



**HALTON
DOMESTIC ABUSE
PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY 2022-2024**

**HALTON
DOMESTIC ABUSE
PARTNERSHIP BOARD**



FOREWORD

In Halton our vision for 2022-24 is for everyone to be able to recognise domestic abuse, take responsibility and work together to tackle it. The Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership will lead on ensuring that we achieve this vision.

No one should live in fear - in the next three years Halton aims to create safer homes, safer communities and a safer society benefitting all of residents, and reducing fear and harm.

This strategy will detail the key priorities we have identified, and focuses on hearing the voices of survivors and children affected by domestic abuse, and responding to local need.

The strategy will also respond to the needs of those who abuse so we can reduce harm caused to victims and children and make for happier, safer future relationships and improve childhood experiences.

Domestic abuse is never acceptable – in Halton we have adopted a zero tolerance culture, and we actively promote Clare’s Law - The Right to Know and The Right to Ask.

Everyone needs to understand their responsibilities and what they can do to contribute to tackling domestic abuse in Halton.

We will promote support services and provide people with skills so that when they are concerned about someone they know, they have access to specialist help, feel supported and are equipped to prevent harm.

We will ensure that frontline staff have the tools and skills to recognise domestic abuse, provide advice, and carry out effective safety and support work with individuals and families.

We must do everything we can to ensure victims and their dependents are protected from harm within the community or in supported accommodation. And, by working in partnership with Criminal Justice, we want to ensure those who harm are brought to justice.

Thank you to all the partners and victims who have contributed to this strategy – this vital work will help us to continue tackling domestic abuse and make a real difference in Halton.

CLlr Martha Lloyd Jones

Executive Board Member, Community Safety

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Strategic Director, People

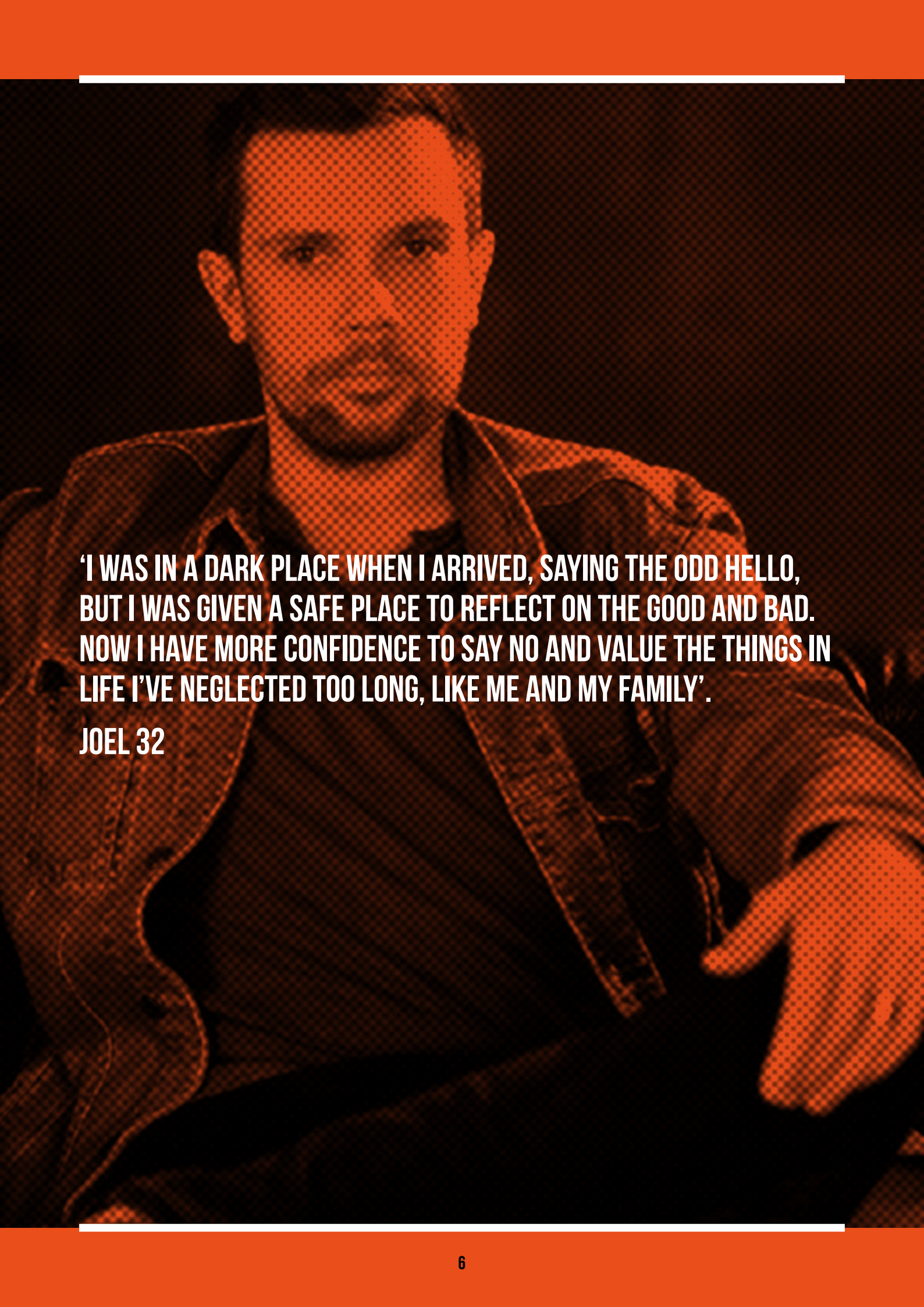


**'I AM GOING TO MISS IT HERE, I CAN'T PRAISE THEM ENOUGH. THEY
HAVE GIVEN ME A LIFE WHICH I NEVER HAD BEFORE, I JUST EXISTED'.**

SALLY 24

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'I WAS IN A DARK PLACE WHEN I ARRIVED, SAYING THE ODD HELLO, BUT I WAS GIVEN A SAFE PLACE TO REFLECT ON THE GOOD AND BAD. NOW I HAVE MORE CONFIDENCE TO SAY NO AND VALUE THE THINGS IN LIFE I'VE NEGLECTED TOO LONG, LIKE ME AND MY FAMILY'.

JOEL 32

SECTION 1: WHAT IS DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Domestic Abuse Act and wider action plan will help to ensure that victims have the confidence to come forward and report their experience, safe in the knowledge that the justice system and other agencies will do everything they can both to protect and support them and their children and pursue their abuser.

For the first time there is a Statutory Definition of 'Domestic Abuse' (The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Definition in detail – see Appendix 1). This is defined as 'behaviour which is abusive by one person towards another person'. The persons have to be personally connected. Behaviour is to be regarded as 'abusive' if it consists of any of the following:



To be 'personally connected' means individuals who are either married, civil partners, couples engaged to be married or have agreed to enter into a civil partnership, those who have been in an intimate personal relationship with one another or those who have a child or children to whom they each have parental responsibility or they are relatives.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, faith or class. Abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. There are lots of examples of domestic abuse and each situation will be unique. For examples of domestic abuse, refer to Appendix 2.

The previous cross-government definition of domestic abuse, which was in place since 2012, operated on a non-statutory basis. Putting the definition on a statutory footing while also recognising on the face of the Act the impact of domestic abuse on children will ensure that domestic abuse is properly understood and that in seeking to tackle this abhorrent crime and provide support services to survivors and their children, all public agencies and others are applying a common definition.



'STAFF MADE ME FEEL WELCOME AND SUPPORTED ME DAILY WITH MY MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS. I COMPLETED THE GATEWAY PROGRAMME AND FEEL THIS HAS HELPED ME TO MOVE FORWARD'.

EMILY 39

SECTION 2: DOMESTIC ABUSE, THE SCALE AND CHALLENGE.

National Context:

Domestic abuse can affect anybody, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation, and it occurs across all of society, regardless of age, race, religion, wealth or geography. The evidence for improving the response to domestic abuse is overwhelming.

National statistics tell us that:

Domestic abuse accounts for 1 in 5 of all violent crimes (ONS 2018)

Almost one in three women aged 16-59 will experience domestic abuse in her lifetime (ONS 2019)

Two women a week are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales alone (ONS 2019)

Of domestic abuse crimes recorded by the police, 26% were committed against men. This equates to c155,000 offences per year (Mankind)

13.6% of men and 28.4% of women and aged 16 to 74 have experienced some form of domestic abuse since the age of 16 (2017/18) Every year that one in the three victims of domestic abuse are male equating to 757,000 men and 1.561m women (Mankind).

In the year ending March 2019, 1.6 million women experienced domestic abuse. (ONS 2019)

On average, victims experience 50 incidents of abuse before receiving effective support. Every minute, police in the UK receive a domestic assistance call – yet only 35% of domestic violence incidents are reported to the police. (Stanko, 2000 & Home Office, 2002)

Victims of domestic violence are more likely to experience repeat victimisation than victims of any other type of crime. Two women are killed every week in England and Wales by a current or former partner. (Homicide Statistics, 1998)

Domestic abuse commonly takes place in households with children and young people. We know that witnessing domestic abuse can be particularly traumatic for children. A minimum of 750,000 British children and young people a year (around 6.5%) are witnesses to domestic abuse and around 30% of domestic abuse begins or escalates during pregnancy. (Home Office, 2010)

The Crime Survey for England and Wales found that (in the year ending March 2017) the majority of adults responding to the survey thought it was always unacceptable to hit or slap a partner. However some respondents thought it was always, mostly or sometimes acceptable to hit or slap a partner in response to:

- having an affair or cheating on them (7.1%)
- flirting with other people (2.0%)
- constantly nagging or moaning (1.5%). (ONS, 2018)

There are still lots of stereotypes and misconceptions around domestic abuse and its causes. Victim-blaming is common issue that results in people not asking for help.

Local context:

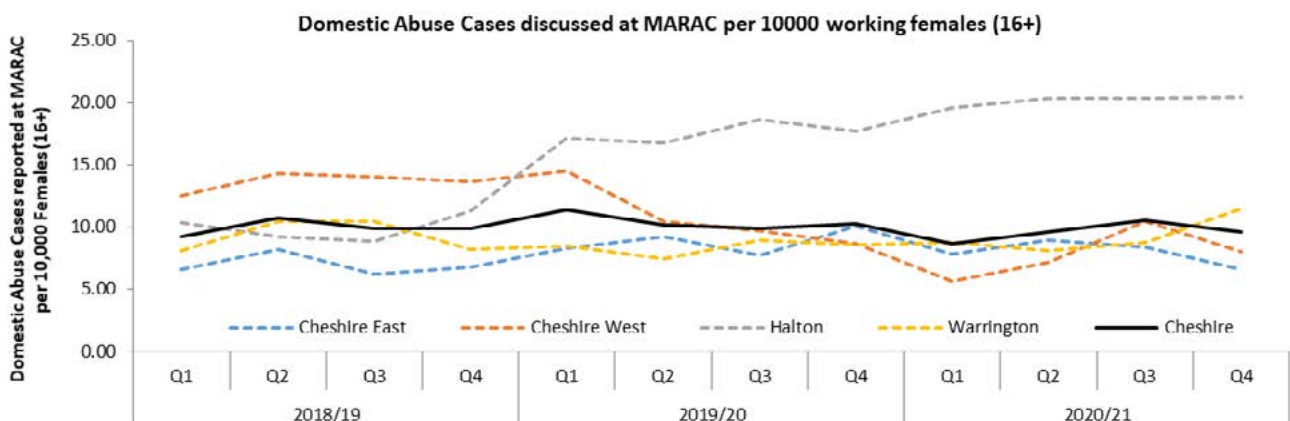
Halton is a largely urban area when compared to other areas of Cheshire. Its two biggest settlements are Widnes and Runcorn that face each other across the River Mersey, 10 miles upstream from Liverpool. Unlike Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington, Halton shares many of the social, economic and crime/ASB issues more associated with its urban neighbours in Merseyside and is part of the Liverpool City Region.

Halton Borough Council serves a population of 125,800 (Census 2011) and 53,300 households.

Halton is ranked 23rd in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2019). The environment acts as a contributory factor to the abuse and violence seen in Halton. The 5 most deprived wards in Halton are Windmill Hill, Halton Lea, Halton Castle, Riverside and Norton South.

Key Halton Data 2020-21

- In an average week there are 55 domestic related crimes reported to Cheshire Police, originating from Halton Borough. Halton has the highest number of domestic related crimes per 10,000 population of 50.38 compared to 36.15 in other areas of Cheshire.
- 553 Domestic Abuse Related Crimes have occurred in Halton that have resulted in injury; Halton had the highest number per 10,000 pop (9.58), compared to 6.91 in Cheshire.
- 334 cases have been processed through the MARAC, with 176 cases appearing as repeats. Per 10,000 female population (16+), Halton had the highest rate of cases discussed at MARAC.



- 23 Domestic Violence Protection Notices were authorised by Cheshire Constabulary.
- Claire's Law (DVDS) Referrals – 64 Domestic violence disclosures were made via the Right to Ask Scheme and a further 42 disclosures via the Right to Know Scheme ('Right to Know' requests are triggered by police where indirect information or intelligence held by ourselves or partner agencies indicates that an individual is at risk of harm from their partner.)
- 241 children and 3 unborn babies were identified at child protection assessment were domestic abuse has been a significant, attributing factor to harm caused.

Hearing and Responding to Service Users Voices

In Halton we not only consulting with service users in developing our plans and services, we also consult with the wider community to ensure we model services that are responsive, and meet the needs of our local community.

Responses to the Halton domestic abuse victims and those who have tried to help someone else suffering from domestic abuse 2021 survey, including a review of victims feedback and consultations have been used to shape this strategy and directly contribute to the modelling of local services.

We recognise the importance of having authentic service users voices in our local service delivery, over the next three years we will improve existing arrangements and will have representation of both adult and children as victims of domestic abuse at our Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. We will work with service user panels to help shape our future commissioning plans, and work with the voluntary and community sector in particular to ensure that both victims, children and those who harm are listened to.

We acknowledge that domestic abuse is a complex issue and we will continue to gather the voices of those who present with additional needs, we are passionate in Halton about supporting hard to reach clients, hearing their voices is essential to mitigate their risks, and ensuring resources are available their needs and shape services that can respond to their choices. Developing a broader understanding and knowledge base.



'I RECEIVED ALL THE SUPPORT I NEEDED. I KNOW THAT SOMETIMES I DIDN'T MAKE THINGS EASY, BUT I WAS NEVER JUDGED'.

IRENE 56

SECTION 3: THE 2022-2023 HALTON VISION

Halton recognise that domestic abuse is a common and complex issue that has a debilitating impact upon the health and wellbeing of those affected by it, and on the communities it is perpetrated within. We have had a strong focus on tackling domestic abuse in all its forms for many years and we remain resolute in our ambition, in Halton we believe that tackling domestic abuse is vital to building stronger, safer and healthier communities. We recognise that domestic abuse can occur in many forms and can be experienced differently by different groups, such as women and girls, members of the LGBT and BME communities and men, who may disproportionately experience various elements of these abuses. It is widely evidenced that these issues not only impact on the victim, their families and children but also the wider community and broader society with the associated emotional, health and financial costs.

Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026 sets out the vision of all partners is that:

Halton will be a thriving and vibrant Borough where people can learn and develop their skills; enjoy a good quality of life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods."

Halton's Corporate Strategy states:

"Halton will be a thriving and vibrant Borough where people can:

- Learn and develop their skills
- Enjoy a good quality of life with good health
- Benefit from a high quality, modern urban environment
- Have the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential
- Develop greater wealth and equality, sustained by a thriving business community
- Live in safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods.

The Halton Vision for 2021-2023 to tackle domestic abuse is:

"FOR EVERYONE TO BE ABLE TO RECOGNISE DOMESTIC ABUSE, TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AND WORK TOGETHER TO TACKLE DOMESTIC ABUSE IN HALTON"

The newly formed Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership will lead on ensuring that we achieve this vision. We have listened to our local survivors, their children and working together have designed a clear pathway to the Partnership to ensure that we are and continue to be service user led. Halton has a long established strong multi agency partnership ethos, we recognise that no one agency can end domestic abuse and we will continue to work in collaboration and challenge agencies to ensure Halton that intervention models are based on best practise, evidence and robust evaluation. No one should live in fear, especially in domestic setting. In the next three years, Halton aims to create safer homes, safer communities and a safer society benefitting all of our residents, reducing fear and harm experienced by those affected by domestic abuse.



'I REALLY DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE REFUGE. THIS WAS THE LONGEST PLACEMENT I HAVE EVER HAD. I FELT SAFE AND KNEW I COULD GET HELP WHENEVER I NEEDED'.

SOPHIE 42

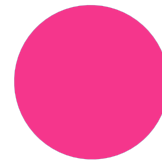
SECTION 4: A WHOLE PICTURE APPROACH

The Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership Strategy will build on previous strategies and will re-inforce local approaches to tackling domestic abuse. Partnership agencies will work in collaboration demonstrating a Whole Picture response, Whole person, Whole Family, Whole Community. Whole Society approach to supporting victims, children, perpetrators and families affected by domestic abuse.

We believe the following SafeLives framework sets out the comprehensive and enduring whole picture approach that needs to be in place for domestic abuse to be ended for good.

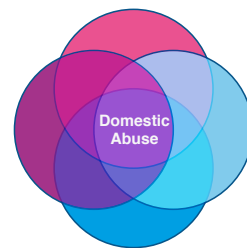
We believe the following framework sets out the comprehensive and enduring whole picture approach that needs to be in place for domestic abuse to be ended for good. In Section 4 we set out what role we will play in delivering this approach.

Section 1 A whole picture approach: Ending domestic abuse, for good



	Whole Person Seeing and responding to the whole person, not addressing a series of issues	Whole Family Adult victims, survivors, those who harm, individuals connected to the victim/perpetrator including extended family	Whole Community All communities of geography, identity and online spaces	Whole Society The general public and those who influence them: the media, politicians, employers, key opinion formers and commentators
1 Act before someone harms or is harmed	People are treated as just that – people, and not issues. The complexity of domestic abuse and links to other adverse experiences are understood. ⁴	Protective factors are put in place for those at risk of abusing or being abused – people and services sufficiently understand domestic abuse and what makes it more or less likely to happen.	Communities ⁵ of geography, identity and online spaces are equipped to identify and act on early risk factors and warning signs of abusive situations.	Gender stereotypes are challenged and deconstructed – particularly those of masculinity – supporting boys and men to break these norms. Societal shifts see a reduction in the motivation and opportunity for different types of power to be abused.
2 Identify and stop harmful behaviours	Harmful behaviour is addressed by proactively identifying all motivating factors and consequences, such as other violence, abuse and criminality.	Individuals who abuse any family member are appropriately assessed for the risk they pose to all family members – and themselves.	Community members know they are more than passive bystanders – there is low tolerance and high urgency about identifying and holding to account those who abuse.	
3 Increase safety for those at risk	The protection offered to people means proactively checking that all risks posed have been addressed, not just the initial presenting issue.	The safety and wellbeing of all non-abusive family members – physical, mental and emotional – is defended from those who pose a risk to them.	Communities of geography, identity, online spaces and employers/businesses understand the risks posed by those who abuse and their role in protecting the safety and wellbeing of those at risk.	
4 Support people to live the lives they want after harm occurs	People are responded to as people, not an issue or series of issues. Both crisis and longer-term responses to people who have experienced abuse are sensitive to their possible vulnerability to future adverse experiences.	When an immediate experience of abuse is over, all family members' safety and wellbeing – physical, mental and emotional – are (re)built. People are supported to live the lives they want, drawing strength from each other.	People who speak about their experience of abuse are believed. Communities and society validate their experience and support their process of creating safety, wellbeing and resilience so they can live the lives they want. The voices, strengths and needs of survivors are paramount, and survivors draw further strength from one another.	

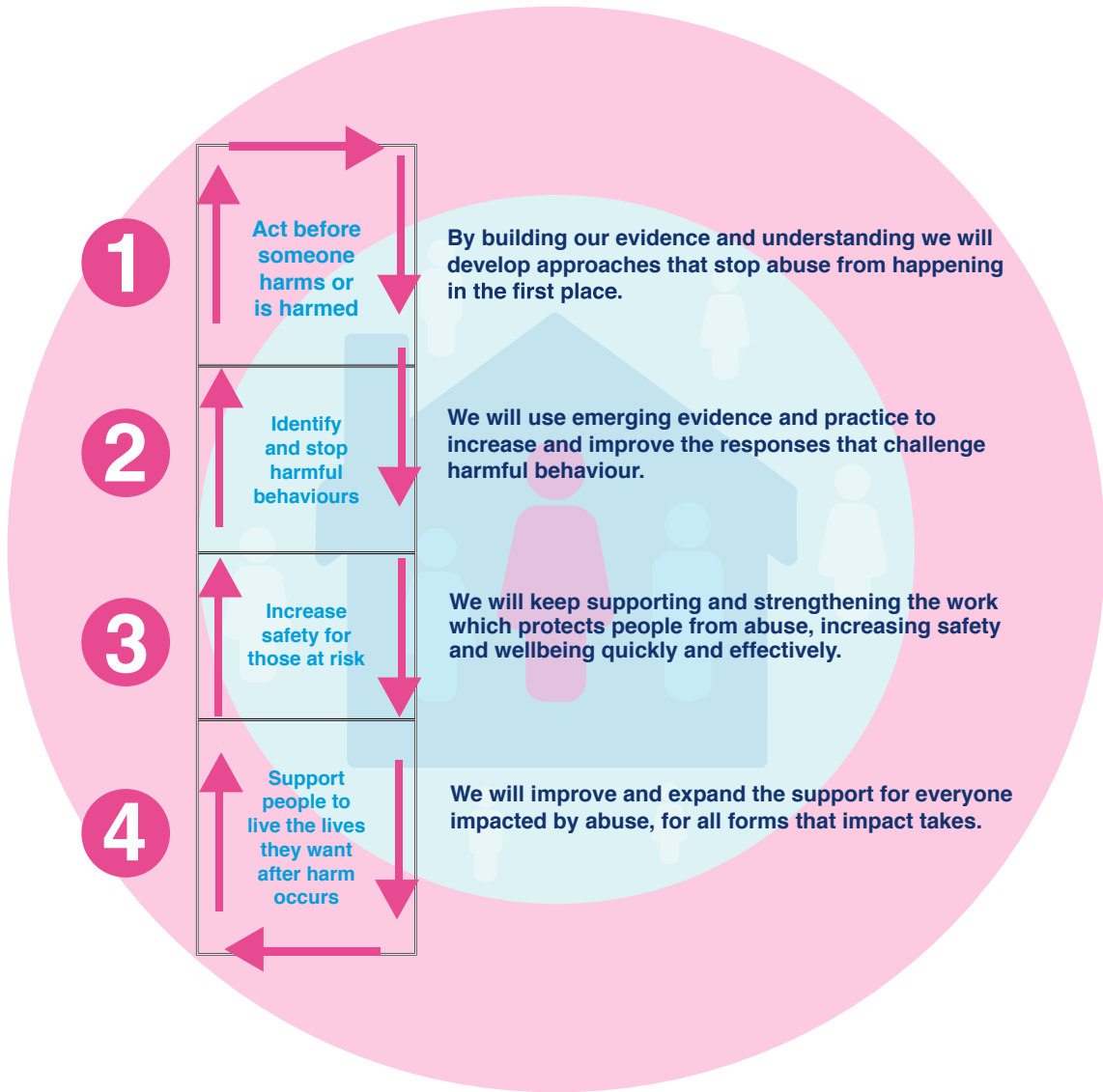
The whole person: domestic abuse is never all of someone's experiences or situation.



⁴ Such as child abuse, child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, sexual violence, trauma, mental ill health, substance use, or economic disadvantage

⁵ Individuals might form an identifiable community; we work on the basis that within that community will also be a range of views, backgrounds and experiences.

During 2021- 2023 Halton we will:



In everything we do, the expert voice of frontline practitioners and the authentic voice of survivors will be a prominent and vital part. We will keep expanding the opportunities for those with lived experience to speak for themselves, in their own voices, and be heard by those who can make change.

Strategic Priority 1 – Act before someone is harmed

- Domestic abuse is never acceptable, Halton have adopted a zero tolerance culture.
- We actively promote Clares Law, The Right to Know and The Right to Ask.

Strategic Priority 2 – Identify and stop harmful behaviours

- Everyone needs to understand their responsibilities and what they can do to contribute to tackling domestic abuse in Halton.
- Promote support services and upskill people so that when families, friends, neighbours or co-workers are concerned about someone they know, they have access to specialist help, feel supported and are equipped to prevent harm.
- Through improved systems and sharing information about adults and children at risk of harm we are able to identify and understand the needs of individuals and families so we can provide timely interventions.
- We share and spend resources in a way that best matches our collective whole picture approach,

Strategic Priority 3 – Increase safety for those at risk

- Ensure that all frontline staff have the tools and skill sets to recognise domestic abuse, provide advice and have the understanding to do effective safety and support work within their remit, with the individuals and families they support.
- We must do everything within our gift to ensure victims and their dependents are protected from harm within the community or within a range of supported accommodation options.
- We develop specialist skill sets to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our community, that services and support are accessible and equitable.
- Working in partnership with Criminal Justice we must work in collaboration to ensure that those who harm are brought to justice.

Strategic Priority 4 – Support people to live the lives they want after harm occurs

- Victims are offered support and services that best fit their needs and help them to recover. Victims and families are empowered to be resilient and independent.
- Children and young people are recognised in their own right, providing early and effective interventions, offering support and advice to parents and young people in order to address need and support behavioural change;
- Those who harm are offered the support they need to change and tackle the underlying motivators to their behaviour.



'THE SANCTUARY SCHEME MADE ME FEEL SAFER IN MY OWN HOME'
SARAH 49

SECTION 5: A WHOLE HOUSING APPROACH

The new Domestic Abuse Act, places a statutory duty on tier one local authorities relating to the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing within refuges and other safe accommodation.

A Whole Picture Approach details clear work streams and outlining key priorities to ensure that local people are supported at the earliest stage of their experience to prevent the escalation of risk and harm. This includes the provision of specialist services to support the whole family – victims and their children, as well as those who harm. The intention is to work together to provide safety, recovery and sustainable change.

Accommodation need arises where prevention and early intervention has not been possible or successful and is a last resort for individuals and families who are at risk of further harm if they do not move out of their home.

Only a small minority of people need such provision as there are many ways in which we can provide safety in homes and communities, including:

- Safety planning with and support for victims to end abusive relationships in a planned and risk managed way
- Using a range of multi-agency fora to bring all involved agencies together to safeguard clients
- Accessing the criminal and civil justice system to address the source of the problem i.e. the alleged perpetrator
- Engaging the person who is harming in changing their behaviour

However there remain some families where the person causing harm continues to pose a significant threat and there is no other option than to seek safe alternative accommodation. This is provided locally through our Halton Domestic Abuse Service commission, where temporary supported accommodation (Refuge) is made available to those in need. Service users have indicated that their preference is to maintain as ‘normal’ a life for them and their children as possible and how important it is that we offer a range of solutions rather than a one size fits all.

Anyone accessing accommodation receives one to one support to address the abuse that has brought them into temporary accommodation and to support them towards independence and gaining a new permanent home, the offer of support will be accessible in all housing options provided in Halton.

The partnership between the council and the local registered social landlords is strong, working in collaboration we will further develop options that will strengthen the offer of support for people who wish to remain in their own homes through an extended range sanctuary measures.

The Sanctuary Scheme is a multi-agency victim centred initiative which aims to enable

households at risk of violence to remain safely in their own homes by installing a ‘Sanctuary’ in the home and through the provision of support to the household’

The Whole Housing Approach is an evidence-based model that has been used as a framework to develop and construct a model for Halton.

The Whole Housing Approach was first conceptualised in 2018 by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) in collaboration with the National Housing and Domestic Abuse Policy and Practice Group. The approach aims to:

- Enable earlier identification and intervention of domestic abuse
- Reduce the number of people rendered homeless because of domestic abuse
- Enable survivors to remain safely in their homes where it is their choice to do so, or to keep their tenancy status if they relocate
- Where a current joint tenancy is in place, enable the tenancy to be altered so the perpetrator is removed and the tenancy is put in the victims sole name

The diagram below illustrates the model and its twelve components. The blue circles represent different forms of accommodation including the three main tenure types (social, private rented and private ownership) and temporary accommodation settings (refuges, supported accommodation). The orange circles are the housing options and specialist domestic abuse services designed to provide safe and stable housing which allow victim/survivors to either remain in their property or relocate to new accommodation.



The Halton Response

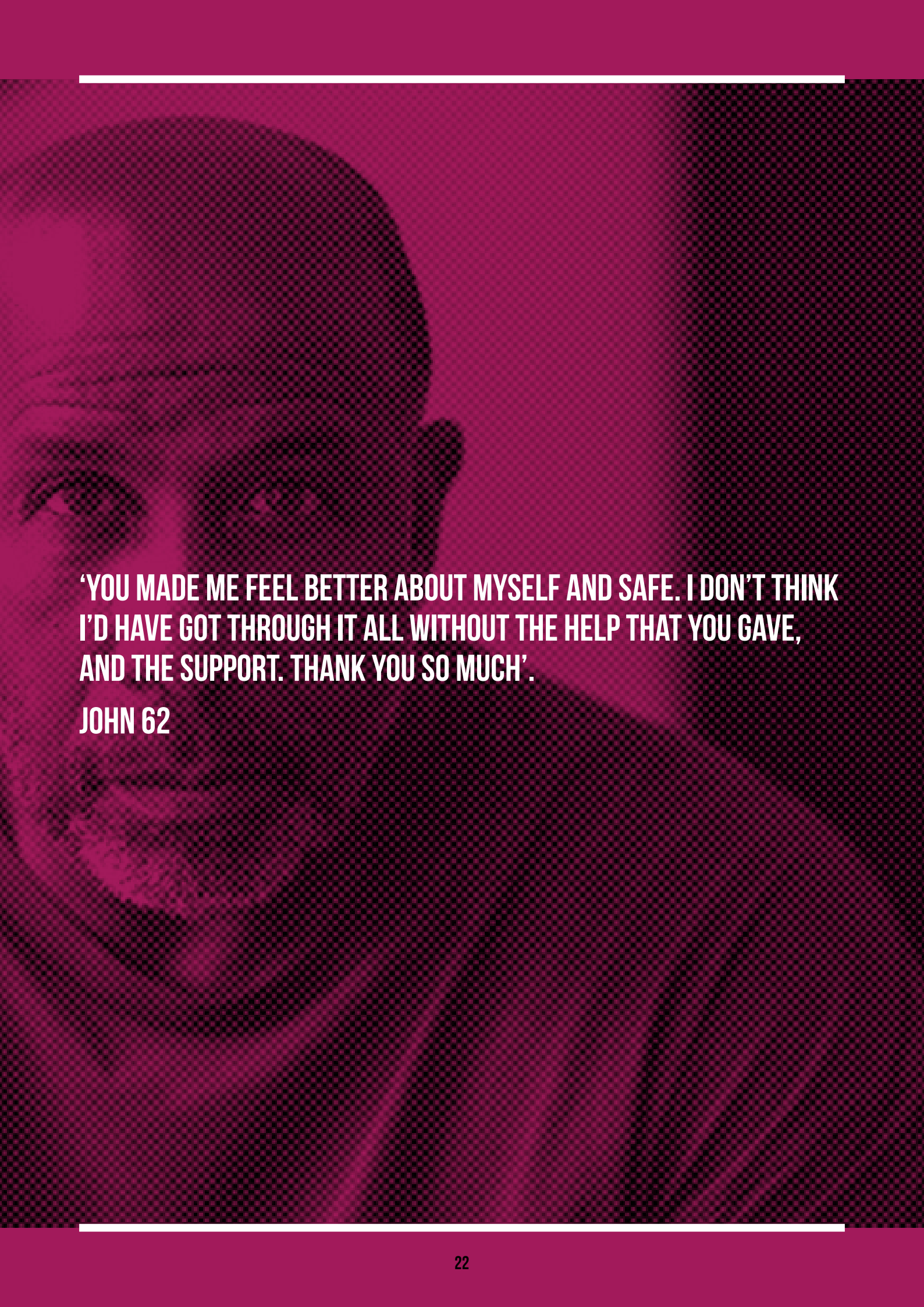
In response to the local need for accommodation, Halton will offer a range of options including:

- Housing-related support – providing housing-related advice and support, for example, securing a permanent home and advice on how to live safely and independently.
- Specialist support for victims with relevant protected characteristics and those presenting with complex needs.
- Specialist services that are able to respond to those people who require interpreters, have regard to cultural and faith requirements, mental health advice and support, and immigration advice.
- Inclusive supported temporary accommodation
- Community based supported accommodation
- Secondary stage accommodation
- House for life options
- Access to supported accommodation for people not eligible for benefits
- Grants to facilitate safe access to supported accommodation

Sustainability

To ensure what we offer is sustainable we will:

- Develop the Whole Housing approach to interface with our existing systems and pathways including Marac, the Integrated Front Door.
- Embed the learning within staff teams and across the partnership through models of joint working, secondment opportunities and shared learning events
- Build the evidence base and financial case for the approach through high quality external evaluations that can be used to support future funding applications.
- Include performance measures that evidence sustained change.
- Create tools, materials and interventions that can be used by professionals, and families themselves, beyond the timescale of the project
- Align all work with local relevant strategies



'YOU MADE ME FEEL BETTER ABOUT MYSELF AND SAFE. I DON'T THINK I'D HAVE GOT THROUGH IT ALL WITHOUT THE HELP THAT YOU GAVE, AND THE SUPPORT. THANK YOU SO MUCH'.

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SECTION 6: GOVERNANCE

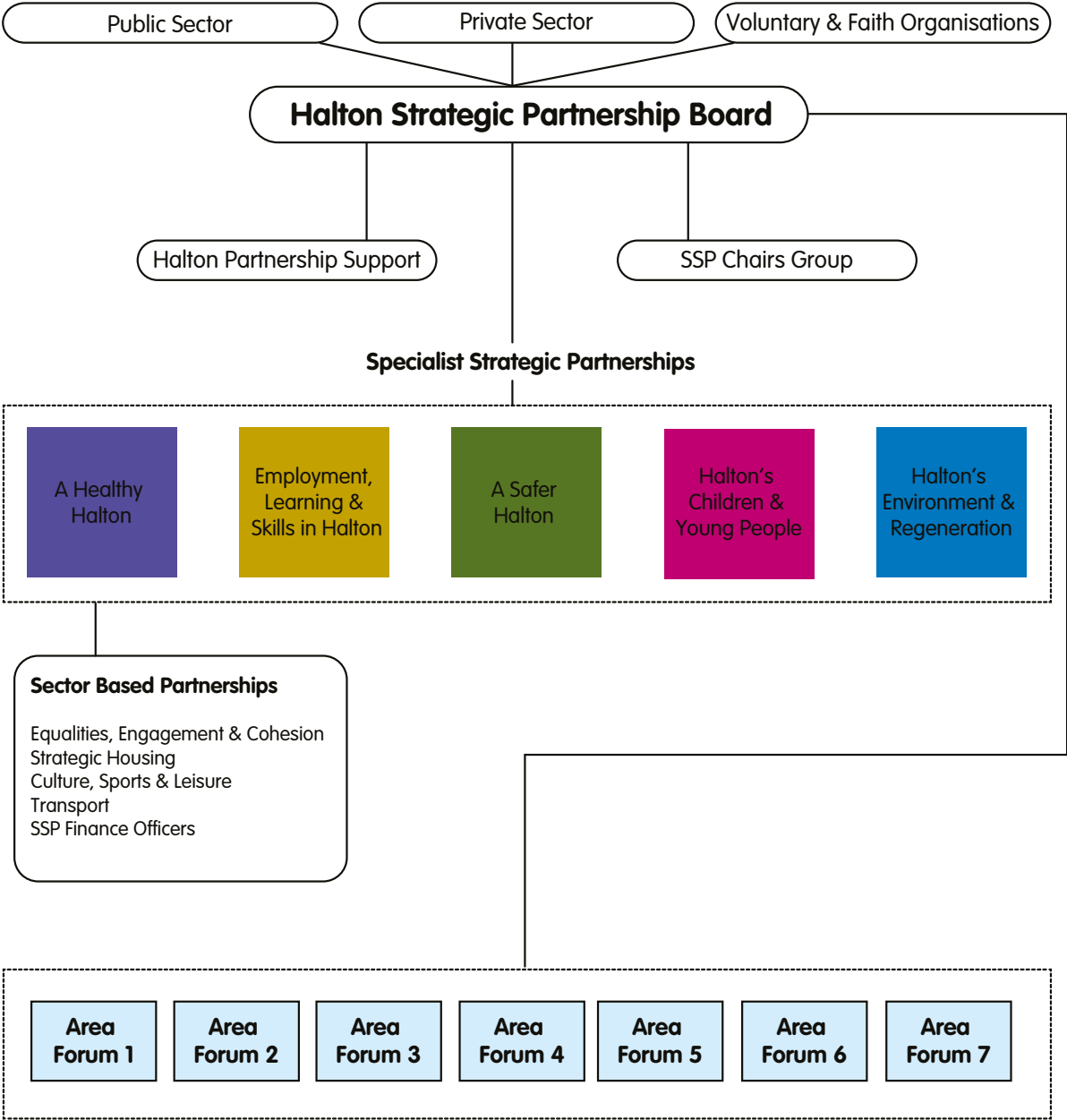
Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026 sets out the ambition, aspirations and direction of the Halton Strategic Partnership for the Borough of Halton.

The Halton Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026 aims to enhance the quality of life of local communities through actions to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the area and its inhabitants. Local authorities and their partners are required to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for their area (there remains a duty to prepare an SCS under Section 4.1 of Local Government Act 2000).

The Halton Strategic partnership consists of five specialist strategic partnerships – Halton's Priority Themes.

- A Healthy Halton
- Employment, Learning and Skills
- A Safer Halton
- Halton Children and Young People
- Haltons Environment and Regeneration.

The Virtual Organisation



A Safer Halton – Aims:

“To ensure pleasant, safe and secure neighbourhood environments, with attractive, safe surroundings, good quality local amenities, and the ability of people to enjoy life where they live.”

The Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership Strategy directly links to key objectives within the Safer Halton priority Theme – Specifically,

“TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF DOMESTIC ABUSE IN ALL ITS FORMS, SUPPORTING THE VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES AND TAKING ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST PERPETRATORS.”

“TO SAFEGUARD ADULTS WHO ARE MORE VULNERABLE TO PHYSICAL, FINANCIAL, SEXUAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN WHO ARE OFTEN PART OF FAMILIES WHERE THERE ARE DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROBLEMS OR WHERE RELATIONSHIPS ARE ABUSIVE OR VIOLENT.”

The Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board reports to the Safer Halton Partnership.

We recognise that being subjected to Domestic Abuse can have a considerable impact of the health and wellbeing on an individual, for their children and for others family and friends who try and help. The direct immediate impact may include cuts, bruises, broken bones, lost teeth and hair, miscarriage, still birth, complications of pregnancy, and homicide of victims and children.

The results of domestic abuse can be long lasting and may cause or worsen other chronic health issues, including asthma, epilepsy, digestive problems, migraine, hypertension, and skin disorders. Domestic abuse has a significant effect on mental health and can lead to anxiety, depression, PTSD and suicide. Those affected by domestic abuse are at greater risk of increased use of alcohol, drugs and other substances used as a coping mechanism.

The health of children affected by domestic abuse is also likely to have been seriously compromised from witnessing abuse directed at you, and also in many cases from abuse which they themselves may have suffered.

This Strategy compliments the One Halton Place Based Plan 2019-2024, the vision set out as follows:

WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF THE PEOPLE OF HALTON SO THEY LIVE LONGER, HEALTHIER, HAPPIER LIVES

I came to this area from another part of the country with my 2 children. I am a Muslim woman, and felt very welcomed in to Refuge. All of the staff went out of their way to help me, to make sure I had everything I need. They told me where I could shop for halal food, and supported me to sort out my money and to find a school for the children very quickly. My children loved living in Refuge. My little girl said she was very happy that daddy couldn't come to live with us, because daddy was mean and used to hit my brother. Staff supported me to contact the mosque to get a divorce, and in appointments with the police, to take a statement, and to go to court with me. The manager also helped me to do some volunteer work with the Syrian refugees in Halton. I have now moved out of Refuge into my own home, and have received lots of support to get furniture and other items I need for the house. I have had extra security put on my house – lights and camera, to make me feel safe, and I visit staff in the Refuge most days when I take the children to school. When I have settled in, I would like to do some voluntary work in the Refuge. The children are so much happier than they were before – I can't thank everyone enough!

AMIRA 27

SECTION 7: THE HALTON DOMESTIC ABUSE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The successful delivery of the vision for Halton lies in the strength of the Halton Domestic Partnership Strategy 2021-2023. The Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership must hold agencies to account in order to be effective, it is vital that all agencies work together to tackle domestic abuse in Halton in a coordinated inclusive approach whole approach. Local service delivery shapers must ensure that we are able to demonstrate key competencies:

Leadership and Delivery Structures

Leadership, delivery and partnership structures must be in place so we are able to evidence validation across all levels of the multi-agency partnership. Community leaders must foster and adopt a strong approach to tackling domestic abuse supported by engagement and buy-in by our elected members, strategic leads with offers of help and validation. Greater levels of success will be achieved by seeking new opportunities to work across a broader spectrum, encouraging new partnership working arrangements and seeking to be more inclusive, this strategy will aim to work in collaboration with businesses and other local authorities to benefit everyone affected by domestic abuse in Halton.

Creating a Greater Understanding and Knowledge Base

The multi-agency Partnership needs to be strong and effective with a clear commitment from local decision makers and the authentic involvement of people with lived experience of domestic abuse. The Partnership will evidence this by using research, including using the learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews, Safeguarding Adults Reviews and Serious Case Reviews as a basis of decision making within the Board. Both children and adults will be represented using the voice of the victim and experiences of those who have lived with/witnessed domestic abuse including children.

Developing the Frontline

The Workforce across all multi-agency need to have the appropriate support and training to make sure that this Strategy is effective.


That we are assured that the workforce has the confidence, skills and motivation to tackle domestic abuse. To achieve this we must seek to create a stable workforce with the ability to attract and retain staff from a range of backgrounds and experiences. We must ensure that we have processes in place that support staff to act and provide appropriate interventions. Our workforce will be most effective when they have the space and time to enhance their skill sets, they are offered reflective supervision and we adopt an ethos of continual learning across all levels of the multi-agency partnership.

Performance Measuring, Accountability and Quality Assurance

The Halton Domestic Abuse Partnership will act upon and implement best practise. It will use performance information to measure how well the Board is doing to tackle domestic abuse furthermore, it will use reports from inspections and case file audits to reflect what is happening on the frontline and seek assurances that service delivery is of a high standard. The Board will seek opportunities and act as a critical friend and support peer reviews.

Effective Commissioning

The Partnership will collaborate with commissioners to ensure that the right support outcomes are in place to assist those affected by domestic abuse through robust arrangements, using information from local needs assessments to determine needs and priorities both commissioning services and when appropriate de-commissioning services.



My IDVA was very supportive, very attentive and listened to my concerns patiently and was constantly checking on me. She also helped by providing me with a letter to the court regarding information on the issue of domestic abuse and this was a massive help. I was also referred for one to one counselling sessions which I am still undergoing and this too is helping massively as I get to face and discuss some of my anxieties and issues that have been affecting me as a result of the domestic abuse endured in the past. This has brought to light some of the suppressed and deep rooted impact, and has helped me be more self-aware of some subconscious mechanisms developed along the way. It has also helped me appreciate how far I have come in the past 2 years since I made the decision to leave the abusive relationship. I really appreciate the support I have received, before then I had felt like I had nowhere to go, especially as I had no police records or anything to prove what I was saying was true, and that in itself does some damage. So, I am grateful for your immeasurable support and I hope to be in a position in future where I can pay it forward by providing support/help to other victims.

MICHELLE 46

APPENDIX 1:

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

- (1) This section defines “domestic abuse” for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if –
 - (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and (b) the behaviour is abusive.
- (3) Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following –
 - (a) physical or sexual abuse;
 - (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
 - (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
 - (d) economic abuse (see subsection (4));
 - (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse;and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.
- (4) “Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to –
 - (a) acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
 - (b) obtain goods or services.
- (5) For the purposes of this Act A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B’s child).
- (6) in this Act to being abusive towards another person are to be read in accordance with this section.
- (7) For the meaning of “personally connected”, see section 2.

2 Definition of “personally connected”

- (1) For the purposes of this Act, two people are “personally connected” to each other if any of the following applies –
 - (a) they are, or have been, married to each other;
 - (b) they are, or have been, civil partners of each other;
 - (c) they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
 - (d) they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);

- (e) they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
- (f) they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child (see subsection (2));
- (g) they are relatives.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(f) a person has a parental relationship in relation to a child if -

- (a) the person is a parent of the child, or
- (b) the person has parental responsibility for the child.

(3) *In this section –*

“child” means a person under the age of 18 years;

“civil partnership agreement” has the meaning given by section 73 of the Civil Partnership Act 2004;

“parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act);

“relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

3 Children as victims of domestic abuse

(1) This section applies where behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is domestic abuse.

(2) Any reference in this Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who

- (a) sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse, and
- (b) is related to A or B.

(3) A child is related to a person for the purposes of subsection (2) if -

- (a) the person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child, or
- (b) the child and the person are relatives.

(4) *In this section –*

“child” means a person under the age of 18 years;

“parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act);

“relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

APPENDIX 2: TYPES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

(1) Examples of physical abuse include:

- Being kicked, punched, pinched, slapped, dragged, scratched, choked, bitten, pushed, stabbed
- Use or threats of use of 'weapons' including knives and irons
- Being scalded, burnt or poisoned
- Objects being thrown including food, drinks, cutlery
- Violence against family members or pets
- Causing you physical harm by denying access to medical aids or equipment
- Harming you whilst performing 'care' duties (especially relevant for disabled victims) including force feeding, withdrawal of medicine or over-medication

(2) Examples of isolation:

- Limiting outside involvement such as family, friends and work colleagues
- Not allowing any activity outside the home that does not include her or him
- Constant checking up on your whereabouts

(3) Examples of verbal abuse:

- Constant yelling and shouting
- Verbal humiliation either in private or in company
- Constantly being laughed at and being made fun of
- Blaming you for their own failures;
- Insults and threats; and
- Mocking someone about their disability, gender, sexual orientation, physical appearance etc.
- Mocking your "sexual performance" including in front of friends, work colleagues and on social media

(4) Examples of threatening behaviour:

- The threat of violence
- The threat of use of 'weapons' including knives and irons
- The threat of use of violence against family members or pets
- Threatening to use extended family members to attack you
- Destroying your personal and treasured items
- Threatening to tell the police that you are the person committing the domestic abuse,

committing sexual abuse including against your children

- Threatening to remove your children, that you will never see them again or that they will take them abroad without your permission

(5) Examples of emotional and psychological abuse:

- Intimidation
- Withholding affection and giving you the silent treatment
- Turning your children and friends against you
- Being stopped from seeing friends or relatives
- Constantly being insulted, including in front of others
- Repeatedly being belittled
- Keeping you awake/stopping you sleeping – sleep deprivation
- Excessive contact, for example stalking
- Using social media sites to intimidate you (such as Facebook and Twitter)
- Wilfully stopping fathers from seeing their children by breaching court orders (Child Arrangement Orders)
- Manipulating your anxieties or beliefs
- Telling you that you are to blame for the abuse and injuries
- Persuading you to doubt your own sanity or mind (including “Gaslighting” – read more [here](#))
- Telling you, you are not the father of your children
- Telling you, you are not a “real” father
- Denying the abuse committed against you ever happened or trying to minimise it
- Telling you, your bruises, cuts and injuries are not serious
- Accusing you falsely of having affairs and/or constantly looking at other women

- Mocking your “sexual performance” including in front of friends, work colleagues and on social media

(6) Examples of power and control:

Abusers believe they have a right to control their partners by:

- Telling you what to do and expecting obedience
- Telling you, you will never see your children again if you leave
- Using force to maintain power and control
- Not accepting responsibility for the abuse – not their fault
- Continual and purposeful breach of family court orders
- Forced marriage

(7) Examples of economic abuse and financial abuse:

- Totally controlling the family income
- Not allowing you to spend any money unless ‘permitted’
- Making you account for every pound you spend
- Running up huge bills such as credit/store cards in your name – including without you know.
- Purposely defaulting on payments
- Setting up false companies, accounts or credit cards
- Deliberately forcing you to go back to the family courts as a means of costing you additional legal fees
- Refusing to contribute to household income;
- Interfering with or preventing you from regularising your immigration status so you are economically dependent on the perpetrator;
- Preventing you from claiming welfare

benefits, force someone to commit benefit fraud or misappropriating such benefits;

- Interfering with your education, training, or employment;
- Not allowing you access to mobile phone/ car/utilities;
- Damaging your property.
- Denying you food or only allowing you to eat a particular type of food

(8) Examples of sexual abuse:

- Sexual harassment/pressure, or sexual acts, including with other people
- Forcing sex after physical assaults
- Sexually degrading language
- Rape
- Forcing you to have sex (or commit a sexual act) against your will
- Unwanted sexual contact and demands
- Forced involvement into making or watching pornography
- Deliberately being hurt during sex
- Being pressurised or being tricked into having unsafe sex
- Your partner telling you they are taking contraception (The Pill) when they are deliberately not / refusing to use contraception

(9) Examples of false allegations:

- Telling the police (or threatening to) that you are the one committing the domestic abuse when it is the other way around
- Telling friends, families, your employer and others (or threatening to) such as sports clubs that you are the one committing the domestic abuse
- False allegations of another 'crime' such as abusing children

(10) Examples of being stalked:

Stalkers will often use multiple and differing methods to harass their victims. Stalking can consist of any type of behaviour such as:

- following you to and from work
- checking your email and phone calls
- regularly sending gifts
- making unwanted or malicious communication
- damaging property or clothes
- physical or sexual assault

(11) Examples of digital and social media abuse (often this can be with former partners):

- stalking you
- placing false and malicious information about you on your or others' social media
- being trolled
- having no control on your content or not allowed to have access
- revenge porn
- monitoring or controlling your email and phone calls (including work email and calls)
- Image-based abuse – for example the non-consensual distribution of private sexual photographs and films with the intent to cause you distress
- Hacking into, monitoring or controlling email accounts, social media profiles and phone calls
- Blocking you from using online accounts, responding in the victim's place or creating false online accounts;
- Use of spyware or GPS locators on items such as phones, computers, wearable technology, cars, motorbikes and pets
- Hacking internet enabled devices such as PlayStations or iPads to gain access to accounts or trace information such as your location

- Using personal devices such as smart watches or smart home devices (such as Amazon Alexa, Google Home Hubs, etc) to monitor, control or frighten you
- Use of hidden cameras.

(12) Types of Coercive and Controlling Behaviour

Such behaviours might include:

- isolating you from your friends and family;
- depriving you of your basic needs;
- monitoring your time;
- monitoring your online communication tools or using spyware;
- taking control over aspects of your everyday life, such as where you can go, who you can see, what to wear and when you can sleep;
- depriving you access to support services, such as specialist support or medical services;
- repeatedly putting you down such as telling you that you are worthless;
- enforcing rules and activity which humiliate, degrade or dehumanise you
- forcing you to take part in criminal activity such as shoplifting, neglect or abuse of children to encourage self-blame and prevent disclosure to authorities;
- financial abuse including control of finances, such as only allowing you a punitive allowance;
- threats to hurt or kill;
- threats to a child;
- threats to reveal or publish private information (e.g. threatening to 'out' someone).
- assault;
- criminal damage (such as destruction of household goods);
- rape;
- preventing you from having access to transport or from working
- controlling or monitoring your daily activities, including making you account for your time, dictating what you can wear, when you can eat;
- isolating you from family and friends, intercepting messages or phone calls or refusing to interpret
- intentional undermining your role as a partner, spouse or parent
- preventing you from taking medication or over-medicating you, or preventing you from accessing health or social care (especially relevant for victims with disabilities or long-term health conditions)
- using substances to control you through dependency;
- using children to control you – threatening to take the children away or manipulating professionals to increase the risk of children being removed into care;
- parental alienation, including preventing children from spending time with your or their grandparents, from visiting friends' houses and from participating in extracurricular activities;
- threats to expose sensitive information (e.g. sexual activity) or make false allegations to family members, religious or local community including via photos or the internet;
- preventing you from learning a language or making friends outside of their ethnic/ or cultural background;
- threatening precarious immigration status against you, withholding documents, and giving false information to a victim about your visa or visa application; threats of institutionalisation.

APPENDIX 3: LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This strategy has been developed in line with statutory policies, guidelines and frameworks as well as sector specific legislation and publications

- The Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Housing Act 1996
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) Strategy 2016-2020
- The Care Act 2014
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Halton Local Safeguarding Adults Board
- Halton Children and Young People Safeguarding Partnership

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