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Director of
Public Health
Annual Report

— Domestic abuse in York

“ I didn't have to suffer alone, I got support and became confident enough to report him to the Police.”

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Introduction from Director of Public Health



Ending domestic abuse is everyone's business

This year my Director of Public Health Annual Report focuses on the important subject of domestic abuse.

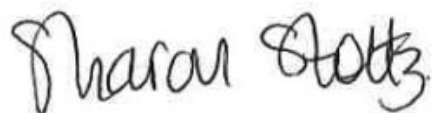
It is estimated that the national annual cost of domestic abuse is upwards of £66 billion in costs associated with the long-lasting emotional and mental impacts, physical health care, policing, criminal justice and lost productivity.

Domestic abuse is a crime often hidden from view since takes place in people's homes, usually behind closed doors. It often goes unreported as victims, including children who may witness the violence, may not report the abuse for many different reasons including the fear of reprisals from the perpetrator.

Domestic abuse has a profound and lasting impact on victims and survivors and wider society. The impacts on children in a home where domestic abuse is happening are especially severe with impacts on their mental and physical health, safety and educational attainment. Domestic abuse also makes a significant contribution to family breakdown and is one of the main causes of family homelessness. It increases the risk of poverty for victims and their children.

The prevalence of domestic abuse was vividly highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic with a much greater increase in cases being reported across the country and here in York.

Ending domestic abuse is everyone's business and requires a co-ordinated response from all agencies and greater awareness across society of its impacts. York has a Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board which brings key partners together to provide such a co-ordinated response. The report covers some of the key areas the Board has been working on together and where to get help.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Stoltz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sharon Stoltz

Director of Public Health

Chapter 1: Defining domestic abuse & national context

Domestic Abuse Act

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, for the first time, created a legal definition of domestic abuse. According to the act behaviour is classed as “domestic abuse” if:

- ➔ Both individuals are over 16 years of age.
- ➔ Both individuals are personally connected to each other and the behaviour is abusive, whereby personally connected refers to individuals who are married, are civil partners, have agreed to marry or be in a civil partnership, they are or have been in an intimate relationship, they are or have been in a parental relationship to the same child or they are related.

Children are also classed as victims of domestic abuse if they:

- ➔ See or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse
- ➔ Are related to the victim or perpetrator.


Domestic abuse can be any of the following behaviours:

- ➔ Physical or sexual abuse
- ➔ Violent or threatening behaviour
- ➔ Controlling or coercive behaviour
- ➔ Economic abuse
- ➔ Psychological, emotional, or other abuse

It should be mentioned that domestic abuse can happen to anyone—regardless of age, background, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or sex. Some people, particularly women, are more likely to be victims and are more likely to be seriously hurt or killed as a result of domestic abuse.

Why this Act was passed

One in three women worldwide have experienced domestic abuse in their lifetime¹. This reality is also common in England and Wales, where it is estimated that 1 in 5 adults experience domestic abuse in their lifetime² and, up to 130,000 children are living in homes where they are at high risk of serious harm from domestic abuse.

 **One in three women worldwide have experienced domestic abuse in their lifetime.**

Domestic abuse can have a negative impact on victims' physical health and emotional wellbeing. For example, victims of physical abuse may suffer a variety of injuries, ranging from bruising to broken bones, all of which has a long-term impact on the victim. Subsequently, victims of domestic abuse are also likely to suffer long-term mental health issues and are more susceptible to alcohol or substance misuse.

Although domestic abuse can affect anyone, most cases involve women and children. Previously, there were many scenarios whereby a non-abusive parent within a household was the only recognised victim of domestic abuse.

However, following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), children witnessing domestic abuse or living within homes where domestic abuse is present are now also classed as victims in their own right. Evidence suggests

1 [One in three women are subjected to violence - WHO - BBC News](#)

2 [About domestic abuse - Refuge](#)

that children who experience domestic abuse are more likely to become perpetrators of domestic abuse in their future relationships, highlighting the need to ensure appropriate support and education for these children relating to healthy behaviours and relationships³.

Most domestic abuse incidents will require involvement from organisations such as the police, hospitals, courts, doctors, and other public services. This means that domestic abuse incidents impact on the capacity of public services, as services are required to respond efficiently and prioritise the limited resources available. Furthermore, as victims of domestic abuse tend to suffer from long term physical and mental health problems⁴ this has a subsequent impact on the economic cost of domestic abuse through lost productivity due to people being off sick from work.

3 [The Consequences of Witnessing Family Violence on Children and Implications for Family Counselors - Christopher M. Adams, 2006 \(sagepub.com\)](#)

4 [How widespread is domestic abuse and what is the impact? | Safelives](#)

At present, it is costing the UK government **230 million pounds** to tackle domestic abuse. This includes:

- ➔ **£3 million** of funding is given to the police for training its staffs to help support victims and survivors.
- ➔ **£75 million** to Home Office to tackle perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- ➔ **£48 million** given to organisation to pay for support services in local areas.

Like most countries, the UK experienced an increased number of domestic abuse incidents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Several studies found that lockdown restrictions increased the severity of abuse and made it difficult for victims to leave or seek help⁵. The other factor which increased victims'

5 [Shadow_Pandemic_Report_FINAL.pdf \(womensaid.org.uk\)](#)

vulnerability is the cost-of-living crisis, which caused financial strain for more households. The national domestic abuse charity Safelives published a report which highlighted that victims of domestic abuse are being faced with a choice of remaining in an unsafe home or face financial destitution or homelessness⁶. These circumstances alongside other long standing efforts such as the publication of the Domestic Homicide Review report and, the European Union Gender Equality Strategy 2020, have collectively brought the need for a national response to tackle domestic abuse.

“My partner sets up new direct debits on my account without me knowing.” – [Recognising financial & economic abuse](#)

6 [Domestic abuse and the cost of living crisis | Safelives](#)

Why is the DA Act important?

“He uses child arrangements as an excuse to harass me with messages.” – [Recognising psychological & economic abuse](#)

The creation of the act emphasises that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but it can also be violent and threatening behaviour, emotional abuse, controlling or coercive behaviour or economic abuse. The provision of a legal definition of domestic abuse has also removed uncertainty as to what we mean by domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) also aims to further support victims of abuse, encouraging victims to come forward by holding perpetrators to account by providing the police more legislative powers. The act places a duty on local authorities to provide accommodation-based support to domestic abuse victims and their children. Furthermore, the Domestic Abuse

 Up to 130,000 children are living in homes where they are at high risk of serious harm from domestic abuse.

Act established the domestic abuse commissioners (DAC) office and appoints a commissioner with specific powers to ensure, victims voices are amplified, public knowledge about domestic abuse is increased, and the power to hold agencies and government to account in tackling domestic abuse.

Recognising the signs of domestic abuse in victims

Each experience of domestic abuse is unique. In some instances, the victim themselves does not recognise they are in an unhealthy relationship. Though widely unreported, feelings of shame, financial dependence, fear of retaliation, and embarrassment can all contribute.

Nonetheless, there are common factors that may indicate an individual is experiencing abuse. These can include:


- Social withdrawal
- Isolation from friends and family
- Changes in behaviour – anger, anxiety, aggression
- Lack of confidence and self-esteem
- Bruising or other visible signs of injury
- Monitoring of social media use
- Masking – attempts to hide signs such as bruising by wearing long sleeved clothing

Chapter 2: The impact of domestic abuse on public health

Public Health is the science of protecting and improving the health of the population and local communities. In this chapter, the focus is on the health consequences of domestic abuse at a population level. Individual experiences may differ.

The many different forms of domestic abuse were discussed earlier in this report, but the World Health Organization (WHO) has warranted domestic abuse to be a “major public health problem.” The prevalence of domestic abuse in all forms, both nationally and locally, is extremely concerning and can have devastating short and long-term impacts that can be

deep-rooted and persist long after the event. Evidence⁷ suggests that the more severe the abuse, the greater the risk of long-term impacts, and whilst support is available to promote recovery, the impacts can be seen in all aspects of physical, mental and sexual health and wellbeing. In the worst cases, domestic abuse can lead to mental illness so severe that it leads to suicide.

 World Health Organization (WHO) has warranted domestic abuse to be a “major public health problem.”

⁷ Bo, Liu., Yating, Peng., (2023), *Long-Term Impact of Domestic Violence on Individuals.*, MDPI Behavioural Sciences 13(2): 137

The short-term health impacts of domestic abuse

Short-term health consequences may result directly from the abuse itself. This is particularly noted in physical and sexual abuse, though mental ill health arising from emotional and financial abuse is also seen. The following provides some examples of the health impacts of domestic abuse, all of which may differ in severity depending on factors such as the severity of abuse, the period of time abuse has taken place, the type of abuse, and the age of the victim.

Victims of domestic abuse may experience the following:

- ➔ Injuries such as broken bones and bruising
- ➔ More serious injury including compound fractures, internal organ damage or shock
- ➔ Shortness of breath
- ➔ Confusion

- ➔ Poor mental health – 50% of domestic abuse victims had already been diagnosed with a mental illness, such as depression and anxiety⁸
- ➔ Anxiety
- ➔ Depression
- ➔ Low self-esteem
- ➔ Post-traumatic stress disorder
- ➔ Poor mental resilience
- ➔ Eating and sleep disorders
- ➔ Emotional detachment
- ➔ An inability to trust others

⁸ [University of Birmingham: Women who are Experiencing Domestic Abuse are Nearly Three Times as Likely to Develop Mental Illness, 2019](#)

The impact domestic abuse has on a victim's behaviour has also been observed and domestic abuse may result in victims being more likely to display the following behaviours:

- ➔ Substance misuse, including drugs and alcohol
- ➔ Multiple sexual partners, and choosing abusive partners later in life
- ➔ Lower rates of contraception and condom use
- ➔ Increased risk of engaging in criminal behaviour
- ➔ Disassociation – a detachment from reality, often described as an “out of body” experience

“ I haven't seen my friends in a long time, my partner makes planning things difficult.”

– Recognising coercive & controlling behaviour

Sexual abuse occurs within a relationship it is a form of domestic abuse and victims of sexual abuse may experience:

- ➔ Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- ➔ HIV
- ➔ Unintended pregnancy which may result in termination
- ➔ Complications with pregnancy including miscarriage
- ➔ Unspecified vaginal bleeding
- ➔ Urinary tract infections
- ➔ Painful sexual intercourse
- ➔ Injury to genitals
- ➔ Increased risk of cervical and uterine cancers
- ➔ Sexual dysfunction

“ Even when I am not up for sex, he will force himself onto me.”

– Recognising physical & sexual violence

Long-term impacts on health

Experiences of traumatic events, including domestic abuse, have been known to lead to long-term conditions and adverse health outcomes. In some cases, these can occur many years after the event. Studies⁹ have also suggests other cumulative disadvantage like early exposure can lead to increased risk of poor health outcomes in later life.. people who have reported a history of abuse have generally also experienced broad range of chronic health and psychological problems. These have included functional digestive disorders such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and abdominal pain, headaches, non-specific low back pain, chronic pelvic pain. Memory loss, mobility problems and the feeling of being unable to carry out daily activities have also been reported health issues displayed by victims of domestic abuse.

9 [Mock, Steven. E., Arai, Susan. M., \(2011\) *Childhood Trauma and Chronic Illness in Adulthood: Mental Health and Socioeconomic Status as Explanatory Factors and Buffers*, Frontiers in Psychology, 1: 246](#)

Wider determinants of health

The wider determinants of health are a diverse range of social, economic and environmental impacts on people's health. Influences can be local or extend internationally and have the power to shape the conditions of daily life. Differences in factors such as access to education, employment, affordable housing, healthy food results in avoidable health inequalities, meaning where a lack of these factors exist this typically results in poorer health outcomes.

“ I wear clothing that covers my arms because of what happens behind closed doors.” – [Recognising physical & sexual violence](#)

Domestic abuse is prevalent in all societies and cultures. Nonetheless, social factors such as age, marriage, low education attainment, unemployment or insecure employment may adversely increase the risk of experiencing abuse. People with higher incomes, for example, will generally enjoy better health

and have longer life expectancies than people on lower incomes. Lower incomes can then extend to challenges in securing safe accommodation in areas of higher deprivation or where crime rates may be higher. Consequently, the issue of feeling safe can impact on social support networks. Feeling connected with friends, family, and the community at large are important factors in helping people weather the harder periods in life. Confiding in someone in a non-judgemental and practical scenario has been shown to be beneficial to health; the amount of positive social contact and emotional support being attributed to lower premature death rates and long-term medical conditions like cardiovascular disease.

Both men and women can be victims of domestic abuse, however:

“ In England, intimate partner violence (IPV) was more prevalent and severe in women than in men. In general, there was a social gradient for physical IPV in women only, and not for emotional-only IPV in either gender. This suggests that interventions across the social spectrum are appropriate for emotional IPV prevention, but that policies for physical IPV prevention should particularly address the needs of women from deprived backgrounds.”¹⁰

¹⁰ Khalifeh, H., (2013), *Intimate Partner Violence and Socioeconomic Deprivation in England: Findings From a National Cross-Sectional Survey*, *Am J Public Health* 103(3): 462-472

The effects of domestic abuse on children

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises that children who are exposed to abuse in the home are also now classed as victims of domestic abuse. Being witness to, or directly experiencing abuse can increase the risk of long-term physical and mental health problems. There is some evidence¹¹ that suggests children that are exposed to violence, are at risk of becoming violent in future relationships.

¹¹ Moylan, C.A., (2010)., *The Effects of Child Abuse and Exposure to Domestic Violence on Adolescent Internalizing and Externalizing Behavior Problems*, J Fam Violence. 2010 Jan; 25(1): 53–63

Short-term effects

Pre-school children

- ➔ Signs of regression including bed-wetting, thumb-sucking, whining.
- ➔ May show signs of anxiety such as hiding or display severe separation anxiety.

School-aged children

- ➔ Feelings of guilt- can blame themselves
- ➔ Low self-esteem and may have poor academic attainment, have fewer friends and not engage in activities and classes.
- ➔ Somatic physical symptoms can be present including stomach pain and headaches.

Teenagers

- ➔ Truancy, engagement in risky behaviours such as alcohol and drug use, unprotected sex
- ➔ Low self-esteem and trouble making friends
- ➔ May be bullies and can be in trouble with the law.
- ➔ Girls are more likely to be withdrawn and experience depression/anxiety.

Long-term effects

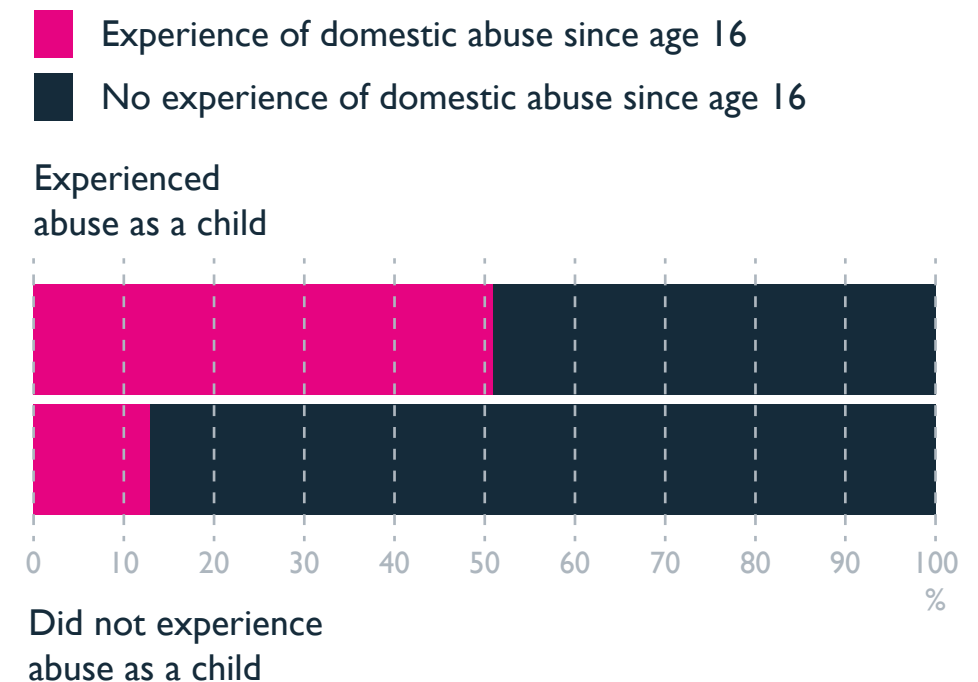
Children who have been exposed to domestic abuse in the home can suffer long-term effects. Experiencing elevated stress levels for long term periods of time can negatively impair cognitive function and impede brain development.¹²

Early behavioural changes can include irritability and emotional distress, problems with sleep, immaturity, and problems with language development. In later life, adults who were exposed to abuse as children were observed as being at greater risk of substance use disorders, criminal behaviour, mental illness and suicidal tendencies, and teenage pregnancy, than those who had no such exposure.

Recent analysis from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) suggests that over half (51%) of adults who experienced domestic

abuse as a child will experience abuse as an adult. Women who were survivors of child abuse were more likely than men to experience abuse as an adult (57% compared with 41% of men).

Survivors of child abuse or not and whether they experienced domestic abuse as an adult, CSEW year ending March 2016



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

¹² [Harrison, O., \(2021\), *The Long-Term Effects of Domestic Violence on Children*, Children's Legal Rights Journal, Vol 41, Issue 1](#)



51%
of adults

who experienced domestic abuse as a child will experience abuse as an adult.



57% / **41%**
of women / of men

who were survivors of child abuse were more likely than men to experience abuse as an adult.

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, ONS

The financial impact of domestic abuse on the NHS

Domestic abuse places a heavy burden on health across the life course. The economic impacts are equally burdensome and can be associated with loss of working hours as well as medical costs. The costs of domestic abuse to the NHS in England and Wales have previously been estimated to be **£2.3 billion** (Oliver et al., 2019). The Domestic Abuse Bill 2021 recognises that an integrated healthcare response to domestic abuse will:

“Reduce costs within the NHS... To implement a hospital based Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) in each hospital would cost £15.7 million and to commission Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) in general practices nationally would cost £25 million. Both hospital-based IDVAs and the IRIS programme are highly cost-effective and cost-saving for the NHS.”

Chapter 3: Domestic abuse in York

The local picture

York has a population of 202,821 residents, which represents a 2.4% rise between 2011 and 2023 based on the latest census data, with a further forecast increase of another 13,000 individuals.

The city of York is classed as predominantly urban and has an aging population, with the over 65 population growing year on year and has risen 12.7% since 2011. Similarly, there are currently 9,854 people over the age of 80 living in York. York also has 48,779 students living in the city, which is due to having two universities, the University of York and York St John University.



7.3% of residents in York are from black or minority ethnic groups, 5.5% are from white but non-British background and 10.8% were born outside the UK. York has a higher than average LGBTQIA population compared to the regional and national statistics (5.5% York, 3.0% region, 3.1% England & Wales). Over 17.1% of residents are disabled and 7.7% have carer responsibilities.

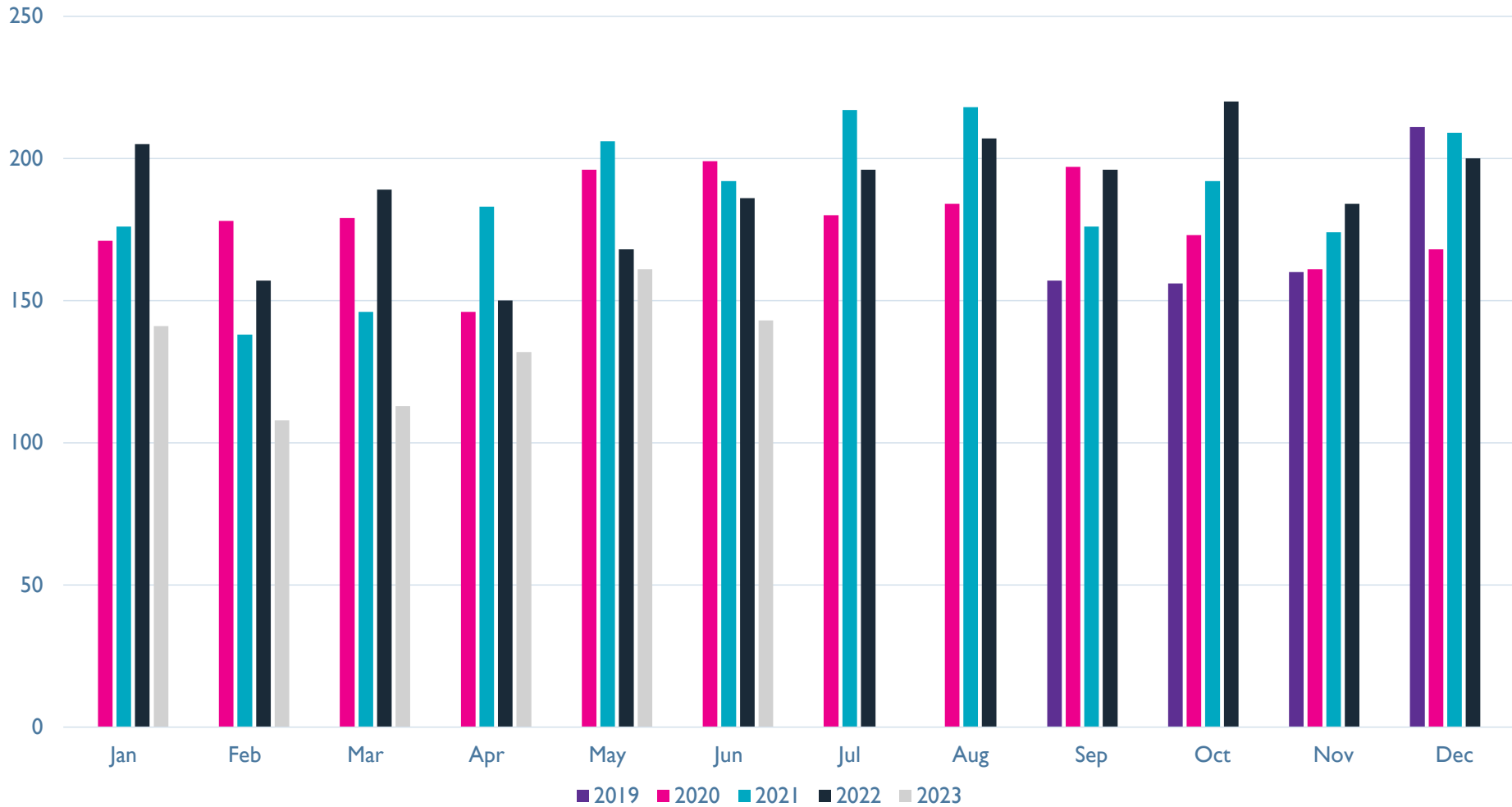
According to the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) York has risen 5 places since 2015 and is currently ranked 140th out of 151 upper tier local authorities.

With regards to domestic abuse, in the 2022/2023 financial year there were 2,069 domestic abuse related crimes recorded by North Yorkshire Police that had occurred in York. The greatest number of domestic abuse related crimes were reported in Guildhall (263), Westfield (249), Micklegate (200) and Heworth (190) during the same period. Of the 2,069 reported crimes, 72% of victims were female, typically aged between 20-39 years, whilst 73% of suspects were male of the same age range.

North Yorkshire Police domestic abuse related crimes (York)			
	20/21	21/22	22/23
Q1 (Apr-Jun)	541	581	504
Q2 (Jul-Sep)	561	611	599
Q3 (Oct-Dec)	502	575	604
Q4 (Jan-Mar)	460	551	362
Total	2,064	2,318	2,069

Domestic abuse crimes – York

NYP Crimes Record



Local governance and achievements

Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board

As part of the statutory requirements within the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) all tier 1 local authorities were required to establish a domestic abuse local partnership board (DALPB), bringing together organisations to have a coordinated response to addressing domestic abuse. In York, the DALPB has a key strategic role in ensuring services in York that may engage with victims and survivors of domestic abuse meet their needs and provide the necessary support. This involves ensuring there is a system and a culture in York that enables victims of domestic abuse to have the confidence to come forward to access support services, whilst also empowering victims and survivors to report the abuse they have received where they wish to do so.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an increase in both the number of domestic abuse incidents reported to North Yorkshire Police and the number of individuals accessing local specialist services. Consequently, the York DALPB has increased capacity within local specialist services to ensure victims of domestic abuse are able to access the support they require promptly and via a method that is easily accessible for them. In addition to this, a package of training has been developed to upskill local frontline professionals who may encounter victims of domestic abuse, enabling them with the knowledge and tools to be able to identify and respond to instances of domestic abuse.

As part of our work on providing safe accommodation we have commissioned an external needs assessment to ensure that we have the appropriate number of available units of accommodation for the number of domestic abuse incidents happening locally. In addition to this, we have also commissioned a wider system review of the local domestic abuse partnership

arrangements, ensuring that we have effective governance in place. Both the safe accommodation needs assessment and the wider system review have been undertaken by the national domestic abuse charity SafeLives. These have provided recommendations which will inform our future work and the development of our new domestic abuse strategy that will be published in 2024.

Domestic abuse strategy

Our existing domestic abuse strategy was published in 2018, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), both have which significantly impacted the local need and response to domestic abuse. Our new strategy will provide an emphasis on how we aim to adopt a public health approach to addressing domestic abuse, focussing on prevention and creating a culture whereby the different forms of domestic abuse are clearly understood, enabling people to feel empowered to challenge abusive behaviours.

This will strengthen the existing work of our specialist services to ensure that the authentic voice of victims and survivors is integral to our future partnership working, whilst also holding perpetrators to account.

Consequently, our new strategy will be themed around 4 priorities which are:

-  **Drive change together**
-  **Accountability**
-  **Authentic & inclusive support for all**
-  **Prevention and early identification**

MARAC & MATAAC

There are multi-agency processes in place for managing high risk cases of domestic abuse for both victims and perpetrators, which are led locally by North Yorkshire Police. Multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) enable the sharing of information on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between key stakeholders including local police, health, child protection, housing, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors. Partners discuss options for increasing the safety of the victim, which includes developing a joint coordinated action plan that will be implemented across all services engaging with the victim. We've undertaken a piece of work with all partner agencies to ensure their ongoing commitment to

“She felt lonely and isolated, which had got worse since becoming pregnant as a result of being raped.” – [Recognising violent & threatening behaviour](#)

contributing to the MARAC, ensuring the most accurate and up-to-date information can be shared between agencies. Our MARACs take place twice per week in York to ensure a timely response to referrals, with our primary focus being to safeguard victims as effectively and efficiently as possible.

The multi-agency tasking and coordination (MATAAC) process works in a similar way to MARAC but instead aims to assess and plan a bespoke set of interventions which target and disrupt serial perpetrators. The planning involved in managing perpetrators identified via MATAAC includes working to support individuals to address their behaviour, one method of which is via the +Choice programme that we jointly commission with Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) for North Yorkshire and North Yorkshire Council.

Multi-agency training

Following the inception of the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board it was deemed that a comprehensive training framework was required to ensure that frontline practitioners, across all local stakeholders, had a suitable awareness and understanding of the new definition of domestic abuse.

Consequently, City of York Council Public Health commissioned local domestic abuse specialists IDAS to deliver a multi-agency training package.



This training is free to all professionals, to help services recognise and respond to incidents of domestic abuse, whilst providing them with an awareness of local referral pathways for support.



Commissioned in September 2022, the training engaged **281 individuals** from **67 agencies** in quarter 3 from October 2022 until December 2022, whilst subsequently providing training for **321 professionals** across **48 organisations** in Q4 from January 2023 until March 2023. The training has remained in place for the 23/24 financial year, providing a further **66 sessions** for up to **1,650 local professionals**.

Chapter 4: Local commissioned services

Joint commissioning arrangements

Within public health we lead on the City of York Council's commissioning of local specialist domestic abuse services. All of our specialist domestic abuse services are currently jointly commissioned between City of York Council, the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) for North Yorkshire and North Yorkshire Council. Due to the geography of North Yorkshire and the jurisdiction covered by North Yorkshire Police it is more appropriate to work collaboratively on our approach to prevent a postcode lottery in the services available to victims of domestic

abuse, something which Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales, was keen to address in the [patchwork of provision report](#).

Service provision for victims

Our current services for victims of domestic abuse are provided locally by IDAS. IDAS operate a hub and spoke model, whereby a central point receives all referrals and can then undertake appropriate triage and assessment to ensure victims get the most appropriate support. The offer consists of:

- ➔ IDAS Hub & Helpline - a single point of contact for referrers and people calling the helpline.

- ➔ Community-based victim support - community teams situated across various sites in North Yorkshire & City of York, which are fully embedded in each local area. This local knowledge is vital in helping to support the people who require longer-term support to prevent mental illness or social isolation.
- ➔ Refuge and accommodation support – a mixture of refuge and dispersed units of emergency temporary accommodation for victims escaping abuse.
- ➔ Domestic abuse whole family approach (DAWFA) service - this programme supports adult and child victims of domestic abuse, and where it is safe to do so, works collaboratively with specialist agencies to challenge and help change the behaviours of those who've caused harm in the family.
- ➔ Respect service - an early intervention for families where a child or young person is displaying abusive behaviours towards their parent or carer.

Service feedback

Community-based support

“No-one else stuck by me or tried to help me and you never gave up on me.”

“What you are doing on the front line is literally saving lives and most importantly saving children’s futures”

Safe accommodation

“just wanted to let you all know we get the keys today for our new home, thanks again so much for getting us here and all the help and support you’ve continued to give our family”

Respect

“Respect has done my son a lot of good and he has enjoyed the programme. It was good to have support for those moments when you are really struggling”

Service provision for perpetrators

Whilst it is essential that we have support services in place for victims of domestic abuse it is important that we work to address perpetrator behaviour, tackling domestic abuse to prevent it happening in the first place and ensuring perpetrators take accountability for their actions. Consequently, we also jointly commission a behaviour change programme for perpetrators, known as +Choices, which is provided by Foundation. The programme is delivered as part of a whole system where partners, ex-partners and/or other family members are also offered access

to the integrated support service. A dedicated victim liaison officer (VLO) will be the first point of contact when a perpetrator is engages with the programme, who will work with IDAS and other agencies to ensure a coordinated safe and victim focussed approach.

As part of their work in addressing perpetrator behaviour Foundation delivered awareness raising sessions to over 70 agencies and over 1000 professionals during the 2022-2023 financial year.

+Choices data:

- ➔ 122 supported clients
- ➔ 100% of clients had an agreed exit strategy
- ➔ 75% of clients evidencing reduced risk based on conversations with victims

+Choices feedback:

- ➔ “I learnt what kids can pick up on and how an adult’s behaviour can influence a child’s behaviour”
- ➔ “I will behave differently in my relationship and treat my partner differently, better”



17,012

helpline calls received
by the IDAS Hub
(average of 1,418
per month)



9,739

referrals to the
IDAS Hub



8,389

completed
safety plans

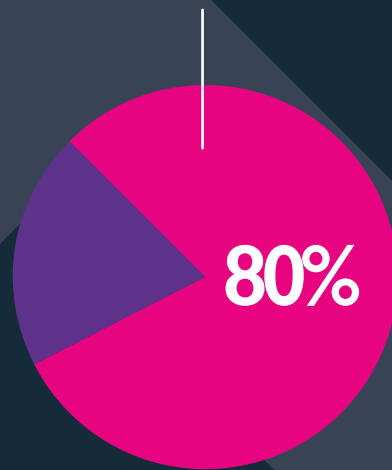


1,784

referred to
community-based
victims service for
longer term support



210 adults
132 children
supported by the
DAWFA service



of which had needs
met by the
IDAS Hub



264 parents
76 children
were supported via
the Respect service



164 adults
97 children
were provided with
safe accommodation

Chapter 5: Prevention & future priorities


In order to adopt a public health approach to domestic abuse, we must focus on preventing domestic abuse in the first instance in order to protect and improve the health of a population. As domestic abuse is still often understood as solely physical and sexual violence, without the recognition of the wider forms of abuse, there is the need to increase awareness and understanding across all ages following the publication of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021). Consequently, within public health we are working with partners to raise public awareness of the different forms of abuse by providing practical examples of what domestic abuse look like. We aim to create a culture where individuals can feel empowered to become active bystanders and safely intervene when observing unacceptable behaviour, and support victims.

Healthy relationships in schools

The Relationships Education Curriculum and the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum provide the necessary platform to ensure that all children are aware of healthy relationship behaviours. The statutory guidance around relationships education for primary school aged children mean that we are able to ensure children understand healthy behaviours between friends and subsequently further developing this into understanding healthy and unhealthy behaviours in intimate partner relationships during the RSE curriculum provided in secondary schools. Whilst this statutory requirement for schools is a step in the right direction, it is important

to recognise the challenges that schools and teachers face in delivering this difficult subject matter without adequate training or support. In Wales, the Welsh Government has commissioned the Spectrum Project to deliver sessions on Healthy Relationships and violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence topics in all primary and secondary schools. This ensures that every child receives the same standard of education on healthy relationships and is supporting schools to deliver these curriculums to children.

In York, we are in the process of undertaking a mapping of what is delivered at part of the relationship's education and RSE curriculums in York schools. This will enable us to identify any gaps in provision, whilst ensuring we are able to support schools with the future delivery of this topic area. Furthermore, Public Health has commissioned the Healthy Schools programme, as part of which schools will receive resources to support

 ...the majority of victims of domestic abuse were females aged between 20-29 years...

their delivery of lessons relating to healthy relationships and domestic abuse.

All About Respect in colleges and universities

North Yorkshire Police crime data showed that between April 2022 and March 2023 the majority of victims of domestic abuse were females aged between 20-29 years, highlighting the need to undertake work with the University of York (UoY) and York St John University (YSJ), given our large student population in York. The All About Respect project was launched in 2016 at YSJ. Over the past seven years, the project has undertaken a range of activities, including awareness-raising and intervention work to create safe environments to discuss healthy relationships. The All About Respect programme has since been well embedded across both YSJ and the UoY.

Following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) public health have been working with the All About Respect team to further increase understanding of domestic abuse, particularly focussing on coercive control, amongst our university students. Over the next 2 years the All About Respect programme will be delivering a number of campaign events, delivering focus groups and undertaking surveys with students to determine young people's understanding of domestic abuse, providing active bystander intervention training courses to students. These will be provided not only to those students at UoY and YSJ but also to the further education establishments York College and Askham Bryan College.

“ My partner makes me feel like I'm not good enough, I'm always walking on eggshells.” – [Recognising psychological & emotional abuse](#)

Community campaign

To build upon the work being undertaken with schools, colleges and universities, the public health team has also worked with our specialist domestic abuse provider IDAS to develop a communications campaign aimed at raising awareness of domestic abuse amongst all York residents. The resources provide information relating to the different forms of domestic abuse as per the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), providing practical examples of the horrific and sometimes hidden behaviours that victims experience at the hands of perpetrators. The aim of this campaign is to raise public awareness that domestic abuse is not solely physical and sexual violence, but also encompasses violent and threatening behaviour, psychological abuse, coercive control and financial abuse. This will help victims to recognise that they are in an abusive relationship, whilst also developing a culture which challenges perpetrator behaviour and reduces the prevalence of domestic abuse.

This communications campaign will be delivered via our partners within the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, as well as having dedicated resource to engage with communities with regards to domestic abuse. This resource will also be pivotal in working with victims of domestic abuse to gather the voice of victims to inform our future strategic plans and commissioned services, ensuring that local residents feel more able to access the support they need and feel confident to report incidents of domestic abuse to North Yorkshire Police.

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation

The domestic abuse housing alliance (DAHA) accreditation is an established set of standards, overseen by the national domestic abuse charity Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse, which aims to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse. The accreditation aims to improve the approach of housing teams, ensuring appropriate policies and procedures are

in place, ensuring safety led case management and promoting perpetrator accountability, which has subsequently been endorsed by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales, Nicole Jacobs.

Following the SafeLives Needs Assessment of local safe accommodation provision as part of our statutory duty under the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), City of York Council have agreed to undertake the DAHA accreditation to ensure a whole housing approach to domestic abuse. Public health has committed to providing the resource within our housing directorate to enable the two-year accreditation period, ensuring that we have a housing approach that works effectively with our local specialist provider of refuge and safe accommodation, IDAS.

“ I got support and managed to get him removed from the tenancy agreement.” – [Recognising financial & economic abuse](#)

Chapter 6: Recommendations from this report

01

Develop a new domestic abuse strategy which is informed by the work of the Local Partnership Board across York and North Yorkshire.

02

Increase awareness of domestic abuse and introduce targeted learning to young people about abusive behaviours.

03

Accountability: We will focus on challenging and addressing perpetrator behaviour, holding individuals to account and providing support that facilitates the development of healthy relationship behaviours. We must recognise the impact of perpetrator behaviours on families as a whole and it is vital that we understand more about perpetrators if we are to understand how to prevent abuse and change their behaviour.

04

Work to capture the voice of domestic abuse victims to help inform service provision and local partnership working. This will be developed over the course of 2024.

Chapter 7: Recommendations from the previous report

01 Public Health must build on the city-wide partnership working relationships developed during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and lead the development of a York strategy for ‘Living with Covid’ to be adopted by all city partners.

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease. It is primarily spread via droplets landing on surfaces, through the air and direct contact. For most people COVID-19 is a relatively mild disease with those affected making a full recovery. However for those who maybe vulnerable because of underlying health conditions or pregnancy, it can become a serious illness with the risk of poor health outcomes. There is also the risk of people developing

Long-Covid. Living with covid is the government strategy for dealing with the disease. It includes a preventative response, focusing on vaccination to reduce the burden of illness and limit transmission together with ongoing research and better management of the condition.

Through the work of the York Health and Care Partnership Executive our approach to living with COVID-19 has evolved over the year and now forms part of our York system wide plan to improve our resilience to outbreaks such as flu and other respiratory diseases including COVID.

02 The Director of Public Health to establish a York Health Protection Committee with responsibility for ensuring that the city has the necessary plans in place to respond to large scale events such as future pandemics, disease outbreaks and the health impacts of adverse weather events, learning from the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. The York Health Protection Committee to present an annual report to the Health and Wellbeing Board on progress together with recommendations for action.

City of York council has established a Health Protection Committee chaired by the Director of Public Health. The committee is made up of health and social care partners who will oversee the plans we have in place to respond outbreaks and events affecting the population, ensuring a system wide response and a response which can be actioned at speed if required.

The annual health protection report is scheduled to be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in November 2023. The report will cover all aspects of health protection including COVID-19.

03 Children and young people in York, and across the country, have been particularly badly affected by the lockdowns and other restrictions over the past two years. The 2022 School Survey into the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People in York has identified a number of needs that will have to be addressed if we are to succeed as a city in giving every child and young person the best start in life. The Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Board should use the findings in the 2022 School Survey to inform the development of a new children's plan for York that is adopted by all key partners.

One of the ways in which we have responded to the school survey findings is by commissioning a 'Healthy Schools Programme'. This is an awards-based programme that enables schools to focus on the health and wellbeing of their school community, through recognising good practice in the following key areas: active lives, emotional health and wellbeing, food in schools, PHSE (including RSHE) and staff wellbeing. It also provides training and resources to schools around these themes.

Sleep was identified as an area of concern in the findings of the survey and so we commissioned training and resources to support schools in responding to this.

We have commissioned another school survey to take place this year. We have made changes to the questions we are asking pupils so that we can enquire further into areas of concern that we raised last time and we have also used standardised measures, where appropriate, so that we can compare our survey findings with other results across the country to

understand whether issues are unique to our children and young people, or whether this is a national problem.

04 We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has had wider impacts on the health behaviours of some residents. Alcohol consumption has increased, the numbers of people reaching recommended levels of physical activity have gone down and many people are finding they are struggling with their mental health and extra weight gained during lockdowns. It is recommended that the council's Public Health team continue to lead an evidence-based approach to tackling these issues across the city working with individuals, families, communities and our partners in focusing our collective efforts on those who need the help most.

The City of York Council Health Trainer service sits as part of the Public Health team. It offers free support and advice to residents on a wide range of health behaviours including support

to stop smoking, reducing alcohol consumption, being a healthy weight/eating healthily, being more physically active and getting involved in groups or activities. The service utilises an evidence based, person centred approach to behaviour change to help resident achieve their goals. The Health Trainers link with a wide range of council and partner agencies to get the residents the right help and support they need to meet their goals. The Healthy Child service also sits as part of the Public Health team, support families from before a child is born, through their first weeks and months, through starting school and into adulthood. The service works closely with healthcare and voluntary organisations to help families make healthy and informed choices. Across these services and the wider Public Health team, resources are targeted to those who need the help the most. This is done by focussing on specific conditions, population groups or areas of the city where it is known there are greater risks of poorer health.

Chapter 8: Acknowledgements

Project lead	Heather Baker	Public Health Improvement Officer
Main collaborators	Anita Dobson	Nurse Consultant of Public Health
	Matt Orme	Public Health Specialist Practitioner (Advanced)
	Aminata Sheriff	Public Health Improvement Officer
With grateful thanks to:	All members of the Safer York Partnership and North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership	

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Chapter 10: Glossary & definitions

DA	Domestic Abuse
Domestic Abuse Act 2021	An Act of Parliament of the United Kingdom. It is intended to help tackle domestic violence in the United Kingdom and includes provisions necessary to address violence against women and girls.
DAC	Domestic Abuse Commissioners
DAHA	Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance
DAWFA	Domestic Abuse Whole Family Approach
DPH	Director of Public Health

Gender Equality Strategy 2020	Presents policy objectives and actions to make significant progress by 2025 toward a gender-equal Europe
IDAS	Independent Domestic Abuse Services. A specialist charity that supports people affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence
IDVA	Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference. A meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between specialist representatives including local police, probation, health, IDVAs (see above)
MATAC	Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination- the process of identifying and tackling serial perpetrators of domestic abuse perpetrators
NPV	Non-Intimate Partner Violence
RSE	Relationships and Sex Education

STIs	Sexual Transmitted Infections
UoY	The University of York
WHO	World Health Organisation
YSJ	York St. John University

Appendices

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Appendix A: List of local & national domestic abuse organisations

	Name	Description	Link
Locally commissioned service	IDAS	IDAS is the largest specialist charity in the North supporting people affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence.	www.idas.org.uk
	Foundation (Positive Choices)	+Choices (Positive Choices) is a service of Foundation for perpetrators of domestic abuse, providing an opportunity to recognise, acknowledge and change abuse behaviour.	www.foundationuk.org

	Name	Description	Link
Organisations for women	National Domestic Abuse helpline	This is a freephone 24 hour helpline which provides advice and support to women and can refer them to emergency accommodation. It is run by Refuge.	www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
	Refuge	<p>Their helpline offers advice and support to women experiencing domestic violence.</p> <p>Refuge also provides safe, emergency accommodation through a network of refuges throughout the UK, including culturally-specific services for women from minority ethnic communities and cultures.</p> <p>There is also some information for men who are either being abused or who are abusers.</p>	www.refuge.org.uk
	Women's Aid	Women's Aid provides a wide range of resources to help women and young people.	www.womensaid.org.uk
	Rights of Women	Offers confidential legal advice on domestic and sexual violence.	www.rightsofwomen.org.uk

	Name	Description	Link
Organisations for women	Finding Legal Options for Women Survivors (FLOWS)	Gives legal advice to women who are affected by domestic abuse - they also give advice to front line workers.	www.rcjadvice.org.uk
	Southall Black Sisters	Provides advice for Black (Asian and African-Caribbean) women with issues including domestic abuse, forced marriage, immigration and homelessness.	www.southallblacksisters.org.uk
Organisations for men	Respect - Men's Advice Line	Provides confidential helpline for all men experiencing domestic violence by a current or ex-partner. They provide emotional support and practical advice and can give details of specialist services that can provide advice on legal, housing, child contact, mental health and other issues.	www.mensadvice.org.uk

	Name	Description	Link
Organisations for men	SurvivorsUK	<p>A helpline for men who have been victims of rape or sexual abuse.</p> <p>They may be able to provide details of appropriate counselling or support groups in the local area.</p>	www.survivorsuk.org
	ManKind Initiative	<p>A charity offering information and support to men who are victims of domestic abuse or violence. Information includes support reporting incidents, police procedures, housing, benefits and injunctions. They can refer you to a refuge, local authority or other another support service if you need it.</p>	new.mankind.org.uk
Organisations for men and women	RCJ Advice Family Service	<p>Gives legal advice to people who are affected by domestic abuse or need family law help.</p>	www.rcjadvise.org.uk
	Rape Crisis	<p>Provides contact details for centres and gives basic information about rape and sexual violence for survivors, friends, family, students and professionals. Also runs a freephone helpline.</p>	www.rapecrisis.org.uk

	Name	Description	Link
Organisations for men and women	Honour Network Helpline	A national helpline run by Karma Nirvana, a national charity which advises victims and survivors of forced marriage and honour-based abuse.	www.karmanirvana.org.uk
	Hourglass	Gives confidential advice and information to older people who are victims of violence or abuse. A relative or friend of the person being abused can also contact the helpline on behalf of the older person. The helpline can be used in the case of older people who live at home, in a care home or who are in hospital.	www.wearehourglass.org
	National Stalking Helpline	Provides advice on how to deal with any type of stalking behaviour. This includes advice on how to report the behaviour to the police, and what you can expect if you report something.	www.stalkinghelpline.org
	Respect Phonenumber	Offers information and advice to partners, friends and family who want to stop someone's violent behaviour.	www.respectphonenumber.org.uk

	Name	Description	Link
Organisations for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people	National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline	Provides support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic violence.	www.galop.org.uk
Organisations for people with disabilities	SignHealth - Domestic Abuse Service	Provides a specialist domestic abuse service to help Deaf people find safety and security.	www.signhealth.org.uk
	Respond	Works with children and adults with learning disabilities who've either experienced abuse or abused other people.	www.respond.org.uk

Appendix B: Victims' voices

Financial & economic abuse

“My partner sets up new direct debits on my account without me knowing.”

“I got support and managed to get him removed from the tenancy agreement.”

“I’m not able to do the things that I want as my child has control of all my money.”

Psychological & emotional abuse

“My partner makes me feel like I’m not good enough, I’m always walking on eggshells.”

“I didn’t have to suffer alone, I got support and became confident enough to report him to the Police.”

“He uses child arrangements as an excuse to harass me with messages.”

Physical & sexual violence

“Even when I am not up for sex, he will force himself onto me.”

“The physical abuse has gone on for so long I can’t feel the pain anymore.”

“I wear clothing that covers my arms because of what happens behind closed doors.”

Coercive & controlling behaviour

“I haven’t seen my friends in a long time, my partner makes planning things difficult.”

“I didn’t know what gaslighting was, my partner said I was the issue and it was in my head.”

Violent & threatening behaviour

“I feel scared when my partner will throw objects around the house.”

“My partner says if I’m not back on time then they will hurt me.”

“I can’t wear what I want, he cut up my clothes.”

“She felt lonely and isolated, which had got worse since becoming pregnant as a result of being raped.”

(IDAS Domestic Abuse Community Services, City of York and North Yorkshire March 2019-March 2023)

Access and download the 2020-2022 report here:

<https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/1158/director-of-public-health-s-annual-report-2020-to-2022>

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