

**City of York Council**  
**Equalities Impact Assessment**

**Who is submitting the proposal?**

<b>Directorate:</b>	Public Health		
<b>Service Area:</b>	Domestic Abuse		
<b>Name of the proposal :</b>	Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2028		
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Anita Dobson		
<b>Date assessment completed:</b>	29/12/23		
<b>Names of those who contributed to the assessment:</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Job title</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Area of expertise</b>
Anita Dobson	Nurse consultant	CYC	Public health
Aminata Sheriff	Public Health Improvement Officer	CYC	Public health

**Step 1 – Aims and intended outcomes**

<b>1.1</b>	<b>What is the purpose of the proposal?</b> Please explain your proposal in Plain English avoiding acronyms and jargon.
	<p>This proposal aligns with the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) and associated guidelines, mandating local authorities in England and Wales to offer assistance to domestic abuse victims and hold perpetrators accountable.</p> <p>As part of creating a new Domestic Abuse strategy for the city of York, in compliance with the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), an Equality Impact Assessment is being conducted. This strategy establishes a fresh framework for planning, monitoring, and evaluating efforts to address domestic abuse in York. It is linked to ongoing collaborative work between City of York Council (CYC) and North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) to ensure effective and consistent support and intervention for domestic abuse victims in the region. The previous Domestic Abuse strategy, implemented from 2018 to 2023, has concluded, prompting the development of a new strategy in line with the recent legislation.</p> <p>Conducted through an externally produced needs assessment and a comprehensive system review by SafeLives, the recommendation from these processes is guiding the new strategy. The needs assessment and system review suggest seven broad areas for consideration to enhance the effectiveness of domestic abuse services in the region. These areas include.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A review of the local partnership board,</li> <li>- An increase in the provision of support and community service capacity,</li> <li>- Improvement of services for children affected by domestic abuse,</li> <li>- Increased assistance for housing needs to prevent homelessness, and</li> <li>- The harmonization of data collection while addressing data gaps.</li> </ul> <p>The current partnership is acutely aware of the necessity for increased support for domestic abuse victims in the region. Consequently, they have reached a consensus to formulate a collaborative four-year strategy centring on four major priorities derived from their collective experiences in the field of domestic abuse, as well as recommendations from the needs assessment and the broader system review that scrutinized the</p>

	<p>service landscape from 2019 to 2022. City of York Council (CYC) maintains its unwavering commitment to delivering domestic abuse services through a public health approach. Consequently, the four-year strategy will integrate with other council-wide strategies, particularly those falling under the health and well-being strategy.</p>
<b>1.2</b>	<p><b>Are there any external considerations?</b> (Legislation/government directive/codes of practice etc.)</p>
	<p>The Domestic Abuse Act, 2021          Serious Violence Duty, 2022          Home Office Violence against women and girls' strategy          Nice guidelines: <a href="#">Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working</a></p>

<b>1.3</b>	<b>Who are the stakeholders and what are their interests?</b>
	<p>The main beneficiary in this proposal are victims/ survivors of domestic abuse – Adult and children</p> <p>Other stakeholders who will contribute to delivering the actions on this proposal are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children Social Care (Child Protection/Child in Need)</li> <li>• Housing Local authority</li> <li>• Community Safety partners</li> <li>• Healthy child services -Health Visitors</li> <li>• Adult Social Care (Social Work)</li> <li>• Integrated Care Board NY Humber &amp; York Place ICB, NHS Trust York &amp; Scarborough</li> <li>• Housing (Housing association or other)</li> <li>• North Yorkshire Police</li> <li>• Specialist Domestic Abuse Service (accommodation based)</li> <li>• Victims/survivors of the Domestic Abuse</li> </ul> <p>And others as informed by the project local partnership board.</p>
<b>1.4</b>	<b>What results/outcomes do we want to achieve and for whom?</b> This section should explain what outcomes you want to achieve for service users, staff and/or the wider community. Demonstrate how the proposal links to the Council Plan (2019- 2023) and other corporate strategies and plans.
	<p>The outcome of this Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will guarantee that the emerging strategy and interventions actively foster equality and avoid unintentional discrimination against specific groups or communities. Here is an enumeration of the desired achievements and their intended beneficiaries:</p> <p><b>1. Service Users:</b></p>

a. Safety and well-being

**Objective:** *Ensure that all service users, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability, experience improved safety and well-being.*

**Outcome:** Reduction in the incidence and severity of domestic abuse cases, improved mental and physical health of survivors.

b. Access to support services

**Objective:** *Guarantee that support services are accessible to all, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability, experience improved safety and well-being.*

**Outcome:** Increased accessibility to safe accommodation, and other support services for marginalised groups, reduced barriers to seeking help

c. Culturally appropriate support

**Objective:** Ensure that support services are culturally sensitive and relevant

**Outcome:** culturally appropriate services that resonates with diverse communities, reducing cultural barriers to seeking help.

**2. Staff**

a. Training and awareness

**Objective:** Equip staff with knowledge and skills to address domestic abuse effectively and sensitively

**Outcome:** Improve staff awareness, increased competency in dealing with diverse cases.

**3. Wider community**

a. Prevention and early intervention and education

**Objective:** Raise awareness of domestic abuse to ensure early identification, promote specialist services, provide support, and ultimately eradicate abuse altogether.

**Outcome:** Increased community awareness, prevention programmes that address the roots caused of domestic abuse

	<p>b. <u>Social attitude change</u>  <b>Objective:</b> Empower people in communities to challenge and change social attitudes towards domestic abuse  <b>Outcome:</b> <u>Reduce tolerance for domestic abuse, increase community support for survivors</u></p> <p>c. <u>Community collaboration</u>  <b>Objective:</b> Encourage collaboration between the community and service providers  <b>Outcome:</b> Strengthen community partnerships, increase resources and support for survivors</p> <p>Furthermore, beyond the mentioned points, the proposal is linked to the targets outlined in the council's decade-long strategy. It particularly plays a vital role in advancing the 'Health and Wellbeing' priority, aiming to enable York residents to lead content, healthy, and independent lives within supportive communities. This aligns with the overarching goal of addressing the growing disparities in health, ensuring individuals can manage their health and wellbeing, and providing additional assistance for those requiring support.</p>
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<b>2.1</b>	<p><b>What sources of data, evidence and consultation feedback do we have to help us understand the impact of the proposal on equality rights and human rights?</b> Please consider a range of sources, including consultation exercises, surveys, feedback from staff, stakeholders, participants, research reports, the views of equality groups, as well your own experience of working in this area etc.</p>	
	<b>Source of data/supporting evidence</b>	<b>Reason for using</b>
	Domestic Abuse Needs assessment and system- wide review	The Needs Assessment commissioned and system- wide review commissioned in 2022 asked the requirements of all victims/ survivors protected characteristics under the 2020 Equality Act which include gender, sexual orientation (LGB), gender reassignment, disability, ethnicity, and age to be considered and analysed. The commission carried out extensive data collection, review of available data and statistics, capturing service users' feedback, and interviews with key policy makers/ stakeholder consultation with service providers. Online surveys for

	frontline professionals and victims /survivors were undertaken to reflect the diversity of experiences by protected groups.
Reports	Also considered for this assessment are commissioned partners report, case studies and other service provision reports delivered to the commissioner every quarter since 2021.
North Yorkshire police data	Local police data tells us there is rise in DA related calls to north Yorkshire police from 2021- 2022. This record shows twelve out of the 22 wards in York report on average 30 DA crimes each quarter. The largest number of police recorded crimes are from Guildhall, Micklegate, Westfield, Heworth and Clifton. Victim age demographics are most people between the age 20-59. These records also show a rise in older victims (between the ages 59-79) reporting domestic abuse to the police
Commissioned service Data	Demand for refuge accommodation increased in 2022-2023 even though calls to the help line decreased by almost 30 percent compare to the previous years. 32 new referrals were made to services for children and young people (C&YP) affected by domestic abuse. Seven C&YP referred needed physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing support. Our perpetrator behaviour change service also saw 26 percent decline in the numbers of perpetrators volunteering to change their behaviour. 8 out of the 32 new perpetrator referrals also need mental and emotional wellbeing support and 2 needed shelter.

### Step 3 – Gaps in data and knowledge

3.1	<b>What are the main gaps in information and understanding of the impact of your proposal? Please indicate how any gaps will be dealt with.</b>	
<b>Gaps in data or knowledge</b>	<b>Action to deal with this</b>	
<p>The Assessment has considered the following groups in adherence to the equality Act 2010:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protected characteristics including sex, age, disability marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation, and gender re-assignment.</li> <li>• Improve data collection service data: non-protected demographic characteristics including mental health, immigration status and socio-economic status.</li> <li>• The survey found that 10% of the population in City of York identify as Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic (BAME). However, it is challenging to truly understand the needs of the BAME population in York as many agencies did not collect data regarding a person's ethnicity, highlighting that poor data collection has wider impact regarding accessibility of services to Black, Asian and Racially Minoritized victims, which is an area for improvement. This applies to other protected characteristics too, including disability, sexual identity, and gender identity</li> </ul>	<p>Therefore, it is recommended to introduce a new key indicator to measure outcomes in relation to all protected characteristics for those accessing safe accommodation services, and for this to be extended to wider domestic abuse services, in the new strategy. This should facilitate the monitoring of the Strategy recommendations and delivery of the plan to ensure the strategy will have a positive impact for these group</p>	



## Step 4 – Analysing the impacts or effects.

4.1	<p><b>Please consider what the evidence tells you about the likely impact (positive or negative) on people sharing a protected characteristic, i.e., how significant could the impacts be if we did not make any adjustments?</b> Remember the duty is also positive – so please identify where the proposal offers opportunities to promote equality and/or foster good relations.</p>		
Equality Groups and Human Rights.	Key Findings/Impacts	Positive (+) Negative (-) Neutral (0)	High (H) Medium (M) Low (L)
Age	<p>The needs assessment revealed a somewhat diverse age profile among domestic abuse victims, with approximately 1,000 individuals aged 60 experiencing domestic abuse in York between 2019-2022. Recent police incident reports from early this year also indicate an uptick in older people reporting domestic abuse to the police. The reason for this increase in reporting by older victims remains unclear; however, studies acknowledge that older individuals are vulnerable to specific forms of domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, as well as financial abuse.</p> <p>Further evidence suggests that older people may be more prone to normalizing abusive behaviour and might not perceive themselves as victims, possibly due to a generational knowledge gap. The new strategy aims to enhance public awareness regarding domestic abuse and its various forms, particularly focusing on addressing the unique challenges faced by older victims.</p>	Positive	H

<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<p>A report done by <u>Public Health England (2015)</u> highlights that disabled people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• experience disproportionately higher rates of domestic abuse.</li> <li>• experience domestic abuse for longer periods of time, and more severe and frequent abuse than non-disabled people.</li> <li>• encounter differing dynamics of domestic abuse, which may include more severe coercion, control, or abuse from carers.</li> </ul> <p>This unique situation was also highlighted in the local needs assessment, which identified gaps in capturing information about disabled victims. The report attributes this issue to deficient reporting systems and a failure to inquire about disability when victims access services. Evidence gathered revealed that even in attempts to collect disability data, there were numerous unknown details that put this group at risk. Insufficient information about a victim can subsequently result in situations where disabled domestic abuse victims and their families struggle to access the appropriate support. According to the prevalence tool used by Safelives, an estimated 3,500 disabled victims of domestic abuse were in York between 2020-2022. The report further examined people with visual impairment, estimating that approximately one in 12 visually impaired individuals in the UK have been victims or survivors of domestic abuse. This translates to 188,000 out of the 2.19 million blind and partially sighted people in the country having</p>	<p><b>Positive</b></p>	<p><b>H</b></p>
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	<p>experienced domestic abuse. Additional barriers and challenges faced by those with visual impairment are detailed in the <u>report</u>.</p> <p>The new strategy will take into consideration the risk disabled people face. Planned interventions will aim to address the current data capture gap. The partnership aims to work with service providers and other multiagency partners (i.e., Adult Social care services) to improve information governance and data sharing methods.</p>		
<b>Gender</b>	<p>As per the needs assessment, the gender distribution of domestic abuse victims in York remained stable from 2019-20 to 2021-22, with approximately 67% to 68% identified as female and 18% to 19% recorded as male. Although domestic abuse can affect individuals of all genders, women face a higher risk. The proposal aims to provide support for all genders, with a specific emphasis on enhancing assistance for women facing multiple social and economic risk factors</p>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	<p>Data obtained from the needs assessment indicates that only 5-6% of victims who utilized services in the last three years reported their gender as unknown, and less than 1% identified as non-binary, transgender, or another gender identity. While there are no specifically commissioned services for LGBTQIA individuals at present, service providers are employing innovative methods to address the unique needs of this group, particularly those facing potential repercussions related to</p>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>H</b>

	disclosure. The proposal aims to ensure that service providers deliver a comprehensive range of trauma-led support catering to the well-being of all genders, including LGBTQIA individuals		
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	The act recognises that Domestic Abuse can occur through several intimate relationships and is not limited to persons within a marriage or civil partnership. In line with the act this proposal will support victims of different marital status as prescribed in the act.	<b>Positive</b>	<b>L</b>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Acknowledging pregnancy as a factor contributing to domestic abuse and potentially causing an escalation in abuse, including risks to unborn children, this proposal seeks to offer training to all healthcare professionals, particularly midwives. The aim is to enable early intervention during pregnancy, drawing insights from best practices observed elsewhere	<b>Positive</b>	<b>H</b>
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>	Based on our research, 500 individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds in York experienced domestic abuse in 2019. This count excludes victims of domestic abuse from non-intimate partners like parents, siblings, and honour-based violence (HBV). Case studies indicated that victims from ethnic minorities face increased vulnerability due to their insecure immigration status, leaving them with no recourse to public funds. This proposal aims to establish services with an effective approach to support victims in confidently escaping abuse, mitigating the fear of deportation or reprisal	<b>Positive</b>	<b>H</b>
<b>Religion and belief</b>	Cultural backgrounds can influence the dynamics of relationships, with certain cultures having a higher likelihood of individuals experiencing domestic abuse. This may result in various impacts, such as victims being hesitant to report or opposing the arrest of their partners. York has seen a	<b>Positive</b>	<b>H</b>

	significant influx of refugees due to heightened instability in other regions globally. Additionally, the city's universities attract students from various parts of the world. Hence, it is essential to actively involve these communities in discussions about domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG), encompassing issues like honour-based violence, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation. Commissioned service providers will be encouraged to link with By-For services to be able to properly engage these groups.		
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	According to national data, individuals in the LGBTQ+ community who are victims of abuse are more prone to experiencing abuse from multiple partners compared to their heterosexual counterparts. Additionally, they are nearly twice as likely to have attempted suicide, more than twice as likely to engage in self-harm, and more than twice as likely to have encountered historical abuse from a family member. As a result, the new intervention will endeavour to accurately record and comprehend the sexual identity of domestic abuse victim.	<b>Positive</b>	<b>H</b>
<b>Other Socio-economic groups including:</b>	<b>Could other socio-economic groups be affected e.g., carers, ex-offenders, low incomes?</b>		
Carer	No evidence available		
<b>Low income groups</b>	The needs assessment reveals a lack of data on socio-economic characteristics, aside from employment status and household structure, as recorded by current service providers. While this is the local scenario, national studies indicate that socio-economic factors, such as income and expenditure, can	<b>Positive</b>	<b>L</b>

	<p>influence eligibility for social housing, benefits, and secure accommodation. Individuals facing these challenges may encounter delays in claiming benefits, leading to a reluctance to escape domestic abuse.</p> <p>It is worth noting that domestic abuse is underreported among affluent individuals, but this doesn't negate its occurrence behind closed doors. In 2019, York was ranked 140th out of 151 upper-tier local authorities in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Among the 120 LSOAs in York, six are among the 20% most deprived, and 62 are within the least deprived quintile.</p> <p>To ensure fair access to services, the strategy will implement diverse outreach strategies designed to reach individuals irrespective of their background and circumstances</p>		
<b>Veterans, Armed Forces Community</b>	<p>In collaboration with the OFPCC, we have formed connections with the local Army Welfare Service to enhance our approach to intricate domestic abuse cases. This partnership aims to provide training for ISVA and IDVAs who will be integrated into local military communities to offer support to victims of domestic abuse within the army.</p>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>H</b>
<b>Other</b>	<p>Certain districts in western York are designated as highly rural. It is crucial to acknowledge the associated risk factors of this rural setting, encompassing issues such as geographical isolation, limited transportation, scarce community resources, and cultural factors like a lack of anonymity or privacy. The plan aims to enhance community-based services by establishing service centres in easily reachable locations, taking into account transportation choices, proximity to public transport, and safety considerations. Additionally, to improve</p>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>H</b>

	access to services in rural areas, the strategy will explore options such as virtual counselling for individuals residing in remote areas		
<b>Impact on human rights:</b>			
List any human rights impacted.	<p>The strategy will impact positively on the following human right principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The right to life</li> <li>• The right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman and degrading way.</li> <li>• The right to respect for private and family life (including the right to physical and psychological integrity)</li> <li>• The right not to be discriminated against</li> </ul>		<b>H</b>

**Use the following guidance to inform your responses:**

Indicate:

- Where you think that the proposal could have a POSITIVE impact on any of the equality groups like promoting equality and equal opportunities or improving relations within equality groups
- Where you think that the proposal could have a NEGATIVE impact on any of the equality groups, i.e. it could disadvantage them
- Where you think that this proposal has a NEUTRAL effect on any of the equality groups listed below i.e. it has no effect currently on equality groups.

It is important to remember that a proposal may be highly relevant to one aspect of equality and not relevant to another.

<p><b>High impact</b> (The proposal or process is very equality relevant)</p>	<p>There is significant potential for or evidence of adverse impact The proposal is institution wide or public facing The proposal has consequences for or affects significant numbers of people The proposal has the potential to make a significant contribution to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights.</p>
<p><b>Medium impact</b> (The proposal or process is somewhat equality relevant)</p>	<p>There is some evidence to suggest potential for or evidence of adverse impact The proposal is institution wide or across services, but mainly internal The proposal has consequences for or affects some people The proposal has the potential to make a contribution to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights</p>
<p><b>Low impact</b> (The proposal or process might be equality relevant)</p>	<p>There is little evidence to suggest that the proposal could result in adverse impact The proposal operates in a limited way The proposal has consequences for or affects few people The proposal may have the potential to contribute to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights</p>



## Step 5 - Mitigating adverse impacts and maximising positive impacts

5.1	<b>Based on your findings, explain ways you plan to mitigate any unlawful prohibited conduct or unwanted adverse impact. Where positive impacts have been identified, what is been done to optimise opportunities to advance equality or foster good relations?</b>
N/A	

## Step 6 – Recommendations and conclusions of the assessment

6.1	<b>Having considered the potential or actual impacts you should be in a position to make an informed judgement on what should be done. In all cases, document your reasoning that justifies your decision. There are four main options you can take:</b>
	<b>- No major change to the proposal</b> – the EIA demonstrates the proposal is robust. There is no potential for unlawful discrimination or adverse impact and you have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitor and review.

- **Adjust the proposal** – the EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. This involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance quality or to foster good relations.
- **Continue with the proposal** (despite the potential for adverse impact) – you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and how you believe the decision is compatible with our obligations under the duty
- **Stop and remove the proposal** – if there are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated, you should consider stopping the proposal altogether. If a proposal leads to unlawful discrimination it should be removed or changed.

**Important:** If there are any adverse impacts you cannot mitigate, please provide a compelling reason in the justification column.

Option selected	Conclusions/justification
N/A	N/A

## Step 7 – Summary of agreed actions resulting from the assessment

<b>7.1 What action, by whom, will be undertaken as a result of the impact assessment.</b>			
<b>Impact/issue</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>Timescale</b>

**Step 8 - Monitor, review and improve**

<p><b>8. 1</b></p>	<p><b>How will the impact of your proposal be monitored and improved upon going forward?</b> Consider how will you identify the impact of activities on protected characteristics and other marginalised groups going forward? How will any learning and enhancements be capitalised on and embedded?</p>
	<p>Within our local partnership board, we will systematically monitor the impact of activities on protected groups. A strategy delivery plan will be devised to monitor and assess identified Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) throughout the four-year period. The partnership will consistently report on key areas, including:</p> <p>Data collection and analysis: We will identify diversity and inclusion KPIs within our contract monitoring process to identify patterns and trends. Capture specific information about protected victims who access commissioned services.</p> <p>Diversity and inclusion assessment: We will create channels for marginalised groups to provide feedback on their experiences and the impact of services we commission. Ensure these mechanisms are safe, anonymous if necessary, and encourage open and honest communication.</p> <p>Training and Education: We will implement training and education programmes to raise awareness among employees about the importance of diversity, inclusion, and the potential impact of services on protected groups.</p>

Continuous improvement: We will continuously review and evaluate the impact of services on protected characteristics and marginalised groups by capturing victims/ survivors voice to make necessary enhancement and adjustments to policies, practices, and programmes.

Benchmarking and best practices: We will stay informed about industry best practices and benchmark local services against them. Learn from other local areas that have successfully embed diversity and inclusion into their DA programme.