

# Sefton Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2028



Authorised by

Sefton Council 

# Our partners

**Sefton Council** 

**Sefton Safeguarding Adults Board**  
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**SEFTON**  
Safeguarding Children Partnership 

**Sefton Integrated Care Partnership** 

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# 1. Foreword by Councillor Trish Hardy Chair of Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board



**Councillor Trish Hardy**

Welcome to Sefton's 2022-2027 Domestic & Sexual Abuse Strategy. This is the third version of this strategy and it reiterates our commitment and priority for tackling domestic and abuse at all levels across Sefton. It builds on the previous partnership work we have been doing over the past 7 years and includes the duties outlined in the Domestic Abuse Act (2021).

The issue of domestic and sexual abuse has rightly continued to grow in recognition both locally and nationally, including additional resources via the Government and the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner role. These resources are welcome but we know more needs to be invested in services to ensure those affected by domestic and sexual abuse get the support they need.

Sefton's Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is responsible for overseeing Sefton's strategic approach to tackling domestic and sexual abuse. One of its key priorities over the past year has been to complete a local Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment so we have an up to date picture of what we already have in place and what areas we need to develop. This piece of work has helped inform the update of this strategy. An important part of the needs assessment was to hear directly from local victims and survivors of domestic abuse so their voice and experiences are an integral element within the development and delivery of all services and systems associated with tackling domestic abuse. On behalf of the Board I would like to thank all the victims and survivors who took part and shared their views. We will continue to look at how we can develop the ways victims and survivors can continue to be involved in this work.

## 2. Introduction

The Sefton Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2022-2027 is a multi-agency partnership document developed by Sefton's Domestic Abuse Partnership Board following the completion of a comprehensive local domestic abuse needs assessment which helped identify what we need in Sefton and builds on work of the previous local Domestic and Sexual Abuse strategies. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that all key stakeholders in Sefton have a consistent understanding of the issues surrounding domestic and abuse and their roles and responsibilities in addressing them. Domestic and sexual abuse cannot be tackled in isolation. It requires joint working across a wide range of departments, agencies, and partnerships, including those beyond the usual statutory and specialist organisations associated with domestic and sexual abuse.

At its core is the need to ensure the voices and experiences of domestic and sexual abuse victims and survivors shape Sefton's approach to the development and delivery of services so that they provide what is needed. This includes ensuring there are a range of specialist support services available to address a wide variety of needs. It means really listening to what it feels like for victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse and understanding the challenges and barriers they face across all services and not just related to specialist domestic and sexual abuse support. It includes being able to challenge perpetrator behaviours safely and working to hold them to account.

This strategy sets out how we will do this in Sefton over the next five years. It outlines the key themes partners will focus on and identifies priorities which will be translated

into practical areas for action which will be monitored by the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. The strategy is based around three strategic themes:

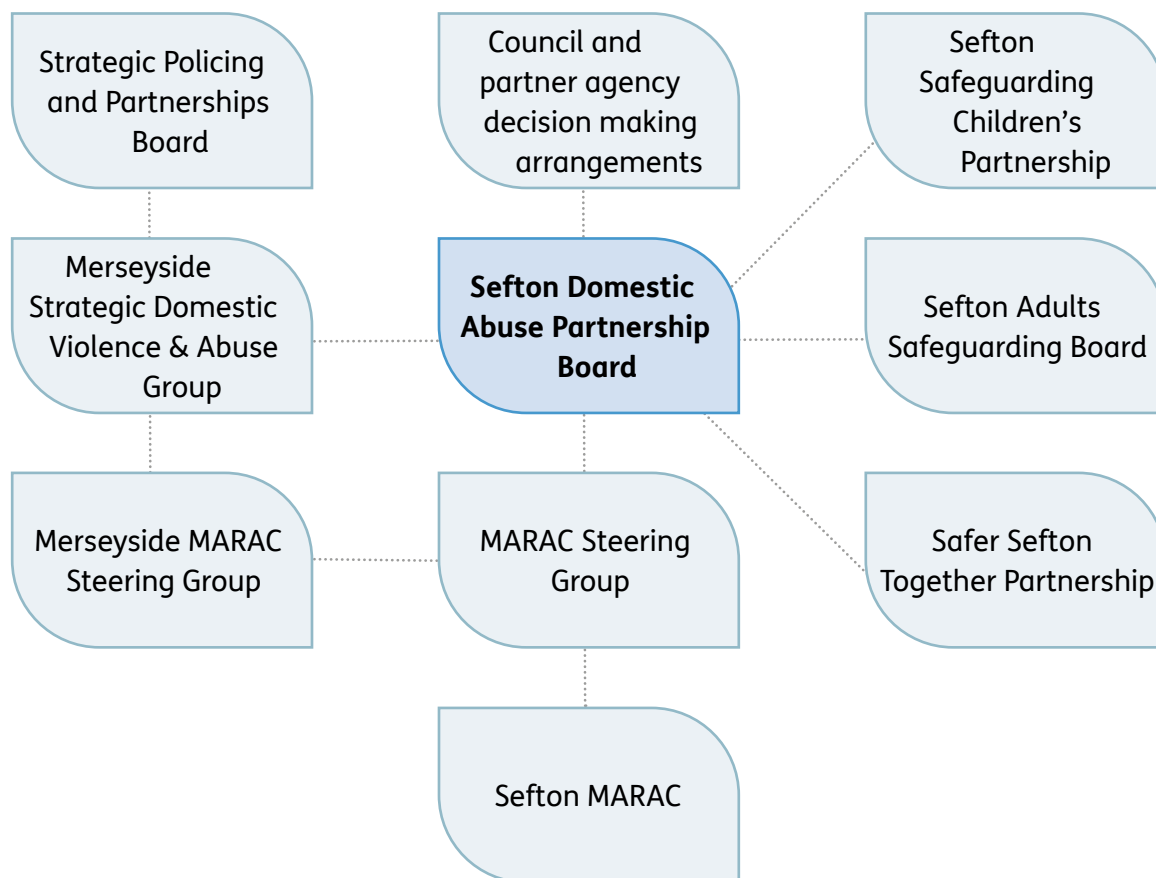
- **Prevent** – Early intervention and prevention to reduce the cycle of abuse.
- **Protect** - Keeping victims and their families' safe whilst challenging the behaviour of perpetrators.
- **Repair** - providing ongoing support beyond crisis intervention and developing resilience for the future.

It also incorporates the elements of Sefton's previous Safe Accommodation Strategy for victims of domestic abuse which the local authority is required to have as part of the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.

Domestic and sexual abuse is a key element of the Violence Against Women and Children (VAWG) agenda. However, it is acknowledged that VAWG also includes a range of other linked but separate subjects, such as human trafficking and modern slavery, honour based violence harmful practices and child exploitation. These areas will be covered by Safer Sefton Together's approach to VAWG.



### 3. Governance



The links between the Partnership Board and other strategic partnership arrangements are maintained through joint membership, shared sub-groups established around specific subjects (eg training and workforce development) as well as shared action plans.

Sefton Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is made up of representatives from the following agencies:

- Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council (Elected Member, Communities, Adult Social Care, Children’s Social Care, Public Health and Housing and Investment Services.)
- Sefton Women’s and Children’s Aid (SWACA)
- Rape and Sexual Assault Merseyside (RASA)
- Merseyside Police
- Probation Service
- Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust
- Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Partnership
- Mersey Care
- One Vision Housing
- Sefton Council for Voluntary Services (CVS)
- Venus
- Merseyside Fire and Rescue
- Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner Merseyside

## 4. Our Vision

That domestic and sexual abuse is viewed and challenged as an unacceptable form of behaviour by all our communities.

That victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse and their families in Sefton feel safer in their communities, are protected from harm, and are able to move forward positively

with their lives as a result of receiving the support and interventions they need.

That the behaviour of perpetrators is effectively challenged, and perpetrators are fully held to account.

## 5. Objectives

- To prioritise a strategic partnership approach to the reduction of domestic and sexual abuse in our communities.
- To improve the prevention, early identification and response to domestic and sexual abuse.
- To increase the reporting of domestic and sexual abuse through awareness raising and access to support services.
- To work with commissioners to ensure a wide range of services are in place to support and protect victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, including children.
- To hold perpetrators to account through appropriate criminal justice sanctions and effective interventions that promote long term behaviour change.
- To safeguard children and vulnerable adults from the impacts of living within a household experiencing domestic and sexual abuse.



## 6. What is Domestic and Sexual Abuse?

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 provides a definition of domestic abuse which is provided in full in Appendix A at the end of this document. In summary, it includes the following key points

The behaviour of a person towards another person is defined as “domestic abuse” if:

- both people are aged 16 or over and are “personally connected” to each other and

- the behaviour is abusive

Behaviour is defined as “abusive” if it consists of any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a pattern of behaviour.

Two people are “personally connected” to each other if any of the following applies:

- they are, or have been, married to each other
- they are, or have been, civil partners of each other
- they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)

- they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child
- they are relatives

It should be noted behaviour considered as abusive towards a victim can also include conduct directed at another person eg the victim’s child/children

Children are also explicitly included within the Act as direct victims of domestic abuse. This includes circumstances where a child:

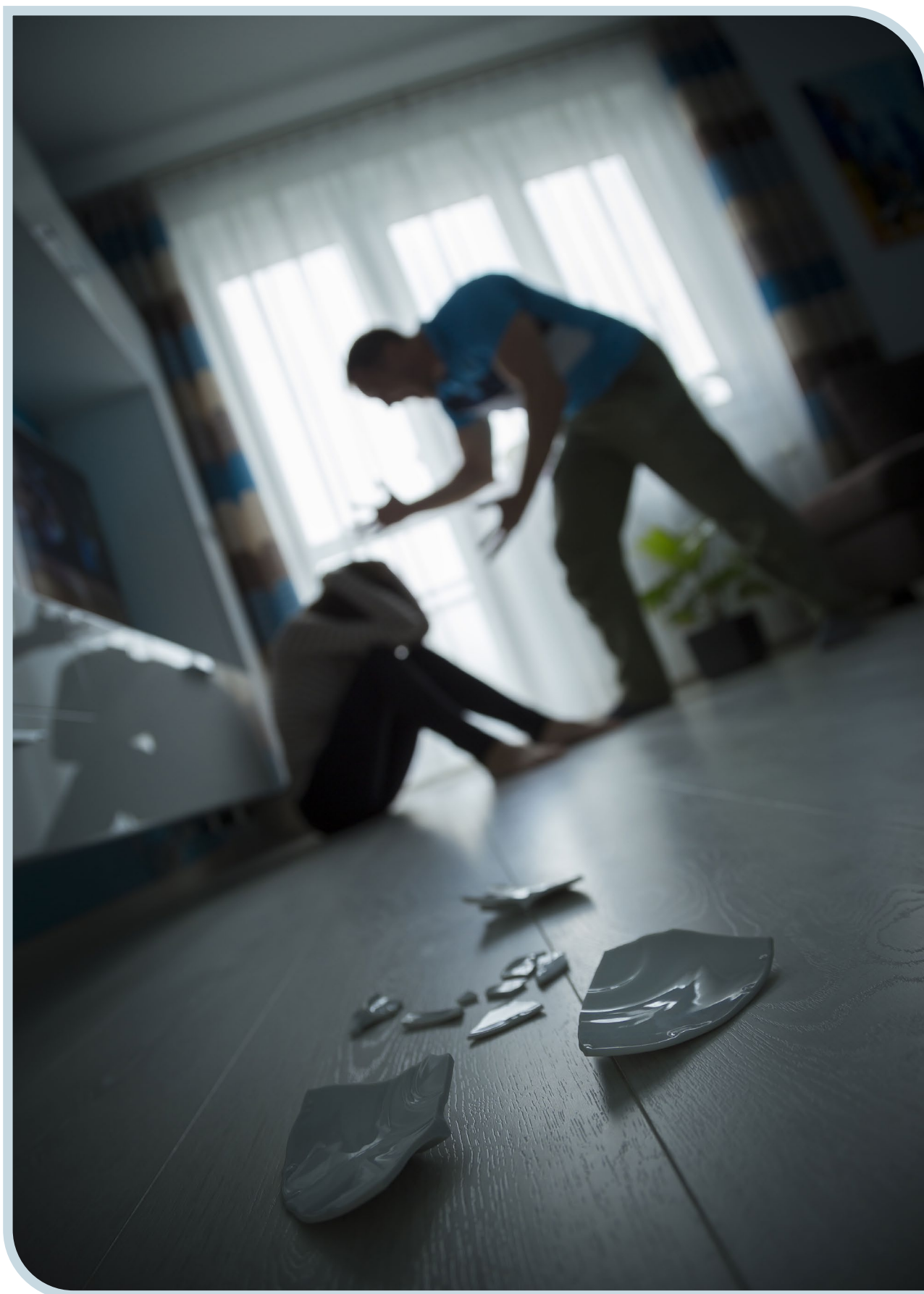
- sees or hears, or experiences the effect of, the abuse,

and

- is related to either the victim or perpetrator of the abuse

There is no one set definition of sexual violence or abuse; however, it is widely accepted as being any unwanted sexual act or activity. There are many different kinds of sexual violence and abuse, including rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation. Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by a stranger or by someone known.





## 7. The Domestic Abuse Act

In April 2021 the new Domestic Abuse Act was signed into law in England. The Act is designed to raise awareness of domestic abuse and provide a range of further protections for victims/survivors of domestic abuse as well as strengthen measures to tackle perpetrators. This includes:

- the creation of a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, controlling or coercive, and economic abuse.
- the establishment in law of the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner and the functions and powers within this role.
- provision for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order (currently known as Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs).
- placing a duty on local authorities in England to provide accommodation based support to victims/survivors of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.
- prohibition of perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in the civil and family courts in England and Wales.
- the creation of a statutory presumption that victims/survivors of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts.
- clarifying the circumstances in which a court may make a barring order under section 91(14) of the Children Act 1989 to prevent family proceedings that can further traumatise victims/survivors.
- extending the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse.
- extending the offence of disclosing private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress (known as the “revenge porn” offence) to cover threats to disclose such material.
- the creation a new offence of non-fatal strangulation or suffocation of another person.
- clarifying by restating in statute law the general proposition that a person may not consent to the infliction of serious harm and, by extension, is unable to consent to their own death.
- extending the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to further violent and sexual offences.
- providing for a statutory domestic abuse perpetrator strategy.
- Enabling domestic abuse offenders to be subject to polygraph testing as a condition of their licence following their release from custody.



- placing the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (“Clare’s law”) on a statutory footing.
- providing that all eligible homeless victims/survivors of domestic abuse automatically have ‘priority need’ for homelessness assistance.
- ensuring that where a local authority, for reasons connected with domestic abuse, grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an assured shorthold tenancy) this must be a secure lifetime tenancy.
- prohibiting GPs and other health professionals in general practice from charging a victims/survivor of domestic abuse for a letter to support an application for legal aid.
- providing for a statutory code of practice relating to the processing of domestic abuse data for immigration purposes.

## The Safe Accommodation Duty

Part 4 of the Act places a statutory duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. Local authorities must:

- Appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board
- Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support in their area for all victims or their children, including those who come from outside the area.
- Develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, having regard to the needs assessment.

### Refuge accommodation

Single gender or single sex accommodation and domestic abuse support which is tied to that accommodation. The address will not be publicly available. Victims, including their children, will have access to a planned programme of therapeutic and practical support from staff. Accommodation may be in shared or self-contained housing, but in both cases the service will enable peer support from other refuge residents.

### Specialist safe accommodation

Single gender or single sex accommodation, alongside dedicated domestic abuse support which is tailored to also support those who share particular protected characteristic(s) and / or who share one or more vulnerabilities requiring additional support. Accommodation may be in shared or self-contained housing, and the address will not be publicly available.

### **Dispersed accommodation**

1. Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse), self-contained accommodation with a similar level of specialist domestic abuse support as provided within a refuge but which may be more suitable for victims who are unable to stay in a refuge with communal spaces, and/or where peer support from other residents may not be appropriate, due to complex support needs, or where older teenage sons cannot be accommodated in a women only refuge, for example. Where two or more units share any part of the accommodation, including shared hallways or access routes, provision should be single gender or single sex.

2. Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse), self-contained 'semi-independent' accommodation which is not within a refuge but with support for victims who may not require the intensive support offered through refuge, but are still at risk of abuse from their perpetrator/s. Where two or more units share any part of the accommodation, including shared hallways or access routes, provision should be single gender or single sex.

### **Sanctuary Schemes**

Provision of enhanced physical security measures to a home or the perimeter of the home. A Sanctuary Scheme is a survivor centred initiative which aims to make it possible for victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice, and where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation.

### **Second stage accommodation**

Accommodation temporarily provided to victims, including their children, who are moving on from other forms of relevant accommodation and/or who no longer need the intensive level of support provided in a refuge, but would still benefit from a lower level of domestic abuse specific support for a period before they move to fully independent and settled accommodation. Where second stage accommodation is in shared housing it should be single gender or single sex.

### **Other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation**

A safe place (single gendered or single sex, secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse) with domestic abuse support tied to the accommodation to enable victims to make informed decisions when leaving a perpetrator and seeking safe accommodation. For example, short term (e.g. 2-3 weeks) accommodation providing victims with the space and safety to consider and make informed decisions about the options available to them.

Accommodation such as Bed and Breakfast accommodation is not considered relevant safe accommodation and for this reason are specifically excluded in the Regulations.

## Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation

The Domestic Abuse Act statutory guidance describes Domestic Abuse Support within Safe / relevant Accommodation as:

- Overall management of services within relevant accommodation – including, the management of staff, payroll, financial and day to day management of services and maintaining relationships with the local authority.
- Support with the day-to-day running of the service, for example scheduling times for counselling sessions, group activities (such functions may often be undertaken by administrative or office staff)
- Advocacy support – development of personal safety plans, liaison with other services.
- Domestic abuse prevention advice – support to assist victims to recognise the signs of abusive relationships, to help them remain safe (including online), and to prevent re-victimisation.
- Specialist support for victims:
  - a) Designed specifically for victims with relevant protected characteristics (also known as by and for), such as faith services, translators and interpreters within BAME-led refuges, immigration advice, interpreters for victims identifying as deaf and / or hard of hearing, and dedicated support for LGBTQ+ victims [not limited to].
  - b) Designed specifically for victims with unique and / or complex needs such as, mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support, including sign posting accordingly.
- Children’s support – including play therapy and child advocacy.
- Housing-related support – providing housing-related advice and support, for example, securing a permanent home, rights to existing accommodation and advice on how to live safely and independently.
- Advice service – financial and legal support, including accessing benefits, support into work and establishing independent financial arrangements; and,
- Counselling and therapy (including group support) for both adults and children, including emotional support.



## 8. Links to Other Legislation, Strategies, Boards and Partnerships

In addition to the Domestic Act 2021, certain elements of domestic abuse are also covered by other existing Acts:

- both people are aged 16 or over and are The Serious Crime Act 2015: coercive control is an offence under Section 76.
- The Care Act 2014: local authorities are responsible for promoting individual wellbeing, including ensuring their freedom from abuse.
- The Health and Social Care Act 2012: Regulation 13 covers safeguarding service users from abuse.
- The Adoption and Children Act 2002: “seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another person” is a form of harm under Section 120. This clarifies the definition of harm in the Children Act 1989.
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003 outlaws causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent.
- Housing Act 1996 Section 177
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

There are a number of local and national strategies, examples of practice learning evidence, research and guidance that also tie into this strategy. Locally, this includes the following:

- Safer Sefton Together Strategic Plan 2023-2026
- Children and Young People’s Plan 2020-2025
- Sefton Integrated Early Help Strategy for Children, Young People and Families 2020-2025

- Sefton Children and Young People’s Emotional Wellbeing Strategy 2021-26
- Sefton Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board Strategic Plan 2022-24
- Sefton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2023
- Sefton Housing Strategy 2022-2027
- Working in partnership to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) across Merseyside. Delivery Plan 2022-2025. Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner.

Supporting the delivery of these strategies and the wider domestic and sexual abuse agenda are a number of multi agency partnerships. These are an integral link to the work of the Domestic abuse Partnership Board and this Strategy.

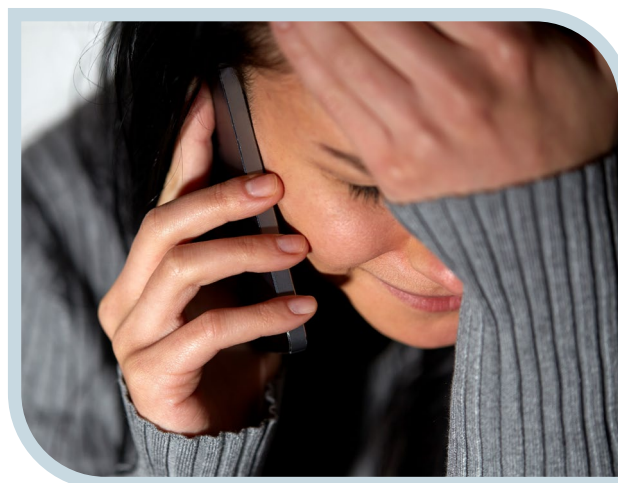
- Safer Sefton Together Partnership
- Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Sefton Safeguarding Adults Partnership
- Health & Wellbeing Board
- Merseyside Strategic Domestic Violence and Abuse Group (SDVAG) and Sexual Violence Group

The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board supports the recognition domestic abuse is being given nationally by the government, as well as the ongoing work of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and will ensure this strategy is reviewed to incorporate any further new legislation, programmes, or best practice as required.

## 9. Information and Data

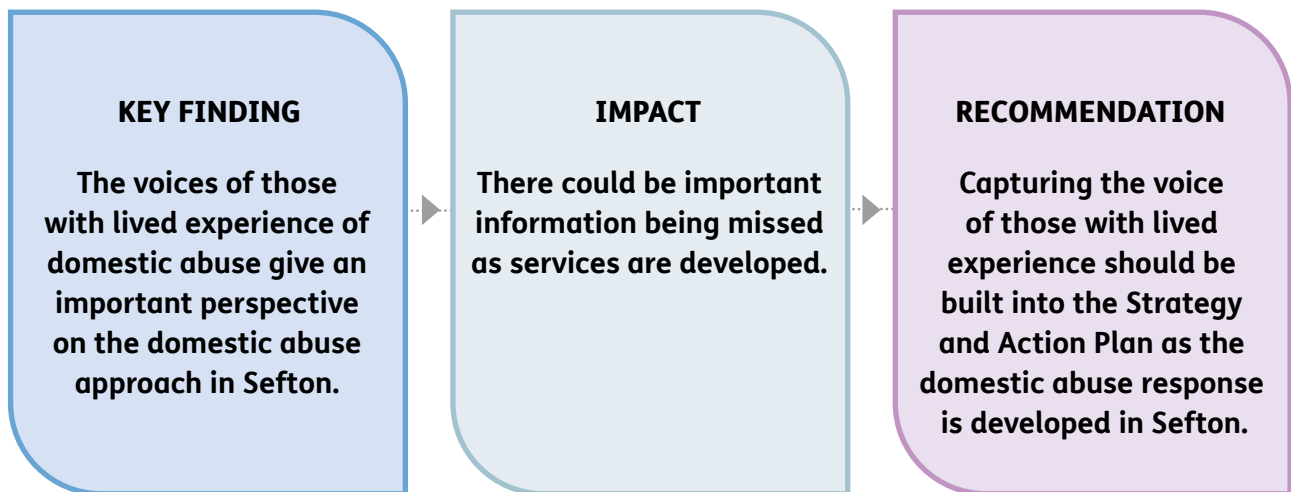
Domestic and sexual abuse are national issues that have an enormous impact on the lives of those it affects. Data does not accurately reflect the true scale of the issue and it is widely accepted that any figures will be an underrepresentation. However, they do provide some context on the extent and nature of the problem. Current statistics and research highlighted in Sefton's Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment include:

- It is estimated 5.5% of adults in England and Wales aged 16 to 74 years (2.23 million people) experienced domestic abuse in 2019/20 ([Domestic Abuse in England and Wales Overview November 2020, Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)).
- In 2020/21, the police recorded 1,459,663 domestic abuse related incidents of which 845,744 were recorded as domestic abuse related crimes. This increased to 1,500,369 incidents in 2021/22 of which 910,980 were recorded as domestic abuse related crimes. ([Domestic Abuse in England and Wales Overview November 2021 and November 2022, Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)).
- Female victims accounted for 73% of domestic abuse related crimes recorded by the police 2020/21 and 74% in 2021/22 ([Domestic Abuse in England and Wales Overview November 2021 and November 2022, Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)).
- There were 373 victims of domestic homicide aged 16 and over in England and Wales between March 2019 and March 2021. 72% of these victims (269) were female. ([Domestic Abuse in England and Wales Overview November 2022, Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)).
- Police in England and Wales made almost 245,000 referrals to social services for domestic abuse in 2020/21, with an average of 669 child protection referrals a day. ([NSPCC Record numbers of children and young people affected by domestic abuse | NSPCC](#)).
- The new Domestic Abuse Act has introduced compulsory Relationships Education for all primary school pupils and Relationship and Sex Education for all secondary school pupils in England ([Sefton Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment](#)).
- Rape Crisis England and Wales states 1 in 4 women have been raped or sexually assaulted as an adult, 1 in 6 children have been sexually abused, and 1 in 20 men have been raped or sexually assaulted as an adult ([rapecrisis.org.uk/get-informed/statistics-sexual-violence](#)).
- Rape Crisis England and Wales states 1 in 2 rapes against women are carried out by their partner or ex partner. 5 in 6 rapes against women are carried out by someone they know. [rapecrisis.org.uk/get-informed/statistics-sexual-violence](#).



## Survivor Voice

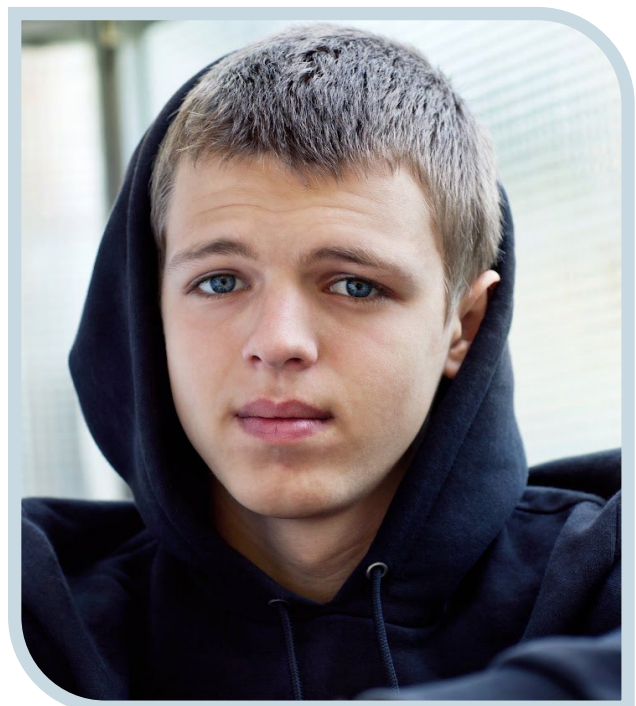
The most important element of this Strategy is ensuring victim/survivor voices and experiences are clearly captured, listened to, and enacted upon to ensure Sefton's response to tackling domestic abuse is based on their needs. This was clearly highlighted in Sefton's Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment and is an area the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will continue to develop and work on.



The stories told by victims/survivors through the community survey and survivor interviews and group sessions highlight the difficulties and complexities involved in cases of domestic abuse and the importance of practitioners and first responders having an understanding of these complexities.

Some of the key findings from this consultation include:

- Experience of having an IDVA to provide support through the Court process was helpful, though earlier support would have been beneficial.
- Experiences of feeling unsupported by the police and the criminal justice process following reports of abuse meaning survivors felt let down and that there was no accountability for the perpetrator's actions.
- Experiences of feeling ashamed of what had happened, fear they wouldn't be believed if they told someone, and fear of what their abuser would do that stopped them from telling anybody.
- Experiences of there being a lack of support put in place for their children.





Initial findings from the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Mapping of Domestic Abuse Services across England and Wales (August 2022) also highlights some of the challenges faced by survivors of domestic abuse. These include:

- Support services help victims/survivors to cope and to recover from the abuse they've experienced. Of those who expressed a view in the survey, there were significant differences between the two groups, with those who had accessed support more likely to report that they felt safer and more in control
- The majority of respondents stated that they wished to access a form of community-based service rather than an accommodation-based service, and it was forms of community-based services that victims/survivors were most likely to have been unable to access despite wishing to.
- The lack of support for children was particularly noteworthy. Almost all survivors who had children said that they would have wanted their children to have specific support, but just 29% said that their children had been able to access this type of support.
- Overall victims and survivors struggled to get help. Equally, they survey found significant regional variations and significant differences by sex and gender. People in the North West of England reported finding it most difficult to access help, with 45% of respondents saying it was 'quite difficult' or 'very difficult' to access help, Over two-thirds of men and over half of non-binary survivors found it 'quite difficult' or 'very difficult' to get help, in comparison to a third of women survivors.
- Victims/survivors with learning disabilities said often it was harder to recognise what was happening to them as domestic abuse, and that even where they did recognise this, they struggled to disclose



the abuse. It was difficult to know how to report it, know where to get information or advice, or understand that they could contact the police.

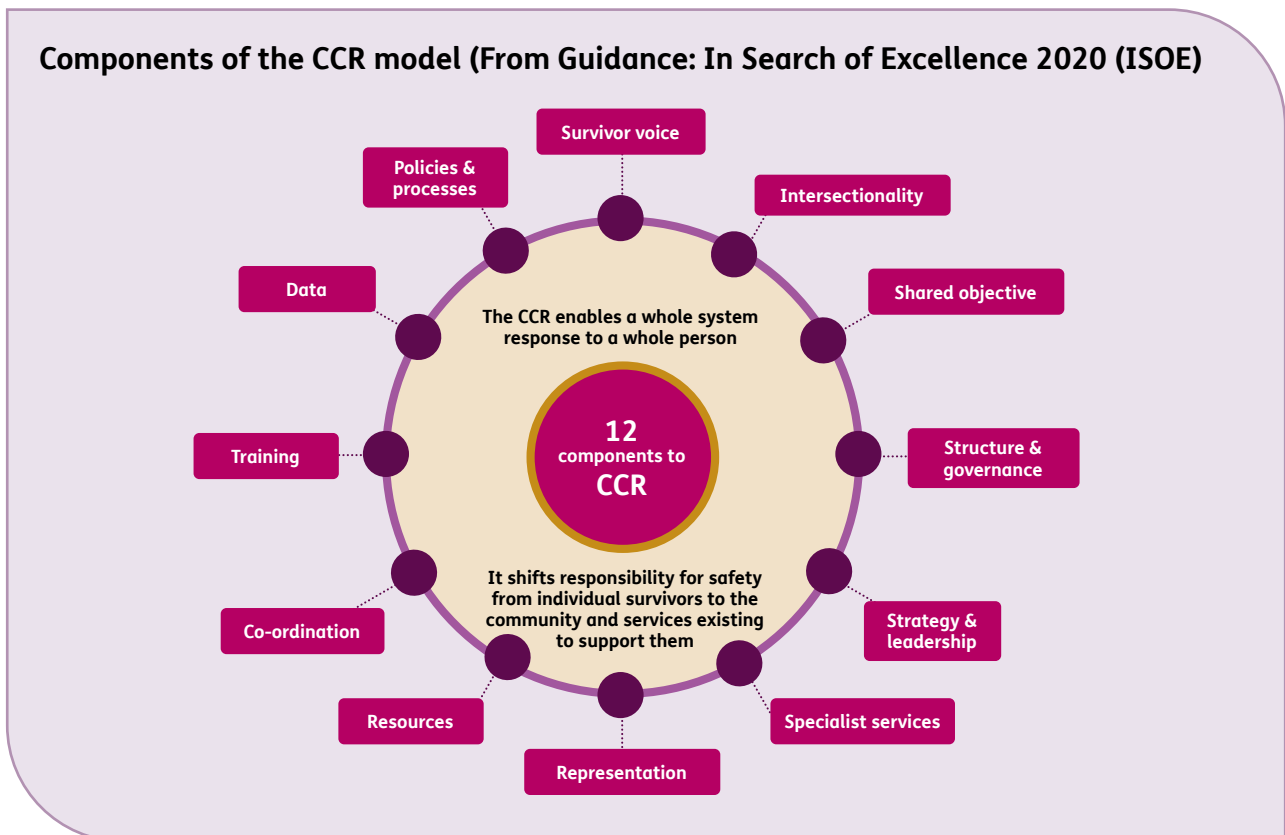
- Victims/survivors also talked about the lack of counselling services that had an understanding of how to work with autistic or neurodiverse domestic abuse survivors.

## 10.A Coordinated Community Response

The co-ordinated community response (CCR) model encourages collaborative working with other agencies. The CCR is a collaborative multi-agency effort to change the culture of tolerance of domestic abuse by embedding practices and procedures which integrates victim/survivor safety and holds the perpetrator to account for abuse.

The CCR encompasses the broadest possible response to domestic abuse addressing prevention, early intervention, dealing with crisis, risk fluctuation, and long-term recovery and safety, working with a wide range of services, pathways, agencies, and systems. The fundamental premise of the CCR is that no single agency or individual can see the complete picture of the life of a family or individual within that family, but all may have insights and can provide interventions that are crucial to their safety and wellbeing. The CCR enables a whole-system response to a whole person. It shifts responsibility for safety away from individual survivors to the community and services existing to support them.

Victims/survivors of domestic and sexual abuse – adult or child – require a coordinated, multi-agency response with all agencies working collaboratively to provide a response that is effective in meeting their needs and making them safer. The model guides coordinators to build interventions within systems that are aligned with the lived experience of victims/survivors.



For the CCR to be effective, the responsibility for support and intervention must be spread across agencies, rather than held with a single agency or person. This approach is an integral part of this strategy and the key priority themes it includes

# 11. Strategic Themes

## 1. Prevent

**Early intervention provision, including improving public knowledge on domestic and sexual abuse to drive a cultural shift, intervening earlier to prevent and reduce the impact of longer term poor outcomes, and breaking the cycle of abuse across generations.**

- There is clear and consistent information is available to the public on domestic and sexual abuse, including practical tools, advice and the support services available.
- There is a need for all services and practitioners to be aware of the signs of domestic and sexual abuse, how to respond to these initially, and where to signpost to for more comprehensive specialist support.
- Promotional campaigns reinforce both what constitutes domestic and sexual abuse and what support services are available and ensuring links are made to appropriate regional and national campaigns.
- Educational programmes are available for children and young people focusing on healthy relationships and developing resilience to help prevent future abusive behaviours.
- There is a quality assured offer of support for children and young people causing harm to help prevent this behaviour escalating.
- Domestic abuse is considered as a routine enquiry by a wide range of agencies and practitioners across Sefton, using a trauma informed approach.
- Activities that focus on supporting positive mental wellbeing to help prevent self-harm and suicide.



## 2. Protect

**Keeping victims/survivors of domestic and sexual abuse and their children safe in a consistent and coordinated way, providing safe and quality assured support services, and challenging the behaviour of perpetrators whilst also offering opportunities to change.**

- Victims/survivors and their families have a consistent and effective response from agencies to disclosures of domestic and sexual abuse that helps protect them from further harm.
- Agencies are consistent and effective in recognising and identifying risks associated with domestic and sexual abuse; workers proactively use professional curiosity and take action.
- Organisations have clear and easily accessible policies on domestic abuse to support their employees.
- There are a range of quality assured, evidence-based support services for victims/survivors to ensure work is delivered safely, responds to need, reduces risk and is in partnership with other agencies.
- This includes ensuring victims/survivors with additional vulnerabilities and specific needs can access support that meets their needs – specifically around those with protected characteristics, older people and those with complex lives.
- There is a range of specific support available for children and young people affected by domestic and sexual abuse.
- There is a range of safe accommodation options for victims/survivors of domestic abuse to enable them to leave abusive relationships safely and access the ongoing support they need.
- The behaviour of perpetrators is proactively challenged and held to account in a consistent and appropriate way and there are a range of interventions available to support behaviour change.

- There are effective and efficient multi agency risk management processes, including MARAC and MAPPA, that are regularly reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose.

## 3. Repair

**Supporting the development of resilience for families and individuals to move on and deal with future life challenges, providing ongoing support beyond crisis intervention.**

- Provision of a range of ongoing support for victims/survivors and children to reduce the impact of abuse and to recover from trauma.
- Provision of wider support opportunities for perpetrators of domestic abuse to sustain positive behaviour change long term.
- Criminal justice interventions achieve positive outcomes for victims/survivors to support them to move on with their lives.
- A wide range of organisations that can provide ongoing community based support for individuals and families based on their needs.





## 12. Outcomes

Based on the objectives outlined above, this strategy seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

- Service providers and front line staff are equipped to recognise and respond to domestic and sexual abuse.
- Information about the support available for domestic and sexual abuse victims/ survivors is clear, consistent, and accessible.
- Our community is educated as to what domestic and sexual abuse is, and what services are available in Sefton.
- Sefton residents feel confident and able to report incidents of domestic and sexual abuse.
- Consistent processes and systems are in place to respond appropriately to domestic and sexual abuse.
- Victims/survivors and their children are offered person centred support to address their specific needs.
- Perpetrators of domestic and sexual abuse are dealt with appropriately.
- Repeat incidents of domestic and sexual abuse are reduced.



## 13. Monitoring and Measuring the Impact

Sefton's Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will be responsible for the monitoring of the Strategy and will oversee the development of a Strategy Action Plan and Performance Framework which will set out the detail of how the priorities will be delivered. Service providers and front line staff are equipped to recognise and respond to domestic and sexual abuse.

- Information about the support available for domestic and sexual abuse victims/ survivors is clear, consistent, and accessible.
- Our community is educated as to what domestic and sexual abuse is, and what services are available in Sefton.
- Sefton residents feel confident and able to report incidents of domestic and sexual abuse.
- Consistent processes and systems are in place to respond appropriately to domestic and sexual abuse.
- Victims/survivors and their children are offered person centred support to address their specific needs.
- Perpetrators of domestic and sexual abuse are dealt with appropriately.
- Repeat incidents of domestic and sexual abuse are reduced.

# 14. Further Information

## Local Strategies and Plans

Sefton Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment August 2022

Safer Sefton Together Strategic Plan 2023-2026

Safeguarding Sefton's Children: Level of Need Guidance

Children and Young People's Plan 2020-2025

Sefton Integrated Early Help Strategy for Children, Young People and Families 2020-2025

Sefton Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing Strategy 2021-26

Sefton Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board Strategic Plan 2022-24

Sefton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2023

Sefton Housing Strategy 2022-2027

# Appendix A - Definition of domestic abuse as outlined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

## Section 1: Definition of “domestic abuse”

(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
- (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) References 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.

## Section 2: Definition of “personally connected”

(1) 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;

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

Section 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 effect 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 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.

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