



BRADFORD DISTRICT
DOMESTIC ABUSE AND
SEXUAL VIOLENCE
HOUSING STRATEGY

2021

Taking positive action, changing attitudes and improving lives





INTRODUCTION

Preventing and responding to domestic abuse and sexual violence is a priority for the Bradford District and the partnership that supports those who are or have been impacted by domestic abuse and sexual violence. Access to housing is a vital part of responding to domestic abuse and sexual violence, and this strategy lays out the coordinated approach we will take as a district to ensure safe accommodation and support is available for all victims and/or survivors. This strategy sets out Bradford's three-year plan for the provision of relevant safe accommodation and support for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence, including children as victims. Legislative changes under the new Domestic Abuse Act will be implemented locally to support the strategic approach in this document.

This strategy is linked to Bradford's recently published Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2021-2024, and the Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025. It will operate as a sub-strategy to the Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Strategy. Particularly in terms of the implementation of our intention to enhance our services, so that we can improve access to and experience of support to protect victims and facilitate recovery by:

Giving effect to the changes in practice required and statutory duties that apply now that the Domestic Abuse Bill has been passed. The Governance for this strategy will therefore sit with the district's domestic abuse & sexual violence board.



The Strategy should also be read in conjunction with:

- Bradford Council Plan 2021-2025
- Bradford Community Safety Plan (2021)
- Bradford District's ACEs, Trauma and Resilience Strategy 2021
- National Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2021

METHODOLOGY

The Domestic Abuse Act has mandated that Local Authorities have a duty to house victims and/or survivors and their children within safe accommodation that provides robust support. Full details of the legislation can be found in the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

In order to prepare for this statutory duty a comprehensive needs assessment was carried out for the Bradford district which provides the evidence base for this strategy. The needs assessment considers the local profile of domestic abuse and sexual violence, the current provision and any gaps in the need to ensure that the statutory duty can be complied with.

This strategy has been developed in consultation with relevant partners and stakeholders. To assist with the development of the needs assessment, and to ensure we meet the statutory duty, a housing task and finish group was established which comprised of domestic abuse housing providers and relevant partners in housing. A revised version of this strategy was presented to the membership for consultation. In addition to this the strategy was also presented to the local domestic abuse and sexual violence board for review. We have also sought input from officers across all key Council departments.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this strategy the following definitions will apply within the Bradford District:

The Domestic Abuse Act defines ‘**relevant accommodation**’ as following types of accommodation:

- Dispersed accommodation;
- Sanctuary schemes;
- Refuge accommodation;
- Specialist safe accommodation;
- Move-on or second stage accommodation.

The Act also defines Domestic abuse support that needs to be provided as:

- Advocacy support – development of personal safety plans, liaison with other services;
- Domestic abuse-prevention advice – support to assist victims and/or survivors to recognize the signs of abusive relationships, to help them remain safe and to prevent re-victimization;
- Specialist support for victims and/or survivors with relevant protected characteristics and / or complex needs, for example, interpreters, faith services, mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support, and immigration advice;
- Children’s support – including play therapy and child advocacy;
- Housing-related support – providing housing-related advice and support, for example, securing a permanent home and advice on how to live safely and independently; and
- Counselling and therapy for both adults and children.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In the 12 months from April 2020 to March 2021 there were 13,567 domestic crimes reported to the police in Bradford – 85% of which were violent crimes. From April 2019-March 2021 there was an increase in domestic crime rates of 5.5%. This is set against a context where domestic abuse is often a hidden crime that is not reported to the police with the National Crime Survey of England and Wales 2020 stating 5 in 100 adults aged 16 to 74 would have experienced domestic abuse within the last year.

Statutory and third sector partners have all reported increased complexity presenting for support. This trend is borne out by the increased number of cases that are heard by Bradford MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conference). April 2020 to March 2021 saw 1077 cases referred to Bradford MARAC. This compares with 751 cases the year before, a 43 % increase in cases. Nationally the increase is 108.7%.

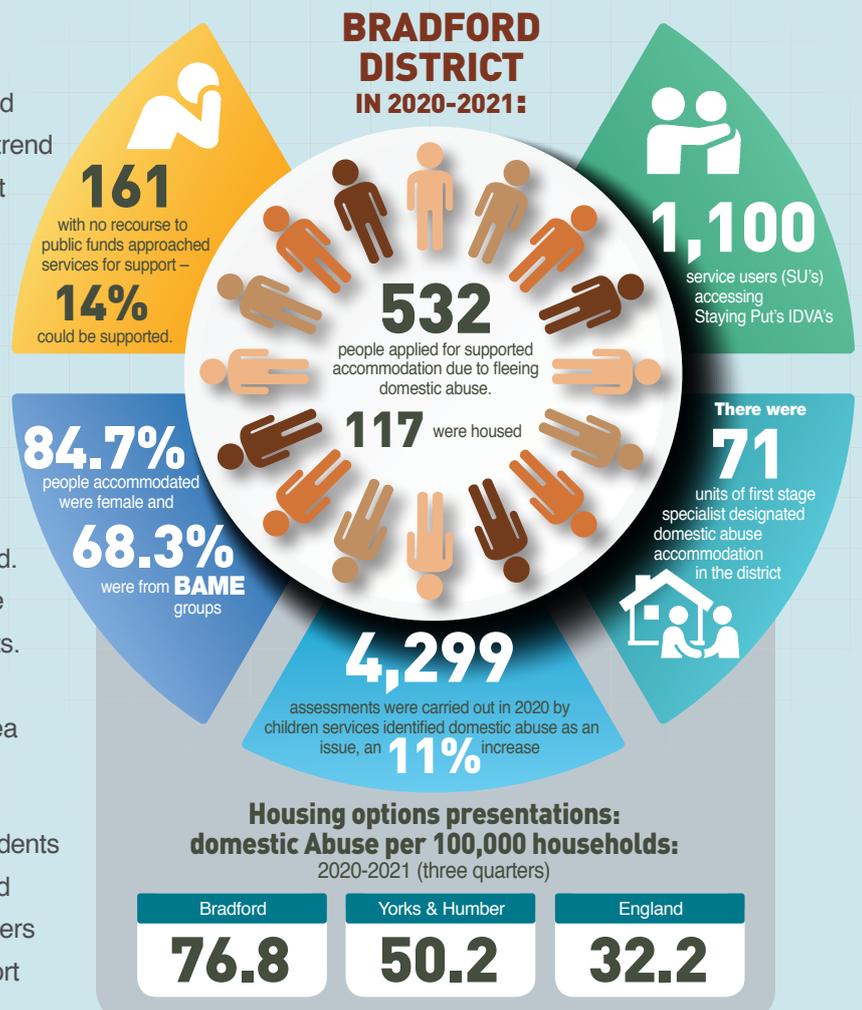
Bradford has a young population with the fourth highest proportion of under 16 year olds in England. Between April 2020 and March 2021 children were present at 28.8% or 4788 domestic abuse incidents. The ability to meet the needs of children within supported accommodation is highlighted as an area requiring significant investment.

Mental Health support was needed by 63% of residents who had experienced domestic abuse and secured accommodation within the Bradford district. Providers spoke candidly about the need for specialist support

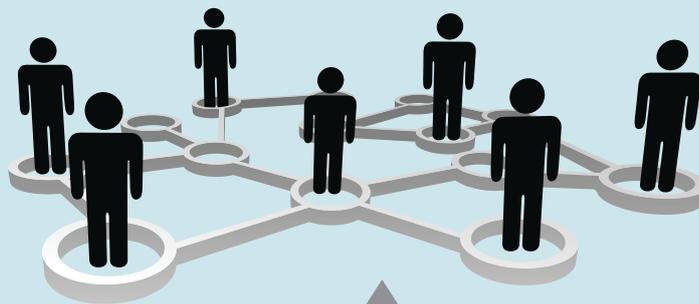
across the sector especially that could be responsive to crisis or to support staff through consultancy.

It should be noted that consistent data across the housing sector and the wider partnership was not available. This strategy seeks to remedy this going forward, to ensure that the strategy is implemented to meet the need and to ensure that commissioning is informed by robust data. One example is around duplication of referrals.

The review found that there was a significant differential between the amount of housing required to meet both crisis need and move on accommodation and in terms of providing access to the support outlined in the new statutory duty. These conclusions will require the development of processes to ensure the right survivor is placed within the right accommodation. It also requires development to determine how we can work together to create a trauma informed housing offer within the Bradford district. Which will be critical to the successful implementation of our priorities.



OUR VISION AND PRINCIPLES



OUR VISION

To ensure all victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence have access to accommodation that keeps them safe and is appropriate. Alongside a comprehensive support package that meets their needs.

PRINCIPLES

To achieve our vision, we have identified four key aims for our strategy:



Across each theme we will hold to the following principles:

- **Equality and diversity** – we encourage understanding and promote good practice around equality and diversity in services and across partnerships. Recognising how discrimination operates and how diversity can improve the effectiveness of support and housing provision.
- **Co-production** - We listen to the voices of victims and/or survivors, believe in them and strive to incorporate their voice and opinion into policy, procedure, commissioning and improvement of services.
- **Person centred** - We support and empower victims and/or survivors to make informed choices

and we work to put the individual at the heart of their support. Empowering individuals to realise their goals and develop a positive lifestyle.

- **Shared learning/resources** – We share our resources, knowledge and skills, including our challenges, so that we can work better together and all be the best we can be.

‘Part of this strategy is implemented under the pre-existing Survive and Thrive provision in Bradford, which is a funded contract of approximately £1.4M a year. The new burdens funding provided under the Domestic Abuse Act will help us achieve a broader reach in terms of the strategic aims outlined in this strategy. Under the new burdens funding an initial triage of money was distributed, this initial funding was distributed across the strategic aims in the following percentages:



It should be noted that the remaining funding will predominantly be focused on Aim 1 and Aim 4.

STRATEGIC AIMS

AIM 1

Early intervention and prevention

This aim is about preventing homelessness as a result of domestic abuse and sexual

violence. Stopping the cycle of abuse from happening in the first place, which starts with implementing early interventions on a whole family basis. We will change attitudes alongside running programs that stop escalation of risk. We will achieve this through:

- 1.1 Working together on our district communication plan to increase awareness of domestic abuse and sexual violence in Bradford and generate a culture of shared learning with housing and support partners. Our communication plan will offer extensive educational interventions and will promote the transformative work being completed across Bradford.
- 1.2 Enhancing our offer of sanctuary schemes across Bradford to reduce the risk to people experiencing domestic abuse while enabling them to remain in their existing home through prevention. We will

AIM 2

Improve access to housing

A fundamental part of this strategy and the statutory duty is ensuring victims of abuse have access to a range of housing

options that are suitable for their needs. We recognise relocating and seeking support can be incredibly challenging, and individuals who experience domestic abuse and sexual violence may also experience a range of vulnerabilities. We will aim to:

- 2.1 Improve access to available housing in the district for victims, in reflection of the predicated need highlighted in the needs assessment. We will seek to diversify the housing offers over the next three years to ensure there is safe housing and relocation options for all survivors. We will achieve this through the creation of comprehensive pathways into housing, including a clear and defined pathway of move on accommodation from temporary and emergency accommodation. We will also achieve this through the creation of a Whole System Approach for the district.
- 2.2 We will work alongside local housing providers to help strengthen their response to domestic abuse and sexual violence and assist them in increasing the pathways to support that they offer to their tenants. We will encourage use of supportive tenancies through commissioning to help those who have experienced domestic abuse and sexual violence secure specialist support, retain their tenancies and wherever possible have homes for life.
- 2.3 We will generate inclusive housing for all, where identity and personal characteristics are never a barrier to support. We will ensure a tailored approach

increase the offer of target hardening measures and implement a more digital offer to make the service more accessible.

- 1.3 Develop robust a resettlement offer within the district and relocation pathway for individuals resettling from another local authority. We will collaborate with wider West Yorkshire partners and develop processes with neighbouring authorities so that access to safety and support is never restricted by a victim's locality.



for those with protected characteristics, refugee, migrant and asylum communities, LGBTQ+ victims and/or survivors and those who present with complexity of need. We will embrace new ways of working to achieve this and we will collaborate with health and existing organisations to improve our offer of housing and support to these groups.

AIM 3
Improve access to Support

Domestic abuse and sexual violence has devastating and life changing effect on victims and survivors.

We recognise that we need to increase the offer of support options available in Bradford and support a cultural change that recognises the effects of abuse on victims and/or survivors. We recognise the importance of increasing the specialist domestic abuse commissioned service offer, and also working with non-commissioned services across the district. We will:

- 3.1** We will increase the support offer available for victims and/or survivors who experience complex needs, multiple disadvantages and mental health. We will make stronger links with a wider range of specialist support agencies so there is a tailored offer for individuals. We will highlight and bolster the existing services that offer support to those who experience multiple disadvantage, and work with them to find new ways of working. We will launch new initiatives with local mental health services so that victims and/or survivors can receive mental health intervention outside of the crisis mainstream service.
- 3.2** We will increase the offer of support to children within relevant safe accommodation, supporting children who have suffered or witnessed abuse. Providing funding to specialist children's refuge workers and children's independent domestic violence advisors.
- 3.3** We will increase the counselling offer across the region and fund services that bridge any communication barriers to this service. To ensure that victims and/or survivors have access to free confidential counselling, in a language and format they understand.

AIM 4
Work better together

Domestic abuse and sexual violence is a complex matter, one that no single agency can solve alone. We are

committed to working better together so everyone understands how they support victims and/or survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence. We will build on our existing strengths in partnership working, and collaborate with the resourceful and expert services across the region. We will work better together by:

- 4.1** Developing a housing associations forum to bring housing associations together across Bradford and improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse and sexual violence. We will partner with housing associations to provide training to their staff force, and assist with any strategic, policy or service changes that are needed so that victims and/or survivors can feel supported in their tenancies and safe in their homes.
- 4.2.** Developing locality approaches to domestic abuse. Working with ward officers and local led partnerships to respond to the need that presents in wards. We will strengthen the community assets through training and awareness and bring the work of specialist domestic abuse services into the community.
- 4.3** Strengthening our West Yorkshire partnership working, pooling funding to commission joint services, sharing the approaches that are succeeding regionally and finding new ways together to achieve our goals. To work together to encourage standardised practices across housing providers that cover wider regions.
- 4.4** Creating a data driven approach to commissioning. Our needs assessment highlighted inconsistencies in what data is collected and how and when it is collected. We would wish to agree a data capture that would support both the work of the partnership around implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act but that will also underpin future needs assessments and commissioning processes.



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