



**The Bradford Domestic and Sexual Violence  
Strategy  
2015 – 2020:  
A strategic response to ending violence against  
women and girls (VAWG) and inter-personal  
violence against men**

## **Executive Summary**

We are pleased to present Bradford District strategy for tackling domestic and sexual violence. This strategy outlines Bradford's commitment to supporting those victims, families and perpetrators affected by Interpersonal Violence.

### **Our Vision**

**Bradford Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategic Board recognises the negative impact that domestic and sexual violence has on all victims and their families. We are committed to preventing domestic violence and providing early interventions as well as effective and consistent support to reduce the harm this causes to individuals and communities; we will promote healthy relationships and always prioritise the safety of those adversely affected.**

Domestic and Sexual violence harms the whole of society and impacts across all sections of our local communities. It damages adults, young people and children and it has a significant impact on individual health and wellbeing and can seriously affect whole life experiences.

The Bradford Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy 2015 – 2020: A strategic response to ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) and inter-personal violence against men recognises the gendered nature of violence against women and girls and the interconnections of such violence and abuse. The strategy also recognises that some men experience violence and abuse within their intimate relationships.

**This Strategy** sets out the commitment of all partner agencies to adopt a consistent and long term approach to the prevention of domestic and sexual violence and provide an effective partnership response where it occurs.

We have achieved a significant amount in our response to domestic and sexual violence and we will further develop and improve. In order to do this we have three strategic objectives; they reflect the structure of national and regional policy as well as our needs locally in Bradford. They provide a platform for us to build and deliver an effective response to all aspects of Domestic and Sexual violence.

Bradford's Safeguarding Children Board and the Bradford's Safeguarding Adults Board have in place West Yorkshire wide protocols and procedures which outline actions to be taken when any child under the age of 18 and adults at risk of violence

are identified. A greater working relationship across all three partnerships will continue to improve the response to domestic and sexual violence.

Our overarching theme is to ensure that we work within a co-ordinated and pragmatic partnership model. As a partnership we will be working collectively to address the following:

**Prevention:** We want to intervene early to prevent situations escalating and violence and abuse being repeated.

**Provision of Services:** We want to help victims and their children to continue with their lives by providing effective co-ordinated specialist services.

**Protection and Prosecution:** We want to reduce offending and deliver an effective criminal justice system

**It should be noted that any incidents involving children or young people should always follow child protection procedures and that any incidents involving vulnerable adults should follow adult protection procedures.**

## **Context**

The General Recommendation 19 of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (1992) provides a definition of Violence Against Women and the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women provided further clarification of what a definition should include. Taking these two descriptions of violence against women, this strategy adopts the following definition:

Violence against women and girls is violence and abuse directed against a woman or girl because she is a woman or girl or that affects women and girls disproportionately and is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to a woman or girl, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Inter-personal violence is an umbrella term that encompasses relationship violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Inter-personal violence and abuse refers to violence and abuse that occurs between people who know each other. The reason for using this term instead of violence against men, is to distinguish violence experienced within a relationship and stranger violence against men; stranger violence is not the remit of the strategy.

The current cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or violence between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of violence:

Psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviour which is characterised by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person over another within an intimate relationship or a family. It is usually frequent and persistent.

Controlling behaviour includes a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour includes an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other violence that is used by perpetrators to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. This includes issues of concern to black and minority ethnic (BME) communities such as so-called honour based violence, forced or early marriage and female genital mutilation.

The change to the definition of domestic violence to include young people is welcomed, as it will help raise awareness that young people experience domestic violence in their own intimate relationships.

The World Health Organisation defines Sexual Violence as:

Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.

Sexual violence has a significant impact on physical and mental health of a victim. Its impact on mental health can be as serious as its physical impact, and may be equally long lasting. Sexual violence can profoundly affect the social wellbeing of victims; individuals may be stigmatized and ostracized by their families and others as a consequence.

A wide range of sexually violent acts can take place in different circumstances and settings. These can include;

- Prostitution
- Human trafficking of sexual exploitation.
- Rape
- Sexual harassment
- Forced Marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation.
- Sexual abuse of vulnerable Adults with Care needs
- Sexual abuse of children

In March 2011 the Government published an action plan committing to a wide range of actions to end violence against women and girls. In response to this partners in Bradford have developed this strategic response. It reflects the complexity of the agenda and recognises domestic violence is the responsibility of all agencies with a remit for health, social care and crime.

This strategy addresses issues surrounding domestic and sexual violence experienced by a range of people; this includes women who are victims of male perpetrators but we also recognise that men experience violence in intimate and familial relationships. Our work also recognises that victims are drawn from diverse backgrounds with wide ranging experiences and individual circumstances, in particular those from the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and LGBT communities.

All forms of domestic and sexual violence involve perpetrators seeking to exert power and control over their partners or family member and often incorporate a range or variety of abusive behaviours.

The Centre for Social Justice, estimates that domestic violence "costs the taxpayer almost £4bn per year. When human and emotional costs and lost economic outputs are aggregated the cost to society climbs to £15.7bn per year.

**The estimated cost of domestic violence to the Bradford District in 2009 was £54.2 million per annum (Total costs not including human and emotional costs).**

**This is broken down as follows:**

- **£11.8 million per annum for criminal justice costs**
- **£2.7 million social services costs**
- **£1.9 million housing and refuges**
- **£3.6 million civil legal services**
- **£16.2 million physical and mental health care costs**
- **£18.1 million lost economic output**
- **£93.5 million human and emotional costs (not included in total)**

*(Walby, 2009. These costs are likely to be an underestimate since they do not include domestic violence by family members and the number of incidents of domestic violence has increased since these figures were calculated)*

There are over 10,000 incidents of domestic violence reported to Bradford police every year. An annual profile of domestic and sexual violence will be produced each year to provide an evidence base for the Action Plan that supports this strategy. The Action Plan will be a dynamic document, changing to meet the evolving needs of the district.

## **Our Strategic Objectives:**

**Our overarching theme is to ensure that we work within a co-ordinated and pragmatic partnership model.**

**Prevention:** In order to prevent domestic and sexual violence we want to change attitudes and raise awareness of the signs and impact of domestic violence. We want to intervene early to prevent situations escalating and violence and abuse being repeated.

The Bradford Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategic Board will continue to protect those experiencing domestic and sexual violence through a coherent and solid perspective and policy framework. We recognise perspective and policy as the necessary foundations and drivers of an integrated strategy; we want to place prevention at the centre rather than the margin of the approach to tackling domestic and sexual violence.

Developing models and programmes to stop violence from occurring in the first place is the most strategic (and cost-effective) medium to longer term positive outcomes. Early intervention prevents escalation, repeat victimisation and ultimately reduces high risk incidents of domestic and sexual violence.

Schools have a range of legal obligations to ensure young people are safe. Focusing on young people, especially adolescent girls and boys is crucial to foster positive attitudes towards gender equality and to instil zero tolerance for domestic and sexual violence. Working with adolescents, both girls and boys presents an invaluable opportunity to cultivate generations in which intimate violence is no longer commonplace or tolerated.

We believe in the importance of safeguarding and educating children & young people through early identification and training. We will do this by providing specialist training and support for all relevant staff.

By building capacity within non – specialist services and organisations across Bradford we will ensure that access to specialist services is available to those at greatest need which will also provide equality of access to services for all.

**Provision of Services:** We want to help victims and their children to continue with their lives by providing effective specialist services. We want to ensure that survivors are able to access a consistent range of co-ordinated support services that maximise safety, reduce repeat victimisation and acknowledge their individual needs and experiences. We want to ensure systems of early identification and proactive responses to domestic and sexual violence are in place to reduce and minimise further risks.

The provision of services needs to be coordinated within commissioning streams. The main commissioners in Bradford have worked together to move towards joint commissioning, which will ensure consistency and quality of service provision as well as opportunities to develop further work.

We want to deliver appropriate, timely and efficient emergency and acute services when people are most in need. We aim for good criminal justice outcomes for victims and ensure an effective victim advocacy service is provided that supports victims before, during and after court.

The need for good multi-agency working and information sharing in order to secure improved safeguarding outcomes is clear. We want to continue to develop further integrated working with frontline service providers; we aim to do this through greater understanding and mutual respect among different agencies, which in turn will lead better working relationships.

**Protection and Prosecution:** We want to deliver an effective criminal justice system which incorporates investigation, prosecution, support and protection for the victim and effective perpetrator programmes, which are tailor made to tackle all levels of domestic violence.

By ensuring a criminal justice response that is faster and right first time, including specialised prosecution and timely and appropriate sentencing, with the necessary victim support. We want to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable by a range of interventions that reduce risk, provide clear messages that their behaviour is not acceptable and are provided with specialist support to change their behaviour,

It is crucial that the right interventions are put in place to stop offending, reduce repeat victimisation and increase confidence in the Criminal Justice System. We also need to ensure that there are appropriate and adequate perpetrator interventions outside of the criminal justice system which do not rely upon a conviction.

We know from local and national experience (Change Programme, Worth and Mirabal DVPP) men who take part in well established perpetrator programmes that meet national service standards, with support for victims and children, stop using violence and reduce the level of control; victims feel a greater sense of freedom and are able to live a more fulfilling life.

## **Local Service Delivery**

In September 2014 Bradford Council entered into a procurement exercise to commission services to support people who had been victims of domestic and sexual violence. CBMDC worked in partnership with Public Health and the Clinical Commissioning Groups to joint commission services. This has brought funding streams together to maximise value for money.

Successful providers began new service delivery starting on 1 April 2015. Four key areas of work have been commissioned these are;

- 1. Refuge and resettlement services delivering housing related support and some children's activity work (including specific service provision for BME victims)**
- 2. Crisis Intervention, outreach, target hardening, awareness raising and perpetrator programme (including specific provision for BME victims and direct work with male victims)**

3. **Services for women seeking to exit prostitution.**
4. **Independent Domestic Violence Advocate Service (including specific provision for BME victims and direct work with male victims)**

It is also important to highlight that provision in Bradford supporting Victims and perpetrators is not limited to services that are commissioned locally by Public Sector agencies. The much needed and valued contribution and joint partnership working with a number of voluntary and community sector agencies is immeasurable.

### **Future needs and gaps in provision**

During 2013 an extensive consultation process was carried out by Bradford Metropolitan District Council's Adult Service's Commissioning Team to assess the overall requirements of the district in relation to violence against women and girls.

Emerging areas for development identified by the consultation process and from the data collected during 2012/13 included:

- **Prevention and early intervention with low and medium risk cases of domestic violence**
- **Young people experiencing domestic and sexual violence within relationships**
- **Young people perpetrating violence against parents**
- **Older people experiencing violence from family members (including grandchildren)**
- **Male victims of domestic violence**
- **New arrivals experiencing domestic violence (e.g. increase in Eastern European communities)**

**Appendix 1 highlights the governance structure of the Board and related groups. A comprehensive action plan will be developed incorporating all of the priorities that will deliver activities to address the present and emerging needs of the District.**

**Governance Structure**

