Worcestershire’s Domestic Abuse Strategy 2017-20
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<tr>
<td>BAMER</td>
<td>Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>Community Rehabilitation Company</td>
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<td>CSE</td>
<td>Child sexual exploitation</td>
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<td>CSP</td>
<td>Community Safety Partnership</td>
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<td>CHISVA</td>
<td>Children &amp; Young Person Independent Sexual Violence Advocate</td>
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<td>DA</td>
<td>Domestic abuse</td>
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<td>DVA</td>
<td>Domestic violence and abuse</td>
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<td>DAU</td>
<td>Domestic Abuse Unit</td>
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<td>DHR</td>
<td>Domestic homicide review</td>
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<td>FGM</td>
<td>Female genital mutilation</td>
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<td>FM</td>
<td>Forced marriage</td>
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<td>IDVA</td>
<td>Independent Domestic Violence Advocate</td>
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<td>HBV</td>
<td>Honour-based violence</td>
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<td>HWB</td>
<td>Health and Wellbeing Board</td>
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<td>LGBT</td>
<td>Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender</td>
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<td>MARAC</td>
<td>Multi-agency risk assessment conference</td>
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<td>MAPPA</td>
<td>Multi-agency public protection arrangements</td>
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<td>NPS</td>
<td>National Probation Service</td>
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<td>NICE</td>
<td>National Institute for Health and Care Excellence</td>
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<td>Police and Crime Commissioner</td>
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<td>SARC</td>
<td>Sexual Assault Referral Centre</td>
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<td>SCB</td>
<td>Safer Communities Board</td>
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<td>SDAC</td>
<td>Specialist Domestic Abuse Court</td>
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<td>WRSASC</td>
<td>Worcestershire Rape &amp; Sexual Abuse Support Centre</td>
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<td>WSAB</td>
<td>Worcestershire Safeguarding Adult’s Board</td>
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<td>WCC</td>
<td>Worcestershire County Council</td>
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<td>WSCB</td>
<td>Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board</td>
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<td>VAWG</td>
<td>Violence against women and girls</td>
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Foreword

This Strategy is an important document. It commits us to working together in order to prevent and tackle all forms of domestic violence and abuse.

Locally, organisations and individuals work hard, with dedicated staff across the County doing all they can to improve the lives of victims and safeguard children. I acknowledge that there is much more work to do in changing the behaviours of perpetrators and we continue to work with the Police and Crime Commissioner in this regard. Nationally, Government has strengthened its leadership, producing a Strategy on Ending Violence against Women and Girls 2016-2020, and making education on Healthy Relationships compulsory in all schools from 2019. This will have an important part in long term prevention of domestic abuse and violence.

However, the statistics remain stark. In Worcestershire in 2015-16, 357 people were seen at the Sexual Assault Referral Centre; 10,618 domestic abuse incidents/crimes were reported to the Police; and 98 individuals were supported in our local refuges. We want to see these numbers change, through earlier intervention and prevention as well as by the right crisis support getting to the right people at the right time.

This Strategy gives a clear direction to how the whole system can work better together to tackle domestic violence. Good progress on its four key themes of prevention; partnership; service provision; and pursing perpetrators through criminal justice will help to change the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in our County.
Introduction

This is Worcestershire’s refreshed Strategy that seeks to address all forms of violence and abuse regardless of age, gender and sexual orientation. The strategy acknowledges that anyone can be a victim but also that domestic abuse disproportionately affects women and girls. Tackling violence and abuse is everyone’s business. Over the last few years significant progress has been made as to how public and voluntary sector partners in Worcestershire respond; raise awareness and deliver support and prevention work in relation to the issue of domestic abuse.

Domestic Abuse cannot be tackled in isolation and a coordinated partnership approach is essential. We need to work together to prevent, intervene and reduce the impact, increasing the safety and reducing the risk posed to those who experience it within Worcestershire.

We need to ensure that victims are supported through their journey to ensure they are empowered to make their own decisions. From health providers, to law enforcement, to employers and friends and family we all need to play our part. We must ensure that victims are able to access the services that they need, when they need them. And seek to provide an integrated, effective, whole family approach to addressing and stopping violence and abuse. As individuals and agencies we must give a clear message that violence and abuse will not be tolerated and that perpetrators will be held to account for their behaviour and supported to change their behaviour through programmes.

We still however have a long way to go to deliver this work effectively and in developing our response to other types of violence. This includes forced marriage, female genital mutilation, so-called ‘honour’ based violence, stalking, trafficking, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation. We know that by reducing violence and abuse we will be improving the health and well-being of people within Worcestershire. We know that domestic abuse has a significant impact on both the physical and mental health of victims and families.

A significant challenge and pillar of this strategy is to help young people understand what a healthy relationship is and to re-think their views of controlling behaviour, violence, abuse, sexual abuse and consent. This approach will also include challenging the attitudes and behaviours amongst teenage boys and girls that abuse in relationships is acceptable.

This strand will be made significantly stronger by the recent Government decision (March 2017) to make healthy relationship sessions compulsory in all schools from 2019.

The Strategy commits us to working together and strengthening our efforts to prevent and tackle violence in all its forms. It recognises the overlap with both children and adult safeguarding responsibilities in seeking to protect those with care and support needs living in their own homes and the links between mental health, substance abuse, alcohol and domestic abuse.

The Strategy is underpinned and supports the Government’s strategy Ending Violence against Women and Girls 2016-2020 issued in March 2016. Our objectives and themes are those mirrored in the national strategy, namely, Prevention, Provision of Services, Partnership Working and Justice Outcomes and Pursing Perpetrators. These objectives will be reflected in our action plan for the coming years. The Strategy will be coordinated by the Worcestershire Forum against Domestic abuse on behalf of the Worcestershire Safer Communities Board working alongside the two Community Safety Partnerships. The strategy further supports the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Safer West Mercia Plan 2016-20 with victims at its very heart and the tackling of “Hidden Crimes” causing the greatest harm.

This Strategy will continue to evolve as the national and local context changes.
Our 4 Key Themes

Prevention
Prevention and early intervention remains the foundation of our focus on preventing violence and abuse from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it. This will include working with agencies to develop and sustain programmes around healthy relationships that challenge stereotypes and inappropriate behaviours and consent for children and young people. The development and sustainability of programmes of support and recovery for victims and the implementation of perpetrator programmes which will impact on levels of repeat victimisation and challenge and change behaviours remains at the heart of our approach.

We will continue to challenge the cultural attitudes that underpin practices of FGM and force marriage and ensure that professionals have the confidence and knowledge to confront the issues. This will include promotion of both civil/ criminal protection measures coordinated by public awareness campaigns across all forms of abuse.

Provision of Services
Victims should be able to access the right support at the right time. It’s critical that a range of provision is in place to meet the needs of victims. We are committed to working and commissioning with the local authority, the NHS and PCC to ensure services are in place and sustained, particularly in respect of Public Health commissioned services and specialist services such as IDVA. Services should seek to provide support at an earlier stage so that fewer victims reach crisis point. With increased disclosure, early intervention by early help services will ensure fewer suffer repeat abuse.

Partnership
Multi agency working is the foundation to the delivery of this strategy with both statutory, voluntary and community services working together, with improved links to all areas of safeguarding, leading to improved risk identification and needs-led interventions for victims, families, children and perpetrators. Continuing to develop the healthy relationship agenda is a critical activity. Through focused needs assessments linking in with other critical services such as drug and alcohol, mental health services we will be able to better support victims and families. The ongoing development of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Family Front Door will further embed multi-agency information sharing.

As a county we continue to learn lessons and embed them in practice through reviews, such as domestic homicide reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews.

Pursing Perpetrators and Criminal Justice
We want to ensure that there are effective sanctions against perpetrators that support sustainable behaviour change, thereby reducing re-offending.

Increased victim confidence in the criminal justice system is essential demonstrated by increased reporting and continued increases in prosecutions. We will continue to promote and effectively use a range of both criminal and civil protection measures to safeguard victims. Our promoting healthy relationship work in schools seeks to educate and prevent perpetrators of the future.

Support the development of working with domestic abuse perpetrators within the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) process.
Key Strategic Drivers:

Domestic Abuse and Violence Needs Assessment 2016

This was commissioned by Public Health as part of Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to help inform the future commissioning of domestic abuse services across Worcestershire.

Govt Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016

Our strategy embraces the ethos and approach of the national strategy but is inclusive recognising that anyone can be a victim of abuse regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

Domestic Abuse Risk Factors

Domestic Abuse will affect one in four women and one in six men in their lifetime. Incidents of domestic abuse are hugely under reported, 40% of incidents are never reported and of those reported there will have been on average 50 incidents before the victim calls the police. Whilst the legislation is gender neutral, statistics consistently show that women and girls are disproportionately affected by crimes of domestic violence and abuse. In 2014/15 nationally, 92.4% of defendants in domestic abuse flagged cases were male.

From national research, there are several factors which increase the risk of someone experiencing domestic violence or abuse. These include but are not limited to the following: (NICE Guidance PH50)

- Both men and women may perpetrate or experience domestic violence and abuse. However, it is more commonly inflicted on women by men
- Being female, aged between 16 and 24
- The risk is further increased around the time of separation if the woman decides to leave the relationship
- The risk is also increased if a woman is pregnant or has recently given birth. Although pregnancy appears to offer protection for some, for others it increases the risk. In addition, there is a strong correlation between postnatal depression and domestic violence and abuse
- Teenagers aged 16–19 are at highest risk of relationship abuse.
- Someone with a long-term illness or disability or a mental health problem. Disabled people are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse compared to non-disabled people. Over one in ten disabled women and just under one in ten disabled men experienced domestic abuse in 2012-13 and more than one in three people with mental illness have experienced domestic abuse in the past year. Disabled people experience domestic abuse which is more severe and lasts for longer than non-disabled people. The severity of an impairment increases the risk of abuse it can create socially isolated people who depend heavily on carers thus increases situational vulnerabilities.
- For transgender people, around 80% will experience emotional, physical or sexual abuse from a partner or ex-partner.
- Just under 40% of bisexual, gay and lesbian people class themselves as having experienced domestic violence and abuse. Lesbian and bisexual women experience domestic violence and abuse at a similar rate to women in general (1 in 4). Compared with 17% of men in general, 49% of gay and bisexual men have experienced at least 1 incident of domestic violence and abuse since the age of 16

The role played by alcohol or drug misuse in domestic violence and abuse is poorly understood. Research nationally has indicated that 21% of people experiencing partner abuse in the past year thought the perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol and 8% under the influence of illicit drugs. Additionally, people are thought to be at increased risk of substance dependency as a consequence of being the victim of domestic violence.

How the Strategy will be delivered

A Strategy Action Plan will be developed and monitored by The Worcestershire Forum against Domestic Abuse on behalf of the Worcestershire Safer Communities Board to support the delivery of the Strategy. This will be reviewed and refreshed annually.
Key Stakeholders

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bromsgrove District Council</th>
<th>Redditch Borough Council</th>
<th>Worcester City Council</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acute NHS Trust, Health and Care NHS Trust and Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Groups</td>
<td>Voluntary and Community sector</td>
<td>Worcestershire County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Criminal Justice Board</td>
<td>West Mercia Police</td>
<td>Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board</td>
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<td>Malvern Hills District Council</td>
<td>West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company</td>
<td>Worcestershire Safeguarding Children’s Board</td>
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<td>National Probation Service</td>
<td>West Mercia Crime Reduction Board</td>
<td>Wychavon District Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Police and Crime Commissioner</td>
<td>West Mercia Victims Board</td>
<td>Wyre Forest District Council</td>
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Interdependencies with other work

The Strategy does not sit in isolation. Violence and Abuse is closely connected to other issues such as poor health, child poverty, social exclusion and economic and educational disadvantage. It therefore has an impact on other local and national strategies and initiatives such as:

- Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Safeguarding Strategies
- Stronger Families
- Care Act 2014
- North and South Community

The Strategy does not intend to duplicate work being led by others. It aims to bring together work across all sectors on the issue of domestic abuse & sexual violence into one cohesive, coordinated statement.

Key Issues

Whilst Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence are not always inter related, many of the aspects of abuse transcend these devastating crimes. The issue of sexual violence is the focus of activity by the PCC and NHS commissioning and the PCC’s Victims Board.

However, we are clear that our approach is inclusive and will encompasses all forms of violence ensuring a more integrated approach and effective response that better reflects the experiences of those affected, whether they be male or female. However, it is important to emphasise that our approach embraces the End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Government strategy 2016-20 in both its structure and vision.

Forms of Violence

**Domestic abuse.** The cross Government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: ‘Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality’ The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: Psychological; physical; sexual; financial and emotional.

A new criminal offence was introduced on the 29th December 2015 of ‘Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an intimate or family relationship’, which complements existing legislation and closes the gap in law around patterns of controlling or coercive behaviour.
Controlling behaviour

Controlling behaviour is 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

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used by a person to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Controlling or coercive behaviour statutory guidance December 2015
http://bit.ly/1HPVrlh

Sexual violence including rape is sexual contact without the consent of the woman/girl/man/boy, where perpetrators range from total strangers to relatives and intimate partners, but most are known in some way.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the complete or partial removal or alteration of external genitalia and is mostly carried out on young girls between infancy and 15 years.

Forced marriage (FM) is a marriage conducted without valid consent of one or both parties, where duress is a factor. Forced marriages often involve the repeated rape and sexual assault of the victim

Sexual harassment is unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It can take place anywhere, including the workplace, schools, streets, public transport and social situations. It includes ‘flashing’, obscene and threatening calls, and online harassment.

Stalking is repeated (i.e. on at least two occasions) harassment causing fear, alarm or distress. It can include threatening phone calls, texts or letters; damaging property; spying on and following the victim.

Sexual harassment

Stalking

‘Honour’ based violence (HBV) is violence committed to protect or defend the ‘honour’ of a family and/or community where young women are the most common targets and can, in extreme cases, include murder.

Worcestershire Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and Action Plan 2015 -17

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where someone receives ‘something’ (e.g. food, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, protection money) as a result of them performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. Young women and girls involved in or connected to gangs are at risk of sexual exploitation by gang members. The definition of interpersonal violence includes sexual exploitation. Child Sexual Exploitation is currently a priority for the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board in Worcestershire and a separate strategy and action plan are in place and governed by the LSCB for this area.
However there are significant overlaps between child sexual exploitation and the wider areas covered by this violence strategy therefore close working and alignment of these areas of work is essential.

To date the focus of work on violence has been on domestic abuse, sexual violence and honour based violence. Further work is needed to fully understand the other areas of interpersonal violence within a Worcestershire context. This work is being scoped and undertaken by the police.

Whilst we are inclusive in our approach, extensive research shows that violence, or the threat of violence, is rarely a one-off event and women who are disproportionately affected are likely to have experienced multiple and intersecting forms of violence throughout their lives.

It also recognises the commonalities across all forms of Violence: they are human rights violations and criminal offences; the impacts and consequences for health and well-being are similar; all are considerably under-reported; minimisation and myths exist across all forms; those affected are under-supported by services; and perpetrators are often known to victim-survivors. Greater integration creates opportunities to address these multiple issues through targeting limited resources more effectively.

**National context**

Highlights from the data and research available nationally on VAWG are as follows:

**Each year around three million** women and girls in the UK experience some form of violence, including domestic violence and abuse, rape, forced marriage, stalking, female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation, trafficking and crimes in the name of honour *(Coy et al, 2008)*

- **In England & Wales, 2 women a week are killed** by a partner or ex-partner *(Women’s Aid, 2014)*
- **85,000 women are raped** and **400,000 women are sexually assaulted** every year in England and Wales *(MoJ, 2013)*
- **130,000 children** in homes where there is high risk domestic abuse *(SafeLives 2015)*
- **The average victim will suffer in excess of 50 incidents** before they report it or tell anyone *(SafeLives 2016)*

- The Forced Marriage Unit recorded **1,220 cases of forced marriage** across the UK in 2015

- There are estimated to be **137,000 women and girls with FGM in England and Wales.** *(Macfarlane 2015)*

- Violence remains **hugely under-reported** with only one in four of those experiencing domestic abuse, & **one in eight** of those experiencing sexual violence, making an official report. *(Walby and Allen, 2004)*

- **The long-term human and emotional cost of violence to individual is immeasurable.**

- Some Communities are **less likely to report domestic abuse** than others including BME groups, LGBT groups, disabled women, rural and more affluent communities, and male victims.

- Violence has **high rates of repeat victimisation compared to other crimes, and even when reported conviction rates for perpetrators remain low.**

- The social societal cost of Violence, in England & Wales, is estimated to be over **£40 billion** a year (including health, legal and social services.)

- The average victim will suffer in excess of **50 incidents** before they report it or tell anyone *(SafeLives 2016)*

9
Worcestershire context

Given its hidden nature and under-reporting, it is difficult to gain an accurate picture of the scale and extent of violence and abuse locally. Drawing on available data from partners, some key points are:

- In 2015-2016 there were 10,618 domestic abuse incidents/crimes reported to West Mercia Police in Worcestershire. These impacted on 6,098 separate children, of which 877 children were exposed 3+ times and 261 were exposed 5+ times.

- Research suggests only 40% of domestic abuse incidents are reported to the police. Assuming this, there may actually be 27,000 incidents of domestic abuse occurring in Worcestershire each year.

- WRSASC supported 1125 clients in 2015-2016 including 107 referrals to the CHISVA Service in Worcestershire. WRSASC 2016

- 2,089 referrals were made to the Domestic Abuse Support Service in 2015-16. 1309 individuals were taken on to the caseload. 98 individuals were supported in Worcestershire refuges.

- 753 high risk cases were discussed at MARACs in Worcestershire in 2016-17. A 66% increase from 2015. 21.5% were repeat victims, 618 children were involved, 32 cases were BME and 11 were male victims.

- 6 Domestic Homicide Reviews have been undertaken in Worcestershire since the legislation came into force in 2011 (as of March 2017). A further 2 cases have been referred for consideration and 3 near miss reviews have been conducted.

- 1186 Sexual offences were recorded by the police in Worcestershire in 2015/16. This is 21.7% increase compared to 2014/15.

- 357 people were seen at the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (The Glade) in 2015-16. The majority were white British with 38% being children and young people. Most were assaulted by an acquaintance with rape being the most prevalent offence. The Glade
The Cost of VAWG in Worcestershire

Based on the prevalence data available the estimated cost of domestic abuse to public services alone in Worcestershire is £55 million per annum. (VAWG Ready Reckoner and ONS 2014 mid-year Population estimates (Domestic Abuse and Violence needs Assessment 2016))

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tr>
<td>Physical &amp; mental health care costs</td>
<td>£11.8m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>£1.4m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (including housing, civil legal &amp; employment)</td>
<td>£34.2m</td>
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Total Human and emotional costs £175.5m

Total annual cost to public services in Worcestershire (not including human & emotional costs) £7.5m

When the human and emotional cost is included the total rises to £230.4 million per annum. These estimates are based on 2014 data and are therefore considered a conservative estimate.

Strategy Objectives & Next Steps

Worcestershire’s Strategy objectives and outcomes have been adapted from the national strategy, “Call to End Violence against Women and Girls”, published by the Home Office in March 2016.

This section highlights what we aspire to have in place and what we will do to develop provision and address the gaps.

We are clear about the overall outcomes we want to achieve by 2020:

- a reduction in the prevalence of all forms of violence and abuse
- matched by increases in reporting to the police
- an increase in calls to the helpline
- an increase in prosecutions and convictions.
- we want to see earlier intervention and prevention so fewer victims reach crisis point.
- and every victim gets the support they need and the support their children need – at the right time effectively.

A Strategy Implementation plan priorities the work we intend to do and provide details in relation to how, who and when the identified work will be delivered.

Whilst the Strategy seeks to be aspirational, recognition is given to the tight financial climate within which all public sector agencies are working. The first priority therefore is to protect and enhance what is already in place, but maximise efficiency and reduce duplication thereby freeing up resources to support the areas for development.

A key in developing and delivering this strategy will be to recognise the synergy between the priorities of both the Children’s and Adults Safeguarding Boards, the Heath and Wellbeing Board and the governance arrangements of the Worcestershire Safer Communities Board to ensure there is no duplication of effort and that resources are used.