



Domestic Violence and Abuse



Buckinghamshire Domestic Abuse Strategy

Context

- **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** – The Domestic Abuse Act received Royal Assent on the 29th April 2021; The new duties came into effect on 1st October 2021. The act provides additional resources to tackle this critical issue. With the new duties we are now publishing our intentions to drive forward a three year strategy for victim support and safe accommodation. The Act and the introduction of a Domestic Abuse Commissioner is important to help raise awareness and ensure the advocacy continues.
- We want Buckinghamshire to be a place where as few people as possible are affected by domestic abuse, but those who are can get help to end the abuse and go on to live the lives they want.
- This strategy is about how we want to develop and improve domestic abuse services over the next 3 years. Underpinned by a SMART action plan, this document sets out our commitments which have been informed by a review of the effectiveness of current practice, the changing national context alongside qualitative and quantitative data from a range of contributors
- **Domestic Abuse Board- Inaugural meeting 28th September 2021**

Buckinghamshire Domestic Abuse Strategy

- DA Strategy - Approved by Full Cabinet on 7th December & published on 9th December



Four key themes

1. Early intervention and Prevention
2. Effective Services that meet the needs of victims and their families
3. Tackling Perpetrators to reduce reoffending
4. Supporting Professionals to make a difference

The size of the problem in Buckinghamshire

- Estimated 21,000 adults per year, or 57 people everyday.
- Significant under-reporting
- 4,000 victims of abuse recorded by police -71% women (20/21)
- 3,212 perpetrators - 72% men (10 months data)
- 15% of all recorded crime in Buckinghamshire.
- 15 domestic homicides 2011 – 2020.
- Using *estimated* numbers of victims in Buckinghamshire, cost of consequences ~ **£687m**.

Who is at risk of domestic abuse?

- Anyone
 - Women 2x as likely to experience domestic abuse as men. 91% of domestic violence crimes causing injuries are against women.
 - Increased risk in disabled adults , people with a learning disability , women with mental health problems
 - unemployed, single parent households, mixed ethnic group, women from lowest household income bracket, LGBT and transgender people.
 - Under-reporting by older people and poor ethnic coding.
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Perpetrators

- More likely to be male (72% in Buckinghamshire).
- 64% 40 years and under.
- Often a partner or ex-partner.
- Male perpetrators are more likely to seriously injure or kill their victim.
- Men committed 86% of the 357 domestic homicides in England and Wales 2017 – 2019.

Impact

- poor physical & mental health, chronic pain, memory loss, problems with daily activities, the consequences of sexual violence and “self-medicating” with drugs or alcohol.
- 16% of people experiencing domestic abuse consider or attempt suicide and 13% self harm.
- 1 in 5 high risk victims attended A&E with injuries in the year before getting help offering opportunities to detect and prevent further abuse.
- Increase risk of homelessness, poverty and impact on employment. Domestic abuse is 2nd most common reason for losing a home and it is estimated that 1 in 5 homeless women are homeless due to domestic abuse

Impact on children

- estimated 1 in 5 children are exposed to domestic abuse in UK.
- emotional, psychological, social, educational and developmental problems.
- moving home and school to escape a perpetrator
- a danger that children may in some cases begin to see abuse as normal behaviour.
- In 2020/21 in Buckinghamshire there were 2,400 referrals for social care assessment where domestic abuse was the primary concern (23% all children's social care referrals).
- 700 children were given children in need, child protection plans or became looked after. Accounted for half of all children who became looked after that year.
- **Long term consequences** - alcohol misuse, becoming a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse, anti-social & risk taking behaviour, early pregnancy, homelessness, increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation & criminal behaviour.

Progress so far

- Smart Action Plan has been developed
- The Domestic Abuse team is in discussion with Service Providers to deliver new Domestic Abuse Services as set out in outline spend plan below.
 - Specialist DVA Worker for male victims
 - 2x Specialist DVA advisors in hospitals
 - Specialist DVA worker – diversity and inclusion
 - 2x Multi Agency Hub triage workers
 - Specialist Housing/Resettlement Advisor
 - Fund for ‘no access to refuge’ support
 - Fund for additional therapeutic services
 - Cross agency scenario-based training and Immersive technology support
 - Multi agency case management system
 - Back office infrastructure including project officers
 - Specialist Domestic Abuse Communications Officer
 - *Perpetrator service