

Bolton Council

| | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|-------|
| Report to: | Cabinet | | |
| Date of meeting: | 10 th January 2022 | | |
| Report of: | Deputy Chief Executive | Report Number: | 31585 |
| Reporting Officer: | Emily Brook, AD Strategy & Partnerships | Telephone Number: | |
| Contact Officer: | Rafael Martinez, Head of Community Safety & Neighbourhoods | Telephone Number: | |
| Report title: | Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2022 - 2025 | | |
| Not confidential | | | |
| This report does not contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public. | | | |
| Purpose: | The purpose of this report is to seek approval to endorse and adopt the strategy as set out in Appendix 2 | | |
| Recommendations: | The Cabinet is recommended to: 1) Endorse and approve the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2022 – 2025. Further updates on progress will be provided to the Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. | | |
| Decision: | | | |
| Background documents: | | | |
| Signed: | Leader/Executive Cabinet Member | Monitoring Officer | |
| Date: | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|-----|----------|----------------------------------|---|
| Consultation with other officers | | | | |
| Finance | No | | N/A | |
| Legal | No | | N/A | |
| HR | No | | N/A | |
| Procurement | No | | N/A | |
| Climate Change | No | | N/A | |
| Equality Impact Assessment | Yes | 02/12/21 | Rebecca Albrow / Rafael Martinez | |
| Post consultation reports Please confirm that the consultation response has been taken into consideration in making the recommendations. | | | Yes | |
| Vision outcomes Please identify the appropriate Vision outcome(s) that this report relates or contributes to by putting a cross in the relevant box. | | | 1. Start Well | √ |
| | | | 2. Live Well | √ |
| | | | 3. Age Well | √ |
| | | | 4. Prosperous | |

| | | |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| | 5. Clean and Green | |
| | 6. Strong and Distinctive | √ |

1. **INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 sets in statute that Tier One authorities¹ must prepare and publish a local strategy of how it will provide domestic abuse support for all victims (including their children) who reside in relevant safe accommodation, including those who come from outside of the area, based on a robust needs assessment.
- 1.2. The duty includes a requirement to publish a strategy and evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of it. Timelines set by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have been challenging, with a requirement that the strategy is published by 5th January 2022. This report seeks approval to endorse and adopt the strategy as set out in Appendix 2.
- 1.3. Domestic abuse has been a priority for the council for many years, and collaboration on improving responses to this issue has been a significant work area of the Community Safety Partnership, Children Safeguarding Partnership, and the Adult Safeguarding Board. With the enactment of the Domestic Abuse Act and the formal arrangements to set-up local Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards, it is our ambition that our coordinated response to this issue will only get stronger.

2. **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- 2.1. Under the Act there is a duty on local authorities to prepare a needs assessment, which will inform the development of a domestic abuse support in safe accommodation strategy. The Act doesn't stipulate that the needs assessment should be published but that it should be detailed enough to inform an assessment of the current safe accommodation provision in an area and identify what gaps exist, and how these will be addressed. The expectation is that the funding allocated to local authorities for the purpose of supporting victims and their children in safe accommodation should be used to commission / procure enhanced service provision as needed based on the needs assessment and the priorities identified within the strategy.
- 2.2. Working with the local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, the council has developed a needs assessment taking data from a wide range of settings. A further deep dive has been conducted specifically related to the safe accommodation duties to understand current provision and gaps. Relevant highlights from the needs assessment have been included in the strategy, and the key challenge from which are as follows:
 - A mix of response is required to meet varied needs of clients, dependent on their risk, household structure, occupation, and tenure of property.
 - Provision of easily accessible accommodation to those at risk of abuse and their children who are safe to stay within the area if provided with additional support.
 - Provision of therapeutic support to victims and their children who have experienced domestic abuse.
 - Ensuring greater support is provided to the housing sector to improve awareness and support to those experiencing domestic abuse.
 - Demand for temporary accommodation is high with a requirement to ensure this complies with safe accommodation requirements.
- 2.3 The needs assessment also highlights:

¹ Bolton Local Authority is classed as a Tier 1 Authority under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

- Bolton has a range of safe accommodation-based support available for survivors of domestic abuse. This consists of a blend of 'traditional' refuge, dispersed accommodation, and support for survivors to remain safely in their own homes and a range of therapeutic interventions.
- Fortalice is currently the primary provider of safe accommodation (refuge) in Bolton which is commissioned by the Council.
- Alongside this, there is other provision across dispersed accommodation which Endeavour provide the specialist domestic abuse support for, however this is limited and does not meet the demand identified.
- The range of services in Bolton are broadly in line with models prevailing in the UK and elsewhere.
- Users of local services recognise them as delivering good quality support and emphasise the need for holistic support, provided in a flexible range of safe environments that are tailored to their individual circumstances.
- In common with similar services in other parts of the country, accommodation-based support services in Bolton experience significant levels of demand. This has been particularly marked since the initial phases of the ongoing pandemic. As such, there is pressure on capacity across the services offered.

3. STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT, CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT

- 3.1 A core working group, representing a mix of professional backgrounds (including Community Safety, analysis and intelligence, Housing, Commissioning) has supported the development of a draft Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy for the next 3 years. This has been augmented by contributions from key stakeholders, such as local specialist domestic abuse services (Fortalice, and Endeavour), and Bolton at Home (Registered Social Landlord).
- 3.2 Between 01/11/2021 and 01/12/2021, the Council ran a public consultation, seeking to engage professionals, victims and stakeholders that use, support or provide safe accommodation within the borough into sharing their reflections on the draft Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy. During that period a comprehensive communication plan was implemented to raise awareness of the proposal across the borough, with a strong emphasis on engaging as wide as possible with stakeholders, professionals and victims. Communication was also carried out to all stakeholders, including the Vision Partnership and Elected Members. Supporting documentation was made accessible on the Council's consultation webpages and social media was heavily utilised throughout the period to share key messages about the consultation. The full report is available at Appendix 3
- 3.3 The overall responses to the consultation were very positive and suggest that the strategic priorities set out in the document are appropriate. In terms of other supporting comments respondents felt that the strategy lacked a focus on male victims of domestic abuse. Other comments suggested more of a focus on asylum seeker was needed. The strategy does refer to these specific groups of victims, however more work is needed to understand the impact, and this is examined further within the Equality Impact Assessment. As a general comment respondents all felt that a more user-friendly version of the strategy should be available.

4. STRATEGY PRIORITIES & AREAS OF FOCUS

- 4.1 The strategy sets out five priorities over the next 3 years (2022 – 2025).

| | |
|-----|--|
| (i) | Appropriate Safe Accommodation: availability of safe accommodation in Bolton for all of our victims and professional assistance in accessing safe accommodation whether this is in Bolton or out of our borough |
|-----|--|

| | |
|-------|---|
| (ii) | Access to Support Services within Safe Accommodation: Professionals have the right knowledge to be able to support victims to access relevant support services. |
| (iii) | Recognising multiple needs within safe accommodation: Access of Services to meet all needs |
| (iv) | Support to children and young people impacted by domestic abuse both within safe accommodation and in the community: Addressing the support needs of children and young people as victims in their own right |
| (v) | Multi- agency working to support requirements of the Safe Accommodation and Support Duty of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021: Joint working to provide a holistic approach to domestic abuse within safe accommodation and in the community |

- 4.2 Key work areas under each priority have been identified and these will be turned in a delivery plan, to help coordinate and manage progress. One of the key areas of focus will be exploring the Whole Housing Approach (WHA) to Domestic Abuse. This approach is endorsed by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner as well as highlighted as good practice within the Domestic Abuse Act Guidance. This approach enables victims of domestic abuse to access safe accommodation regardless of the tenure of property and enables specialist domestic abuse staff to offer a range of flexible options with regards to increasing the safety of those suffering domestic abuse and their children.
- 4.3 The WHA model offers a framework for the domestic abuse and housing sectors to work together to address the immediate and longer-term housing needs of survivors. The model incorporates the experiences of survivors, the expertise of system leaders and established, evidence-based practice.
- 4.4 Strategic discussions are taking place with local Registered Providers of Housing, via Bolton Community Homes, to explore how the sector can support some of the pressures in the current system particularly relating to use and capacity of temporary accommodation.
- 4.5 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has made funding available to Local authorities to enhance the safe accommodation support offer. Plans are developing as to how this funding will be used based on the needs assessment, and once the strategy has been formally endorsed, further approvals will be brought forward. The extent to which these plans and the strategy can be delivered, will depend to some extent on the funding made available for the period 2022 - 2025.

5. GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

- 5.1 The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will have responsibility to ensure the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation strategy and its priorities are progressing. A specific working group will be set-up with key stakeholders to take forward the strategy reporting back to the Board. Due to the cross-cutting nature of domestic abuse strategy updates will also be provided to the Community Safety Partnership, Children Safeguarding Partnership and Adult Safeguarding Board.
- 5.2 The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board benefits from political involvement with both the Executive Cabinet Member Wellbeing (and Domestic Abuse lead) and the Executive Cabinet Member Stronger Communities both represented.
- 5.3 An update report highlighting progress will be provided to the Council's Corporate Leadership Team in 6 – 12 months' time.

6. DEVELOPING A WHOLE SYSTEM RESPONSE

- 6.1 Whilst this report and draft strategy focuses on the support requirements for victims within safe accommodation, Bolton's Domestic Abuse Board recognise that responses to address domestic abuse need to form part of a wider, whole system, response. As such, Safe Lives (independent domestic abuse sector leader) is currently working in Bolton undertaking a deep dive of our current offer and system, adopting a Public Health approach. This involves extensive surveys and interviews with professionals, survivors, children, and perpetrators. This work will inform the development of a wider strategy for the whole system. The Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy will form an addendum to that wider strategy.

7. IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 Financial

- 7.1. The Council has been allocated £682,592 (2021/2022) from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to enhance the safe accommodation and support offer. Any procurement and standing order approvals will be subject to a separate report. Both DLUHC and the Local Government Association have indicated there is likely to be funding for future years, however, the level of funding has not been confirmed and was due to be announced in the Autumn Budget Statement 2021. Future funding allocations would form part of the local government finance settlement and at this stage there is no indication as to the funding levels for 2022/23 and beyond.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 None

7.3 HR

- 7.3.1 None

7.4 Climate Change

- 7.4.1 None

7.5 Other

- 7.5.1 If the strategy is approved the Council's Marketing Team will produce a more user-friendly version which will be made available on the council's website. The current version will remain on the council's website until this new document is available, which is expected towards the end of January 2022.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the council has a general duty to have due regard to the need to:
1. **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 2. **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and

3. **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

8.2 It is important to consider how the proposals contained within this report may impact positively or negatively on protected characteristics. Although the increased provision of support will be made available to all victims of domestic abuse, including children, it is unclear whether some protected groups (e.g. male/LGBTQ+/BME) have been identified as being differentially impacted by the current arrangements that are outlined within the strategy. However, measures are being taken to explore further how to support members from these groups in accessing provision and providing an inclusive offer. A full EIA is available at Appendix 1.

9. **CONSULTATION**

9.1 Section 3 of this report covers the detail relating to the consultation with the full report available in Appendix 3. As part of the consultation exercise a specific workshop session was undertaken with the Youth Council. The findings from this and the wider survey will be shared with Safe Lives as some feedback relate to the wider system response rather than the specifics of support in safe accommodation. A more targeted piece of work will now take place with children and young people that have experienced domestic abuse.

10. **VISION 2030**

10.1 Due to the far-reaching nature of domestic abuse, this report and the proposals contained within it will have a positive impact on the following Vision outcomes.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Start Well | Our children get the best possible start in life, so that they have every chance to succeed and be happy. |
| 2. Live Well | The health and wellbeing of our residents is improved, so that they can live healthy, fulfilling lives for longer. |
| 3. Age Well | Older people in Bolton stay healthier for longer and feel more connected with their communities. |
| 6. Strong and Distinctive | Stronger, cohesive, more confident communities in which people feel safe, welcome and connected. |

11. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

11.1 The Cabinet is recommended to:

- a) Endorse and approve the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2022 – 2025. Further updates on progress will be provided to the Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

Appendix 1

Equality Impact Assessment

| |
|---|
| Title of report or proposal: |
| Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2022 - 2025 |

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Directorate: | Corporate Resources |
| Section: | Community Safety Services |
| Date: | 02/12/2021 |

Public sector bodies need to be able to evidence that they have given due regard to the impact and potential impact on all people with 'protected characteristics' in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees.

Under the Equality Act 2010, the council has a general duty to have due regard to the need to:

1. **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
2. **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
3. **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

By completing the following questions the three parts of the equality duty will be consciously considered as part of the decision-making process.

Details of the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment must also be included in the main body of the report.

1. Describe in summary the aims, objectives and purpose of the proposal, including desired outcomes.

The Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy sets out how Bolton will provide domestic abuse support for all victims (including their children) who reside in relevant safe accommodation, including those who come from outside of the area based on a robust needs assessment.

The needs assessment highlights some gaps in current provision. Central government funding will be used to try and meet these gaps wherever possible. The strategy aims to ensure that a victim has a safe place to go to should they need it with the appropriate level of support available for both the victim and their children.

2. Is this a new policy / function / service or review of existing one?

This is a new strategy.

3. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the proposal?

Victims of domestic abuse, including their children

4. In summary, what are the anticipated (positive or negative) impacts of the proposal?

The aim of the strategy is to enhance the current offer which will benefit all victims of domestic abuse and their children. Although the increased provision of support will be made available to all victims of domestic abuse, including children, it is unclear whether some protected groups (e.g. male/LGBTQ+) have been identified as being differentially impacted by the current arrangements that are outlined within the strategy. However, measures are being taken to explore further how to support members from these groups in accessing provision and providing an inclusive offer.

The extent to which the gaps identified in the needs assessment can be met will depend on the funding levels allocated by central government. At this stage no funding has been allocated after March 2022. This could limit the level and type of dedicated provision available to some victims, e.g. males, LGBT+, BAME, those with no recourse to public funds. It is proposed that within the first year of the strategy an independent review will be undertaken to ensure the council is meeting its statutory duty. This will include engagement with key organisations and groups representing specific victims (e.g. BME, LGBT+) to ensure any barriers to accessing the current offer is understood and improvements can be developed.

5. What, if any, cumulative impact could the proposal have?

None anticipated.

6. With regard to the stakeholders identified above and the diversity groups set out below:

| | List any adverse impacts identified from data or engagement | Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason? Please state why | Please detail what actions you will take to remedy any identified adverse impact i.e. actions to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations |
|---|---|---|--|
| Race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality, and caste, and includes refugees and migrants; and gypsies and travellers) | Consultation has highlighted some possible gaps; however it is unclear at this stage whether there is adverse impact on - race. | | Engagement with key organisations and groups representing specific victims to ensure any barriers to accessing the current offer is understood and improvements can be developed. |
| Religion or belief (this includes any religion with a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief. The Act also covers lack of religion or belief) | Consultation has highlighted some possible gaps; however it is unclear at this stage whether there is adverse impact on – religion or belief. | | Engagement with key organisations and groups representing specific victims to ensure any barriers to accessing the current offer is understood and improvements can be developed. |
| Disability (a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities) | Consultation has highlighted some possible gaps; however it is unclear at this stage whether there is adverse impact on – disability. | | Engagement with key organisations and groups representing specific victims to ensure any barriers to accessing the current offer is understood and improvements can be developed. |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Sex / Gender | Consultation has highlighted some possible gaps; however it is unclear at this stage whether there is adverse impact on – sex / gender. | | Engagement with key organisations and groups representing specific victims to ensure any barriers to accessing the current offer is understood and improvements can be developed. |
| Gender reassignment / Gender identity (a person who's deeply felt and individual experience of gender may not correspond to the sex assigned to them at birth, they may or may not propose to, start or complete a process to change their gender. A person does not need to be under medical supervision to be protected) | Consultation has highlighted some possible gaps; however it is unclear at this stage whether there is adverse impact on – gender reassignment / gender identity. | | Engagement with key organisations and groups representing specific victims to ensure any barriers to accessing the current offer is understood and improvements can be developed. |
| Age (people of all ages) | Consultation has highlighted some possible gaps; however it is unclear at this stage whether there is adverse impact on – age. | | Engagement with key organisations and groups representing specific victims to ensure any barriers to accessing the current offer is understood and improvements can be developed. |
| Sexual orientation - people who are lesbian, gay and bisexual. | Consultation has highlighted some possible gaps; however it is unclear at this stage whether there is adverse impact on – sexual orientation. | | Engagement with key organisations and groups representing specific victims to ensure any barriers to accessing the current offer is understood and improvements can be developed. |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Marriage and civil partnership (Only in relation to due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination) | Consultation has highlighted some possible gaps; however it is unclear at this stage whether there is adverse impact on – marriage and civil partnership. | | Engagement with key organisations and groups representing specific victims to ensure any barriers to accessing the current offer is understood and improvements can be developed. |
| Caring status (including pregnancy & maternity) | Consultation has highlighted some possible gaps; however it is unclear at this stage whether there is adverse impact on – caring status. | | Engagement with key organisations and groups representing specific victims to ensure any barriers to accessing the current offer is understood and improvements can be developed. |
| Socio-economic | Consultation has highlighted some possible gaps; however it is unclear at this stage whether there is adverse impact on – socio economic. | | Engagement with key organisations and groups representing specific victims to ensure any barriers to accessing the current offer is understood and improvements can be developed. |
| Other comments or issues. | | | |
| Please provide a list of the evidence used to inform this EIA, such as the results of consultation or other engagement, service take-up, service monitoring, surveys, stakeholder comments and complaints where appropriate. | Needs assessment undertaken based on service data and need. The Consultation findings on the draft strategy is available in full under Appendix 3. | | |

This EIA form and report has been checked and countersigned by the Directorate Equalities Officer before proceeding to Executive Cabinet Member(s)

Please confirm the outcome of this EIA:

| | |
|--|--|
| No major impact identified, therefore no major changes required – proceed | <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> |
| Adjustments to remove barriers / promote equality (mitigate impact) have been identified – proceed | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Positive impact for one or more groups justified on the grounds of promoting equality - proceed | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Continue despite having identified potential for adverse impact/missed opportunities for promoting equality – this requires a strong justification | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination - stop and rethink | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Contact Officer

Name: Rafael Martinez

Date: 02/12/2021

Directorate Equalities Lead Officer

Name: Rebecca Albrow

Date: 02/12/2021

APPENDIX 2: BOLTON'S DOMESTIC ABUSE SAFE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY 2022 - 2025

INTRODUCTION

This Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy has been developed by Bolton's Domestic Abuse and Violence Partnership Board in response to the Government's Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which has a specific focus on domestic abuse support in safe accommodation. Whilst the focus for this strategy is purely on the support element within safe accommodation, it will form part of a system wide Bolton Domestic Abuse Strategy which will also include the findings and recommendations that Safe Lives are currently undertaking with us. That strategy will articulate the broader partnership response to domestic abuse.

1. THE DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT 2021: What does it say?

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires that Local Authorities establish a Domestic Abuse Partnership Board with a statutory duty to assess the need and create a strategy for domestic abuse support in our area for all victims (and their children) who reside in relevant safe accommodation, including those who come from outside of the area; to publish this strategy and evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of it.

We now have a responsibility by law to assess the need for support in safe accommodation through a needs assessment to meet identified need.

The Act introduces changes which impact on registered Housing Providers. Prior to the Act victims fleeing from domestic abuse would only be considered to have priority need if they were found to be vulnerable as a result of the domestic abuse, or if they fulfilled another vulnerability characteristic such as being pregnant, having dependent children or being vulnerable as a result of mental illness or disability.

The Domestic Abuse Act now extends priority needs status to all those who are eligible for assistance and homeless as a result of domestic abuse. This will mean that councils will no longer need to consider if a survivor is vulnerable as result of their abuse in order for the survivor to access accommodation secured by the local authority.

The Domestic Abuse Act places requirements on housing authorities in relation to security of tenure when rehousing survivors fleeing domestic abuse who were an existing lifetime social tenant.

The Domestic Abuse Act emphasises that support is available to all those fleeing abuse, including those who cross local authority borders, and that housing and support needs for adults and children fleeing abuse should be met irrespective of whether they have stayed close to home or moved to another authority area.

Safe Accommodation Types:

| Accommodation | Description |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Refuge accommodation | Accommodation and intensive wrap around support for victims and their children residing there. |
| Specialist safe accommodation | Specialist refuges for Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Questioning and other (LGBTQ+) communities, and disabled victims and their children. These may provide single gender accommodation with dedicated specialist support to victims who share a protected characteristic(s). This includes services that are led by those that also share the protected characteristic and/or have |

| | |
|---|---|
| | complex needs |
| Dispersed accommodation | Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of DA), self-contained accommodation with the same 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 due to complex support needs or for families with teenage sons for example. |
| | 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, and are still at risk of abuse from their perpetrator(s) |
| Sanctuary Schemes | Properties with local authority installed Sanctuary Schemes or other similar schemes, which provide enhanced physical security measures within a home. A Sanctuary Scheme is a victim 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. |
| Move-on and / or second stage accommodation | These are interchangeable terms for projects temporarily accommodating victims, including families 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 permanent accommodation. There is no expectation that every victim will require this. Many victims are ready to move straight to a permanent new home from refuge. However, move-on and / or second stage accommodation may be helpful in some cases. |
| Other accommodation designated by the local housing authority, registered social landlord or registered charity as domestic abuse emergency accommodation | A safe place with support. To give victims an opportunity to spend a temporary period of time to make decisions in an environment which is self-contained and safe. This would include access to wrap around support and specialist support for victims with complex needs (including mental health needs and substance misuse). |

'Safe accommodation' is only considered safe if it is delivered with domestic abuse specific support. This can be directly provided within safe accommodation services and as outreach support to victims in other types of relevant accommodation, including their homes. The government is clear that this Act should not result in any negative impact on non-accommodation based local domestic abuse services. It is expected that support in safe accommodation should sit alongside and complement the support that is already available to victims.

2. SAFE ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS:

Refuge Accommodation

Our refuge has 22 self-contained units to accommodate female victims and their children and a further 2 dispersed units. Wrap around support is offered which includes emotional and practical support. We have no specialist safe accommodation specifically for BAME, LGBTQ+ or other protected characteristics, they are housed either in the existing refuge with the full support offer (if female) or in dispersed and temporary accommodation with support from the Haven Project.

The refuge has 4 units with wheelchair access, walk in showers and open kitchen to allow for wheelchair access. It has never had the demand to use all 4 for disability access. All the other flats can accommodate people with various disabilities such as people with hearing impairment. The refuge can make the required adaptations around other disabilities to meet individual needs.

Demand in our refuge placement is high with over 98% occupancy. Out of area residents are also accepted. From 2018-21, our refuge accommodated 19% of victims from outside the borough.

Over that same 3-year period, 149 female victims and 228 children were housed and supported in the refuge. 144 described themselves as Heterosexual, 3 as bisexual with 2 not disclosing. Of the 149 victims, 43 were from BAME communities (29%). this is an increase from 27% in 2018-19.

The predominant age range was 25-34 (51.7%) with 2 residents aged 55+ during this period. In terms of major presenting issues over the three years 63% of victims identified having mental health issues. A further 14% had drug misuse problems and 7% admitted to alcohol problems.

Dispersed properties

Bolton has 6 dispersed domestic abuse specific properties for both male and female victims of domestic abuse who may also have complex needs. We have a number of other dispersed units that are not secure accommodation.

Other Non-DA Specific Temporary Accommodation utilised for Domestic Abuse cases

There is a range of temporary accommodation provision utilised for domestic abuse cases which is supported but NOT domestic abuse specific. These are generic homelessness provision for singles and families to assist homeless households in need of temporary accommodation and support. These include Benjamin Court (24 units) and Benjamin Court dispersed temporary properties (50 units) and three hostels (2 male, 1 female) (72 units).

There are significant numbers of domestic abuse cases placed through this provision – particularly in our dispersed locations and through the female hostel provision.

For this to meet the Safe Accommodation requirement additional domestic abuse specific support is required, this is currently delivered by the Haven Project but is majorly under resourced.

Our Haven Project provides support in these properties/ temporary accommodation settings including specifically safety planning and safe relationship. It gives domestic abuse victims an opportunity to spend a temporary period of time to [consider and] make decisions in an environment which is self-contained and safe. This support is provided to both male and female victims but not to the children they may have living with them.

In addition, there is regular use of emergency hotel and guest house accommodation for. This is mainly for purpose of initial place of safety and for short periods, however some placements do run for considerable periods of time. Whilst the Haven support is provided, the accommodation would not in ANY EVENT meet the safe accommodation requirements.

From 2018-21 the Haven Project supported 286 victims of domestic abuse, of these 81 (28.6%) were in secure accommodation, 138 (48.3%) were staying with either family, friends or sofa surfing. The remaining were in no-secure accommodation.

The data sets behind these placements are very fluid and will require ongoing monitoring around numbers of placements and need for more suitable 'safe accommodation' alternatives.

Sanctuary Schemes/ Target Hardening.

Although we do not have a formalised Sanctuary Scheme, we do have target hardening options which gives victims a choice if they prefer to remain at home.

In 2020-21 Bolton at Home (our main Social Housing Provider) received 740 individual requests for target hardening to their properties that were DA related (includes more than one target hardening request in a property). Majority of provision has been for spyholes, security lights, window locks, emergency lock changes and referral to Careline. This support is enhanced with dedicated case management support from Domestic Abuse case workers.

The officers are specialists trained to support victims and their families, Bolton at Home has a registered Social Worker who is also a Social Worker Practise Educator, Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) and a former Mental Health Social Worker. The Manager of the service is also accredited by Safe Lives and all of this knowledge and experience adds to the support offer this team provides.

The service offers a victim led approach with regards to Safety planning and target hardening to ensure all concerns of the victim are discussed and that safety planning and target hardening is effective to keep them safe in their own home. The majority of victims wish to remain in their own homes to be near family/friends for support as well as maintain stability for children who attend local schools and have good pastoral as well as peer support, for those victims who are more at risk and are requesting a move Bolton at Home will discuss move on and property location to ensure a safe seamless transition.

Our Be Secure project managed by Community Safety has also target hardened 150 properties in 20/21.

Move-on and / or second stage accommodation

Any move-on from the refuge into Bolton at Home accommodation is referred into the DAV Service to support victims with that transition into their new home as well carrying out new safety planning assessments and target hardening if its required this ensures that the victim and their family remain safe and can start their new chapter of independent living. Bolton at Home also has some out of borough victims that are allocated accommodation who are also referred into the DAV Service as part of the move-on and again they complete safety planning assessments and target hardening if required as well as receiving support from the Tenancy Sustainment Team who can focus their support on tenancy related need.

For those housed outside of Bolton at Home accommodation we offer support through our Safe Haven Project which is a step-down support offer to victims and their families who no longer need the intensive level of support provided in a refuge but would still benefit from a lower level of domestic abuse whilst settling back to fully independent living. From 2018-2021 our 4.5 Safe Haven Officers (combination of council and external funding) have supported 673 families for up to 12 months. Demand during 2021 is already higher. During the first 6 months of this financial year, the Safe Haven Officers have supported 129 new families with a further 113 cases remaining open from the previous financial year.

Our Needs Assessment also found:

- Our biggest social housing provider, Bolton at Home supported 329 victims of domestic abuse in financial year 2020-21. 13% of these came internally via safeguarding or tenancy support. 18% were via Fortalice, our specialist domestic abuse provider. 92% of these were female and 3% from an ethnic minority background.
- From April 2018 to Feb 2021, our Housing Options Service (remit is to work with the homeless or those threatened with Homelessness) supported 1,588 clients, 69% were deemed at risk of domestic abuse. Just over 50% indicated their housing issue was either 'fleeing abuse at their current property' or 'relationship breakdown with a violent partner'.
- Service demand data from Housing Options indicates only 1.8% of all clients are LGBTQ+. The data also indicates that 25% of clients are from a BAME group.
- There has been a steady increase in demand for accommodation relating to domestic abuse over the last three years, with a 43% increase between financial year 2018/19 and 2020/21.

Gaps identified:

- There is insufficient safe accommodation to meet overall demand in Bolton. Victims being placed in temporary accommodation due to a lack of available and suitable local safe accommodation. This is putting immense pressure on our B&B accommodation. Using temporary accommodation without the wraparound support increases the risk of the victim returning back to the abusive partner.
- Victims with teenage children are struggling to find safe refuge accommodation. Our refuge has sourced additional safe accommodation to address this but units are limited so this is an issue.
- There is a high prevalence of mental health and/or substance misuse needs amongst victims in safe accommodation which is not currently being met due to demand outweighing supply.
- There is a gap in advocacy and support for children housed in safe accommodation outside of our refuge.
- The capacity of Haven is very limited as only 1 officer is employed to support all victims housed in safe accommodation outside of our refuge. Additionally, this support is only for victims and not their children
- Moving on from temporary and/or refuge accommodation is limited due to lack of available social housing and the high cost of privately rented accommodation. This results in longer stays in refuge/temporary safe accommodation and so restricts other victims from accessing the much needed safe accommodation support.
- Awareness of the Sanctuary Scheme and how it could benefit victims, is limited amongst professionals.
- 'Sofa Surfing' and living with friends and family is also another means victims are using to flee their abusive relationships. From 2018 to 2021, 138 victims of domestic abuse who were Sofa Surfing, have been supported by our Haven Project. There are likely to be many more. This is unseen by professionals so the true scale of it is not known.
- Limited long term support after leaving safe accommodation for those with complex needs.

2. DOMESTIC ABUSE SAFE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY: PRIORITIES

To meet the safe accommodation requirements under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Bolton has identified the following 5 priorities:

| | |
|-----|---|
| (i) | Appropriate Safe Accommodation: <i>availability of safe accommodation in Bolton for all of our victims and professional assistance in accessing safe accommodation whether this is in Bolton or out of our borough</i> |
|-----|---|

| | |
|-------|--|
| (ii) | Access to Support Services within Safe Accommodation: <i>Professionals have the right knowledge to be able to support victims to access relevant support services.</i> |
| (iii) | Recognising multiple needs within safe accommodation: <i>Access of Services to meet all needs</i> |
| (iv) | Support to children and young people impacted by domestic abuse both within safe accommodation and in the community: <i>Addressing the support needs of children and young people as victims in their own right</i> |
| (v) | Multi- agency working to support requirements of the Safe Accommodation and Support Duty of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021: <i>Joint working to provide a holistic approach to domestic abuse within safe accommodation and in the community</i> |

(i) Appropriate Safe Accommodation

This means developing a model of safe accommodation across Bolton to address current gaps in provision. We will do this by:

- Exploring and considering the principles of the Whole Housing Approach which recognises the important role of housing in supporting and keeping victims safe whether in their own homes or relocating to a place of safety.
- Working with our Housing and Domestic Abuse Specialist Partners to develop and agree robust transitional arrangements to deliver the Safe Accommodation Strategy. We recognise that it will take time to design and commission additional safe accommodation provision and support, and to achieve the improvements intended. We will work together to address actions we can take immediately to our safe accommodation offer for victims whilst working towards a comprehensive responsive offer longer-term.
- Evaluating our Homelessness Strategy against our domestic abuse strategic approach to develop our local action plans to meet the need.
- Investigating the potential of access to more dispersed properties through dialogue with Bolton Community Homes and our main social housing provider: Bolton at Home to improve our safe accommodation offer to meet the demand needs in Bolton.
- Addressing our current gap in move-on accommodation so that once risk is reduced and victims are ready to do so, they can move on from the safe accommodation/other move-on support and open up space for other high risk victims of domestic abuse.
- Formalising our cross-border working arrangements and collaborative agreements so that these are better managed giving our highest risk victims and their children the least traumatic experience of having to move from their locality as a result of domestic abuse.
- Ensuring that all victims currently accessing temporary accommodation as part of the transitional arrangements, are provided support by our Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support Services.
- Treating all victims of domestic abuse as having a priority need for accommodation. The Domestic Abuse Act introduces a requirement for all domestic abuse victims to be automatically considered in priority need and therefore benefit from the statutory homelessness process and receive an offer of settled housing. We will work towards ensuring that all victims of domestic abuse in social housing, are provided with a secure lifetime tenancy as required under the Domestic Abuse Act (where tenancy has been granted).
- Formalising and enhancing our Sanctuary Scheme provision and relevant floating support within it so that victims feel safe in their homes and can access appropriate domestic abuse support for themselves and their children.
- Working with victims to explore options that support them to stay safe when outside of their homes.

(ii) Access to Support Services within Safe Accommodation

This means ensuring that the necessary support is in place within safe accommodation for all victims. We will do this by:

- Ensuring the availability of support provision so that needs are being met. This includes and is not limited to: domestic abuse advocacy, practical and emotional advice and support, housing options advice (including support to complete housing applications), legal advice (through the legal service), re-settlement support, signing up to new schools for children and counselling and therapy for adult and child victims.
- Uplifting our support offer around mental health and substance misuse to address increase in demand within our safe accommodation.
- Increasing our floating support offer so that all victims in safe accommodation have access to relevant support and assistance.
- Working with our Pet Fostering service so that victims can leave their abusive household knowing that their pet is in safe hands whilst they are supported in safe accommodation (often victims remain for fear of what will happen to their pet in their absence).
- Enhancing our move-on and re-settlement support for families after they have left the safe accommodation to ensure on-going support is available if needed.

(iii) Recognising multiple needs within safe accommodation

This means recognising the intersectional and overlapping nature of domestic abuse (race, class, sexuality etc) which affects victims differently. We will do this by:

- Ensuring that safe accommodation provision meets diverse and multiple needs of victims.
- Increasing our understanding of people with multiple needs to allow them to take up placements in safe accommodation.
- Ensuring that our safe accommodation offer is open to all including protected characteristics: It is against the law (Equality Act 2010) to discriminate against someone because of: Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- Enhancing specialist support where there are barriers to access eg: male victims, BAME communities, LGBTQ+ and older victims.
- Enabling options for specific support for vulnerable victims where there is evidenced need eg: Mental health, substance misuse, disability, history of offending etc within our safe accommodation and in victims' own homes for their safety.

(iv) Support to children and young people impacted by domestic abuse in safe accommodation and in the community

This means making sure that children and young people who have been impacted by domestic abuse have the relevant support. We will do this by:

- Strengthening interventions for children including nursery provision, access to play therapy, on-going education, counselling and advocacy within our refuge via our support workers (additional staff have been recruited so 8 officers currently in post)

- Addressing our current gap in advocacy and support for children housed in safe accommodation outside of our refuge to ensure their needs are being met within dispersed properties and at home for those supported via our Sanctuary Scheme.
- Ensuring that children and young peoples voices are heard when designing and reviewing our domestic abuse services so that we are responsive to their needs.
- Working with schools around trauma informed practice.

(v) Multi-Agency Working to support requirements of the Safe Accommodation and Support Duty of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

This means partners working together holistically so that we can identify and respond to domestic abuse as early as possible in an effective and co-ordinated way. We will do this by:

- Reviewing our Multi-Agency training offer to ensure duties of the Act are incorporated into training and operational plans across the workforce so that staff understand the requirements.
- Multi-agency and wider public awareness raising - There is an opportunity to enrich the broader understanding of DA across partner organisations and wider community to encourage the early identification of DA concerns so that responses are effectively facilitated and referral pathways into services are fully understood.
- Utilising the findings of the Whole System Review work undertaken by SafeLives for Bolton's approach to domestic abuse as well as their findings from the deep dive reviews of our MARAC process and our Perpetrator provision to improve and enhance our provision and service delivery.
- Engaging with victims about their experience of accessing local services and any barriers to access they have faced, this will inform improvements needed across safe accommodation providers and agencies and the support they provide.

3. HOW BOLTON'S SAFE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY WILL BE DELIVERED

- A working group from Bolton's Domestic Abuse and Violence Partnership Board will develop and implement a delivery plan with clear timescales for delivery for short, medium and long term. Each identified action will have an objective set against it, the outcomes that are anticipated and how we will measure these. The delivery plan will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by our Domestic Abuse and Violence Partnership Board.
- Alongside the Bolton Domestic Abuse and Violence Partnership Board, we will monitor progress to deliver the strategy and delivery plan with the Be Safe Partnership, Children's Safeguarding and Adult's Safeguarding Boards, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the 'Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' (previously the ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as required.
- We will ensure that 'lived experience' is fully incorporated into our work and that the 'authentic voice' informs our delivery, practice and progress.
- Further work will be undertaken to get a better insight into historic and current need data and a rolling process to understand existing data sets and any shortfall in meeting the provision of safe accommodation and support.
- To address current gaps, additional safe accommodation and support commissioning options will be developed and delivered.
- We will work with partners to seek short term remedies to meet existing need with statutory safe accommodation requirements. Consideration will be given to a longer-term approach to meeting the safe accommodation needs in Bolton for victims of domestic abuse through any revised/additional commissioning approach.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of existing safe accommodation and support services.

- Given the limited supply of social housing for move-on, we will consider the option to pilot a number of personalised move-on budgets working with people who have been assisted through temporary / supported accommodation to secure alternative private rented accommodation.
- Awareness raising, training and communications on the safe accommodation offer will be delivered for professionals across Bolton's agencies.
- We will raise awareness of Domestic Abuse and communicate safe accommodation and the broader DA offer to residents of Bolton.

4. HOW WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE

- Victims have increased capacity and confidence to report and respond. They recognise the need for help and know where to go for this.
- Comprehensive services are being delivered both within safe accommodation and community based, that meet the needs of recipients.
- The authentic voice (lived experience) is used to inform practice and in turn improve service provision.
- Repeat victimisation is reduced.
- Domestic Abuse and Violence becomes a routine inquiry point amongst practitioners: they are better aware of provision and are familiar with the Safe Accommodation offer, utilise this and can sign post accordingly.
- Bolton has appropriate and sufficient safe accommodation and support provision is in place that is relevant to need and supports the most vulnerable domestic abuse victims and their children.
- Victims of domestic abuse that require safe accommodation and support are not housed in generic temporary accommodation in Bolton.
- Housing Providers have a clear understanding of their responsibilities under the new Act.
- More effective/informed commissioning of services that address the gaps and meet the needs identified.

Appendix I: Bolton Domestic Abuse and Violence Partnership Board Members:

Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council which includes representation from:

- Community Safety Services
- Children's Services which includes: Children's Safeguarding, Targeted Early Help, Start Well and the 5-19s Service
- Adult Social Care and Health including Adults Safeguarding
- Public Health
- Bolton Community Homes
- Housing Advice and Support
- Council Commissioning
- 2 Elected Members (ECM Wellbeing and ECM Stronger Communities)

Fortalice: Specialist DAV Provider

Endeavour Paws For Kids: Specialist DAV Provider

Victim Support

Probation Service

Bolton at Home

CCG

Bolton Foundation Trust

GMMH (Greater Manchester Mental Health) Mental Health

GMMH Substance Misuse

Education: 1 Primary Head and 1 Secondary Head

GMP

GMP Victim Services

Appendix II: The Domestic Abuse Act 2021: Domestic Abuse Support within Safe/ relevant Accommodation is described 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 (such functions will often be undertaken by a service manager)
- 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 (for example, GPs and social workers, welfare benefit providers).
- 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.
- Designed specifically for victims with relevant protected characteristics (including ‘by and for’), such as faith services, translators and interpreters, immigration advice, interpreters for victims identifying as deaf and / or hard of hearing, and dedicated support for LGBTQ+ victims [not limited to].
- Designed specifically for victims with additional and / or complex needs such as, mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support [not limited to], 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 – including emotional support, 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.

Appendix III: Other Policy Influencers

- National Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 - 2020.
- The Children Act 1989
- The Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Care Act 2014
- The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) Report of 2015 on 'Adult Safeguarding and Domestic
- Policing and Crime Act 2017
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) regularly undertake inspections of police forces to identify areas for improvement both nationally and locally, this includes particular focus on how forces respond to Domestic Abuse. Greater Manchester Police has developed a Domestic Abuse Action Plan in response.
- GM Violence & Against Women & Girls Strategy
- GM Health & Justice Strategy
- NICE Guidance and Public Health Approach
- Join Targeted Area Inspection Framework: Domestic Abuse
- Sector Lead Development: Against Violence and Abuse (AVA), SafeLives, Standing Together
- GM VAWG Strategy 2021

Appendix IV: Useful Numbers

Fortalice: (specialist Domestic Abuse Support Provider: refuge and support)
Telephone: 01204 365677

Endeavour: (specialist Domestic Abuse Support Provider)
Telephone: 01204 394842

Children's Safeguarding
<https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/worried-child>

Adult's Safeguarding
https://selfserve.bolton.gov.uk/CitizenPortal/Form.aspx?form=Adult_Safeguarding_Referral
Email: Safeguardingadults@bolton.gov.uk
Tel: 01204 337000

Victim Support
<http://www.victimsupport.org.uk>
Telephone: 01204 399736

Greater Manchester Police:
Bolton.ppiu@gmp.police.uk
Telephone: 0161 856 5589

Housing Options:
homelesswelfare@bolton.gov.uk
Telephone: 01204 335830
Independent Choices (support for LGBTQ+)
helpline@independentchoices.org.uk
0161 636 7525

Survivors Manchester (GM support for male victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence)
Telephone: 0845 122 1201

24 hr Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline - 0808 2000 247
www.endthefear.co.uk

Women's Aid
helpline@womensaid.org.uk
Telephone: 0808 2000 247

Mankind
www.mankind.org.uk
Telephone: 01823 334244

Stonewall (support for LGBTQ+)
info@stonewall.org.uk, www.stonewall.org.uk
Telephone: 0800 050 2020

Galop – (support to LGBT+)

[W: http://www.galop.org.uk/](http://www.galop.org.uk/)

Telephone: T: 0800 999 5428

Scope Dial UK (support for the disabled)

response@scope.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 800 33 33

Southall Black Sisters (BAME support)

sbs@leonet.co.uk, www.southallblacksisters.org.uk

Telephone: 0208 571 9595

NSPCC

Telephone: 0800 1111 and 0808 800 5000

Parent Line

parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 800 2222

Respect Phoneline (those seeking support for their abusive behaviour)

<https://respectphoneline.org.uk>

Telephone: 0808 802 4040

Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation Strategy Consultation

**Report by Community Safety Service /
Consultation & Research Team.
December 2021**

1. Background

Bolton Domestic Abuse Board has commissioned this consultation on the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy which is now part of the new statutory requirements of the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.

2. Methodology

Between 01/11/2021 and 01/12/2021, the Council ran a public consultation, seeking to engage professionals, victims and stakeholders that use, support or provide safe accommodation within the borough into sharing their reflections on the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy. During that period a comprehensive communication plan was implemented to raise awareness of the proposal across the borough, with a strong emphasis on engaging as wide as possible with stakeholders, professionals and victims. An email was also distributed to all stakeholders, including the Vision Partnership and Elected Members. Supporting documentation was made accessible on the Council's consultation webpages and social media was heavily utilised throughout the period to share key messages about the consultation.

Participants were surveyed using a questionnaire tool made up of open and closed questions, over a period of four weeks, providing respondents the opportunity to reflect and share their thoughts on the proposal. The questionnaire was made available both digitally and offline, with the questionnaire being accessible on the council's consultation web page, as well as in hard copy format, on request.

In addition, face to face focus group sessions were delivered, enabling service users to outline key concerns and ask questions relating to the proposal. These sessions took place in early November (refer to Appendix A).

*A copy of the questionnaire is included at the end of this document, located in Appendix B.

3. Consultation responses

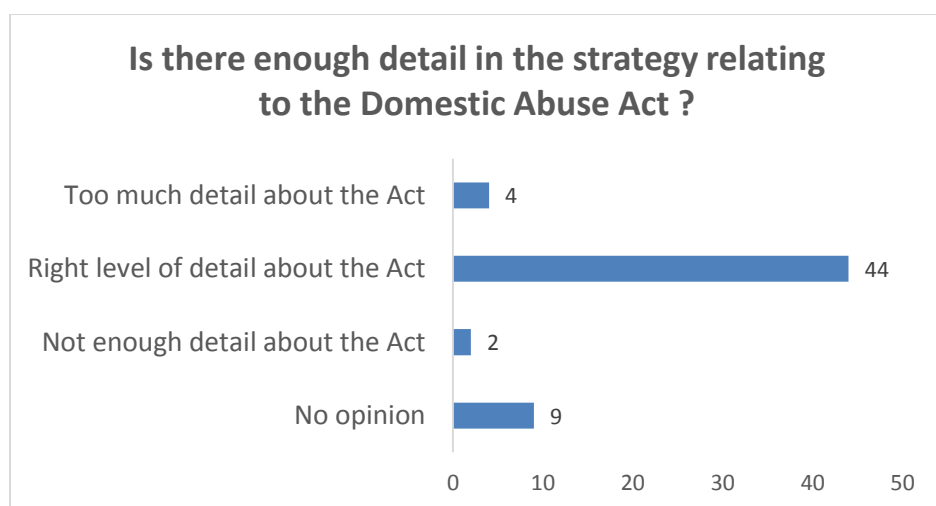
Several open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire to give respondents the opportunity to comment on the proposal, suggest alternative approaches for safe accommodation and outline the support needed if the proposal was approved.

Throughout the consultation period the following responses were received:

- 59 completed electronic questionnaires from residents and stakeholders
- Feedback from the Youth Council meeting.

4. The Strategy and the Domestic Abuse Act

Respondents were asked if enough detail had been provided within the strategy relating to the Domestic Abuse Act. 75% of respondents agreed that the strategy contained the appropriate amount of detail relating to the Act. 3% suggested that it did not contain enough and 7% suggested it contained too much detail.

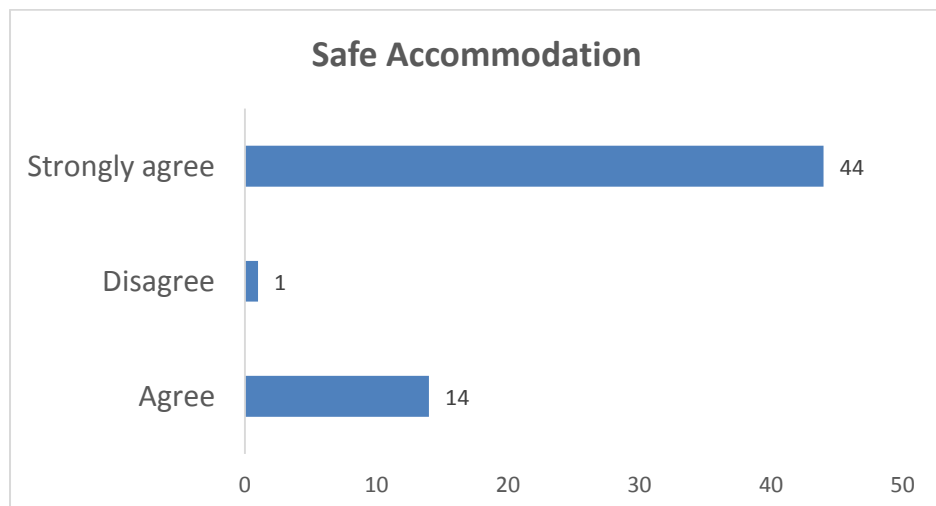


Base 59

One comment was received that no information about male domestic abuse in the borough, or acceptance that male victims actually exist was in the strategy.

5. Priority (i) – Appropriate safe accommodation.

Respondents were asked if they agreed with the statement that the availability of safe accommodation in Bolton for all of our victims, and professional assistance in accessing safe accommodation – whether this is in Bolton or out of the Borough.



Base 59

98% of respondents agreed with the statement, with 76% in strong agreement.

Various comments were received relating to priority one that highlighted issues shown below.

- There are certain barriers for fleeing domestic abuse victims who have teenage children particularly male.
- The availability of pet fostering services.
- Priority should be to keep families within the borough.
- Shortage of housing.
- Little provision for male victims.
- Asylum seeker status.

6. Priority (ii) – Access to support services within safe accommodation.

Respondents were asked if they agreed with the statement that professionals have the right knowledge to be able to support victims to access support services. 97% of respondents agreed that professionals have the right knowledge, with 80% in strong agreement.

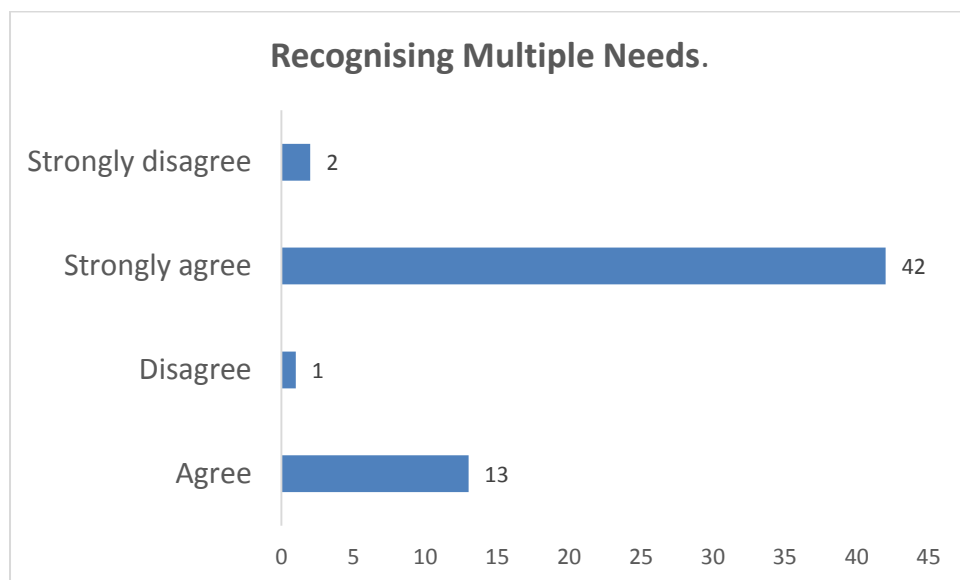


Various comments were received relating to priority two that highlighted issues shown below.

- No support for male victims.
- Specific support required for deaf asylum seekers.
- Professionals need to be better educated and trained.

7. Priority (iii) Recognising multiple needs within safe accommodation.

Respondents were asked if it was important to recognise multiple needs within safe accommodation with services meeting all needs. 93% agreed with this statement, with 71% in strong agreement.



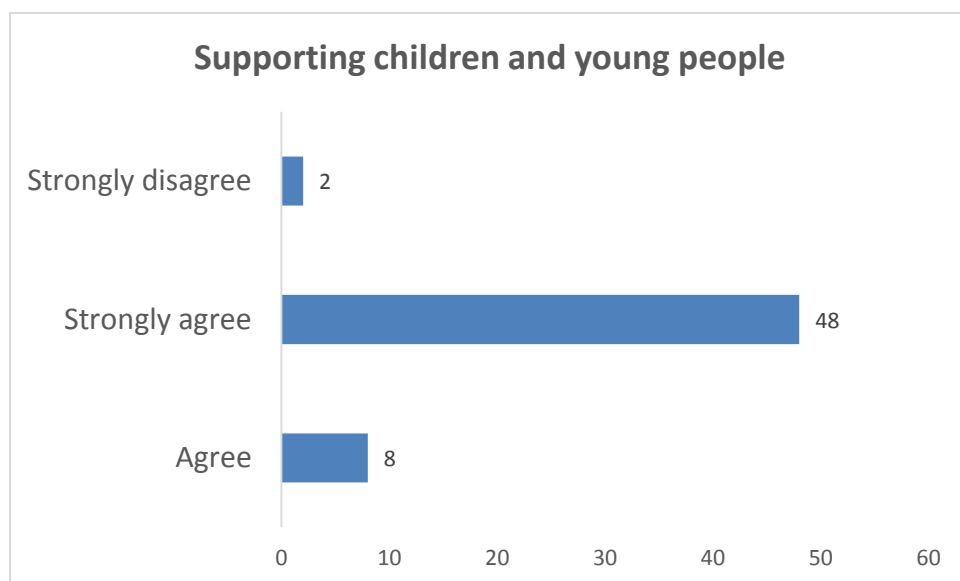
Base 59

Various comments were received relating to priority two that highlighted issues shown below.

- Consideration should be given in respect to parental conflict.
- Need to be more aware of religious requirements.
- Needs of male victims are not met.

8. Priority (iv) – Supporting Children and young people impacted by domestic abuse.

Respondents were asked if supporting children and young people impacted by domestic abuse should be a priority. 97% agreed with this priority, with 83% in strong agreement.



Base 58

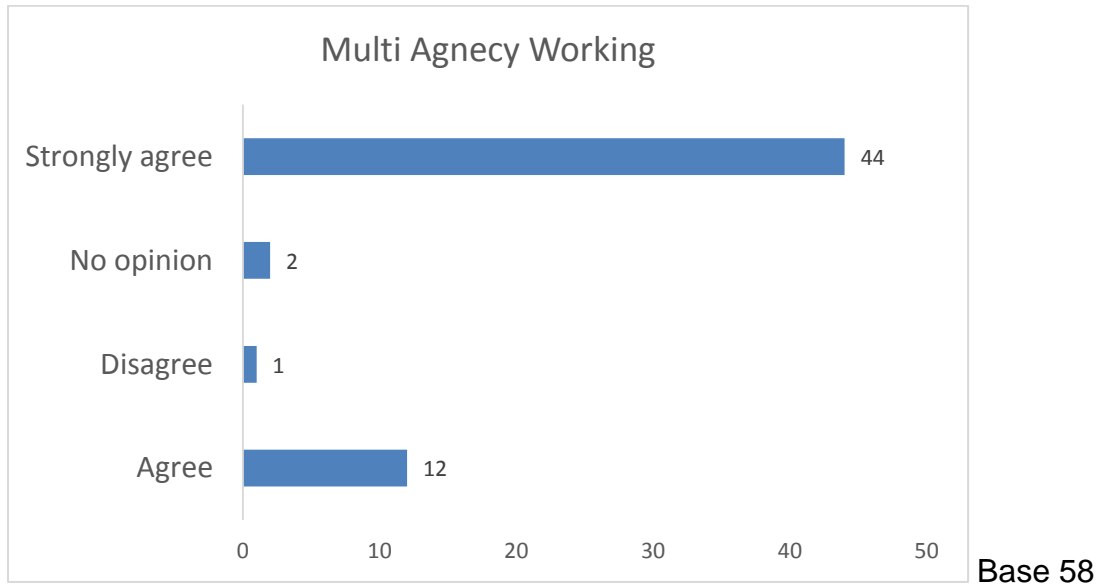
Various comments were received relating to priority two that highlighted issues shown below.

- No mention of the Encompass program.

- Strengthening of therapeutic interventions for mother to understand impact of DV on unborn children.
- Change 'working with schools' to educational providers.

9. Priority (v) – Multi-agency working to support the requirements of the Act

Respondents were asked if multi-agency working to support the requirements of the Act was important, to provide a holistic approach to domestic abuse within safe accommodation and the community.



94% of respondents agreed that multi-agency working to support the requirements of the act was important, with 75% in strong agreement.

Various comments were received relating to priority two that highlighted issues shown below.

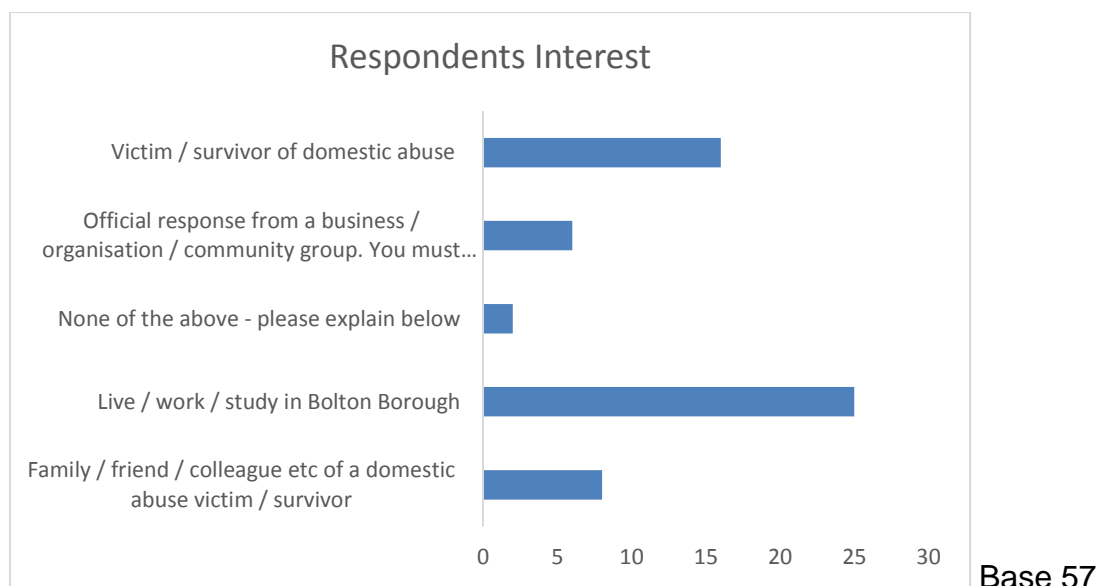
- Male centric approach is required.
- Not enough support or knowledge on asylum seekers or refugees.
- Cross cutting data sharing is required.

10. General Comments

- Use critical reflective analysis to identify barriers for all victims.
- More pet friendly accommodation is essential.
- Government advice is to no longer use the term BAME.
- Safe accommodation for males or family units including males who are victims of domestic abuse.
- A more user-friendly version of the document is required.

11. Respondent's interest

Residents and stakeholders were asked to provide their interest in completing the survey. This was to help identify the level of engagement from protected groups. 28% of respondents were victims or survivors of domestic abuse. The majority (43%) live, work or study within Bolton. 11% of the responses were official from businesses, organisations, and community groups. A further 14% were from family or friend of domestic abuse victims.



Were respondents provided further information they were from the Probation Service, Public Health, School Nurses and Housing providers as well as the voluntary sector.

Analysis notes

- Results are presented in the questionnaire format with 'Don't know' type responses removed unless stated.
- Comments have been categorised where feasible. Unless otherwise stated. Categories may overlap and a comment from one respondent included in multiple categories. Comments may be abbreviated so that only the relevant extract is included. One comment may be coded into multiple categories, and each category may only cover a certain aspect of the comment, for example a respondent may have made both positive and negative comments about the same aspect.
- (If low responses) Due to the number of respondents, results are presented numerically rather than as percentages. Base: unless otherwise stated the base is the number of respondents to a particular question.
- Data has been cleansed where appropriate, e.g., comments moved into existing responses.

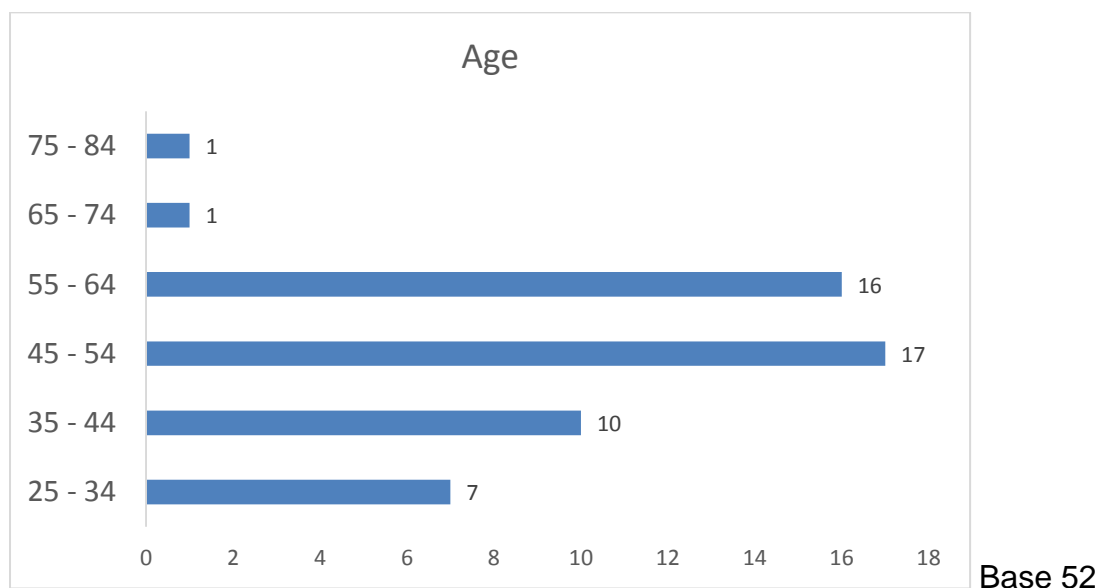
12. Demographics

12a. Gender

52 responses were received providing the respondent's gender. 87% of respondent's identity as being female, 12% as male and 2% respondent identified as 'other'.

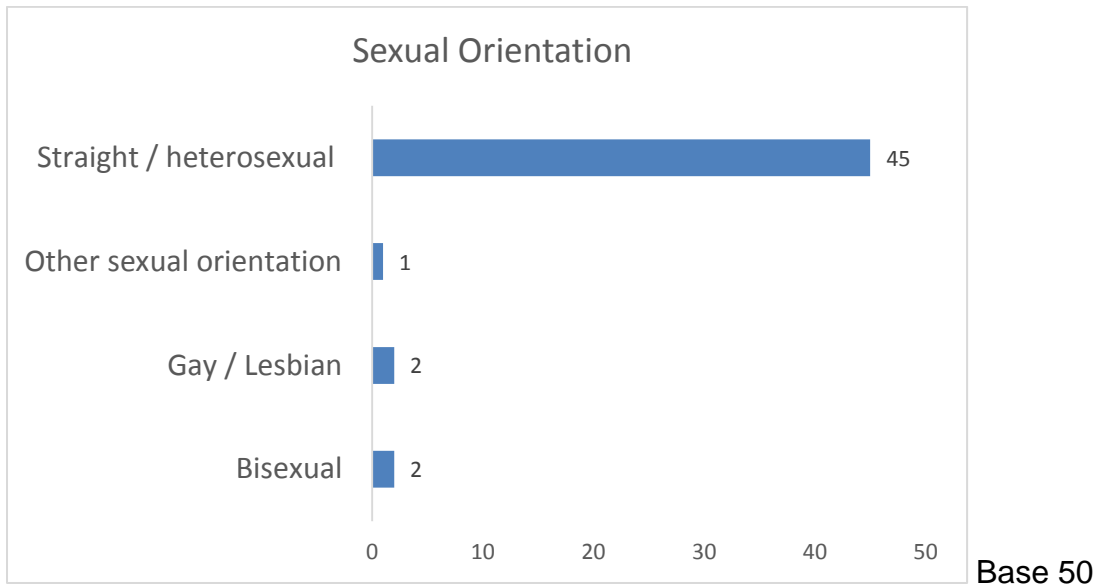
12b. Age

Responses were received from individuals in all age categories. 13% of respondents were under the age of 34 years. 85% respondents were aged between 35 – 64 years. 4% responses were received from individuals above the age of 65 years.



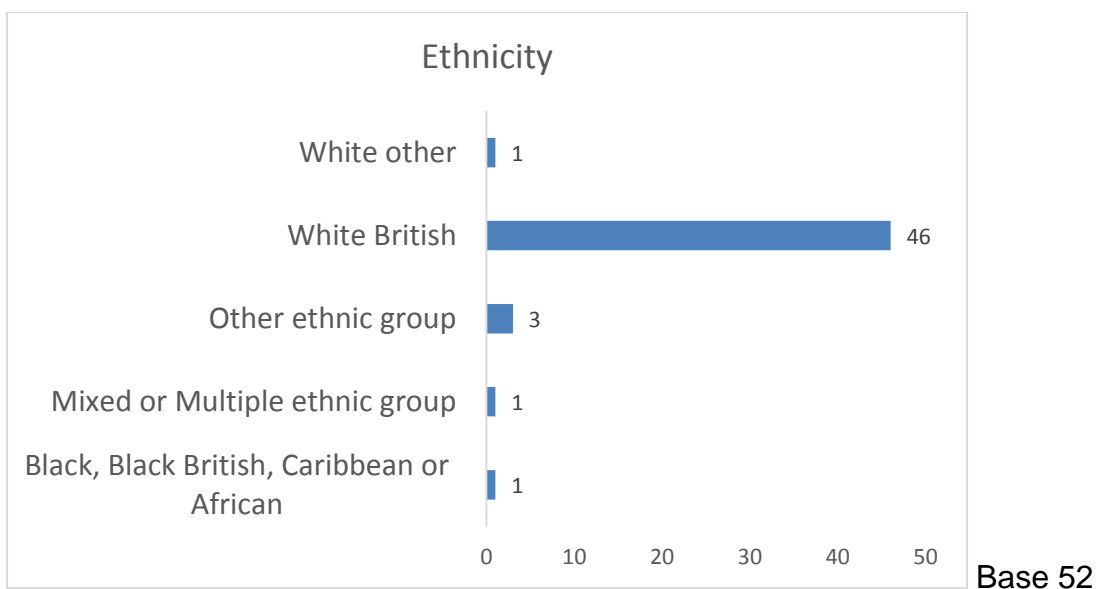
12c. Sexual orientation

Respondents were asked to provide their sexual orientation. This was to help identify the level of engagement from protected groups. 10% of responses were received from residents and other stakeholders other than 'straight / heterosexual'.



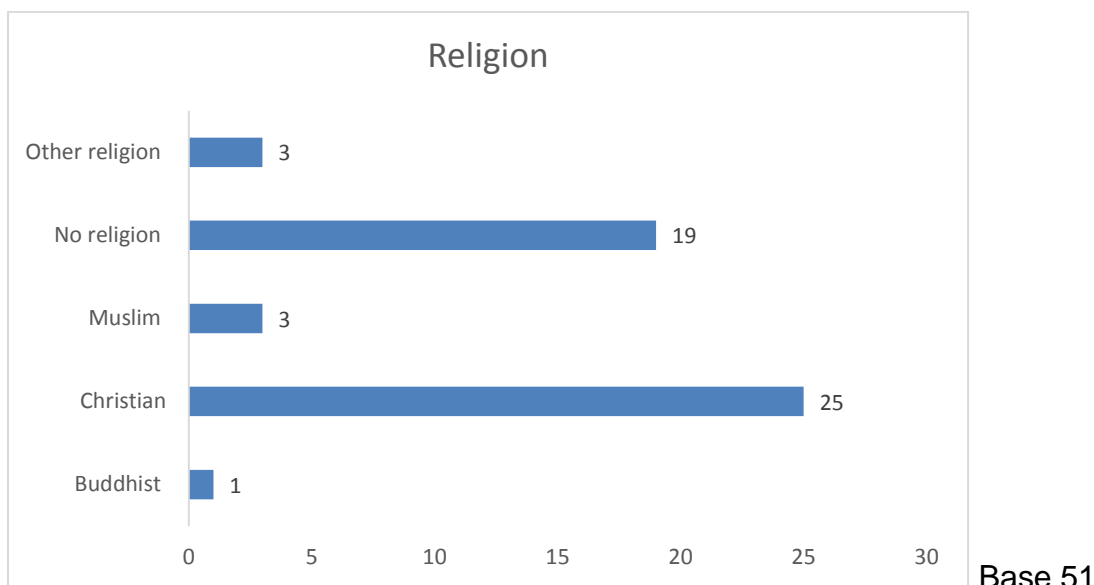
12d. Ethnicity

Most respondents (88%) that took part in the survey, identify as being White British. 6 (12%) identify as being from another ethnic origin.



12e. Religion

Residents and stakeholders completing the survey were asked to provide their religion. This was to help identify the level of engagement from protected groups. 8% identified as belonging to groups other than Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations). 6% stated they didn't belong to any religion.



13. Responses from focus groups

Stakeholders from the Youth Council were invited to participate in reflective sessions, providing an opportunity to share key concerns or reflections that they wanted to be included within the consultation process. The responses from the Youth Council are located in Appendix A.

14. Summary

Of the 59 residents and stakeholders who took part in the consultation 28% were victims or survivors of domestic abuse. The majority of (43%) were other residents of Bolton. 75% responded that the strategy contained the appropriate level of detail. 88% of respondents supported priority one. 80% agreed that professionals have the right level of knowledge to support victims, with 93% agreeing that the strategy should focus on multiple needs.

97% agreed that supporting children and young people should be a priority, with 83% in strong agreement. 94% of respondents agreed that multi-agency working to support the requirements of the act was important, with 75% in strong agreement.

The overall responses to the consultation were very positive and suggest that the strategic priorities set out in the document are appropriate.

In terms of other supporting comments respondents felt that the strategy lacked a focus on male victims of domestic abuse. Other comments suggested more of a focus on asylum seeker needs. As a general comment respondents all felt that a more user-friendly version of the strategy should be available.

Appendix A



Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation Strategy 2022-2025

Youth Council Session

16th November 2021

Consultation & Research Team

Overview

This focus group took place with ten members of Bolton's Youth Council on Tuesday 16th November 2021. Rather than focus on the whole draft strategy for Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation, the group concentrated on key themes linking to support for young people.

Amina Jeewa initially invited the group to share their knowledge on domestic violence, before moving on to asking the group *'what support do you think young people would like/benefit from if they have been a victim of domestic abuse or have witnessed it?'*

The following annotations provide an overview to the discussion that took place with the young people in the session.

- Personal tutors and lecturers are trusted adults that we can talk to. Having someone to talk to is the most important factor. Experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse can cause a young person to spiral into depression, anxiety or become suicidal, these behaviours may only be picked up in educational settings, so it's important staff in these settings are aware of domestic violence and how to support young people that may experience it.

Barriers

- There needs to be consistency in the support offered. It needs to be openly available and young people need to know how to access the support on offer. One barrier experienced, is that the school nurse is only on site one day per week, where/who can young people turn to if they are not available? Settings should readily make available where young people can access confidential support.
- Adults not understanding domestic abuse and not knowing how to respond, or support, is a barrier for young people. Not knowing what services are available, except from CAMHS and how to access these services are a barrier for young people.
- Some schools have started to deliver awareness on preventing domestic violence/abuse, however this is not consistent across the schools and colleges in Bolton. The lessons focus on healthy relationships and how to recognise a healthy relationship, but there is very little information on what to do or how to access services if you are in an abusive relationship. There is a lack of discussion and when the subject of relationships is delivered, they're not taken seriously by pupils and teachers don't know how to respond.
- The PSHE lessons are associated with primary. The lesson name is even given the same title, so the importance isn't valued.
- The group felt it was important to instil the theme of unhealthy relationships and how to access support services from nursery and not wait until Year 10 to cover this sensitive and important topic.
- Domestic Abuse within the LGBTQ+ community is not covered at all in secondary education. There is a significant lack of awareness and a lack of knowledge around support. This is essential for young people from the LGBTQ+ community.

Communication / Awareness Raising

- College and settings visited by young people sometimes have posters in the toilet cubicles about domestic abuse. The same posters are visible in both male and female toilets. This is positive, but it shouldn't be the only place where we can access where to get support.
- The group explored whether Tic-Toc or other social media platforms would be a good place to share key messages about how to access domestic abuse support services, but there were concerns that the algorithms may show related items, which could subsequently lead to dark

material being shown. This would be difficult for young people to delete these algorithms from their devices.

- Could there be a 'one-stop-shop' for accessing all information about relationships – this could be a website.

The role of schools and colleges

- Is there any possibility schools could regularly discuss topics of this nature, rather than once per term, and could the delivery be informative, leading to quality discussions which are taken seriously? Tutors need to take an active role and set expectations for the class.
- Professional development for teachers about mental health and key topic areas, including domestic abuse, is needed.
- Can schools access specialist speakers and advisors to come in and speak to young people?

Next Steps

Youth Council have requested that feedback is provided, particularly highlighting where their suggestions have been taken on board within the Strategy, thus demonstrating the 'youth voice' within the consultation. This information can then be cascaded through their youth networks.

Appendix B

"Domestic Abuse Support In Safe Accommodation" strategy consultation 2021

Please complete this questionnaire online if possible by going to www.bolton.gov.uk and searching for 'Active consultations'.

If you don't have access to the Internet, please ring 01204 334875 for paper copies of any of the documents mentioned.

Bolton Council have developed a new strategy to provide safe accommodation to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

Please read the strategy online at: www.bolton.gov.uk/downloads/file/3937/draft-bolton-safe-accommodation-strategy before completing this questionnaire.

Your responses - keeping your data safe

Most questions are optional, so please feel free to skip any that you prefer not to answer.

If you're responding as an individual you won't be identified in any report; your responses will be anonymised and grouped together with those from other people. Reports may be made public. If you are responding in an official capacity your response may be published, but no personal details will be made public.

Any personal data you provide will be held securely, in line with our retention schedule and privacy policy, which can be found online: www.bolton.gov.uk/data-protection-freedom-information/privacy-notice

We use professional software called Snap Surveys to collect and process your data. As data processor, Snap Surveys Ltd. follow the UK General Data Protection Regulation [GDPR]. You can view their privacy policy online: www.snapsurveys.com/survey-software/privacy-policy-uk/

The strategy and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

We've tried to include enough detail about the Domestic Abuse Act without making our strategy too complicated.

The Act can be found online: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents/enacted

Q1 Does our draft strategy include....?

- ☐ Too much detail about the Act - please go to Q2
- ☐ Right level of detail about the Act - please go to Q3
- ☐ Not enough detail about the Act - please go to Q2
- ☐ No opinion - please go to Q3

Q2 What information from the Act should be included / left out?

If possible, please include the reference number if you are referring to specific parts of the Act.

Priorities

We've come up with five priorities that we think should be included in our "Domestic Abuse Support In Safe Accommodation" strategy.

The following questions tell you where to look in the draft strategy document for a description of each priority and asks how far you agree or disagree that it should be a priority. You also have the opportunity to suggest alternative / additional priorities.

Q3 Priority (i) - "Appropriate safe accommodation: availability of safe accommodation in Bolton for all of our victims, and professional assistance in accessing safe accommodation - whether this is in Bolton or out of our borough."

More information about this is on page 7 and 8 of our draft strategy document.

How strongly do you agree / disagree that this should be a priority?

- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ No opinion

Q4 Please use this space to suggest any changes to priority (i), or to say why you don't think this should be a priority.

Q5 Priority (ii) - "Access to support services within safe accommodation: professionals have the right knowledge to be able to support victims to access relevant support services."

More information about this is on page 8 of our draft strategy document.

How strongly do you agree / disagree that this should be a priority?

- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ No opinion

Q6 Please use this space to suggest any changes to priority (ii), or to say why you don't think this should be a priority.

Q7 Priority (iii) - "Recognising multiple needs within safe accommodation: access of services to meet all needs."

More information about this is on page 8 and 9 of our draft strategy document.

How strongly do you agree / disagree that this should be a priority?

- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ No opinion

Q8 Please use this space to suggest any changes to priority (iii) , or to say why you don't think this should be a priority.

Q9 Priority (iv) - "Supporting children and young people impacted by domestic abuse: addressing the support needs of children and young people as victims in their own right."

More information about this is on page 9 of our draft strategy document.

How strongly do you agree / disagree that this should be a priority?

- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ No opinion

Q10 Please use this space to suggest any changes to priority (iv), or to say why you don't think this should be a priority.

Q11 Priority (v) - "Multi-agency working to support the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021: joint working to provide a holistic approach to domestic abuse within safe accommodation and in the community."

More information about this is on page 9 of our draft strategy document.

How strongly do you agree / disagree that this should be a priority?

- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ No opinion

Q12 Please use this space to suggest any changes to priority (v), or to say why you don't think this should be a priority.

Q13 Please use this space if you wish to suggest any other priorities that should be included in our strategy, or to make any further comments about the draft.

Your interest

Q14 Which one of the following best describes you / your response?

- ☐ Victim / survivor of domestic abuse
- ☐ Family / friend / colleague etc of a domestic abuse victim / survivor
- ☐ Live / work / study in Bolton Borough
- ☐ Official response from Parish / Bolton borough Councillor / Elected Member - please go to Q14b
- ☐ Official response from a business / organisation / community group. You must have their permission to submit an official response on their behalf - please go to Q14b
- ☐ None of the above - please explain below at Q14a

Q14a Please say what your interest is

Q14b Please say which ward, business, organisation or community group you represent

Q14c Please say in what official capacity you are responding, then go to the end of the questionnaire without filling in Q15 - 20.

About you

Your answers in this section help us to make sure that we are getting views from different types of people.

They will not be used to contact you.

Q15 Are you ...?

- ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other

Q16 Which age group are you in?

- ☐ Under 18 ☐ 35 - 44 ☐ 65 - 74
- ☐ 18 - 24 ☐ 45 - 54 ☐ 75 - 84
- ☐ 25 - 34 ☐ 55 - 64 ☐ 85 or over

Q17 What is your ethnic group?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> White British | <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British |
| <input type="radio"/> White other | <input type="radio"/> Black, Black British, Caribbean or African |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed or Multiple ethnic group | <input type="radio"/> Other ethnic group |

Q18 Are your day to day activities limited because of a long-term physical or mental health conditions or illness?

Long-term means something that has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more.

- | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Yes, limited a lot | <input type="radio"/> Yes, limited a little | <input type="radio"/> No |
|--|---|--------------------------|

Q19 What is your religion?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> No religion | <input type="radio"/> Jewish |
| <input type="radio"/> Christian [including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations] | <input type="radio"/> Muslim |
| <input type="radio"/> Buddhist | <input type="radio"/> Sikh |
| <input type="radio"/> Hindu | <input type="radio"/> Other religion |

Q20 Which of the following most closely describes you?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Straight / heterosexual | <input type="radio"/> Bisexual |
| <input type="radio"/> Gay / Lesbian | <input type="radio"/> Other sexual orientation |

Thanks for your views. Please post to: Freepost RTTT-YTEL-YSXS, Consultation & Research Team, 2nd Floor, Town Hall, Victoria Square, Bolton, BL1 1RU. You don't need a stamp.