

Telford & Wrekin Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019 - 2021

Working together to break the cycle of abuse

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Foreword

Domestic abuse impacts upon women and men, children and young people, families and communities and it is not always easy to identify. It is often referred to as the 'hidden' crime as different forms of abuse can mean some victims suffer for far too long before getting help.

More victims in Telford and Wrekin are coming forward to report abuse and the demand on services for victims and perpetrators is increasing. Our services and support need to be responsive at the earliest opportunity, and balanced with prevention activities designed to stop abuse from happening in the first place.

We want everyone in Telford and Wrekin to be kept safe from domestic abuse and have the opportunity to lead healthy and happy lives. We can achieve this by:

- Preventing domestic abuse from happening in the first place, by challenging the attitudes and behaviours which foster it, and intervening early to prevent it from continuing, reoccurring or escalating.
- Reducing the risk to victims and their families ensuring that perpetrators are held to account and supporting them to change their behaviour.
- Working in partnership to provide the right specialist services and support to women, children and young people and also men affected.

The aims of the strategy are to raise awareness, prevent, identify, investigate, prosecute and appropriately support victims of domestic abuse. The effects and impact of domestic abuse cut across a number of service areas across organisations and is therefore supported by the following partnerships:

- Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Children Board (TWSCB)
- Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Adults Board (TWSAB)
- Safer Telford & Wrekin Partnership (STWP)
- Health & Wellbeing Board (HWBB)

The strategy aims to support the partnerships through a joined up response for those affected by domestic abuse, underpinned by a clear recognition and understanding that no single agency can address this complex issue in isolation. Together we will break the cycle of abuse.



Andrew Mason
Independent Chair
Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding
Children and Adults Boards



Superintendent Tom Harding,
West Mercia Police and Chair of the
Safer Telford & Wrekin Partnership

1. Acknowledgements

The Telford & Wrekin Domestic Abuse Group have developed this strategy on behalf of the partnerships. The group includes representatives from multiple Council teams, Police and NHS colleagues, and providers of domestic abuse services. There has been wide engagement across the partnerships and with a variety of groups, teams and colleagues.

2. Mission Statement

The Telford & Wrekin [Community Safety Partnership Strategy¹](#), the vision is that:

“The community are able to identify domestic abuse, know where to turn to for help, victims and their families are supported and perpetrators are dealt with effectively (from prosecution to reducing future harm and offending).”

Together we can make a difference.

3. What this plan aims to deliver

- ✓ **Improved recording of domestic abuse, and fewer repeat victim incidents, but ultimately a reduction in the numbers of incidents and victims**
- ✓ **Victims and families reporting improved health and wellbeing and resilience**
- ✓ A better understanding of the local picture of domestic abuse, to direct prevention work and shape services and support based on our local need
- ✓ A greater awareness across the community of what domestic abuse is and how to respond
- ✓ Training to a wide range of professionals, across organisations and teams
- ✓ Early identification of victims and their children to prompt support to break the cycle of domestic abuse in families
- ✓ More coordinated, responsive specialist services and support offer to victims and children affected, with clear accessible pathways to support recovery and reduce future risks
- ✓ Timely and appropriate referral and support for children and young people at risk of harm from domestic abuse
- ✓ Support for perpetrators to enable them to change their behaviour
- ✓ Better justice for victims, holding perpetrators to account through policing and the criminal justice system
- ✓ Learning from domestic homicide reviews is embedded across the system
- ✓ Women and girls are better protected from the risks of honour based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

4. What is domestic abuse?

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse, 2018² is:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or 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”

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

Domestic abuse can involve a range of behaviours, which are abusive and which would not always be classed as violent. In Telford & Wrekin the definition has also been widened to include 16-17 year olds and reflect coercive control, ‘honour’ based violence (HBV), female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage (FM).

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It’s also known as female circumcision or cutting.

Honor Based Violence (HBV) is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community.

Forced Marriage (FM) is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is recognised as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and an abuse of human rights.

5. Background

Domestic abuse can affect anybody, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation, and it occurs across all of society, regardless of age, race, religion, wealth or geography. However, certain people are disproportionately affected, such as women, young people under 25, those with disabilities or mental health problems.

Occurring in the main in the home, domestic abuse is often without witnesses. It has tremendous costs for the victim, their children, family and friends, and upon the community as a whole. Although domestic abuse is predominately a gender-based crime against women and girls, men are also subjected to abuse at home and in relationships.

The impact of domestic abuse on victims, children and young people and families can have a lasting significance. Its results are not only physical, but impact on emotional wellbeing, health, work and can affect housing, income, and relationships.

The Adoption and Children Act 2002³ recognises the fact that witnessing domestic violence can have serious implications for children. National learning^{4,5} from Serious Case Reviews identifies domestic violence, mental ill-health and drug and alcohol misuse as the most common issues relating to children's families.

The Care Act 2014⁶ also acknowledges domestic abuse as a category of abuse that particularly affects adults with care and support needs, including older people.

Domestic abuse rarely takes place in a vacuum and substance misuse and poor mental health can be both contributory factors and can amplify the consequences. It impacts all aspects of communities including health and crime rates, and the ability to participate in the workforce, child development and family dynamics. For example:

- Children and young people who are exposed to violence in the home may suffer from emotional trauma, poor health and trouble learning at school.
- Children and young people raised in violent situations are more likely to use violence to solve problems as they grow older than if those not exposed to it.
- Adult victims suffer from a host of long-term health problems like heart disease, chronic pain, stress disorders, and arthritis, increasing health care costs for everyone.
- It can impact on organisations effectiveness, which is why organisations have started addressing domestic abuse within their policies. An employee who knows they are supported, will be more loyal and will maintain productivity.

There is evidence⁷ indicating that work with perpetrators, to address the underlying cause of the violence, is key to breaking the cycle and therefore reducing domestic abuse and its effect on people lives and crucially the impact on families.

6. The National Picture

Key Statistics

An estimated 1.9 million people in the UK suffer from some form of domestic abuse⁸ and each year more than 100,000 people in the UK are at high or imminent risk of being murdered or seriously injured as a result of domestic abuse⁹.

One in four women experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives and as reported by the Home Office¹⁰ accounts for almost a quarter of all crime.

Domestic abuse accounts for 1 in 5 of all violent crimes

Every minute, police in the UK receive a domestic assistance call – yet only 35% of domestic violence incidents are reported to the police¹¹

1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men endure violence from a partner, ex-partner/family member during their adult life in England and Wales – equivalent to 1.2 million women and 784,000 men (16-59 years old) in 2012/13¹²

Between 6% and 10% of women suffer domestic violence in a given year¹³

1.2 million women and 700,000 men experience domestic abuse every year

High-risk victims live with domestic abuse for 2.3 years before getting help and 85% of victims sought help five times on average from professionals before they got effective help to stop the abuse⁹

Victims of domestic violence are more likely to experience repeat victimisation than victims of any other type of crime

Two women are killed every week in England and Wales by a current or former partner¹⁴

On average, victims experience 50 incidents of abuse before receiving effective support

Witnessing domestic abuse can be particularly traumatic for children and young people. A minimum of 750,000 British children and young people a year (around 6.5%) are witnesses to domestic abuse and around 30% of domestic abuse begins or escalates during pregnancy¹⁵

7. Introduction – our approach

This Domestic Abuse Strategy sets out the Telford & Wrekin Partnerships vision, aims and objectives for dealing with domestic abuse, and the outcomes we expect to see as a result. It is vital that our response is informed and developed by the local picture, intelligence on need, the voices of victims and what is important to them and also best practice guidance of what works. Our approach needs to also include a clear understanding of the issues that contribute to domestic abuse. The strategy's commitment will be delivered through an ambitious action plan. The key groups intended to benefit from this strategy are:

- Victims and survivors of domestic abuse
- Children and young people who have experienced or are living with domestic abuse
- Perpetrators of domestic abuse, who should be held to account, and supported to change their behaviour to reduce the risk to victims and their children
- Partner agencies involved in supporting adults, children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

We already have a number of local good practice initiatives, including:

- White Ribbon Town accreditation, awareness raising events and campaigns
- Operation Encompass, which ensures children and young people have support in schools following an incident, if needed
- West Mercia Women's Aid Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs)
- The Sanctuary Project which provides additional security for victims
- Shropshire Domestic Abuse Advisory Service

Raising the awareness and understanding of domestic abuse across the community and working to prevent domestic abuse are key commitments of the strategy. Telford continues to be a White Ribbon Town, which means that the Council and partners proactively support people who campaign to step up and positively make a stand towards ending domestic abuse. This is the 5th year of Telford's commitment to be a White Ribbon Town, and partners reaffirmed the town's pledge to ending domestic abuse at the annual White Ribbon event on 23rd November 2018 at the Park Lane Centre. The evaluation of the White Ribbon awareness raising activities is used to assess the reach and impact of the campaign. Council Cabinet Members strongly support the White Ribbon campaign activities.

Engagement with partners has identified that a clear early priority for the strategy is the need to develop better support those already affected – victims and their children, through accelerating the development of our services, support and pathways. There is a recognition that working with the perpetrators is integral, to enable couples and families to achieve positive outcomes.

Domestic abuse impacts on all agencies work within the borough and through the programme of work a variety of organisations and teams (statutory and voluntary) will be involved, for example:

- Telford & Wrekin Council teams: Adult and Children Early Help, Social Care and Safeguarding, Housing Services, Community Safety and Public Health
- West Mercia Police
- Women's Aid
- Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service
- Victim Support
- NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and Provider Trusts

This joined up approach will ensure that we stimulate community-based action to challenge attitudes and develop local solutions that empower and support those affected by domestic abuse.

8. The Local Picture

The Telford & Wrekin picture of domestic abuse described below is based on police data. As there is no specific offence of 'domestic abuse', crime offence and incident records where a domestic setting has been identified at the time have been used. The local current picture represents only those records of domestic abuse reported to the police, and it is acknowledged that there will be further unreported offences occurring.

Key Headlines for Telford & Wrekinⁱ

- In 2016/17 a total of 4,832 domestic abuse offences were recorded in Telford and Wrekin, which was the highest rate of any Community Safety Partnership, within the Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police Alliance. (Figure 1)
- The gender profile for offences consists of 73% female victims and 27% male victims. 74% of perpetrators are male and 26% female. (Figures 2 and 3)
- In terms of the relationship profile - 40% of total harm and 48% of offences are between ex partners, and 56% of harm is caused by partners (Figure 4)
- The main types of Domestic Abuse offences can be broken down into the following categories:
 - 45% Emotional Domestic Abuse Incident
 - 16% Common Assault By Beating
 - 13% Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm

ⁱ Source: Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police

Further work is needed to understand the profile of need and demand on local services, and this will be undertaken through the strategy objectives as part of the action plan.

Figure 1 Domestic Abuse Offences in Warwickshire and West Mercia

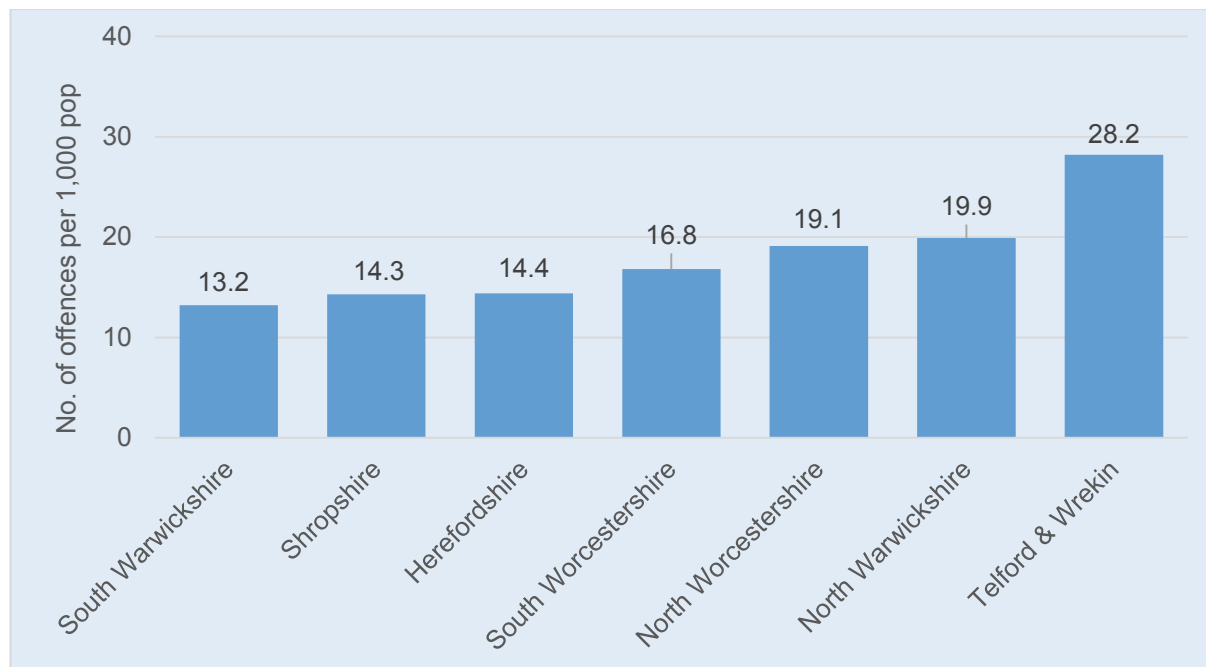
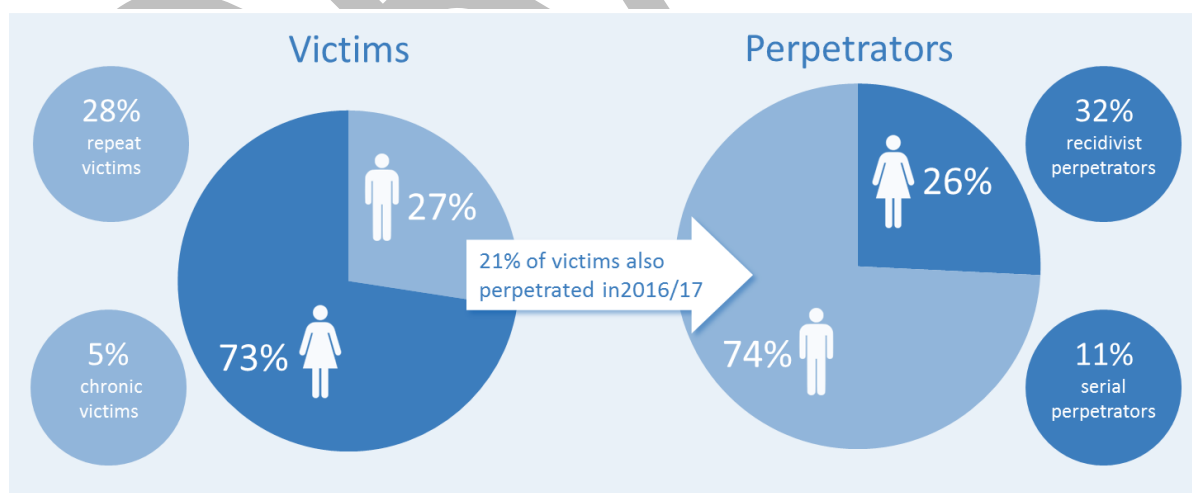


Figure 2 Telford & Wrekin Victims and Perpetrators profile



Please note:

- Repeat victims: Victims of more than one crime
- Chronic victims: Victims in more than one relationship
- Recidivist perpetrators: Repeat perpetrators
- Serial perpetrators: Perpetrators in more than one relationship

Figure 3 Telford & Wrekin perpetrator and victim gender profile

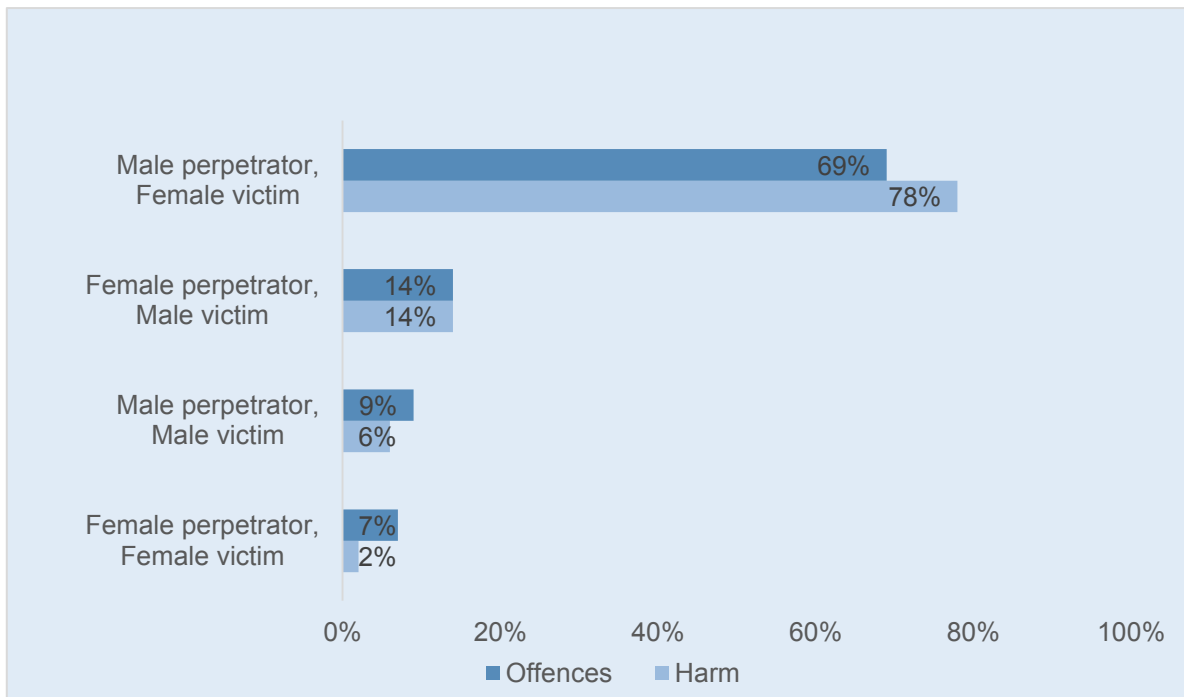


Figure 4 Telford & Wrekin perpetrator and victim relationship profile

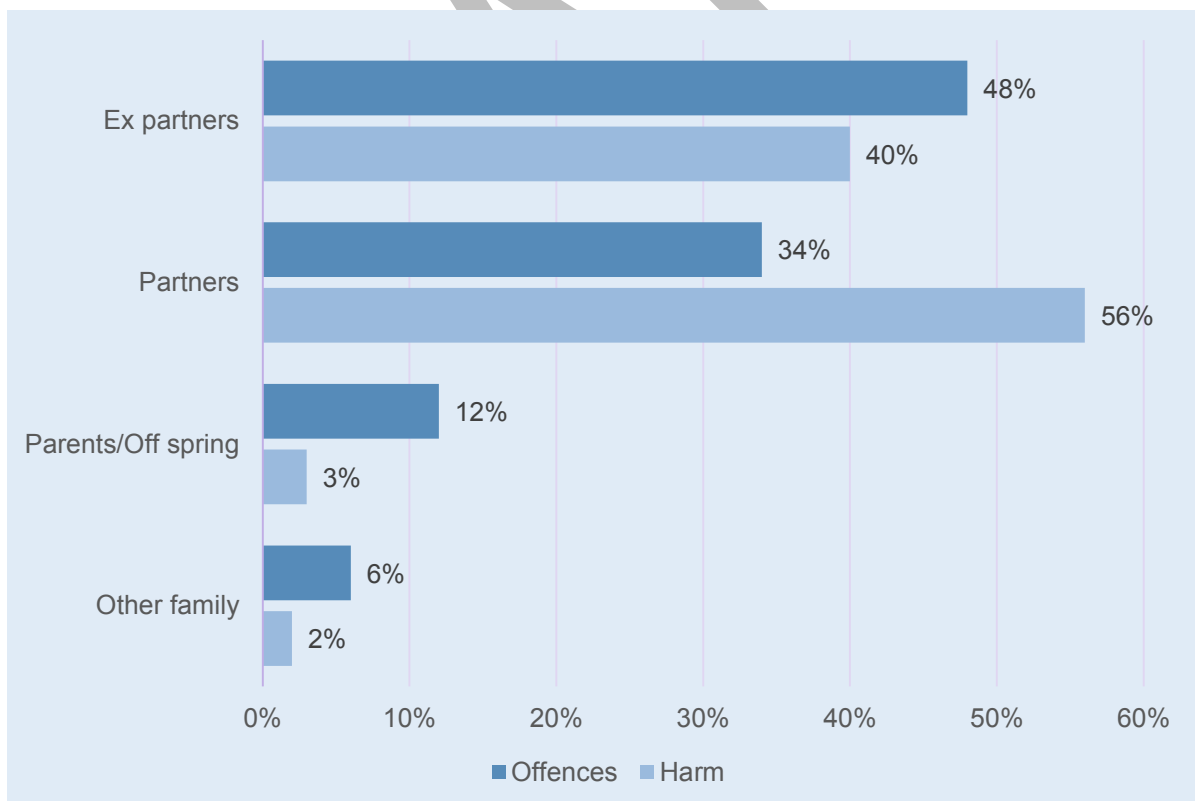
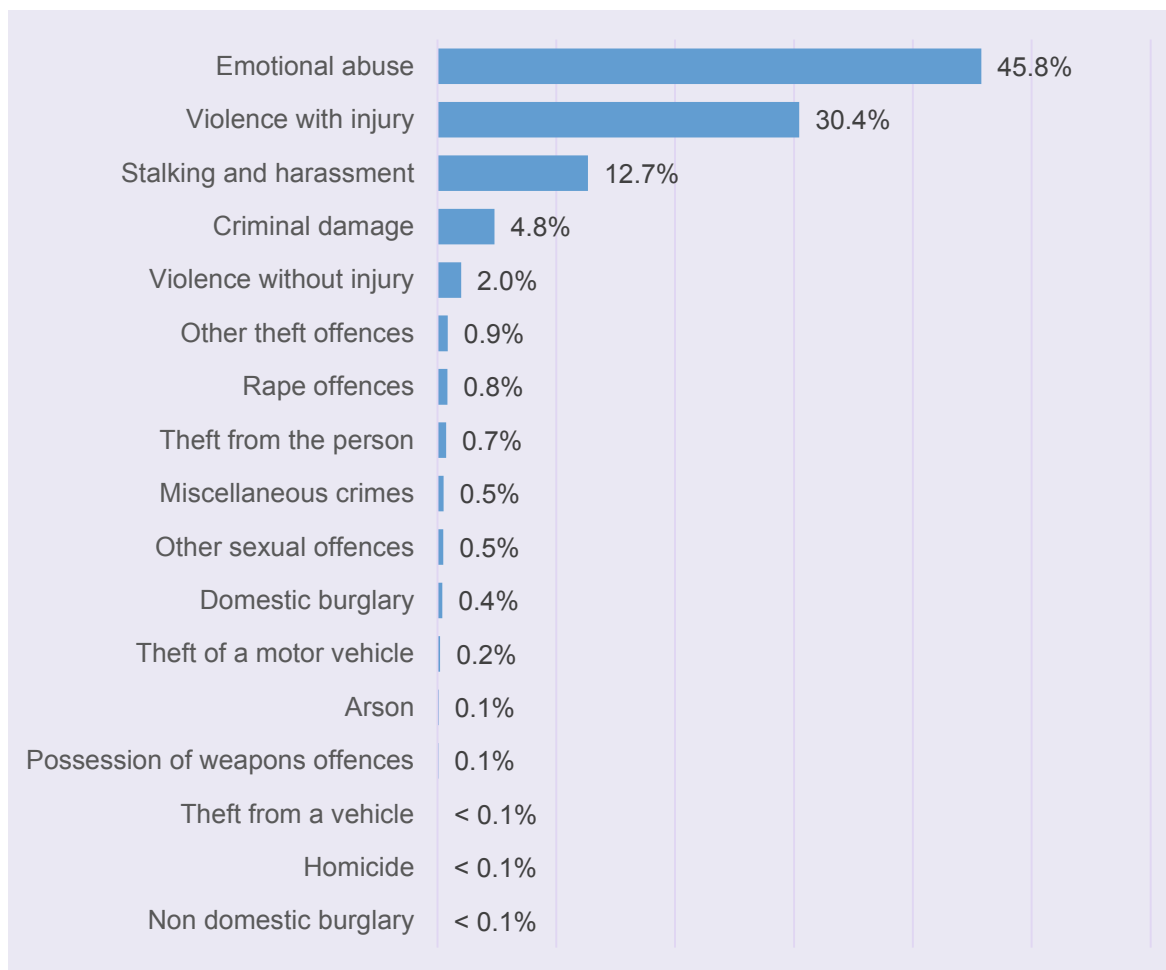


Figure 5 Telford & Wrekin domestic abuse type profile



9. Our Objectives

Our intelligence indicates that domestic abuse is a challenge within the borough, and the impact this type of abuse and crime has on the victim, their families and the community is well recognised. Addressing domestic abuse continues to be a priority for strategic partnerships including the Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Adults and Children Boards. Telford & Wrekin Health and Wellbeing Board has prioritised a work stream on the so called “toxic trio” which aims to tackle the combined impacts of domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health in families, relationships and our communities.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) provides guidance on planning and delivering multi-agency services for domestic violence and abuse¹⁶. The guidance aims to help identify, prevent and reduce domestic violence and abuse among women and men in heterosexual or same-sex relationships, and among young people. To deliver the aims of the strategy, in line with NICE guidance six key objectives have been agreed.

Objective 1

Review and develop specialist services and support and implement comprehensive multi-agency pathways, for both victims and perpetrators and children and young people affected by domestic abuse

To ensure local pathways are clear and fit for purpose to include monitoring of implementation, and inform professionals on how to support and signpost the victims and children and young people. Pathways for perpetrators will also be clear and fit for purpose.

Objective 2

Use intelligence and robust data to assess need, inform commissioning and service provision and raising awareness campaigns:

To ensure that the understanding of the scale of domestic abuse in the Borough, continues to evolve through ongoing profiling.

Objective 3

Develop practitioner's knowledge on the dynamics of domestic abuse on the whole family and provide them with the appropriate training and resources to support the family.

To ensure that professionals feel confident that they understand the characteristics of domestic abuse and what to do should a concern arise. Practitioners will have training and clear guidance about what happens when someone reports domestic abuse and what support is available, ensuring consistency and appropriate support.

Objective 4

Increase awareness and understanding in the community of the impact of domestic abuse, so we can challenge and prevent domestic abuse.

To stimulate the community to be aware of what domestic abuse is, the signs and what to do if it is happening.

Objective 5

Review current policies and procedures and raise awareness associated with Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Honor Based Violence (HBV) and Forced Marriage (FM), within the community and across the professional workforce

To ensure that professionals feel confident that they understand the characteristics of FGM, HBV and FM, what to do should a concern arise and what support is available.

Objective 6

Embed the learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews to ensure recommendations are addressed and acted upon.

To ensure that all agencies have an important source of information to inform national and local policy and practice. It is important to draw out key findings of domestic homicide reviews and their implications for policy and practice.

10. Governance and Accountability

The Joint Domestic Abuse Thematic Sub-group to date has been accountable to the TWSCB and TWSAB. The sub-group is made up of multiagency, multi professional strategic and operational leads (see below). The group have developed and shaped the Strategy and the action plan, which will continue to evolve. Task and finish groups will be set up and engagement events held to support delivery of the action plan.

Ongoing monitoring of the progress of the Strategy will be through the governance structures of the TWSCB and TWSAB. However, the overall progress of this work stream will also be reported regularly to the Safer Telford & Wrekin Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

It is recognised that there are key links and interdependencies for this domestic abuse strategy across a range of local strategies, such as the Early Help Strategy, the Drug and Alcohol Strategy and the Mental Health Strategy. As these strategies are updated and refreshed it is envisaged that there will be shared commitments and actions across these plans, to ensure a systematic and comprehensive approach to preventing harm and supporting the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Telford & Wrekin Joint Domestic Abuse Thematic Sub-group Members

Helen Onions (Chair)	Consultant in Public Health, Telford & Wrekin Council
Graham Preece (Vice Chair)	West Mercia Police
Tina Knight	Strategic Safeguarding Lead Domestic Abuse, Telford & Wrekin Council.
Sarah Hall	Early Help & Support, Telford & Wrekin Council
Michelle Astbury	Service and Clinical Lead, Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Vicky Worthington	Safeguarding and Case Management, Telford & Wrekin Council
Toni Guest	Housing, Nuplace & Commercial Projects, Telford & Wrekin Council
Jas Bedesha	Community Safety Team, Telford & Wrekin Council
Lyn Stepanian	Public Health Practitioner, Telford & Wrekin Council
Cathy Hobbs	Education and Corporate Parenting, Telford & Wrekin Council
Sue Coleman	West Mercia Women's Aid
Wendy Bulman	Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service
Damion Clayton	Research & Intelligence Officer
Kathy George	Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group
Claire Hinstead	Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (MPFT)
Claire Hughes	Shropshire Community NHS Trust
Teresa Tanner	Shrewsbury & Telford Hospital NHS Trust (children)
Sharon Woodland	Shrewsbury & Telford Hospital NHS Trust (adults)
Adam Mathews	Shropshire Fire and Rescue
Louise Cotton	West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company
Kerry Woodhouse	Partnership Development Officer, Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Boards

11. Further Information

Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Children Board

www.telfordsafeguardingboard.org.uk/

Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Adults Board

www.telfordsafeguardingadultsboard.org/

Safe West Mercia Plan – West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

<http://www.apccs.police.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/West-Mercia-Police-Crime-Plan.pdf>

West Midlands Multi-Agency Policies and Procedures

westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/

NSPCC

www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources

Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service

www.shropsdas.org.uk/

Refuge

www.refuge.org.uk/

West Mercia Women's Aid

www.westmerciawomensaid.org/

Men's Advice Line

www.mensadvice.org.uk

A Call to Men

www.acalltomen.org/

Victim Support

www.victimsupport.org.uk/help-and-support/get-help/support-near-you/west-midlands/west-mercia

National Centre for Domestic Violence

www.ncdv.org.uk

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