



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Communities Scrutiny Committee

2 October 2025

Domestic Abuse Strategy and Violence Against Women & Girls Update

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Kelly Middleton – Cabinet Member: Public Health and Healthier Communities
Lead Director:	Helen Onions – Director of Public Health
Service Area:	Health & Wellbeing
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Report considered by:	Communities Scrutiny Committee – 2 October 2025

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

- 1.1 To note the contents of the report.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To receive an update on the Domestic Abuse Strategy, to encompass the Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) prevention agenda and proposed actions.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The Telford & Wrekin Domestic Abuse Strategy 2023-2025 was approved by Cabinet in February 2023. Governance and oversight of strategy implementation is provided by the Telford & Wrekin Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DALP). A local multi-agency Domestic Abuse Forum brings together a wide range of partners to develop annual action plans to implement the strategy commitments and the forum independent chair sits on the DALP.

3.2 The strategy is structured around four pillars:

- **Partnership:** driving change shaped by survivors, through collaborative leadership, partnership working and a skilled workforce;
- **Prevention:** Reducing the incidents of domestic abuse across our community through effective awareness, prevention and education programmes and a culture of early intervention;
- **Provision:** reducing impact & minimising harm by systematically offering integrated, tailored whole family services and support at the right time;
- **Pursuing and Protection:** providing effective, engaged, supportive, responsive and timely protection and justice and a multi-agency approach to perpetrators.

The strategy sets out a number of commitments under each of the four pillars. Notable achievements during the last three years in delivering these commitments under each pillar are described in the following sections.

3.3 Partnership

- A Lived Experience Advisory Forum (LEAF) has been established to listen to local survivors, with their expertise having a wide influence.
- A partnership dashboard has been developed to collate accurate evidence and intelligence to better understand the profile of need, performance and outcomes.
- A comprehensive training programme is put in place across the partnership to ensure staff at all levels and community members are upskilled to recognise and discuss domestic abuse and signpost and refer appropriately.
- The new Homicide Review Panel has been established with robust and timely processes and the implementation of learning identified.
- A Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment has been completed in line with the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act.

3.4 Prevention

- A Community Champions/Workplace Ambassadors Programme recruits and trains people to improve the understanding of domestic abuse across the community.

Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women & Girls Update

- That White Ribbon campaign continues to evolve year-on-year, expanding the reach across our communities, and providing opportunity for men to challenge behaviours.
- Programmes are delivered in primary and secondary schools, and to young people not in mainstream education, across the borough, to support and signpost those affected by domestic abuse, educate about healthy relationships, and challenge attitudes that enable domestic abuse.
- That collaborative work with our safeguarding teams supports early identification of abuse of vulnerable adults at risk of exploitation, including those with learning disabilities and abuse affecting older victims and survivors.

3.5 **Provision**

- An integrated Domestic Abuse Service was commissioned and commenced in June 2023, comprising of Specialist Support, Single Point of Contact (SPOC), Specialist Support for Children and Young People and Safe Accommodation.
- There are clear integrated pathways in our offer for children and young people (Start for Life Programme, Family Connect, Strengthening Families and Family Safeguarding) and adults (adult social care, substance misuse services (STaRS), housing support, and mental health services).
- The number of Safe Accommodation units has increased to meet growing local need and demand and meet the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act.
- All services and support offers have become more systematically trauma informed.
- There has been clear promotion and publicity of our local service offer, the SPOC and the integrated pathways, so that everyone understands what is available and how it can be accessed.

3.6 **Pursuing and Protection**

- Joined up processes are in place to support individuals and families through criminal justice pathways and the number of victims engaged in court proceedings and civil remedies has increased significantly.
- Robust and evidence-based perpetrator programmes and interventions have been commissioned that can lead to sustainable behaviour change.

Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women & Girls Update

- Robust information sharing practices have been put in place to ensure a joint understanding of risk and harm, with timely action planning to address vulnerabilities and disrupt offenders.
- An independent review of the local MARAC has been completed and an action plan is being developed to implement recommendations.

3.7 Following a successful stakeholder event in March 2025 to highlight local good practice, it has been agreed that Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) prevention work will be incorporated into a refreshed Telford & Wrekin Domestic Abuse Strategy. A part-time temporary VAWG Prevention lead has been recruited to lead on this work and the White Ribbon campaign.

3.8 The current contract for the local Domestic Abuse Service expires in May 2026 and a competitive tender process has commenced. The safe accommodation element of the contract will come in-house to Telford & Wrekin Council's Housing Solutions Team. The perpetrator behaviour change programme will be tendered as a separate lot because of different timescales and funding sources.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

4.1 Progress against the delivery of the strategy commitments will be reported to the DALP in January 2026 and a refreshed set of commitments under each of the four pillars agreed for 2026 - 2028 agreed.

4.2 A series of community events will be organised by the Council and its partners for the White Ribbon 16 days of Action in November/December 2025, supported by an impactful social media campaign.

4.3 A number of commitments to prevent and reduce VAWG will be incorporated into the refreshed Telford & Wrekin Domestic Abuse Strategy, backed by a detailed, multi-agency annual action plan.

4.4 Contracts will be awarded early in 2026, following a competitive tendering process, for the provision of a Domestic Abuse Specialist Support Service.

5.0 Alternative Options

5.1 None.

6.0 Key Risks

6.1 There are clear responsibilities and duties for local authorities set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and this strategy includes local implementation of those expectations. The Council is funded to deliver these duties through the Domestic

Abuse Grant and there are associated monitoring returns tracking the spend of this funding in-line with the duties of the Act. The Domestic Abuse Commissioners Office for England & Wales is a member of the Telford & Wrekin DALP.

7.0 Council Priorities

7.1 The domestic abuse agenda contributes to the following Council Priorities:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community
- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live
- A community focused innovative council providing effective, efficient and quality services.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 The core budget for funding domestic abuse services is provided by the Domestic Abuse Grant from the Government £506k in 2025/26 plus £72k of resource brought forward from previous years. The Domestic Abuse Grant cannot be used to fund Perpetrator Behaviour Change Programmes therefore funding of £109k from Council one off resources is being utilised in 2025/26 to fund this activity.

8.2 Commitments under the four pillars will be delivered from within existing resources including the grant detailed above. As stated earlier in the report there are new contracts to be awarded in 2026. Existing resources are the funding envelope within which the contracts should be funded, any requirement to meet expenditure outside of these resources would need to be considered as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

9.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29th April 2021 and defines domestic abuse (Section 1) and children as victims (Section 3). Part 2, when in force, sets out the duties of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and the duty of public authorities, including local authorities and partners, to cooperate with the Commissioner, details include:

- Section 57 (in force 01.10.2021) sets out the duties of local authorities to provide support to victims, to prepare and publish a strategy for such and to monitor and evaluate the strategy's effectiveness.
- Section 58 requires local authorities to appoint Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Boards to advise local authorities about the exercise of their Section 57 functions.
- Section 59 requires local authorities to submit an annual report to the Secretary of State at the end of each financial year.
- Section 60 requires local authorities to exercise their functions under the Act in accordance with statutory guidance (published on 08.07.2022).

This is also to be read in light of the creation of the DHR panel by the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, SAR panel creation and the duty to promote individual well-being under the Care Act 2014 and Children Act duties to safeguard children appropriately.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 None.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

- Domestic abuse is a significant issue in our communities given the impact on individuals and families affected, especially children and young people. It is well known that domestic abuse is an adverse childhood experience which can have life-long effects and that it also has the potential to cause trauma in adults.
- Reducing the impact of domestic abuse is of particular concern to the Safeguarding Children's Board and Safeguarding Adults Board and both boards receive regular updates from the DALP.
- There are overlaps between the domestic abuse agenda and the Building Safer Stronger agenda, given the shared commitment to tackling behaviours and attitudes in our communities, especially in respect to violence against women and girls.
- The local NHS organisations are key members of both the DALP and the DA Forum, and NHS services have a key role to play in identifying patients affected by domestic abuse and then referring appropriately for specialist services and support.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 The Telford & Wrekin Domestic Abuse Forum is a network of more than 50 organisations and individuals representing local communities and our strong local lived experience voice continues to evolve. Work is on-going in the forum to strengthen connections with the Interfaith Council and other faith organisations and the LGBTQ+ community.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

13.1 None.

14.0 Background Papers

Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women & Girls Update

- 1 Thursday 16 February 2023, Cabinet Telford & Wrekin Domestic Abuse Strategy 2023 - 2025.

15.0 Appendices

None.

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	20/09/2025	22/09/2025	HO
Finance	20/09/2025	24/09/2025	RP
Legal	20/09/2025	24/09/2025	ON