



Isle of Wight domestic abuse strategy 2024 to 2029

*'There is always
more we can do'*

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Foreword

As chair of the Isle of Wight Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, and director of Public Health Isle of Wight, I would like to introduce the Isle of Wight Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024 to 2029. I would like to express my gratitude to the victims-survivors of domestic abuse who generously gave their time to share their stories, and in turn highlight critical needs that underpin this strategy.

Domestic abuse has a significant and long-term impact on victim-survivors and their families. The trauma inflicted by domestic abuse goes beyond the physical damage often associated with this crime, and can have detrimental mental, emotional, social and financial impacts. It is crucial that support for victims-survivors include measures for crisis and long term sustainable recovery. Wider preventative measures are also essential to achieve our vision of improving outcomes for people subjected to domestic abuse, and the Island being a place where all residents and visitors feel safe, free from fear of domestic abuse.

The commitment Domestic Abuse Partnership Board members and wider partners have to tackling domestic abuse on the Island is encouraging. The increasing visibility of domestic abuse in a landscape of wider pressures is a positive step forward. In addition, implementation of a systems approach being adopted by many partners in relation to domestic abuse allows us to identify where improvements can be made and allows us to problem solve together more effectively.

This strategy takes into account the unique factors on the Isle of Wight, the opportunities and challenges, the enthusiasm and shared vision which frame our key priorities of prevention and reduction of harm, increased access to specialist support, and collaboration and working together.

We recognise there is always more we can do, a message strongly echoed to us during the development of this strategy. This message is my call to action to embed the Isle of Wight domestic abuse strategy within your own teams and organisations. This will support a coordinated response to domestic abuse on the Island and drive and shape change to improve outcomes for victim-survivors.

Simon Bryant

**Director of Public Health, Isle of Wight and
Chair of the Isle of Wight Domestic Abuse Partnership Board**

Acknowledgements

We would like to express deepest appreciation to the victims-survivors who generously gave their time to share their expertise. Their knowledge has enabled this strategy to be built on authentic premises and address areas highlighted as critical.

We also extend our thanks to the Isle of Wight Domestic Abuse Partnership Board members and wider partners who were instrumental in developing this strategy into a strong accessible framework with clear vision, values and priorities.



Executive summary

This strategy sets our values, vision, priorities, and approach to domestic abuse on the Isle of Wight. The strategy represents a combined and fervent commitment to prevent domestic abuse and improve the outcomes for people subjected to domestic abuse.

There is always more we can do. This was the resounding message during the development of this strategy. As an Island partnership, this strategy allows us to position ourselves to take forward a coordinated response to domestic abuse on the Island.

Our vision

Our overarching vision is to improve outcomes for people subjected to domestic abuse and create opportunities for change for people using harmful and abusive behaviours. We envisage that the Isle of Wight will be a place where people feel safe to live and visit, and can thrive, free from fear of domestic abuse.

Strategy priorities

Our vision can only be achieved by enhanced joined up services which create clear pathways to support and reduce barriers to access.

We will achieve this by three key strategy priorities:

- Prevention and reduction of harm.
- Increased access to specialist support.
- Collaboration and working together.

Our values and working principles

- Inclusivity
- Person Focused
- Collaboration
- Accountability
- Proactive
- Transparency

Introduction

'There is always more that we can do'

The Isle of Wight is rightly proud of its strong sense of community and identity. This strategy aims to ensure that residents, visitors, and all communities on the Island can thrive, free from fear of domestic abuse.

This strategy sets our values, vision, priorities, and approach to domestic abuse on the Isle of Wight. This is the first Isle of Wight Domestic Abuse Strategy since the creation of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. The strategy represents a combined and fervent commitment to prevent domestic abuse and improve the outcomes for people subjected to domestic abuse.

This strategy has been developed by members of the Isle of Wight Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, with input from a much wider range of partners. The voices of victims-survivors have been central to our strategy development, thinking and decision making.

We have listened and heard about the fantastic work being delivered in relation to domestic abuse on the Island, the opportunities ahead, as well as the frustrations and challenges of providing a coordinated and comprehensive domestic abuse response.

The Isle of Wight's unique factors present both opportunities and

challenges. This strategy reflects the wider context within which strategy discussions were held, and is built on the following premises:

- Every victim-survivor should have access to specialist support.
- Victim-survivor voices are critical. Those closest to the issue often are closest to the solutions. We will listen, work together, and embed the outcomes of coproduced workstreams.
- Long term and sustainable recovery is essential.
- A focus on reducing barriers to accessing support is crucial.
- Domestic abuse is predominantly a gendered crime.
- We recognise that domestic abuse also impacts on men, and it is important that tailored support is available to them.
- This is a holistic strategy which includes approaches for managing people using abusive behaviours.
- No one agency, service or team can provide the response to domestic abuse alone. A multiagency coordinated collaboration is required.

This strategy details the collective approach we will subscribe to in our combined response to domestic abuse, By we, we mean:

- members of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board;
- our victim-survivor representatives;

- our partner agencies and organisations including the community and voluntary sector;
- our wider community;
- businesses and non-statutory organisations.

As a collective we are ambitious. Ambitious for better outcomes of people subjected to domestic abuse. Ambitious for the Isle of Wight to be a safe place for all, free from fear of domestic abuse. And ambitious for this strategy to be an effective tool to help us achieve these aims.

There is always more we can do. This was the resounding message during the development of this strategy. We recognise the importance of continuous learning and development, listening and coproducing, and using emerging evidence bases that contribute to best practice.

As an Island partnership, this strategy allows us to position ourselves to take forward a coordinated response to domestic abuse on the Island.



What is domestic abuse?



The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory definition of domestic abuse is: 'Any single incident or a course of conduct of physical or sexual abuse, violence or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological, emotional or other abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been personally connected to each other'.

Domestic abuse can happen across all types of relationships and is not limited to people who are or have been in an intimate personal relationship, or who live together. Domestic abuse may happen across household relationships, those with parental relationships, or between relatives. The definition is inclusive of ex-partners.

Coercive and controlling behaviour is a range of acts which make a person subordinate or dependent, by isolating them from support, exploiting them for personal gain, depriving them of independence, resistance and escape, and regulating everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour can be acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation, or other abuse used to harm, punish or frighten the victim. Victims often live in chronic fear. Honour based violence, forced marriage, and child to parent abuse (when the child is over 16 years) are also forms of domestic abuse.

The definition of domestic abuse within the Domestic Abuse Act states that the person carrying out the abusive behaviour and the person directly receiving the abusive behaviour must be over 16. It also defines children who see, hear or experience the abuse as victims or survivors of the abuse in their own right.

The Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton Local Safeguarding Children's Board policy on children and domestic abuse can be seen at hipsprocedures.org.uk/hkyysh/parents-who-have-additional-needs/domestic-violence-and-abuse.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Domestic Abuse Act received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. This act puts into legislation a number of protections for victims, survivors and children. The act creates the statutory presumption that victims and survivors of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts and puts in place additional protections to support people experiencing abuse. The act places new duties on local authorities and creates new protection orders to support the response to those experiencing domestic abuse.

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 key features

Awareness – Raising awareness and understanding about the devastating impact of domestic abuse on victim-survivors and their families.

The Criminal Justice System – To further improve the effectiveness of the justice system in providing protection for victims of domestic abuse and bring perpetrators to justice.

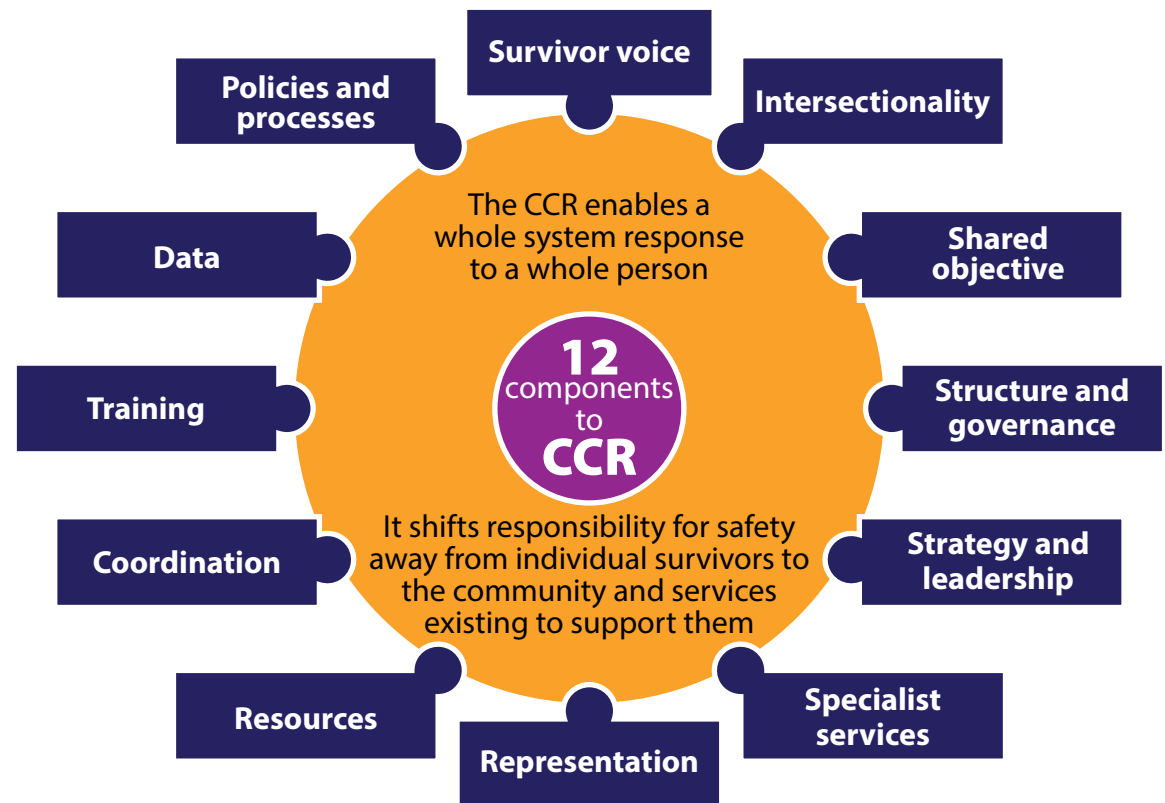
Support for victims and survivors – Strengthening the support for victims of abuse by statutory agencies.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 legislation parts

1. Definition of domestic abuse.
2. The domestic abuse commissioner.
3. Powers for dealing with domestic abuse.
4. Local authority support.
5. Protections for victims and witnesses in legal proceedings.
6. Offences involving abusive or violent behaviour.
7. Miscellaneous and general.

The coordinated community response (CCR) model

The Isle of Wight Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is committed to adopting and embedding the CCR model across our partnership as a fundamental way of working as a whole system. The CCR model enables a whole system response to a whole person. It shifts responsibility for safety away from individual survivors to the community and services existing to support them. The CCR is based on the principle that no single agency or professional has a complete picture of the life of a domestic abuse victim-survivor and their children. Central to CCR is the aim of holding perpetrators to account, underpinned by a full understanding of the perpetrators' pattern of coercive control, abusive behaviour and the impact this has on the survivor and any children. The CCR is made up of twelve components as outlined below. For the CCR to be effective, the responsibility for support and intervention should sit across agencies rather than held with one single organisation. Implementing and embedding the CCR on the Isle of Wight is embedded within our priorities, leading to a more cohesive and effective system.

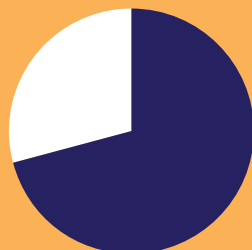


Domestic abuse: The national landscape



An estimated **2.4 million** adults in England and Wales aged 16+ experienced domestic abuse in the last 12 months, which equates to around one in 20 adults.

Women are more than **twice as likely** to experience domestic abuse than men¹ - 1.7 million women and 700,000 men.



Domestic abuse costs the UK an estimated **£23 billion a year**²

Beyond the disproportionate impacts of domestic abuse on women, there are other risk factors nationally associated with domestic abuse (2021-22)³:



Age – risk is highest in the younger age groups (16 to 19 years, and 20 to 24 years).



Women with a long-term illness, disability or impairment were more than twice as likely to be a victim of domestic abuse.



Being divorced or separated – risk also increases around time of separation.



Unemployment – those unemployed are twice as likely to report having been a victim of domestic abuse.



Sexuality or Sexual Identity – bisexual and lesbian women are around twice as likely to report to have been victim of domestic abuse in the previous year compared to heterosexual women. This increased risk is also seen in gay and bisexual men.

¹ ONS (Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)) – March 2022 edition

² Refuge: The facts...The Facts – Refuge

³ ONS (Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)) – March 2020 edition



20 per cent, or **one in five children**

live with an adult perpetrating domestic abuse⁴.

Domestic abuse often begins or escalates during pregnancy.

One in three pregnant women



experience domestic abuse⁵.

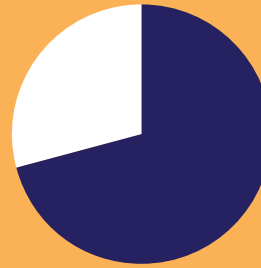
The police receive a domestic abuse-related call **every 30 seconds**



Yet it is estimated that **less than 24 per cent** of domestic abuse crime is reported to the police⁶.

61 per cent of young people

demonstrating harmful behaviours are doing so towards their mother (2015)⁷.



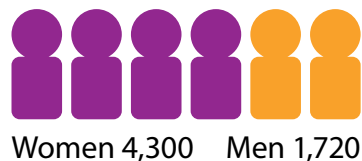
At least 10 people die every week in the UK because of violence related to domestic abuse⁸. This is likely to be an underestimate and includes child deaths, domestic homicides and suicides related to partner abuse.



4 NSPCC: Child abuse and neglect in the UK today, 2019
5 NHS, 2003
6 Refuge: The facts... The Facts – Refuge
7 Safe Young Lives: Young People and domestic abuse. Untitled (safelives.org.uk)
8 Monkton-Smith, Szymanska and Haile 2017 eprints.glos.ac.uk/4553/

Domestic abuse: The local landscape

In 2023 it was estimated that **6,020** people on the Isle of Wight over the age of 16 experienced domestic abuse in the last year.



An estimated **23 per cent** of the individuals on the Isle of Wight subjected to domestic abuse have their experience of abuse recorded as a crime by police.

2020 to 2021

Domestic abuse flagged crimes⁹ increased in 2023 by **13 per cent** from '2020 to 2021', to 2,325 crimes in '2021 to 2022', and has increased every year from '2016 to 2017'¹⁰.

2021 to 2022

- 9** Crimes are flagged to be domestic abuse related by the police officer completing the occurrence. An occurrence includes:
 - any incident of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse;
 - where the parties involved are 16 years old or over;
 - where the parties involved are or have been intimate partners or family members.
- 10** These increases can be at least partly attributed to improved recording by the police alongside increased willingness of victims to report domestic abuse to the police



Image ©www.visitisleofwight.co.uk

Of those crimes flagged by the police as being domestic abuse related during 2021 and 2022 on the Isle of Wight:

36 per cent of domestic-abuse flagged crimes occurred within the 20 per cent most deprived areas¹¹.

Urban areas had a higher rate of domestic-abuse flagged crimes compared to rural areas.

Men were twice as likely than women to be an offender of a domestic-abuse flagged crime.

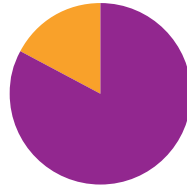
Women were twice as likely than men to be a victim-survivor of domestic abuse flagged crime.

37 per cent of domestic abuse flagged crimes had a ex-spouse or ex-partner relationship.

Between April 2020 and September 2022, there were

2,613 victim-survivor referrals

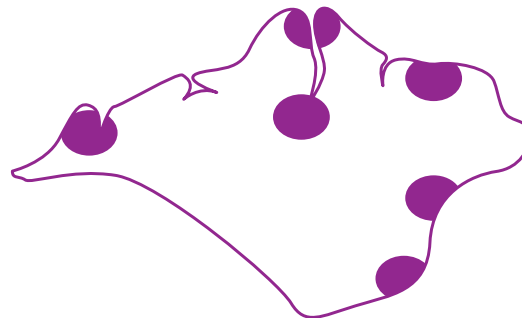
to domestic abuse services on the Island.



Around **83 per cent** of referrals were female.

Highest rate of referrals were aged between **26 and 35 years old**.

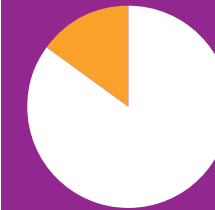
Mental health, depression and anxiety were the most frequent presenting needs.



Urban areas such as **Newport, Ryde and Shanklin** had a higher rate of referrals compared to rural areas.

There were a total of **75 referrals** to perpetrator services on the Island between April 2020 and September 2022.

Highest rate of referrals were aged between **26 and 35 years old**.



85 per cent of the referrals were male.

Almost all referrals were for people identifying as **straight or heterosexual**.

Mental health and substance misuse

were the most frequent presenting needs.

¹¹ The location of crimes are recorded at the location at which they occurred. Therefore, capturing the crimes which occurred in the night-time economy in urban centres within these groups.

Survivor voice

Lived experience is essential to tackling domestic abuse. The voice of victim-survivors ensures coproduced workstreams are relevant, meaningful, and having the right impact. We recognise that knowledge does not only come from professionals in the workplace. Voices of victim-survivors and workplace professionals are equally valuable. Lived experience engagement is delivered in a number of ways on the Isle of Wight including coproduced workstreams and through a planned survivor voice forum. In this way we share power and empower people.

During the process of developing this strategy we have heard from a range of people from a wide range of backgrounds with lived experience of domestic abuse.

Key messages included:

- Clear pathways to domestic abuse support are crucial.
- Reducing barriers to accessing services requires improvement.
- Sometimes the process of working with organisations/agencies who should be supporting a victim-survivor is as traumatising as the abuse. Processes need to change, and avoid being victim blaming.

- People need to 'see themselves' and their particular needs represented in services delivered. This includes universal services and specialist provision.
- Lack or breach of confidentiality is a common fear among people seeking support, or wishing to seek support of services, due to the localised nature of Island living.
- Not all victim-survivors want to seek justice via the criminal justice system.
- Recovery looks different for every victim-survivor.
- Domestic abuse is often unseen in the lives of people with multiple presenting needs, because other coexisting issues are more obvious. Often a lack of professional curiosity or lack of awareness regarding domestic abuse results in it remaining hidden. This is particularly prevalent when overlapping discrimination and disadvantage exist.

Values and working principles

Our values:

Inclusivity

Person-focused

Collaboration

Accountability

Proactive

Transparency

Inclusivity

It is vital to treat everybody fairly. This does not mean treating everybody the same, but according to their own circumstances and needs. We will include all voices at our table, ensure people feel valued and take an anti-discriminatory, trauma informed approach. We recognise the central importance to ensure that victim-survivor voices shape and drive our work, and commit to reduce barriers to enable this to happen.

Person-focused

We recognise the importance of seeing the whole person, and their wider lives and circumstances when responding to domestic abuse. Lived experience will drive our strategy. This resonates strongly with us, and we commit to actively listening, promoting agency and empowerment, and creating spaces where people are treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect. This strategy will enable clear pathways to support which encompass aspirations and ambitions, and go above and beyond. These pathways will be in place for victim-survivors, and those using harmful and abusive behaviours.

Collaboration

We commit to working in partnership, and founding our work on the knowledge, skills and expertise of a wide range of partners, including those with lived experience. We recognise the importance of a joined up approach, and that no one agency, organisation or person can be responsible for the delivery of this strategy.

Accountability

We are accountable for upholding the values and working principles in this strategy, and working transparently, with honesty and integrity. We commit to being professionally curious, to respectfully challenge and to safeguard. Our strategy will focus on sustainable approaches. We will build on our shared culture that aligns with our values and strive for delivering excellence for our communities.

Pro-active

Prevention is better than a cure. We don't want to simply fire fight issues that arise. We want to take a proactive and strategic approach which creates better and safer outcomes. This will include ensuring our systems are integrated, investing in early intervention, prioritising partnership working, being evidence and data led, and leading pioneering and innovative approaches.

Transparency

We commit to working in a way that is open, with clarification of expectations, and transparency regarding why and how decisions have been made.



Vision

Our overarching vision is to improve outcomes for people subjected to domestic abuse and create opportunities for change for people using harmful and abusive behaviours. We envisage that the Isle of Wight will be a place where:

- people feel safe to live and visit, and can thrive, free from fear of domestic abuse;
- victim-survivors, professionals and our wider communities are aware of the specialist support available to them, and clear pathways to support exist;
- it is recognised that all populations and communities are impacted by domestic abuse;
- barriers to receiving support are reduced;
- victim-survivors are supported to thrive, and achieve their ambitions;
- people using harmful and abusive behaviours are supported to change their behaviour;
- there is a culture of strong partnership working and the importance of preventative approaches are recognised;
- victim-survivors feel seen and heard, and lived experience drives our strategy and response to domestic abuse;
- we recognise we can always do more, learn more, and forge a culture of continuous development and improvement.

Priorities

Our vision can only be achieved by enhanced joined up services which create clear pathways to support and reduce barriers to access.

We will achieve this by focusing on the following key priorities:

Prevention and reduction of harm.

Increased access to specialist support.

Collaboration and working together.

How will we address these priorities?

Our progress against these priorities will be monitored by our survivor voice forum, and an action plan which will be monitored by the Isle of Wight Domestic Abuse Partnership Board for progress. Actions will be identified with partners and based on local need.



Addressing inequalities

Addressing inequalities is central to delivery of a successful domestic abuse strategy. Our ambitions include the use of Wight being a more equitable place to live safely, free from fear of domestic abuse and where sustainable long-term recovery is supported.

We acknowledge that domestic abuse is a crime that overwhelmingly impacts women. We also recognise that domestic abuse can affect all people from all backgrounds regardless of:

- age;
- disability or long-term conditions;
- gender identity;
- marriage or civil partner status;
- pregnancy or maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- caring responsibilities;
- drug or alcohol use;
- socio-economic status;
- rural or urban residency;
- employment status or type of employment.

Despite there being many stereotypes of domestic abuse victim-survivors, and those that use abusive behaviours, we know these not to be accurate or representative. There is no 'typical' victim-survivor or person using abusive behaviours. People are not defined by one aspect of their lives, and have multiple and complex backgrounds, circumstances and experiences. Some of these are fluid, and some remain static. In turn, our approach to risk, need and response needs to be dynamic.

Barriers to seeking support are amplified when a number of intersectional areas coexist in a person's life.



What do we know about the Isle of Wight and how this may impact on domestic abuse?

- The number of people living with a learning difficulty or disability on the Isle of Wight is significantly higher than the national average¹². People with disabilities are subjected to domestic abuse at a higher rate than non-disabled people. Women with a disability are twice as likely to be subjected to domestic abuse than non-disabled women¹³.
- The Isle of Wight also has a notable proportion of older adults represented within its demographics¹⁴. Older adults' experiences of domestic abuse may differ significantly to that of younger generations and may also be unrecognised as coexisting with other forms of abuse¹⁵.
- Many minoritised communities on the Island remain 'hidden' due to their low number¹⁶, and support networks and options for seeking support for domestic abuse may be reduced¹⁷.
- Much of the Island consists of rural areas¹⁸. It is known that in rural areas domestic abuse can last longer, risk of harm is higher, barriers can exist to accessing support services, and stigma and shame can be heightened¹⁹.

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- 12 JSNA Healthy People [www.iow.gov.uk/keep-the-island-safe/public-health/joint-strategic-needs-assessment-jsna/jsna-healthy-people/#:~:text=However%20as%20a%20percentage%20of,proportion%20recorded%20nationally%20\(0.5%25\)](http://www.iow.gov.uk/keep-the-island-safe/public-health/joint-strategic-needs-assessment-jsna/jsna-healthy-people/#:~:text=However%20as%20a%20percentage%20of,proportion%20recorded%20nationally%20(0.5%25))
 - 13 Disabled people and domestic abuse spotlight - Safe Lives safelives.org.uk/resources-for-professionals/spotlights/spotlight-disabled-people-and-domestic-abuse/
 - 14 JSNA Demography www.iow.gov.uk/keep-the-island-safe/public-health/joint-strategic-needs-assessment-jsna/jsna-demography/#:~:text=Older%20people%2C%20aged%2070%20years,compared%20to%200.9%25%20in%20England
 - 15 Domestic abuse | Hourglass wearehourglass.org/domestic-abuse
 - 16 JSNA Inclusion Health Groups www.iow.gov.uk/keep-the-island-safe/public-health/joint-strategic-needs-assessment-jsna/jsna-inclusion-health-groups/
 - 17 FINAL-Reframing-the-links.pdf www.womensaid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/FINAL-Reframing-the-links.pdf
 - 18 JSNA Healthy Places www.iow.gov.uk/keep-the-island-safe/public-health/joint-strategic-needs-assessment-jsna/jsna-healthy-places/
 - 19 Domestic abuse in rural areas - Rural Services Network rsnonline.org.uk/domestic-abuse-in-rural-areas#:~:text=Abuse%20lasts%2C%20on%20average%2C%2025%20per%20cent%20longer,the%20setting%2C%20the%20higher%20the%20risk%20of%20harm
-

Monitoring progress

Progress of the strategy to ensure effectiveness and identify further opportunities will be monitored in a variety of ways. This will include:

- Dialogue with survivor voice representatives.
- Collation and analysis of data from a wide range of partners.
- Action plan to socialise and integrate strategy priorities.
- Scrutiny of strategy progress at the domestic abuse partnership board.



Governance

Our governance arrangements sit with the Isle of Wight Domestic Abuse Partnership Board. The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is a requirement of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The board builds on the fantastic work of its predecessor, the Domestic Abuse Forum, and works closely with other multiagency boards such as the Safeguarding Adults Board, Safeguarding Children's Board and Community Safety Partnership.

The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will oversee strategy delivery and monitor strategy progress.

The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board has a terms of reference which include improving outcomes for victim-survivors of domestic abuse, leading and coordinating the Island's response to domestic abuse, facilitate partnership engagement to tackle root causes of domestic abuse and ensuring the statutory duties of Domestic Abuse Act 2021 are complied with.

This strategy sits alongside other key Isle of Wight strategies including the health and wellbeing strategy and the public health strategy and we are committed to identifying and working collaboratively across the common priorities.



Seeking support

Specialist support for people subjected to domestic abuse is available on the Isle of Wight.

Please visit [Help and support for domestic abuse \(iow.gov.uk\)](https://www.iow.gov.uk/help-and-support-for-domestic-abuse)²⁰ for details of specialist commissioned domestic abuse providers, and the Isle of Wight Domestic Abuse Pathway.

²⁰ www.iow.gov.uk/keep-the-island-safe/domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-report-and-support/help-and-support-for-domestic-abuse

Isle of Wight domestic abuse strategy 2024 to 2029

If you have difficulty understanding this document, please contact us on 01983 821000 and we will do our best to help you.

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