

North Lincolnshire  
Domestic Abuse Strategy  
2017-2020

People of North Lincolnshire live in a safe, strong, resilient and  
connected community



## FOREWORD

Welcome to the Domestic Abuse Strategy for North Lincolnshire. 2017 – 2020. The Strategy has been produced through a partnership approach and the delivery of the actions to implement the strategy will continue to use our partners and stakeholders which also includes our local communities. The Safer Neighbourhoods Partnership, who are responsible for the production and delivery of this Strategy are committed to working to an Outcomes Based Approach that recognises that a whole systems approach is required to achieve real changes and improved outcomes for a whole population. This Strategy has therefore adopted this approach – starting from a desired outcome and working backwards to identify the indicators that will guide us to the end result. Our desired outcome is that in North Lincolnshire, people no longer experience Domestic Abuse and whilst we recognise this is a huge ambition we are aiming for the absolute best outcomes for our population and we will work together to move towards this achievement.

Kay Aisthorpe

Head of Safer Neighbourhoods, North Lincolnshire.

Our priorities are to:

1. Identifying prevalence and reducing the number of victims of domestic abuse
2. Increase empowerment and resilience in communities
3. Improving prevention and early intervention

## INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Domestic abuse is one of the biggest challenges that we face as a partnership and we know that it can happen to anyone at any time of life, regardless of age, gender, social status, religion, sexuality or ethnicity. One of the most important aspects of responding effectively to domestic abuse is that it cannot be achieved by one single agency acting in isolation. This strategy supports the ambition that 'In North Lincolnshire people no longer experience Domestic Abuse' and that within North Lincolnshire it is accepted that domestic violence and abuse is recognised as being unacceptable. We want people to live safe and happy lives free from abuse.

This strategy will adopt the Home Office definition of domestic abuse and all agencies within North Lincolnshire fully endorse all aspects of this definition:

*'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. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.'*

People have different needs and their circumstances may be different. We appreciate that 'one size fits all' approach is difficult to adopt but we aim to achieve the right balance between consistency of practice by meeting the needs of the individual and by jointly recognising and supporting the promotion of resilience within the wider community. This will be fundamental for improving the outcomes for local residents.

We will produce a coherent collection of actions with a reasoned chance of making a difference.

1. Identifying prevalence and reducing numbers of victims of domestic abuse

**Indicator – reduction in reported incidents of domestic abuse by the victim occurring before the time of the first report to any service**

**On average there are 35 assaults before the victim contacts the police.**

**Knowing what works**

Within North Lincolnshire there has been a recent change around the provision of our local services and the range of services that are in place for victims and survivors. We need to know how effective this service is so that when individuals leave this service, they are equipped with the skills and resources that they need to maintain recovery. Accordingly, we need to know that victims are safer and better resourced to remain safe, and report improved physical and mental health.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

Safer Neighbourhoods will have the responsibility for monitoring the progress against the Domestic Abuse Strategy and interim progress reports will be provided to the Community Safety Partnership. A common language will be used by all agencies to ensure a clear and concise understanding of what is meant by domestic abuse.

**Proactive approach by working in partnership**

Implementation and delivery of the Strategy will be the responsibility of **ALL** agencies working in partnership to identify and protect those at risk of, and/or experiencing domestic abuse. Victims should have the confidence to report incidents and employees should be professional and have the knowledge and skills to recognise the signs of abuse and report those concerns.

**Our actions and our partners:**

- Establish an effective support package of care that is tailored to individual needs through all risk levels of domestic abuse.
- Develop clear protocols and Information Sharing agreements for sharing information about people experiencing domestic abuse.
- Identify key contacts within each agency/department to lead on domestic abuse issues and act as a 'Workforce Champion'.
- Train staff to recognise potential signs, assess risk and know where to get help.
- Produce minimum standards for responding to domestic abuse as a requirement for any statutory or voluntary agency coming into contact with those affected by domestic abuse.
- Work with agencies to build a collaborative approach towards addressing domestic abuse.

## 2. Increase empowerment and resilience in communities

### **Indicator – increased number of referrals received from a wider range of services**

#### **Increasing victim and community resilience**

Case studies indicate that a victim will have suffered violence or abuse on numerous occasions over an extended period of time before it gets reported. This is not acceptable and we want people to live safe and happy lives free from abuse. We aspire that within North Lincolnshire no one who is subject to abuse suffers in silence. Domestic abuse seriously undermines the confidence and self-esteem of the individuals and learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews, many victims are not known to the police but they all visit GPs, hospitals and other public services. We need to improve their physical and mental health by providing rapid access to domestic abuse interventions and reduce their vulnerabilities.

Communities also play an important role in supporting families through difficult periods and we need to work within those communities to ensure that any signs of abuse are captured and reported by recognising that domestic violence and abuse is unacceptable.

#### **Knowing what is available**

The long term effects of domestic abuse are devastating on both the individual and any children of the family. It is important to recognise that they find it difficult to function in their daily lives, sometimes making them less able to leave the abusive relationship. They can become isolated from friends and family and frequently suffer from a range of illnesses. Making sure that they have access to advice and information is an important step and we aim to ensure that this can come from any aspect of their lives.

#### **Our actions and our partners:**

- Support campaigns, such as White Ribbon, to raise awareness and challenge behaviours and attitudes.
- Work with the communities to enable their access to training and to help promote a whole family approach.
- To respect and value the diversity of the community to recognise their needs and concerns about domestic abuse.
- Expansion of the knowledge of domestic abuse and where to get help within other professions i.e. dentists, hairdressers, beauticians, taxi drivers, public houses, vets, GP's etc and businesses including supermarkets by having DA Champions.
- Increase knowledge of domestic abuse against individuals of any age, gender, religion, sexuality or ethnicity.

### 3. Improving prevention and early intervention

#### **Indicator – reduction in the number of victims of domestic abuse**

##### **The cycle of abuse**

The number of children that witness some form of domestic abuse whilst in the household is at least 950,000 a year. In North Lincolnshire during 2016 there were 594 children in cases that were categorised as high risk within the MARAC process, an increase of 15% (88) from the previous year. By witnessing these events it could have a long term effect on their emotional and physical development which could have an impact on their view of future relationships.

##### **Engaging with people who harm**

By engaging with people who harm we will only be able to break the cycle of abuse. It is essential that we enable them to recognise and understand their own behaviour and the impact that it has on the victim and the family. They need to be held accountable and to take responsibility for their actions. There will also be young people that may be identified as having or developing abusive behaviours that it is necessary to work with to address the systematic nature and cyclical pattern of abuse.

##### **Our actions and our partners:**

- Work to break the cycle of abuse by engaging with individuals, families and communities to raise awareness, promote self help and increase capacity for effective early intervention.
- A timely and proportionate criminal justice response to crimes reported.
- Encourage engagement of victims in criminal and civil justice processes to challenge behaviours of the people who harm.
- Early identification and provision of appropriate support for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse within the home and at risk of developing abusive or unhealthy relationships.
- Develop and maintain programmes for people who harm, both in criminal justice system and voluntary sector, to challenge offending behaviour and reduce the incidence of repeated domestic abuse.
- Make it easier for individuals who are subjected to abuse to access information and advice within all health and education settings.