



IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT SOMEONE, CONTACT WIGAN BOROUGH DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE (WBDAS) 01942 311365



THE SERVICE HAS SHOWN ME THERE IS HELP OUT THERE... I DON'T NEED TO FEEL **ALONE** AND **ISOLATED** ANYMORE. - Tom



YOU GET SO CONDITIONED TO THEIR ACTIONS AND BECAUSE IT BECOMES SO OFTEN YOU BEGIN TO DOUBT YOURSELF AND WHAT IS **WRONG OR RIGHT**. - Claire

WIGAN COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY 2025-2028

LOVE IS NOT ABUSE 



FOREWORD

As a Community Safety Partnership dedicated to fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all residents of Wigan Borough, we recognize the profound impact of domestic abuse on individuals and families within our community. This strategy reflects our collective commitment to preventing domestic abuse, supporting victims, and holding perpetrators accountable.

Our vision is to create a borough where individuals can flourish free from fear and violence. To achieve this, we will collaborate with local agencies, charities, and community groups to provide comprehensive support services, increase awareness, and offer educational programs that promote healthy relationships.

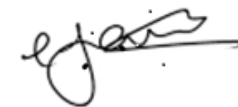
#LoveIsNotAbuse



Kevin Anderson
Portfolio Holder
Community Safety

The voices of survivors will guide our actions, ensuring that our responses are compassionate and tailored to meet their unique needs. We are committed to empowering communities to engage in proactive prevention and support initiatives, fostering a culture that challenges the societal norms allowing domestic abuse to persist.

Together, we can build a safer Wigan Borough, where everyone feels valued, respected, and able to live their lives without the threat of domestic abuse. Let us work hand in hand to effect meaningful change and ensure safety for all.



Chief Superintendent Clare Jenkins
Chief Superintendent
Greater Manchester Police (Wigan)

OUR VISION

Our vision is to create a safe, supportive, and resilient community in Wigan, where every individual can live free from the threat of domestic abuse. We aspire to foster an environment where victims are empowered, supported, and believed, ensuring they have access to resources and services that promote healing and recovery. By raising awareness and challenging societal norms that perpetuate abuse, we aim to cultivate a culture of respect, kindness, and accountability.

We will collaborate with local agencies, schools, businesses, and community groups to implement comprehensive prevention strategies and education programs, targeting both primary and secondary prevention of domestic violence. Our partnership will utilize data-driven approaches to identify risk factors and provide prompt intervention, ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable while safeguarding victims and their families.

Additionally, we envision creating safe spaces throughout Wigan where individuals can seek help without fear of stigma or retribution. Our commitment to continuous training and support for professionals will enhance their ability to recognise and address domestic abuse effectively. Together, we will strive to break the cycle of violence, nurture a community of healing, and create lasting change that uplifts every person in Wigan. Together, we will be a beacon of hope and safety.



Well Women Centre, Wigan



WIGAN.GOV.UK/DOMESTICABUSE

01942 311365

If you have been affected by domestic abuse, we are here to help.

LOVE IS NOT
ABUSE

DOMESTIC ABUSE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** is the central piece of legislation in the UK addressing domestic abuse. It provides a comprehensive legal framework aimed at improving the protection of victims, enhancing support services, and strengthening the response of public authorities, it:

- **Defines domestic abuse** broadly, including physical, emotional, coercive, controlling, and economic abuse.
- **Recognises children** as victims if they see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse.
- **Establishes the Domestic Abuse Commissioner**, an independent role to monitor responses and hold agencies accountable.
- **Creates new protection tools, such as** Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPNs) and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs).
- **Prohibits cross-examination** of victims by their abusers in family and civil courts.
- **Places a duty on local authorities** to provide support and accommodation-based services for victims.

The **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** is a cornerstone of the UK Government's broader **Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy**, and the two are deeply interconnected in both purpose and implementation.

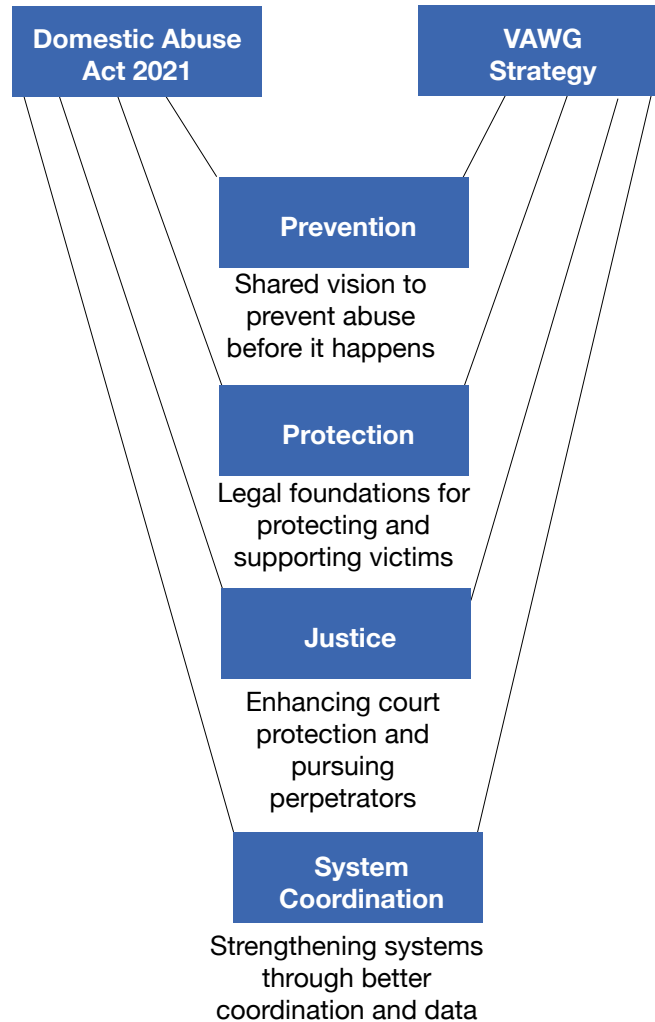
How the Domestic Abuse Act Links to the VAWG Strategy Shared Vision and Objectives

Both the Act and the VAWG Strategy aim to:

- **Prevent abuse** before it happens.
- **Protect and support victims and survivors.**
- **Pursue perpetrators** and hold them accountable.
- **Strengthen the system** through better coordination and data.

DOMESTIC ABUSE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The VAWG Strategy explicitly identifies domestic abuse as a key form of violence against women and girls, and the Domestic Abuse Act provides the legal tools to address it.



The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 is supported by several key pieces of UK legislation that work together to provide protection and support for victims of domestic abuse:

1. Serious Crime Act 2015

This Act introduced the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in intimate or family relationships (section 76). It helps to address patterns of abuse that may not involve physical violence but are equally harmful.

2. Protection from Harassment Act 1997

This Act provides protection against harassment and stalking, which are often components of domestic abuse. It allows victims to seek restraining orders and other legal remedies.

3. Family Law Act 1996

Part IV of this Act includes provisions for non-molestation orders and occupation orders, which can protect victims from further abuse by restricting the abuser's actions and access to the victim's home.

4. Children Act 1989

This Act ensures that the welfare of children is paramount in any legal proceedings. It supports the Domestic Abuse Act by recognizing the impact of domestic abuse on children and providing mechanisms to protect them.

5. The Care Act 2014

Supports the Domestic Abuse Act by focusing on the well-being and protection of adults in need of care and support.

6. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 is a wide-ranging piece of legislation aimed at modernising policing and improving accountability, collaboration, and public safety. It has areas relevant to domestic abuse including increasing sentences for stalking and harassment and Enhances powers to protect vulnerable people.

DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT 21 – LOCAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESPONSE

This strategy has been shaped to reflect the statutory responsibilities placed on **Wigan Council** under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. These duties include:

- Establishing a **multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board**, which must be consulted when carrying out specific statutory functions.
- Conducting a **comprehensive needs assessment** to understand the support requirements of all domestic abuse victims and their children living in safe accommodation, including those who have arrived from outside the borough.
- Developing and publishing a **Safe Accommodation Strategy** that is informed by the findings of the needs assessment.
- Delivering the Strategy through informed **commissioning and de-commissioning** of services.
- **Monitoring and evaluating** how effectively the Strategy is being implemented at a local level.
- Reporting annually to central government on progress and outcomes.
- Our Domestic Abuse Oversight Board is in place and chaired by Greater Manchester Police's Divisional Commander and Children Social Care's Practice Director.
- The Board is made up of key lead officers (criminal justice, health, Community and VCSE lead members as stipulated by the Domestic Abuse Act).
- It forms part of a wider connected governance framework, reporting directly to the Wigan Community Safety Partnership (alongside the Wigan Adult Safeguarding Board and Wigan Children's Safeguarding Partnership) – the governance structure is displayed on page 13
- The Board has developed a monitoring framework that ensures each meeting is informed by a strategic needs analysis across its priorities.
- It oversees key commissioning and resourcing activities / decisions.
- Our Safe Accommodation Delivery Group undertook needs analysis in Dec 24 and a delivery plan that forms a key part of this strategy has been signed off by the board, it is summarised further on in this document.
- The partnership continues to undertake its annual statutory return to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding safe accommodation needs and outcomes within the Borough.

Statement on Sexual Abuse

While this strategy is focused on coordinating objectives and delivery around domestic abuse, it will include sexual abuse where it falls within the scope of the domestic abuse definition. The Wigan Domestic Abuse Oversight Board acknowledges that sexual abuse and violence also occur outside of this definition.

The Wigan Community Safety Partnership alongside Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership and Wigan Safeguarding Adults Board is committed to supporting coordinated efforts to address sexual abuse that is not covered by this strategy. Specific work is undertaken across the wider partnerships including a focus on child exploitation through the Complex Safeguarding Strategy and the Community Safety Partnership through it's work on town centre safety and planned work regarding adult sexual abuse to ensure that this element of work is enhanced and to embed effective responses to sexual abuse and violence across Wigan.

SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS, FAMILIES AND PERPETRATORS

The Domestic Abuse Oversight Board oversees, develops and implements our multi-agency Co-ordinated Community Response Model (CCRM). This is a multi-agency approach that brings together services like police, health, social care, and advocacy groups to collaboratively prevent and respond to domestic abuse, ensuring victim safety and perpetrator accountability. The following services and support are available to address domestic abuse in Wigan Borough / Greater Manchester:

Domestic Abuse Services

- DIAS – Wigan Borough Domestic Abuse Service (helpline, support services, therapeutic services, awareness raising and training including PHSE delivery)
- MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) to support high risk victims
- IDVA Support provided by both a Wigan Council Team and a HISDVA (Hospital Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advocate) provided by WWL Hospital foundation trust
- St Mary's (Manchester) Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)
- Domestic abuse related deaths (DARDS) lessons learnt implementation and review
- Statutory Agency Work Based Domestic Abuse Policies

Greater Manchester Police

- Specialist Domestic Abuse Team's (DAT)
- MATAC Offender management process
- DAPOs / DAPNs (domestic abuse protection orders / notices)
- DVDS - Clares law (domestic violence disclosure scheme)
- Rapid Video Response (RVR) now on each district

Childrens & Young People

- Family Hubs (and model incorporating keeping families Together Teams)
- Domestic Abuse Practitioners.
- Wigan Safeguarding Children's Partnership (WSCP) incorporating local child safeguarding practice reviews)
- Children's Social Care, Targeted Services, Early Years and Early Help
- Parental Conflict programmes through Early Help Offer
- Children's counselling services via Well Women's/ WBDAS
- Operation Encompass

Education

- Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Domestic Abuse PHSE awareness (pupils and staff)

SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS, FAMILIES AND PERPETRATORS

Adult Services

- Adult Safeguarding Team
- Adult Social Care, Early Intervention
- Wigan Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB) incorporating learning from case reviews

Health

- WWL HISDVA - Health Independent Sexual & Domestic Violence Advocate as part of Think Family Safeguarding Service
- WWL Counseling Service
- Wigan 0 - 19s Service delivered by WWL
- GMMH Domestic Abuse Lead Officer role
- Public Health - Commissioning and Suicide Prevention

Civil & Criminal Justice System

- Probation - Building Better Relationships (BBR) Programme
- Probation Integrated Offender management Programme.
- MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements)
- One-to-one work with probation officers
- Shorter, targeted interventions for specific behaviours or risk factors
- Integrated Safety Support for victims alongside perpetrator work.
- Victim Support Services
- Criminal Civil and Family Courts
- CAFCASS

VCSE and Faith Sector

- Experts by Experience Group
- Talk Listen Change Voluntary Perpetrator programme

Housing

- Homelessness Solutions Team (incorporating Specialist Housing Officers)
- Safe Accommodation Commissioning and delivery

DOMESTIC ABUSE – ANALYSIS OF NEED (LOCAL/REGIONAL)

Prevention	Requests to access police information on perpetrators under Clare’s Law in Wigan has increased significantly across 24/25 by 56% (total n=573) indicating positive increase in awareness of the scheme and domestic abuse risks.
	In 2024/25, Wigan Domestic Abuse Board’s commissioned awareness scheme was delivered by DIAS to 19k young people in a school setting. From these sessions 290 young people disclosed they were currently experiencing Domestic Abuse at home.
	49% of teens in relationships from the a recent Youth Endowment Fund survey reported they had experienced some form of violent or controlling behaviour in the last 12 months
	According to a 2021 national survey of 4,000 domestic abuse victims by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 44% disclosed to a healthcare professional—often the viewed them as their only safe contact point
Early Identification and Help	With a national under-reporting rate of 60%, within Wigan it’s likely that there were an estimated total of 28,705 incidents across the borough (actual reported n=11230).
	Reporting and underreporting rates are not uniform across the borough and communities, and we’ll undertake further analysis to identify these areas.
	Older women are less likely to use domestic abuse services, even though they face abuse at similar rates to younger women—affecting at least one in six.
Protecting Children	Of 8912 (mainly) police generated risk assessments undertaken in 24/25, , 50% (n=4413) recorded that children were either present or in the house when the abuse was reported.
	Of those 4413 risk assessments, 26% (n=1138) were assessed as high risk (in the DASH risk assessment, a case is considered high risk when the adult victim is at a significant likelihood of serious harm or homicide due to domestic abuse).
	From police reports, and under Operation Encompass, GMP made 3271 notifications to schools / nurseries regarding a young person attached to a crime of domestic abuse. We know we need to evaluate and understand the impact of sharing this information makes for young people.
	Domestic Abuse is the highest reason for contact to Wigan Children’s First Partnership Hub and the highest recorded factor at assessment for all assessments. It is also the second highest factor at assessment for children in care after parental mental health.
	Emotional Abuse is the highest reason for Child Protection plans in Wigan which is mostly related to domestic abuse and / or parental conflict. In total 41% of all child protection work has domestic abuse recorded as the primary category of need for referral.



Protecting Children	Domestic Abuse referrals have a 65% re-referral rate to Children's Services compared to an average 25% re-referral rate.
	In the year ending March 2025, 4% of Domestic Abuse suspects in Wigan were aged Under 18.
Crisis Support and Recovery	In 24/25 there were 11,230 domestic abuse related Incidents reported to GMP (a +8% increase from 23/24). On investigation these incidents are then converted to crimes or dealt with as domestic abuse related crimes.
	In 24/25 these incidents led to 6,291 domestic abuse related crimes reported to GMP (a -9% reduction from 23/24) highlighting the need to evaluate prevention and early help effectiveness combined with ensuring confidence in reporting and early disclosure.
	The top 5 of offences of Stalking and harassment, Violence without injury, Violence with injury, Criminal Damage and arson offences, Public order offences accounted for 88% of these Domestic Abuse related crimes.
	15% (n=1112) of domestic abuse crimes in 24/25 achieved charged, summonsed,, out of court disposals outcomes compared to 16% in 23/24 (n=1202).
	52% of outcomes in 24/25 (same % as 23/24) were due to victims not supporting an investigation This is due to a mix of factors including feeling listened to and speedy responses for help as well as victims' fears / concerns, confidence in the CJS. Helping victims access the right support first time is a key objective.
	Sexual Offences accounted for 3% of all Domestic Abuse related crimes in 24/25 but we know that this crime type is more under-reported then other types (e.g. physical violence) especially sexual abuse– some estimates put it at a 5% reporting rate (others 1 in 3).
	Of reported / disclosed domestic abuse that through police / partner response received a risk assessment, 24% were high risk, 52% were medium risk and 23% were Standard Risk.
	In the year ending March 2025, 16% of Victims were aged 18-25.
	In 23/24, Wigan had double the rate (per 1k pop) of referrals for safe accommodation compared to the Northwest region (2.4 per 1k pop compared to 1.2 for the NW).
	In 23/24, Wigan's rate per of Safe Accommodation spaces (per 100k households) was 2.5 per 100k (above the NW rate of 1.4 and Rest of England at 0.8, though this was driven by sanctuary scheme provision. Refuge space accounted for 3.4% of total spaces compared to 13.9% (NW) and 20.4% (rest of England).
	In 23/24, Wigan supported a total of 549 individuals and their families to access safe accommodation. 103 individuals could not be supported (under Safe Accommodation criteria mainly due to capacity constraints (though they did receive other Accommodation support).



Crisis Support and Recovery	When looking at total percentages of households unable to be supported, again, driven by sanctuary scheme / target hardening support Wigan could not support 13% of all referrals compared to 48% across the NW and 49% across the Rest of England.
	In 24/25, there were 4015 homelessness presentations to the Homelessness Solutions Team, 8% of these (310) reported a primary reason of Domestic Abuse.
	Wigan's domestic abuse helpline received 6111 calls in 2024/25.
	Medium risk referrals from police to community support services also have around a 70-80% attrition rate and we need to understand what is driving this and adapt our approach.
	Wigan Councils IDVA Service received 1119 referrals in 24/25. WWL HIDSVA received 1031 referrals.
	Across 24/25 repeat presentations at MARAC showed an average of 46% (compared with an average of 51% in 23/24) which is positive– a MARAC Improvement plan will seek to reduce this more and improve victim outcomes.
Holding perpetrators to Account	In 24/25, Wigan had 980 repeat suspects regarding domestic abuse crimes (20% of all offenders), down 3% from 23/24 (n=1228 or 23% of all offenders). Our First 9 cohorts (of our offender manager process - MATAC) have been evaluated 12 months post discharge evidencing 86% decrease in DA related incidents, and a 72% reduction in other crimes

WIGAN DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY 2025-28

Our vision is to create a safe, supportive, and resilient community in Wigan, where every individual can live free from the threat of domestic abuse. We aspire to foster an environment where victims are empowered, supported, and believed—ensuring they have access to the resources and services that promote healing and recovery. By raising awareness and challenging societal norms that perpetuate abuse, we aim to cultivate a culture of respect, kindness, and accountability.

Our 6 priority areas we'll work on are:

- 1. Whole-System Working: Ensure all partners work collectively to respond to and prevent domestic abuse.**
Work to ensure that all partners work collectively and collaboratively as a whole system to respond to and prevent Domestic Abuse.
- 2. Prevention - Changing Attitudes, Behaviour and Culture**
Work with communities, schools and the workforce to embed a culture that promotes the core values that no form of abuse is acceptable with a focus on communities, education and the workplace.
- Early Identification and Help: Increase opportunities for victims to safely disclose abuse and improve professional responses.**

3. for victims to safely disclose abuse and improve professional responses.
Increase opportunities for victims to safely and confidently disclose that Domestic Abuse is happening to them (workforce development and awareness training and work based Domestic Abuse Policies public and private). Improve the skills and confidence of professionals in spotting the signs of domestic abuse improve first responses to prevent escalation of risk and harm and provide tailored support to survivors.
- 4. Protecting Children: Ensure children and young people affected by domestic abuse receive timely and effective support.**
Offering and ensuring access to early help and prevention for people, affected by domestic abuse at the earliest opportunity and within community settings they feel safe, trusted and believed within.
Identify and support children and young people affected by domestic abuse, including supporting young people in abusive relationships.
- 5. Crisis Support and Recovery:** Provide immediate and long-term support to victims and their families. Develop, commission, and deliver effective pathways and responses that provide meaningful support to victims and their families from the moment they disclose domestic abuse. Ensure our interventions reduce repeat victimisation and re-presentations by getting support right the first time—empowering victims to lead lives free from domestic abuse and confirming through their feedback that our approach is effective.
- 6. Holding Perpetrators to Account: Develop and implement pathways that hold perpetrators accountable and support behaviour change.** Develop, commission and implement effective pathways and responses that support victims, that hold perpetrators to account and that evidence changed behaviour (whilst ensuring those at risk are protected from harm).

CONCLUSION, ONGOING ENGAGEMENT, DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE AND MONITORING PROGRESS

Review of the Strategy and how we will engage and consult.

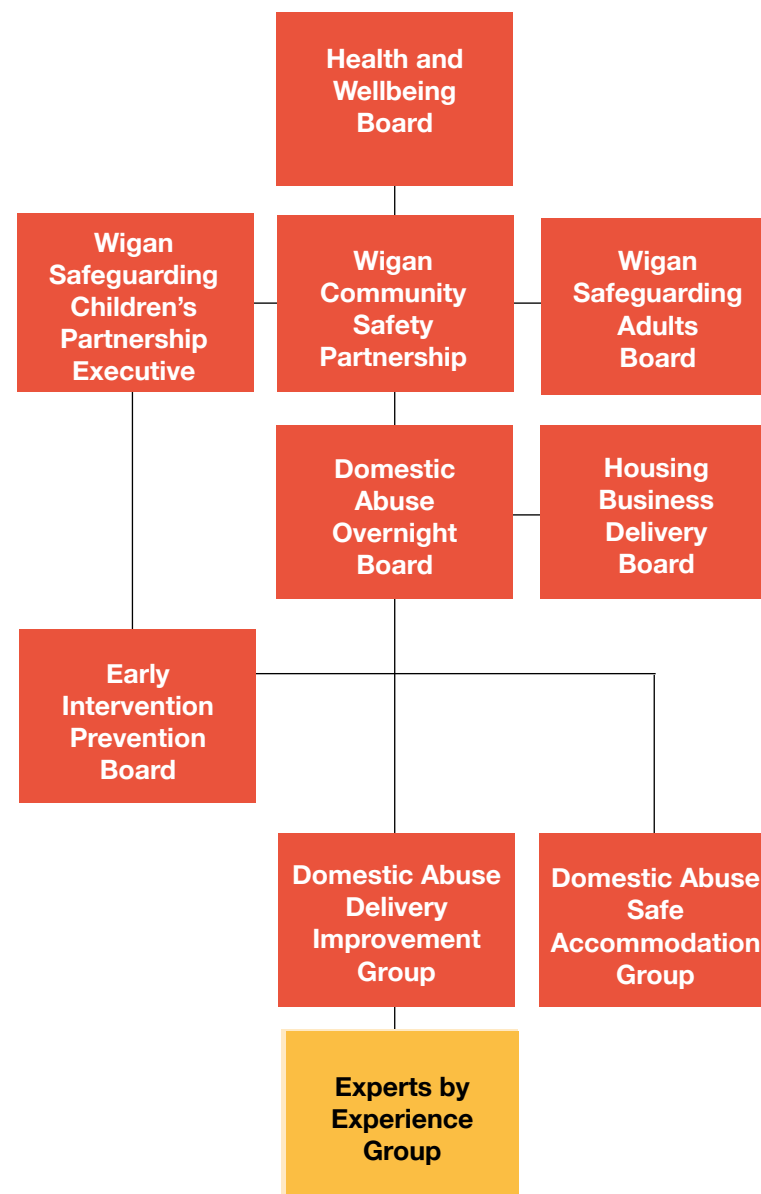
The strategy is a live document under constant review between now and 2028 with its objectives being consistently reviewed by the Domestic Abuse Oversight Board. Regular engagement and consultation will be prioritised through the Lived Experience Group, and we will expand this over the next twelve months. We will produce an annual calendar of public and focused consultations and embed a VCSE Forum, all of which will direct feedback / representation into the Domestic Abuse Oversight Board and its delivery Groups. This includes all activities in relation to the annual refresh, and overall review of the Whole Systems Strategy and Safe Accommodation Duty, which is next planned to take place in 2028.

Monitoring and evaluating local delivery and the effectiveness of the Strategy and reporting back to central government annually

Finally, for the remaining elements of this statutory duty, the Domestic Abuse Oversight Board with its overall membership to meet this statutory duty, will ensure the monitoring and evaluation of local delivery and the elements outlined for victims and their children in safe accommodation.

The Domestic Abuse Oversight Board will work in partnership with all services and organisations responding to Domestic Abuse in Wigan, to complete an annual report back to central government as required by the legislation.

Providing support specifically for victims and their children in safe accommodation will include and ensure that wider areas of focus (including Violence Against Women and Girls, Modern Slavery, Community Safety, Victims, Safeguarding and Families, and Health and Wellbeing) are considered collaboratively across the Boards and Partnerships.





The scars represent the physical pain and damage.

The butterfly represents transformation and growth.

This painting all together means growing stronger through the pain endured. It's about learning to love yourself and making a beautiful life after trauma, something that is possible.

If you have been affected by Domestic abuse, we are here to help

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[WIGAN.GOV.UK/DOMESTICABUSE](https://www.wigan.gov.uk/domesticabuse)

