

# Norfolk Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy

2025 to 2028



## Forward

Domestic abuse and sexual violence are profound issues that affect individuals and families across Norfolk. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach, grounded in empathy, education, and proactive intervention. This strategy outlines our commitment to improving understanding, enhancing skills, and delivering effective support to those affected by these forms of violence.

Our priorities are clear:

1. Improving our communities understanding of domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse, their knowledge of how to respond and where to get help.
2. Increase the skills and knowledge of workforce regarding domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse.
3. Assessing and improving the strategic partnership understanding of domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse, utilising victim-survivor voice to inform our services.
4. Delivering preventative and supportive interventions for domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse, utilising principles from the public health approach.
5. Ensuring children and young people affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence are kept safe, understood, have their voice heard, and are supported to recover.

This strategy represents our collective effort to create a safer, more informed, and supportive community. We extend our gratitude to all those who have contributed to its development. Your insights and dedication are invaluable as we work together to make a meaningful difference.

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## What we mean by Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and Abuse (DASVA)

**Domestic Abuse (DA)** is defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and covers behaviour of person (“A”) towards another (“B”), when they are ‘personally connected’ and are ‘aged 16 or over’ that consists of any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional, or other abuse

Being personally connected generally means people who are or have been in an intimate relationship or are related. The act also recognises children that see, hear, or experience the effect of domestic abuse as victims of abuse.

Anyone can be affected by domestic abuse – regardless of age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender reassignment, race, religion, or belief. In addition, domestic abuse can manifest itself in different ways within different communities.

The Domestic Abuse statutory guidance provides the full definition and lots more helpful information about domestic abuse: [Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance](#)

**Sexual violence and abuse (SVA)** [Rape Crisis](#) explain that it describes any sexual activity that happened without consent and it can involve one or more of the following: pressure, manipulation, bullying, intimidation, threats, deception and/or force. Consent means agreeing to something by choice and having both the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

There are many distinct types of acts that are sexual violence (including online acts), some of which include:

- child sexual abuse
- rape
- sexual assault
- sexual harassment
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- sexual exploitation
- sex trafficking
- indecent exposure or 'flashing'

**DA can include SVA and vice versa. Not all SVA is DA.**

**What about VAWG?** VAWG (violence against women and girls) refers to violence which is disproportionately perpetrated by men and boys and experienced by women and girls. Both DA and SVA fit this definition, however Norfolk use DA and SVA to recognise that men and boys do experience DA and SVA.

## Scale

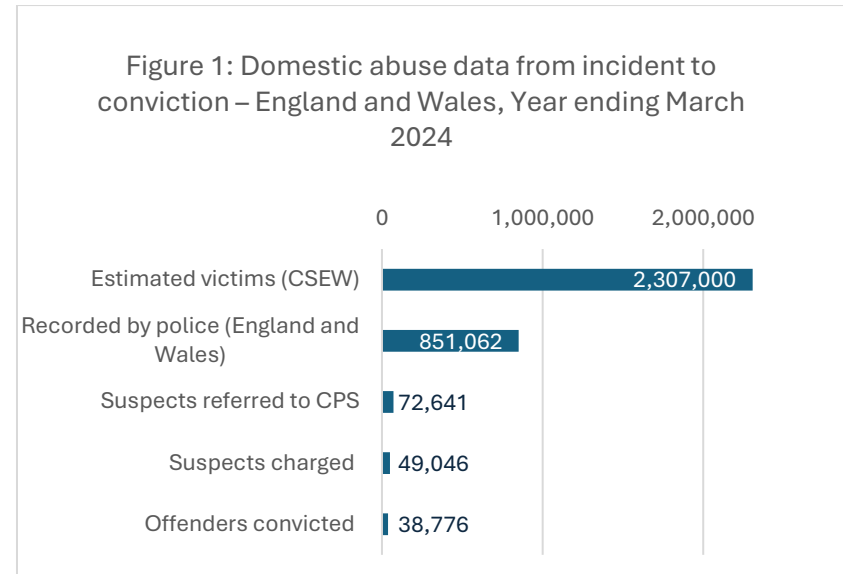
Based on the Crime Survey of England and Wales March 2024 estimate of DA prevalence, an estimated 155,000 (20.5%) people aged 16+ have experienced in their lifetime, 36,000 (4.8%) in the last 12 months. More women than men experienced domestic abuse in the last 12 months, 26,000 (6.6%) compared to 11,000 (3.0%).

There were 17,510 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes recorded by Norfolk Constabulary in the year ending March 2024 – 19 incidents per 1,000 people. The number of DA crimes and incidents reported to Norfolk Constabulary in 2024 was similar (2.5% higher) compared to the previous year. This increase was driven by a 9.0% increase in DA incidents recorded.

10,000 children in Norfolk were involved or witnessed domestic abuse in Norfolk.

Local analysis tells us that Great Yarmouth (38.3) and Norwich (33.1) had the highest rate of domestic abuse crime and incidents per 1,000 people 16+ in 2023/24. King's Lynn and West Norfolk (23.8) and Breckland (22.6) had similar rates to each other whilst North Norfolk (17.7), South Norfolk (17.2) and Broadland (16.3) had the lowest rates.

3,700 people were referred to NIDAS in 2024, with a further 1,100 referrals to NSVC for DA



There are an estimated 145,000 victims of rape and sexual assault, including attempts in Norfolk. That includes 97,000 women aged 16+, 20,000 men aged 16+ and 28,000 children.

Every year, an estimated 17,000 people in Norfolk are the victim of a sexual assault.

In 2024 2,400 serious sexual offences were recorded by Norfolk Constabulary, 26% of which were noted as domestic abuse related.

In Norfolk, there are several organisations that provide specific services to child or adult victims of sexual violence. These

services provide much needed support to a limited number of victims, but the demand for support outstrips supply.

According to Rape Crisis “five in six women who are raped do not report – and the same is true for four in five men. Victims’ reasons for not reporting include:

- 40% said ‘embarrassment’
- 38% said they did not think the police could help.
- 34% said they thought it would be humiliating.

## Impact

Physical – direct injuries from domestic abuse or sexual violence and abuse, sexually transmitted infection, pregnancy, functional disorders or stress-related conditions and psychological harms can be associated with poorer physical health.

Psychological – Both domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse trauma can have a significant impact on a victim’s emotional, psychological, and mental wellbeing. Recognised impacts include feeling isolated, worthlessness, dependency, depression, anxiety, and PTSD.

Suicide - The psychological impact of domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse can be so severe that it leads to suicide ideation and attempt.

Addiction - Some victims develop addictions as part of a coping mechanism which may be exploited by perpetrators.

Offending - There is an established link between women’s experience of domestic abuse and offending and reoffending. Offending may be because of coercion from the perpetrator.

Livelihood – homelessness as a result of domestic abuse affects many people and is often a factor preventing people from leaving abusive relationships. Unemployment, debt, and poverty can result from DA and leave a lasting impact.

Broadly, some of the impacts that domestic abuse can have on children include:

- Feeling anxious or depressed.
- Low self-esteem and difficulties with forming healthy relationships.
- Hypervigilance in reading body language or changes in mood and atmosphere.
- Having difficulty sleeping, nightmares.
- Physical symptoms such as stomach aches or bed wetting.
- Delayed development or deterioration in speech, language, and communication.
- Reduction in school attainment, truancy, risk of exclusion from school.
- Increased application to activities outside the home, including academia or sports, as a distraction.

- Inconsistent regulation of emotions, including becoming distressed, upset, or angry.
- Becoming aggressive or internalising their distress and becoming withdrawn.
- Managing their space within the home so they are not visible.
- Using alcohol or drugs, or self-harming.

There is evidence that the impact is cumulative, with sustained exposure over time leading to the most severe impact.

## Barriers and intersectionality

Many men in Norfolk experience domestic abuse. There is stigma for men related to the societal assumption that domestic abuse victimisation is gendered, which can act as a barrier to male victims and survivors reporting.

LGBTQ+ victims-survivors of domestic abuse may not wish to report for a range of issues including feeling marginalised due to sexuality, fear of 'outing' themselves. Not knowing how to access support also affects this community.

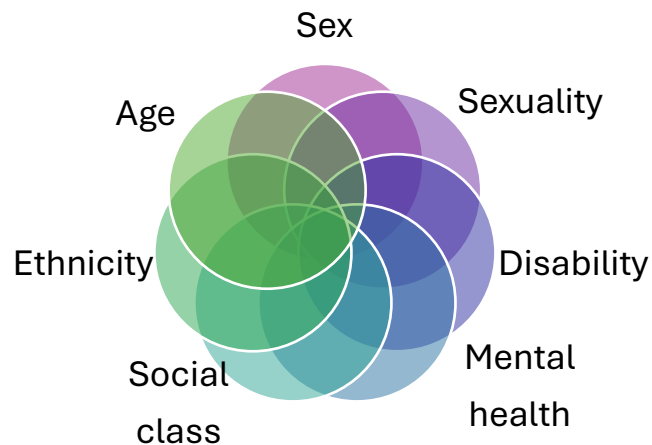
Those from ethnic minority backgrounds may not identify, disclose, seek help, or reporting abuse due to barriers they face, including: a distrust of the police and other statutory agencies; fears about immigration and/or asylum status and risk of deportation; language barriers; being disproportionately impacted by certain forms of domestic abuse, including forced

marriage, staying within an abusive marriage, so called 'honour'-based abuse and female genital mutilation (FGM) and; fear of rejection by the wider community

For adults with care and support needs, research has shown that domestic abuse plays a role in their ability to access support and how they experience abuse. Many abusers deliberately use and increase dependency as a way of asserting and maintaining control and perpetrators often use forms of abuse that exploit, or add to, the abused person's impairment.

In many cases an older person may be too scared to access support, may wish to protect family members, or may have normalised abuse that has been going on for a long time. Additionally, domestic abuse affecting older adults is sometimes understood as elder abuse, even when the perpetrator is a family member or partner.

**Intersectionality** describes the interconnectedness between social categorisations that overlap with one another and their impact on discrimination and disadvantage. Everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression and to provide effective responses to domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse, this needs to be recognised and accounted for. The DASVG is committed to taking an intersectional response to domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse and will work to understand diverse experience, design inclusive services, and provide best practice information to professionals.



## Policy context

The UK Government has committed to publishing its strategy for responding to violence against women and girls in the summer of 2025. This strategy will be influential for the response to domestic abuse and sexual violence nationally and in Norfolk.

The Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 introduces a Duty to Collaborate which mandates local policing bodies, local authorities, and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) in England to work together in commissioning community support services for victims of domestic abuse, sexual abuse, and serious violence.

This collaboration involves developing a joint needs assessment and local strategy to enhance and deliver victim support services effectively. The aim is to ensure a coordinated approach that addresses the specific needs of victims and improves the overall quality of support available.

The **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** mandates local authorities to provide support and accommodation for victims of domestic abuse, ensuring a coordinated and effective response. This includes a statutory duty for tier one local authorities to assess the need for accommodation-based support, develop and publish a strategy, and implement it through commissioning decisions. The Act also requires the establishment of a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to oversee these efforts and ensure collaboration among relevant agencies. This framework aims to provide consistent and comprehensive support for victims and their children, enhancing their safety and well-being.

Tackling serious violence is a key priority for the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership. The Serious Violence Duty was introduced as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. It forms a key part of wider programmes of work to prevent and reduce serious violence; taking a whole-system approach to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence, focused on prevention and early intervention. Locally, the definition of serious violence includes domestic

abuse and sexual offences. The Duty requires responsible authorities and organisations to work together in what they consider to be the most effective way to plan, share data, intelligence, and knowledge, to generate evidence-based analysis of the local problem and solutions to prevent and reduce serious violence in local areas.

The **2016 Domestic Homicide Review Guidance** outlines the process for conducting reviews of domestic homicides to identify lessons learned and improve responses to domestic abuse. It emphasizes the importance of involving families and friends, having a representative review panel, and developing coordinated strategies to prevent future incidents. The guidance aims to enhance inter-agency collaboration and service responses for victims. The Home Office is expected to update this guidance in 2025, including changing the name to **Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews** to better reflect the scope and purpose of these reviews.

Locally, the Safer Norfolk Plan 2025 to 2028 sets how the Community Safety Partnership for Norfolk will respond to community safety issues. This plan provides a clear framework to its subgroup structure, including the DASVG for developing priorities and delivery. This strategy is part of a local partnership landscape, including the Local Safeguarding Adults Board, the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Health and

Wellbeing Board, all of which have a remit relevant to the response to domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The FLOURSH Strategy details what needs to happen and what success looks like for children and young people in Norfolk. Importantly, the strategy places a focus on family, understanding, and safety of children and young people in Norfolk. By working together, as a county and a system, the strategy aims to help every child to FLOURISH.

The Victims' Code in England and Wales outlines the minimum standards of service that victims of crime, including those affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence, are entitled to receive from criminal justice agencies. It ensures that victims are treated with dignity, respect, and sensitivity, and are kept informed throughout the justice process. Key rights include access to support services, the ability to make a Victim Personal Statement, and being notified about significant developments such as the release of an offender. Promoting trauma-informed, victim-centred approaches, ensuring multi-agency collaboration, providing safe accommodation and advocacy, and supporting early intervention and professional training will contribute to delivering the Victims Code for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse.

## DASVG priorities 2025 to 2028

Improving our communities understanding of domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse, their knowledge of how to respond and where to get help.

Increase the skills and knowledge of workforce regarding domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse.

Assessing and improving the strategic partnership understanding of domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse, utilising victim-survivor voice to inform our services.

Delivering preventative and supportive interventions for domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse, utilising principles from the public health approach.

Ensuring children and young people affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence are kept safe, understood, have their voice heard, and are supported to recover.

### Priority 1: Improving our communities understanding of domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse, their knowledge of how to respond and where to get help.

We understand that by ensuring that the public are aware of what DA and SVA is and how to report and seek support, they will be better able to identify if it happening to them or a loved one and access the support they need. This approach will increase confidence in services and improve the accuracy of the partnerships understanding of DA and SVA.

- Co-ordinate communications strategies and deliver targeted and trauma informed campaigns, awareness raising activity and events that increase awareness, and clearly explain domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse. This should include communicating children as victims of domestic abuse.
- Provide consistent information and advice through our partner organisations' websites and other promotional materials, including how to report concerns to the right place, what help is available and how to get it.
- Communicate our activity as a partnership to the public effectively, including the impact that it makes and how communities can get involved.

## Priority 2: Increase the skills and knowledge of workforce regarding domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse.

We know that ensuring our workforce are knowledgeable on DA and SVA supports them to make better decisions and deliver high quality responses to victim-survivors and communities. Investing in the skills and knowledge of our workforce is an investment in the safety and well-being of the entire community.

- Ensure domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse training packages are available for professionals and monitor their impact in Norfolk.
- Provide briefings for professionals working in Norfolk covering intricacies of domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse, including taking an intersectional approach.
- Provide specialist practitioners with access to enhanced training offers, including Domestic Abuse Champions and Domestic Homicide Review Panel Members training.
- Identify emerging training needs through the DASVG subgroup structure and work collaboratively to ensure that these needs are met.
- Assess the availability of multi-agency training in Norfolk.
- Distribute learning from Norfolk based domestic homicide reviews through DHR/DARDR Webinars.
- Raise awareness of the link between domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse and suicide and promote suicide prevention safety planning to professionals working with victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse.
- Criminal Justice agencies adopt best practice in managing domestic abuse cases and prevent harm.
- Provide assurance of the safeguarding culture within the Community Safety Partnership.

### Priority 3: Assessing and improving the strategic partnership understanding of domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse.

A thorough understanding of the root causes, nature, and extent of DA and SVA allows for the development of targeted, effective solutions and evidence-based decision making.

- Annual refreshes to strategic assessment informed by the annual Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment and Domestic Abuse Accommodation Strategic Needs Assessment. DASVG to be responsible for responding to these assessments.
- Undertake a single domestic abuse needs assessment and a separate sexual violence and abuse needs assessment which consider protected characteristics and intersectionality and deliver recommendations for the partnership to improve activity and response.
- Engage the public to inform our understanding of sexual violence and domestic abuse related issues.
- Gather victim and survivor voice to inform service design, our partnership response and to help us understand the impact we are making.
- Establish an approach to deliver the new Duty under the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 to undertake a joint needs assessment to inform the commissioning of community

support services for victims of domestic abuse, sexual abuse, and serious violence.

## Priority 4: Delivering preventative and supportive interventions for domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse, utilising principles from the public health approach.

We know that to respond effectively to prevent future DA and SVA, we must intervene on three levels. We must tackle underlying societal causes of DA and SVA, including values and norms, at a population level. We can also target those at risk of being involved in DA and SVA, providing bespoke interventions based on need. Finally, we must support victims and respond to perpetrators.

- Continue to create communities of active bystanders in key settings, including retailers, the nighttime economy, public transport providers and healthcare settings.
- Reduce parental conflict in Norfolk through the Every Relationship Matters in Norfolk (ERMiN) programme.
- Strive to provide community- and accommodation-based support for domestic abuse to those that need it. This offer should be based on the needs of victims and, includes providing:
  - An Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service.

- Dedicated support for children and young people where their parent/carer is accessing community- or accommodation-based support.
- Recovery programmes.
- Support with the criminal justice processes.
- Sanctuary scheme.
- Refuge accommodation.
- Move on accommodation.
- Dispersed accommodation.

This will be developed further under the duty to implement a strategy under the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 and by delivering against the next Support in Safe Accommodation Strategy for Norfolk.

- Strive to provide access to support services for victims of sexual violence to those that need it. This includes:
  - Sexual assault referral centres.
  - Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) service
  - Special sexual violence support services for children and adults.
  - Support with the criminal justice processes.
- Prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence through behaviour change interventions, which target harmful and abusive behaviour, delivering interventions to different audiences, including those known to be at risk of preparation.

- Keep vulnerable people in Norfolk safe through our effective safeguarding system.
- Ensure services respond to the barriers that different characteristic groups experience when accessing domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse support. This should be informed by intersectionality.

## Priority 5: Ensuring children and young people affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence are kept safe, understood, have their voice heard, and are supported to recover.

We understand children can be victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse in their own home, in their intimate relationships or experience extra-familial sexual violence and abuse. They can also demonstrate harmful behaviours to one another or their family. Sadly, they experience domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse at very high rates and can lead to other negative socio-economic consequences. That is why we have established the following commitments.

- Ensuring our response treats children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right, including in criminal justice system.
- Undertake a data review and needs analysis for children affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse, building on our current understanding.

- Deliver preventative action and early intervention for children and young people in Norfolk.
- Review and developed targeted interventions focusing on early years to improve our local support for children under five living in a home with domestic abuse.
- Maintain Norfolk's innovative response to Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse, which is built on the Respect Young People's Programme
- Work together to coordinate the support offered to children and young people who are victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse.

This strategy directly contributes to delivering FLOURISH Strategy Outcomes

## DASVG Outcomes framework

Priority	Outcome one	Outcome two	Outcome three
1: Awareness – Public	Increase public awareness of domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse and the services available to provide support	There is accurate and consistent information available about DASV on CSP partner websites	The public are reassured by the activity of the DASVG.
2: Workforce development	Professionals understand what domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse is, can identify it, feel they can support disclosures, have the awareness to ask to know how to signpost and understand the barriers for different protected characteristics.	The Norfolk Domestic Abuse Champions programme provides a network of experts within partner organisations.	Learning from DHR/DARDRs is effectively distributed.
3: Strategic Partnership Understanding	DASVG assesses available crime and service data to deliver a clear understanding of domestic abuse and sexual violence in Norfolk.	DASVG collates, analyses, and responds to public and victim-survivor voice.	DHR/DARDR recommendations are put into practice
4: Interventions	Those perpetrating domestic abuse and sexual violence and abuse are challenged to change their behaviour, including by	Victims feel supported to be safe, heard, believed, and recover.	Communities participate in being part of the solution

	increasing the % of perpetrators charged and convicted of crimes.		
5: Children and Young People	Families will receive a whole family response to domestic abuse	All children impacted by domestic abuse or sexual violence are supported	Children understand what healthy relationships look like