

SAFER ROTHERHAM PARTNERSHIP

Tackling Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences Strategy

2026/27 – 2028/29



**THE SAFER ROTHERHAM
PARTNERSHIP**



Contents



- Foreword Page 1
- Overviews Page 3
- Introduction Page 6
- Our Vision 2026 – 2029 Page 7

- National Prevalence and Statistics Page 8
- Local Prevalence and Statistics Page 10
- Current Achievements 2022 – 2026 Page 12

- Consultation and Strategic Alignment Page 19

- Our Priorities 2026 – 2029 Page 25
- What we aim to achieve Page 26

- South Yorkshire Police - RAPID response Page 33

- The Delivery Page 34

Foreword:

Councillor Victoria Cusworth

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and the Domestic Abuse Strategy

Councillor Saghir Alam

Cabinet Member for Finance and Community Safety and the Chair of the Safer Rotherham Partnership

Domestic and Sexual Abuse can affect anyone, and we know the impact it has on children and young people children – this can last a lifetime. Behind every statistic is a child, an adult, or a family living with fear and control we must never lose sight of that. This strategy sets out our commitment to making Rotherham a safer place for everyone. It has been shaped by survivors’ voices, by the expertise of frontline professionals, and by the strength and resilience of our communities.

Ending abuse requires more than services alone. It means preventing harm early, offering timely support, and challenging the wider issues that increase vulnerability such as housing insecurity, mental health challenges, and financial hardship. These are not background factors; they are often the barriers that keep people trapped in harmful situations. By working together across services, sectors, and communities, we will protect victims and children, hold perpetrators to account, and support recovery. Our shared ambition is a safer, stronger Rotherham where children, adults, and families can rebuild their lives free from fear and full of opportunity.

Domestic and Sexual Abuse does not discriminate. It can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, background, or circumstance. We must ensure that everyone has equal access to safety, support, and justice.

Strong governance will underpin this strategy. Clear accountability, robust oversight, and transparent decision-making will drive progress and ensure that we challenge ourselves to continually improve.

Together, we can deliver real and lasting change, creating a Rotherham where everyone can live safely and thrive.

Foreword:

Emma Ellis

Head of Service Community Safety and Regulatory Services & Safer Rotherham Partnership Domestic Abuse lead.

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences/Abuse remains a core priority for the Safer Rotherham Partnership. This strategy builds on previous achievements to further strengthen support for victim / survivors and bring justice to those who perpetrate abusive behaviours.

In November 2024, the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Partnership Group conducted a review of the strategy and reaffirmed the strategy's vision, however felt that by streamlining the previous priorities, it would enable a more focus driven, coordinated and effective response to key areas of need, as such is reflected in this strategy.

Underpinned by key aims and a partnership action plan that will be co-developed by all partners, this strategy focuses on embedding best practice, enhancing service delivery, and ensuring a consistent, survivor and family centred approach to tackling Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences/Abuse. Including tackling Violence Against Women and Girls.



**THE SAFER ROTHERHAM
PARTNERSHIP**

Overview - Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines Domestic Abuse as:

“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

Emotional

Controlling Behaviour is: “a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour”.

Coercive Behaviour is: “an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim”.

This definition includes so-called ‘honour’ based violence, Female Genital Mutilation, and Forced Marriage.

Victim / survivors are not confined to one gender or ethnic group. This intersectional abuse weaves a web through many social issues, child abuse, drug and alcohol addiction, sex work, human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and modern slavery. It is a cyclical pattern of power which victims experience as escalating control over themselves and their lives. Crimes committed in the name of ‘honour’, such as Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), are also clearly Domestic Abuse.

Overview - Sexual Offences/Abuse

Sexual Offences/Abuse centre on any unwanted sexual activity or behaviour that occurs without consent or understanding, or by using a position of power or trust to exploit someone.

This includes a wide range of acts, from physical actions like rape and indecent touching to non-contact activities such as indecent exposure, image-based sexual abuse, and sexual grooming. The key elements are:

Lack of consent

Presence of coercion

A situation where a person lacks the capacity to give valid consent

Abuse of power/trust

This can be:

Physical:

Rape, assault by penetration, indecent touching, and other forms of non-consensual physical contact.

Non-Physical:

- Image-Based Sexual Abuse: The non-consensual creation or distribution of private sexual images and videos.
- Sexual Exploitation: Exploiting another person for sexual purposes, often by offering something of value (money, accommodation, alcohol) in exchange for sexual activity.
- Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature, including comments, gestures, or displays that are offensive or humiliating.
- Grooming: The process of manipulating or coercing a person into sexual activity.
- Forced Exposure: Being forced to watch sexual acts or produce sexually abusive material.

Overview - Violence Against Women and Girls

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) covers a range of unacceptable and deeply distressing crimes, including rape and other sexual offences, stalking, domestic abuse, so called 'honour' based abuse (including female genital mutilation, forced marriage and 'honour' killings), 'revenge porn' and 'up skirting', as well as many others.

These crimes disproportionately affect women and girls. However, men and boys can also be victims of violence and abuse and the approaches within Rotherham will benefit all victims and survivors of these crime types.

In Rotherham we have signed up to the South Yorkshire Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) statement of intent:

1. We will build the trust and confidence of women and girls (within all communities) as we tackle violence against them and provide comprehensive support for victims.
2. We will develop effective strategies to prevent and reduce Violence Against Women and Girls, bringing about long term change through education and challenging perpetrator behaviour.
3. We will improve the confidence of victims to report incidents.
4. We will ensure that our criminal justice system and support services work effectively, so perpetrators are brought to justice and victims and survivors receive appropriate support, reflecting the different needs and experiences of each individual.
5. We will take into account factors which can make some women and girls more vulnerable, and the way these interact with each other. This includes, but is not limited to, disability, culture, gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity and immigration status.
6. We will challenge and condemn sexism and misogyny and racism in all its forms.
7. We will be self-reflective, improving our organisational cultures by addressing inappropriate attitudes, behaviours and activities.
8. We will listen to victims and survivors, as well as supportive services to ensure their views are included in our decision making, and give a voice to the most marginalised women and girls.
9. We will maintain regular communication and share relevant information with each other, to avoid duplication of work, maximise external funding opportunities, make effective use of resources, and share good practice

Introduction

Rotherham Council aims to create a thriving, safe place to live, helping residents live well and be free from abuse.

The Borough spans 110 square miles, encompassing a diverse mix of rural and urban communities. Centrally located within South Yorkshire, its population is evolving, with notable growth among residents aged 60 and over, now representing one in four, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, accounting for one in ten. These demographic changes as well as economic pressures require services to remain flexible and responsive to emerging needs.

In line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, local authorities have a statutory duty to develop and publish a Domestic Abuse Strategy. This strategy ensures a coordinated, evidence-based approach to tackling domestic abuse, setting out how safe accommodation and support will continue to be provided for victim / survivors and their children, inclusive to all intersectionality's, while detailing measures to prevent abuse and hold perpetrators accountable.

Domestic abuse and sexual offences have been brought together under one strategy to ensure a holistic and coordinated approach to tackling these forms of harm that often intersect. Survivors of domestic abuse may also experience sexual abuse within intimate relationships, and perpetrators can use sexual violence as a form of control. Combining these areas within a single strategy allows for shared learning and improved outcomes for victims and survivors.

At the same time, the strategy recognises the need for tailored responses where intersectionality's and other types of abuse differ, such as adult family violence, child to parent abuse, stalking and harassment and economic / financial abuse which are distinct issues, each with unique dynamics, risk factors, and needs that require tailored methods of support.

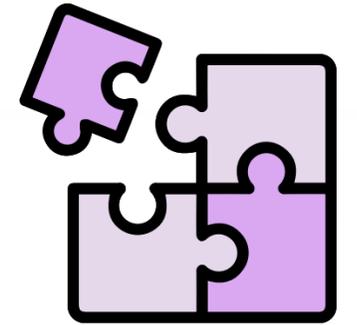
In addition to the production of the Domestic Abuse strategy, the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024, is designed to ensure key organisations such as the Council, Police, Health Services, and specialist providers work together with a duty to collaborate, to deliver coordinated support for victims of domestic abuse, sexual offences, and violence against women and girls.

Although this duty is currently on hold, and implementation timelines yet to be confirmed, it remains an important future consideration. Its aim is to strengthen multi-agency working, improve prevention, and provide comprehensive support for victims and survivors.

To achieve outcomes for victim survivors, we remain informed by feedback, consultation findings, and inspection recommendations, while also responding to national developments.

By making the best use of available interventions, tools, and powers, we can provide effective support, drive behaviour change, and meet the needs of our changing communities.

Our Vision: 2026 – 2029



To reduce the prevalence of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences/Abuse, we are committed to a coordinated, and proactive approach that prioritises early identification, effective partnership intervention, and support for all victim/survivors including children, who are too often the hidden victims of abuse.

We will continue to reach out to underrepresented groups and communities, finding new and innovative ways to address critical issues and ensure that no adult or child is left without support due to barriers of access.

Where abuse occurs, we will ensure that all those affected receive the right support, at the right time. This includes enabling families to remain safely in their own homes where appropriate, with robust safeguards in place or support with the tools to keep their families safe.

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences/Abuse are cross-cutting issues that impact individuals, families, children and young people as well as workplaces, schools, and local communities. The effects can be profound and long-lasting, influencing mental health, development, education, future relationships and life choices.

No adult or child should live in a home where violence, fear, or coercive control is normalised. No one should live in fear of abuse or harassment in their homes, on the streets, or in public spaces. No one should believe that violence is acceptable.

This vision is for all victims, however it also aligns with the Violence Against Women and Girls statement of intent and reinforces our commitment to protecting and empowering all victim / survivors and children through evidence-based, trauma-informed approaches.

We will continue to use the latest research and lived experience to shape our responses, recognising the complex and multifaceted nature of each person's context and experience.

National Prevalence and Statistics

Domestic Abuse is often a hidden crime that is not reported to the police. Therefore, data held by the police can only provide a partial picture of the actual level of domestic abuse experienced.

The national domestic abuse charity Safelives are completing a continuous survey with professionals. Results below are between 01/07/2021 and 22/09/2024. There were 2,086 responses from 21 areas across England and Wales.

The top three areas of need for victims and their families identified by professionals were:



96%

Mental health



84%

Children's wellbeing



82%

Housing needs

The top three areas of need for those that harm identified by professionals were:



88%

Mental health



82%

Drugs or alcohol



82%

Children's wellbeing

1 in 5

Whilst nationally there has been a steady decrease of Domestic abuse during the past 10 years, data still shows approximately one in five people had experienced domestic abuse

since the age of 16 years and rates of abuse still remains higher for young adults and single parents.

4.8%

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) year ending March 2024 estimated that 4.8% of people aged 16 years and over (2.3 million) experienced domestic abuse in that year.

3x

Global minority and migrant women experience higher rates of domestic abuse related homicide and are 3 times more likely to commit suicide than other women in the UK.

National Prevalence and Statistics

Sexual Offences/Abuse can have an immediate impact on a victim-survivor or emerge much later, with some impacts lasting a lifetime. We recognise it is crucial to approach survivors with patience and without judgment.

The Crime survey for England and Wales provides the best measure of victimisation and estimated that:



The Crime survey for England and Wales provides the measure of victimisation and estimated that 2.3% of adults aged 16 years and over were victims of sexual assault (including attempts) in the year ending March 2022, this equates to an estimated 1.1 million adults

The volume of sexual offences recorded by the police has been increasing over the last decade although the numbers remain well below the number of victims estimated by the survey; the latest figures for the year ending March 2022 show an increase of 31%, to 193,566 police recorded offences, compared with the previous year



Approximately 16.6% of adults aged 16 years and over (7.9 million) had experienced sexual assault (including attempts) since the age of 16 years; 1.9 million were a victim of rape (7.7% women and 0.2% men).

Local Prevalence and Statistics

Collecting and analysing local data is a critical component in shaping an effective and responsive strategy. In Rotherham, data is gathered from a range of key stakeholders on a monthly and quarterly basis which is consolidated into a Data Dashboard. The insights gained from this data has informed the strategic priorities, it will guide commissioning decisions, and support targeted interventions, ensuring that resources are directed where they are most needed.

(Rotherham data collected during a 3-year period: April 2022 – March 2025)



From the families who approached RMBC Housing due to homelessness with Domestic Abuse as a primary reason and were owed statutory duty to be accommodated **240** households were placed in local authority temporary accommodation or Domestic Abuse specialist properties

474 adults and children also presented as homeless via Hopian refuge and Safer Options Properties.

9,665 - referrals were made into Domestic Abuse Support Services



507 - Referrals sent to the Inspire to change alleged perpetrator behaviour change programme



21,687 - Domestic Abuse Crime and Non-Crime Incidents reported to South Yorkshire police (note approx. 30% of these will be repeated incidents)

Local Prevalence and Statistics

(Rotherham data collected during a 3-year period: April 2022 – March 2025)



448 - Domestic Violence Protection Orders and **521** Notices delivered to alleged perpetrators of abuse



3,087 people recorded on police data base as repeat VAWG Perpetrators having this flag supports the police assess risk of individuals to others



1,939 adults experienced Sexual Crime and Non-Crime Incidents

19,421 adults experienced Non-Sexual Incidents



1106 - People received a Domestic Violence / Abuse Disclosure (Clare's Law) Request information under Clare's Law: Make a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) application | South Yorkshire Police



1,061 Referrals made to a Independent Sexual Violence Adviser for support

Current Achievements 2022 – 2025

Drive Change Together



Non-Fatal Strangulation and Targeted Health Professional Training

This year, over 500 GPs and healthcare practitioners across South Yorkshire received Domestic Abuse awareness training, aimed at strengthening their ability to identify and respond to abuse. In alignment with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which recognises Non-Fatal Strangulation (NFS) as a standalone offence, specialised NFS training was delivered to frontline professionals. This training equips practitioners with the knowledge and tools to recognise the signs of NFS and make appropriate referrals for support and intervention.

We have revised the South Yorkshire-wide Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment, and Honour-Based Abuse Risk Assessment Form to enhance its clarity, usability, and effectiveness.

The updated form provides clearer guidance for completion, is more user-friendly, and includes improved instructions to support practitioners in assessing and managing risk to victims more effectively.

Enhanced Data Collection and Insight-Driven Campaigns

Strengthened data collection processes have enabled us to identify gaps in service provision and inform the development of targeted campaigns and projects. Notable initiatives include the Domestic Abuse Summer Campaign and the Older People's Domestic Abuse Campaign, both designed to challenge unconscious bias and broaden understanding of victim profiles beyond common stereotypes.

“8 Steps to Homicide” we commissioned this training programme designed to strengthen practitioners’ understanding of risk assessment in cases involving victims of domestic abuse.

The training also provides valuable insight into perpetrator behaviours, focusing on key triggers and indicators of escalation, to support more informed and proactive risk management.

Current Achievements 2022 – 2025

Prevention and Early Intervention



“No more and Do More” Campaign

Both initiatives serve as a proactive call to action, specifically targeting male bystanders. The campaigns challenged abusive and misogynistic behaviours towards women and girls by encouraging men to speak out, intervene safely, and promote respectful attitudes and behaviours.

Exploring Digital Options

The partnership is currently exploring digital solutions to address abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) through the development of the Safer Spaces Improvement Group. This group has key influences, such as representatives from the Rotherham’s Women’s Network, Police and Safer Neighbourhood teams whose contributions are instrumental in identifying and promoting preventative measures aimed at enhancing safety and wellbeing across the community.

Domestic Abuse Training Plan 2024/25

A comprehensive training plan has been developed, to ensure Domestic Abuse awareness training is delivered at the appropriate level to all relevant professionals. The programme includes modules such as “Asking the Question” and “Risk Assessing,” and will be delivered at various intervals throughout the year to support consistent and informed practice across services.

Unpicking Cultural Narratives Workshop

In collaboration with Sheffield Hallam University, a workshop was delivered focusing on prevention and early intervention in domestic abuse. The session explored societal perceptions of victims, with particular emphasis on the term “vulnerable.” It aimed to challenge traditional narratives by reframing vulnerability as a sign of courage and resilience, rather than weakness, thereby promoting a more inclusive and empowering understanding of victimhood.

Current Achievements 2022 – 2025

Justice and ongoing protection

DA Operational meeting Review – Strengthening Response to High-Risk Cases

The number of high-risk domestic abuse incidents referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) has increased within the last 3 years, reflecting an improved reporting and enhanced professional understanding of risk indicators. In response, the MARAC meeting frequency has been increased from twice to three times per month. This proactive adjustment has significantly reduced the backlog of cases waiting for multi-agency action review from nine weeks to just three to four weeks, ensuring a timelier response and improved safeguarding outcomes.

Inspire to Change – Countywide Perpetrator Intervention Programme

Inspire to Change is a countywide intervention programme commissioned for individuals who have not been convicted but acknowledge their abusive behaviours and are motivated to change. Delivered by Cranstoun, the programme uses a behaviour change model to address the root causes of abuse and promote safer relationships. The South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) has tracked 87 participants who completed the programme to see if there have been any further incidents after attendance of the programme. Of these, 73% showed a reduction in domestic abuse reoffending with either no incidents or lower risk incidents, demonstrating the programme's positive impact.

While 27% continued to perpetrate abuse, only 3 of the 87 individuals (13%) from Rotherham were identified as reoffenders, indicating a strong local success rate and effective engagement with the intervention.

Probation Programme – Building Choices

The Probation Service has introduced the Building Choices programme. This cognitive behavioural programme is specifically designed for adult men convicted of intimate partner violence. It focuses on addressing harmful behaviours, promoting accountability, and supporting long-term behavioural change to reduce the risk of reoffending and improve outcomes for victims.

Everyone deserves a life without abuse

Inspire to Change is here to help people in South Yorkshire change abusive behaviours.



Current Achievements 2022 – 2025

Providing Safe Accommodation and Appropriate Support

(April 2022 to March 2025)



Domestic Abuse Housing Support – Refuge and Safer Options

Rotherham commissioned 10 Refuge units and 10 Safer Options properties to provide secure and supportive accommodation for individuals and families affected by domestic abuse including dedicated support for children. Through this provision, **474 adults and children** received dedicated housing and therapeutic support, enabling them to access safety, stability, and tailored interventions that promote recovery and long-term wellbeing for themselves and their children.

Specialist Domestic Abuse Accommodation – Rotherham’s Dedicated Provision

Rotherham currently offers 13 specialist domestic abuse properties, all fully furnished and equipped with target hardening measures to ensure safety and comfort for residents. These properties have supported **203 adults and children**. This provision plays a vital role in offering secure, trauma-informed accommodation for victims fleeing abuse, enabling them to begin their recovery in a safe and supportive environment.

Homelessness Prevention Fund – Supporting Families at Risk of homelessness

The Homelessness Prevention Fund has provided vital financial assistance to **489 adults and children** across Rotherham. This support has enabled the purchase of essential household items, covered moving costs, and contributed to the payment of rent arrears, helping to prevent repeat homelessness and addresses barriers to moving on, promoting housing stability. The fund plays a key role in safeguarding vulnerable households and supporting long-term recovery from domestic abuse.

Domestic Abuse Homeless pathway

A structured pathway has been developed to support frontline professionals by providing clear guidance on the support requirements at each stage when a victim/survivor of abuse becomes homeless. This pathway outlines the roles and responsibilities of each service involved, ensuring timely access to appropriate support and accommodation for those affected.

Target Hardening and Sanctuary Scheme / Supporting Safe Home Retention

Target hardening and sanctuary measures have been implemented in **433** properties across Rotherham, enabling survivors of domestic abuse to remain safely in their own home. These interventions include enhanced security features and tailored safety adaptations, helping to reduce the need for relocation while promoting stability, empowerment, and continued access to local support networks.

Current Achievements 2022 – 2025

Minimising Harm through the Provision of Early Help Support for Children and Families

Level Up – Early Intervention for Young People

Level Up is a targeted intervention programme for children and young people aged 11–15 who are exhibiting abusive behaviours. The programme consists of a structured 12-week series of in-person sessions facilitated within the school environment, focusing on behaviour change, emotional regulation, and healthy relationships.

During the reporting period April 2022 - March 2025, 109 children across Rotherham were referred to the programme, with 35 successfully completing the course. This early intervention model is a vital component in preventing the escalation of harmful behaviours and fostering long-term positive outcomes for both young people and their families.

Despite its potential impact, engagement with the service has presented challenges, particularly in sustaining participation with young people. Given the low attrition rate and following a comprehensive review of available resources and strategic priorities, we will explore alternative commissioning options to better meet the needs of this cohort and improve overall service accessibility and effectiveness.

Ongoing review of Support Offered for Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse

In line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which recognises children as victims in their own right, Rotherham has developed a comprehensive and responsive support offer for children affected by domestic abuse.

The current offer encompasses Children and Young Peoples Services, Early Help family support as well as Hopian therapeutic programmes such as, first steps to support, trauma stabilisation, Domestic Abuse awareness, confidence building, family practice and emotional coping skills, all of which aims to build resilience, promote recovery, and ensure both victim and children feel safe, heard, and supported.

South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) also fund 2 Childrens Domestic Abuse case workers.

Some recent feedback states:

“Since starting to come to groups I have found myself as a person and a parent. I find the courses and first steps coffee group very welcoming and helpful. The staff provide lots of support and friendly advice”

“Thank you. It’s been amazing, really helped me. First time I’ve used this service, and it been helpfully and it let me know that it’s not my fault”

Operation Encompass – Leading the Way in Rotherham

Rotherham is proud to be the only area in South Yorkshire where 100% of schools and 53 nurseries are signed up to Operation Encompass. This initiative ensures that schools are promptly informed when a child has been exposed to domestic abuse, enabling timely and appropriate support.



Current Achievements 2022 – 2025

Responding to Changing Need and Demand

Hopian – Outreach Service & Innovative Victim Needs Assessment Tool

During the last 3 years Hopian has continued to offer support to over 9,500 victims at risk of abuse. They have provided vital one to one support, group facilitated support and therapeutic options to victims and their children of all risk levels. They have also introduced a new self-assessment tool designed to enhance the way victim/survivor needs are identified and prioritised. This approach empowers individuals to reflect on their own experiences and articulate the areas where they require the most support.

By placing the victim/survivor at the centre of the assessment process, the tool enables services to tailor interventions more effectively, ensuring that resources are directed to where they are needed most. This innovation supports a more personalised and trauma-informed response, improving outcomes and strengthening engagement with support services.

The effectiveness of using this tool has reduced the waiting list for support and ensured victims are accessing timely support.

Enhanced Access to Support – Helpline and Webchat Services

The expansion of the helpline and online webchat services has improved access to information, advice, and support for individuals affected by domestic abuse. These platforms offer confidential, real-time assistance, helping victims and survivors navigate available services and make informed decisions about their safety and wellbeing during core and non-core hours.

Domestic Abuse Assertive Outreach Team – Supporting Victims with Complex Needs

The Domestic Abuse Assertive Outreach Team in Rotherham is responding to increasing demand by providing tailored support to victims and survivors with complex needs, including those experiencing mental health challenges and substance misuse.

This specialist team adopts a proactive and trauma-informed approach, ensuring that individuals who may face barriers to accessing traditional services receive consistent, personalised support. By addressing intersecting vulnerabilities, the team plays a critical role in improving safety, engagement, and long-term outcomes for some of the most at-risk individuals in the community.

Domestic Abuse Specialist Housing Officers – Supporting the Most Vulnerable

Rotherham's Domestic Abuse Specialist Housing Officers play a critical role in safeguarding and supporting victims and survivors who have been made homeless because of domestic abuse. These officers provide tailored, trauma-informed assistance to those facing the significant vulnerability of homelessness, ensuring access to safe accommodation, advocacy, and direction into wider support services.

Their work is vital in preventing repeat homelessness, promoting recovery, and enabling individuals to rebuild their lives in secure and stable environments



Cuurent Achievements 2022 – 2025

These achievements are based on the previous Domestic Abuse Strategy prior to the inclusion of Sexual Offences/Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls however work has been ongoing in these areas and some of the achievements include:

We have supported the delivery of the annual Reclaim the Night march in Rotherham, celebrating Rotherham's women and campaigning to make our streets safer for all. In 2024 we held our 10th anniversary walk and were joined by over 100 people parading through the Town Centre.



We have installed innovative lighting and CCTV along a popular route in Clifton Park to help improve feelings of safety, funded by the Government's Safer Streets Fund.



A South Yorkshire sex work steering group has been established to improve understanding of sex work in South Yorkshire and increase awareness of support services.

We have supported the delivery of sessions to college students around the dangers of drink spiking and worked with South Yorkshire Police and The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust to implement a pathway for drink spike cases who attend Urgent Care.

We have delivered a number of events aimed at improving safety in the Night Time Economy including training for staff, managers and door security staff covering safeguarding children, responding to serious violence and domestic abuse.



We also continue to support licensed premises in implementing Ask for Angela through Pub Watch meetings, social media promotion and training including venue staff and taxi drivers and support checks on licensed premises to ensure the scheme is working.

Consultation & Strategic Alignment



A comprehensive needs assessment and a series of targeted consultation events have been undertaken throughout 2024 - 2025 to inform the 2026 - 2029 Domestic Abuse Strategy refresh. These engagement activities have ensured the previous strategic vision is still relevant but also builds on previous achievements while addressing identified gaps and emerging needs.

As a result of this collaborative approach, a refined framework has been developed to guide the strategic response to Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences/Abuse over the next three years . This model streamlines priorities and strengthens focus across key areas of prevention, support, accountability, and partnership working ensuring a coordinated, evidence-led approach that reflects the voices of victims, survivors, professionals, and communities.

Consultation & Strategic Alignment

Individuals accessing support through the Domestic Abuse pathway were invited to participate in structured feedback exercises aimed at identifying areas of effective practice and highlighting any gaps requiring attention. Below is a snapshot of the responses received:

How was the accessibility of support?

“Rotherham Rise (now Hopian) is known to quite a few people but not all. I think it needs to get out there a lot more than it is. I found Rotherham rise By Via Google Search. A lot of people out there probably know nothing about the help and support available to themselves.”
(Hopian service user)

“Accommodation issues, I am still living with the alleged perpetrator and cannot bid for properties due to my rent areas. It’s affecting my mental health. I feel lonely. I cannot invite people” (DAAOS service user)

What support do you require most when in crisis / leaving the abusive relationship?

“Crisis helpline or online chat you could reach out to especially if you find it hard to talk to family/friends or don't want to leave the house. This would be really helpful.”
(Hopian service user)

“I would want somewhere to ring to help me get out, no matter what time it was” (Hopian service user)

“Someone who could listen to me without being judgemental”
(DAAOS service user)

What support do you require for your children?

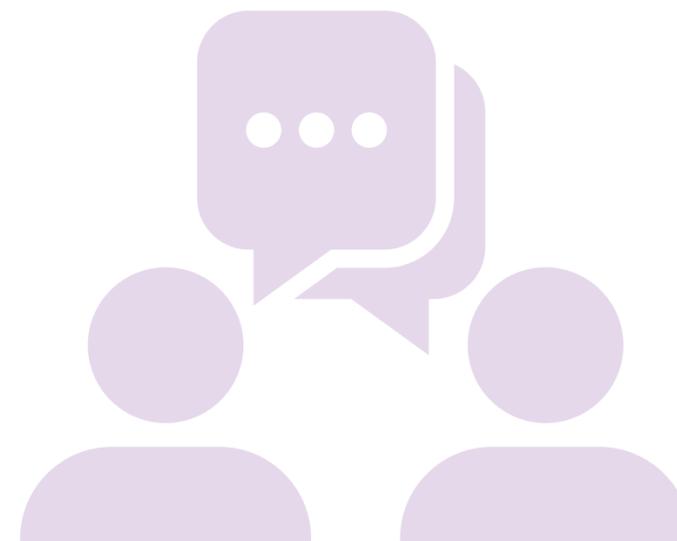
“First of all, making sure the child is safe at all times. Early help/social services. Child counselling Someone to talk to Refuge Rotherham rise do children groups” (Hopian service user)

“I think you are often blamed for what happened to your children...it’s not fair”
(DAAOS service user)

What do you need in relation to Housing support?

“For me I would need somewhere safe to live and some financial support for bills”
(Hopian Service user)

“The process seems too long. I’ve been in a hotel for ages and I’m with people who smoke drugs and stuff, it’s not me. I’m desperate for my own space but the flat they offered was at the other side of Rotherham to where I work. I’m still waiting and it’s really hard. I can’t see my kids or have them overnight because I’m still in the hotel. I’ll be honest, I’ve flet very low at times’ (DA Housing officer support service)



Consulation & Strategic Allignment

Individuals accessing support through the Domestic Abuse pathway were invited to participate in structured feedback exercises aimed at identifying areas of effective practice and highlighting any gaps requiring attention. Below is a snapshot of the responses received:

Preferred supportive methods /venues?

“I like to get away from home so any private room either at Rotherham Rise or local to where I live, so long as it is private”
(Hopian service user)

“At home where I feel safe / comfortable, or community venues, events (drop in info)”
(Hopian service user)

“Face to face is useful, and I don’t mind phone calls, although I work a lot and can’t always answer, I’ve missed a few. Face to face is good because you can get to know someone and trust them” (DAAOS service user)

What support do you require most after leaving?

“Support worker to call home visits and work with family- reassurance of safety”
(Hopian service user)

“Programme and courses about healthy relationship and emotional coping will be helpful” (DAAOS service user)

What support do you require most when remaining in the relationship?

“Courses to recognise abuse behaviours, Support for perpetrator- anger management”
(Hopian service user)

“Regular contact to check on my safety”
(DAAOS service user)

What’s been the most beneficial support you?

“I have found it really helpful to learn about warning signs of abuse, how to keep myself safe. It has been really good to be able to talk to Rotherham Rise and not be judged”
(Hopian service user)

“DA housing officers. Knowing I had someone to call, someone to support me to appointments. Someone who made sure I had things like food and clothes. And just felt like DA housing officers were there and understood me. It’s the first time I have experienced support like this” (DA Housing Officer support)

Other feedback?

“I feel you need people with expert training in domestic abuse who understand what you are going through need to deliver this service. For example, a GP may not have the correct understanding or skills to properly guide you. This is why Rise is irreplaceable as they offer non-judgemental, expert advice on how to best support victims. The environment and staff there are so calm and caring. It is a special place, and I will always be grateful for their help and encouragement” (Hopian Service user)

“Mental health support-Long term”
(DAAOS service user)



Consultation & Strategic Alignment

Public Consultation

The Safer Rotherham Partnership hosted an outreach stall at the 2025 Rotherham Show, which welcomed an estimated 95,000 attendees. This high-profile event provided a valuable platform to engage with residents, gather insights into public perceptions of domestic abuse, and identify perceived barriers to accessing support services. It also enabled the Partnership to explore community priorities in relation to domestic abuse and sexual offences/abuse, and violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Barriers to Accessing Support:

- Fear of the perpetrator
- Financial dependency
- Lack of trust in statutory services

Priority Areas for Tackling Domestic Abuse:

- Alleviating financial pressures to enable victims to leave abusive environments
- Ensuring timely and accessible support for all victims
- Providing dedicated support for children affected by domestic abuse



Consultation & Strategic Alignment

Stakeholder Consultation



In November 2024, the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Priority Group (DSAPG) members were invited to a face-to-face consultation. This session provided a valuable opportunity for key stakeholders to critically review the existing Domestic Abuse Strategy and action plan, highlighting examples of good practice and identifying areas for improvement.

The consultation was attended by representatives of the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Priority group, such as South Yorkshire Police, the NHS, Adult and Children’s Social Care, Domestic Abuse support services, ‘by and for’ organisations, as well as mental health and substance misuse services.

To facilitate focused discussion, the current strategy was segmented into its priority areas. Partners were invited to assess which elements remained relevant and impactful, which had become embedded into routine practice. In addition to identify where gaps existed, that should be addressed in the next strategy.

Consultation & Strategic Alignment

Needs Assessment

A comprehensive needs assessment was completed in March 2024, identifying several areas requiring a more targeted approach.

These include:

- **Establishing a clear and accessible support pathway for children and young people affected by domestic abuse.**
- **Embedding the voices of those with lived experience and survivors throughout the strategy's development and implementation.**
- **Ensuring appropriate support is available for individuals with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), including active engagement with 'by and for' organisations.**
- **Maintaining timely access to support services and safe accommodation for those affected.**

Strategic Alignment

As Domestic Abuse intersects with multiple thematic areas of service delivery, underscoring the importance of a whole-system approach to prevention and response. Recognising that tackling Domestic and Sexual abuse is a shared responsibility across sectors, strategic alignment has been considered with the various key local frameworks, some of which are:

- **Homelessness Prevention Strategy**
- **Housing Strategy**
- **Adult and Children's Safeguarding Strategies**
- **Health and Well being Strategy**

This integrated approach ensures that domestic abuse is considered within broader policy and service contexts, promoting coordinated action and improved outcomes for individuals and families affected.

Domestic Abuse Priorities 2026 – 2029

Rotherham is adopting a four-pillar approach to tackling Domestic Abuse. This framework consolidates previous priorities by grouping overlapping themes, enabling a more focused and coherent action plan.

These strategic priorities will be supported by robust governance arrangements and an already strengthened multi-agency partnership structure, including the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Priority Group (DSAPG) and the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board. These bodies will oversee the implementation of a comprehensive, shared multi-agency action plan, with specific actions aligned to each strategic aim.

Prevention, Early Intervention, and Minimising Harm

This priority focuses on preventing Domestic and Sexual Abuse as well as Violence before it starts and intervening early to stop escalation or repeat incidents for all victim / survivors.

It includes the provision of early help and support for children and families and ensures we promote equality of access to services.

It will reduce barriers to anyone reporting and getting support for abuse and aim to minimise further harm to those who have already experienced abuse.

Support and Safety for all victims and children - including the provision of safe accommodation

This priority ensures victims receive timely, coordinated, and effective seamless support.

It includes ensuring the provision of accommodation is made available for those presenting as homeless due to Domestic Abuse, including those with no recourse to public funds.

We will ensure support is accessible, responsive, and routine service delivery to anyone who experiences abuse including their children.

Justice, Protection, and Accountability

This priority focuses on delivering justice and ongoing protection through responsive, and timely partnership interventions.

It also strengthens governance and accountability across the partnership, ensuring that partnerships work together to effectively safeguard victims and ensure perpetrators are held accountable.

Adapting to Changing Needs and Demands

This priority ensures services remain relevant and responsive to evolving needs and demands. It promotes co-production in service planning and commissioning, enabling the partnership to adapt quickly and effectively to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Adaptation is measured through continuous review of performance data, feedback from service users and practitioners. The partnership will monitor shifts in demand, identify gaps, and make evidence-based improvements to service delivery.

Prevention, Early Intervention, and Minimising Harm – Aims:

- Deliver proactive training across all services to enable staff to identify and respond to early signs of Domestic Abuse, preventing escalation and repeat victimisation. Specialist modules will include Forced Marriage, Honour-Based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), cultural competence, and other priority themes.
- Strengthen professional confidence and capability to address perpetrator behaviour by providing clear pathways and practical toolkits. This will support constructive engagement, promote accountability, and reduce harm.
- Provide timely, trauma-informed and therapeutic support for victim / survivors, children, and families, including access to commissioned services such as mental health, substance misuse, housing, and parenting support to reduce risk and promote resilience.
- Ensure equitable access to support for all individuals, regardless of background or circumstance, by removing barriers and delivering inclusive, non-discriminatory services. Ensuring people who are neurodiverse or who have disabilities can understand campaigns and access support.
- Commission and deliver targeted awareness and prevention programmes in schools, youth services, and community settings, working with Youth Justice to challenge harmful behaviours and promote healthy relationships.
- Seek opportunities to build on initiatives such as Operation Encompass with South Yorkshire Police and explore ways to enhance collaboration with health services to support early identification and intervention
- Expand data collection and sharing within the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Priority Group to identify gaps and evaluate interventions. Include programme-level data from services such as Caring Dads and Probation's Building Better Choices.
- Continuously engage survivors and frontline practitioners to inform and shape the development of policies and procedures, ensuring their experiences and insights are reflected where possible.
- Partner with local businesses to deliver Domestic Abuse awareness and training, widening reach beyond statutory and voluntary sectors.
- Align with wider strategies to create campaigns addressing key issues such as suicide prevention and homelessness, encouraging access to support services.

Support and Safety for all victims and children, including the provision of safe accommodation – Aims:

- Provide victims and their children with access to specialist Domestic Abuse support, whether that be one-to-one or group therapeutic recovery sessions, ensuring a trauma-informed and person-centred approach.
- Ensure timely access to safe accommodation at any stage of abuse, including crisis situations, to enable timely intervention and continuity of care (including those who have no recourse to public funds NRPF)
- Actively monitor communication between Children and Young Peoples services and Domestic Abuse services through action trackers and contract management, ensuring timely referrals, coordinated multi-agency responses, and a whole-family approach.
- Maintain robust governance and contract management to review and commission refuge and other accommodation types, ensuring availability meets the diverse needs of service users.
- Deliver a coordinated support journey for victim-survivors through a Single Point of Access model, providing consistent advocacy and linking individuals to specialist services such as mental health, substance misuse, housing, and financial/legal assistance.
- Offer evidence-based, trauma-informed programmes for service users with children, incorporating therapeutic and psychoeducational components to promote emotional recovery, resilience, and healthy relationships while addressing the impact of abuse on children.
- Ensure victims on Leave-to-Remain visas receive support regardless of immigration status, applying priority status in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Provide Domestic Abuse and housing support for individuals presenting as homeless under statutory prevention duties, ensuring timely access to safe accommodation and specialist intervention.
- Deliver tailored, needs-led support through comprehensive assessments for victim-survivors with multiple vulnerabilities, enabling coordinated responses and access to additional services.
- Continue offering target-hardening measures to allow victim-survivors to remain safely in their own homes where appropriate.
- Ensure services are widely accessible via trusted individuals and organisations such as schools, GPs, housing officers, and voluntary sector partners, promoting awareness of support pathways across all sectors.

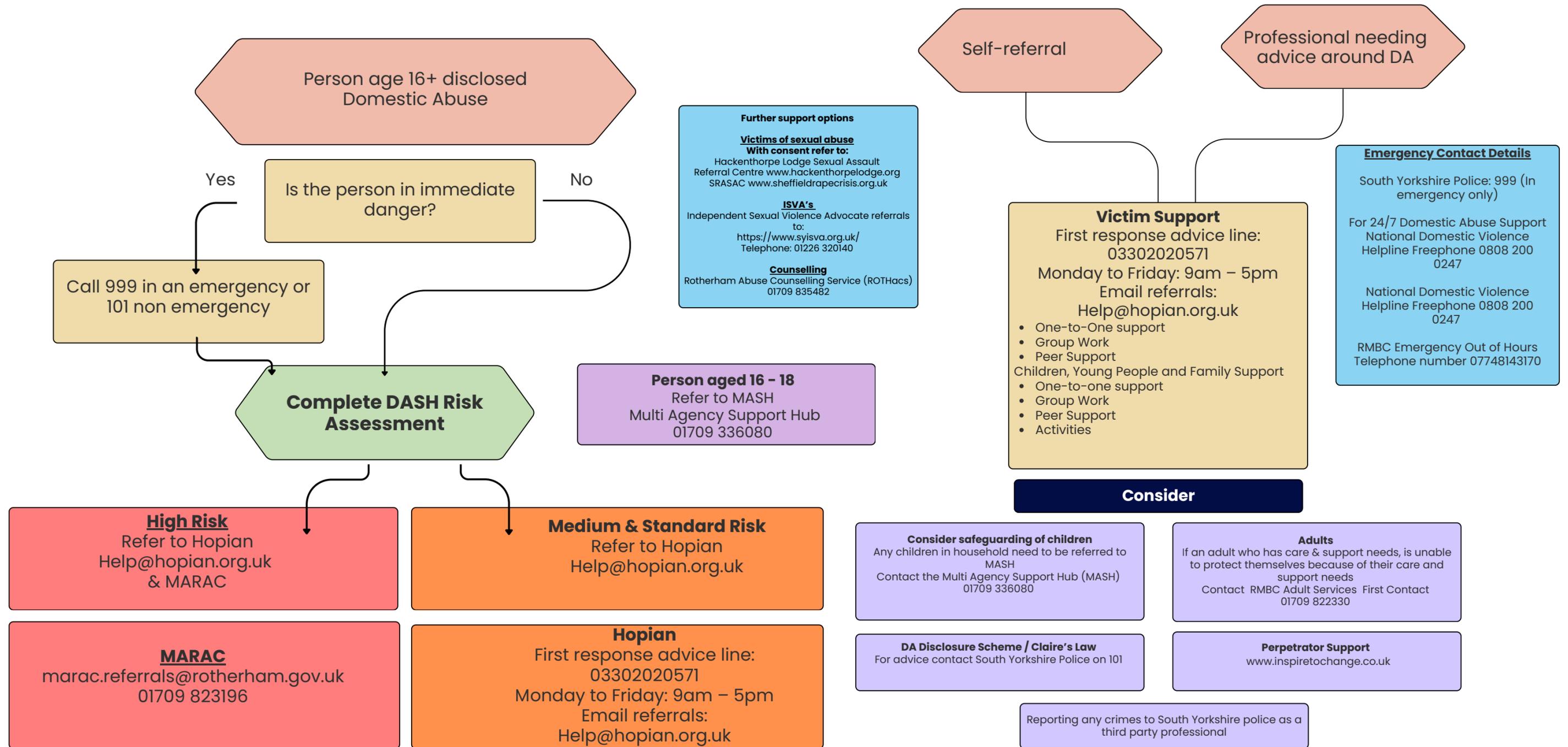
Justice, Protection and Accountability – Aims:

- We are committed to reducing harm and preventing repeat victimisation by addressing the behaviour of those who perpetrate domestic abuse. Individuals identified as alleged perpetrators within all intersectionalities, who have not been charged with a criminal offence, will be offered opportunities to take accountability and engage in meaningful behaviour change through the commissioning and delivery of evidence-based Perpetrator Behaviour Change Programmes. These programmes will challenge harmful behaviours while providing support to help participants understand the impact of their actions particularly on children and develop healthier, respectful relationships. Robust monitoring and evaluation will ensure these interventions are effective in reducing risk, improving safety, and supporting long-term wellbeing for victims and families
- Ensure to maintain oversight of wider behavioural programmes, including Building Better Choices (probation-led for people convicted of abuse) and Caring Dads (Children and Young People/Early Help service led). Building Better Choices is an accredited cognitive-behavioural programme designed to reduce reoffending by addressing criminogenic needs and promoting personal growth through a strengths-based, inclusive approach. Caring Dads is an intervention supporting fathers to end controlling or abusive behaviours, improve parenting, and reduce the impact of domestic abuse on children.
- Continue to strengthen Multi-Agency Partnerships and work collaboratively across policing, social care, health, and the voluntary sector to enhance intelligence sharing and deliver coordinated safeguarding responses. This includes ongoing evaluation of key multi-agency forums such as MARAC, MADA, MATAC, and MAPPA, ensuring effective risk management and improved outcomes for victims.
- Support Police-Led Interventions such as South Yorkshire Police's RAPID response model, which focuses on disrupting domestic abuse perpetration and safeguarding victims. This includes oversight of interventions such as Clare's Law disclosures, Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme applications, Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Orders, and the appropriate use of conditional cautions to hold perpetrators accountable.
- Ensuring victim / survivors receive support throughout their journey, including at court, pre- and post-trial.

Adapting to Changing Needs and Demands – Aims:

- Partners will share accurate, timely, and consistent data to inform commissioning decisions, service delivery, and gap analysis, ensuring resources are targeted where they are needed most.
- We will conduct comprehensive and regular needs assessments and reviews in line with national guidance and statutory requirements with both commissioned and non-commissioned services to ensure services remain responsive to changing patterns of domestic abuse.
- Agencies will actively participate in Domestic Homicide Reviews and Domestic Abuse-related Death Reviews, integrating lessons from Serious Case Reviews and Safeguarding Practice Reviews to drive continuous improvement in policy and practice.
- We will monitor annual trends and fluctuations in demand, adapting service delivery, commissioning, and operational processes to respond proactively to periods of increased need.
- Continuously track and respond to all forms of domestic abuse, including coercive control, digital/online abuse, and post-separation abuse. Survivor feedback will inform service design, resource allocation, and policy development.
- Develop and sustain adaptable support pathways that can be rapidly adjusted to meet changing needs and emerging risks.
- Ensure domestic abuse is embedded as a cross-cutting priority within local and countywide strategies. This approach will integrate safeguarding and prevention across all relevant council departments and partner agencies, reinforcing the principle that tackling Domestic and Sexual Abuse is everyone's responsibility.
- Ensure learning and best practice from other South Yorkshire areas is shared through the Domestic and Sexual Priority Group, this will aim to pre-empt changing needs and demands to enable us to adapt quickly to specific areas of need and training.
- Monitor trauma informed practice by conducting regular case review and audits.

Rotherham Domestic Abuse Referral Pathway



Sexual Offences/Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Priorities 2022 – 2025

Sexual Offences/Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls are also supported by robust governance arrangements and a multi-agency partnership structure through the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Priority Group (DSAPG) and the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board. These bodies will oversee the implementation of a comprehensive, shared multi-agency action plan, with specific actions aligned to each strategic aim.

Sexual Offences/Abuse

Continue to improve victim engagement and reporting of sexual offences through awareness raising, projects and training

Work with partners to understand work with perpetrators of sexual abuse to reduce reoffending and identify any gaps

Violence Against Women and Girls

Reduce violence against women and girls by focussing on hot spot locations and repeat perpetrators and use of digital tools to identify online risks and hot spot locations for non-crime incidents

Deliver awareness raising events, projects and promotions aimed at improving women and girls' safety and feelings of safety including online safety

Sexual Offences/Abuse: Aims

- Support South Yorkshire Police to implement a National Operating Model to improve investigations of serious sexual assaults by using a suspect-focused approach, targeting repeat offenders and using data and digital forensics more effectively
- Produce and promote communications and campaigns aimed at raising awareness of sexual abuse and violence with the public including how to report incidents and where to access support
- Provide and promote training and awareness for professionals to increase understanding and response to sexual abuse and violence
- Work with South Yorkshire Sexual Violence Partners to understand and monitor victim engagement rates, age groups and types of crimes in Rotherham and identify gaps.
- Ensure there is a clear pathway in place for sexual abuse support.
- Work with South Yorkshire Sexual Violence Partners to explore the support available to sex workers in Rotherham and identify gaps
- Map current interventions provision for adult and young offenders to understand the current offer and identify gaps

Violence Against Women and Girls: Aims

- Improve feelings of safety particularly within Rotherham Town Centre and after dark
- Identify hot spot locations using digital tools
- Continue to improve awareness and response to drink spike incidents including encouraging reporting and pathways for gathering forensic evidence
- Work in partnership with other organisations such as Violence Reduction Unit and South Yorkshire Police to share campaigns and training opportunities aimed at improving the safety of women and girls including online safety
- Produce and promote communications and campaigns aimed at raising awareness of Violence Against Women and Girls with the public including how to report incidents and where to access support
- Continue to support events such as Reclaim the Night to promote the safety of public spaces

RAPID Response South Yorkshire Police

Domestic abuse remains one of the most pervasive and underreported crimes within all communities in the UK. According to national crime statistics, police receive a domestic abuse related call every 30 seconds, yet only 24% of offences are formally reported. The human cost is devastating: on average, one woman is killed every five days by a former partner in England and Wales, and three women per week die by suicide as a direct result of domestic abuse. Furthermore, approximately 20% of children live in households where domestic abuse is perpetrated by an adult.

South Yorkshire Police recognises the profound and lasting impact of domestic abuse on individuals, families, and communities. In response, the force is committed to continually improving its approach to tackling domestic abuse, enhancing investigative standards, strengthening safeguarding measures, and ensuring a trauma-informed, victim-centred response.

From October 2025, Rotherham will adopt a focused and strategic framework under the banner of 'RAPID', which will guide operational and partnership efforts across all key areas of domestic abuse work. This framework is designed to ensure a coordinated, consistent, and proactive approach that prioritises victim safety, offender accountability, and long-term prevention.

RAPID Response South Yorkshire Police

R - Responding to incidents without delay.

A - Arrest always where there is a power to do so

P - Prevent further offences through problem solving and partnership working

I - Investigation Quality, victim focused investigations from the outset to conclusion

D - Detention clock, use all the time available to build the case and secure charges.

The Delivery

<p>Strategy</p>	<p>This strategy has been completed by the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Priority Group (DSAPG), on behalf of the Safer Rotherham Partnership.</p> <p>In the preparation of this, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council consulted with various stakeholders, professionals from a wide range of disciplines (including community safety, domestic abuse service providers, voluntary and community sector organisations, South Yorkshire Police and NHS Trust, came together to discuss the proposed priority areas of the strategy, identify potential gaps, and suggest how these could be addressed in the strategy. Their thoughts and ideas have been incorporated into this document.</p> <p>Service users, members of the public, and statutory and voluntary stakeholders were also invited to complete surveys to identify the priorities that were most important to them. By and for organisations have also been invited to review the strategy ensuring cultural competency.</p> <p>The purpose of having this strategy is to clearly identify our gaps and areas for improvement and allow us to focus on them together. As highlighted within the aims of this document, partnership work is key to our success, and this strategy will therefore become the driving force in respect of improvements to Domestic Abuse services.</p>
<p>Performance monitoring</p>	<p>Periodic updates in relation to progress will be expected by the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Priority group (DSAPG). Suitable performance indicators will be identified in order to support each aim and again, periodic updates will be provided. Alongside managing performance, the partnership will seek to manage any risks that exist in respect of delivery against the strategy.</p>
<p>Partnership joint Action Plans</p>	<p>A robust action plan will be developed to support this strategy. The action plan will be driven by the aims contained within this strategy and will identify specific actions needed in order to support each aim and deliver success.</p>
<p>Promotion</p>	<p>The promotion and implementation of the strategy will include, training, awareness raising through events, promotional materials, media and specialist training</p>



For further information visit the Safer Rotherham Partnership website
www.saferrotherham.org.uk



Follow us on social media for our latest news and updates at:

www.facebook.com/Rotherhamcommunitysafety
www.instagram.com/rmbccommunitysafety



Contact us via email at: community.safety@rotherham.gov.uk



If you would like this information in another language or format, please ask us. You can contact us through our website or by emailing community.safety@rotherham.gov.uk

Domestic and Sexual Abuse is a priority under the Safer Rotherham Partnership which includes:

