



Derbyshire

VAVW+G

**Violence Against
Women+Girls**

Strategy 2022 · 2025



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Foreword

Violence against women and girls is still far too prevalent in our society. That is why I have asked all partners in Derbyshire, including Derbyshire Constabulary, Derbyshire County Council and Derby City Council to come together to develop and deliver this county-wide strategy.

A radical change of approach is needed to protect women and girls in the future and tackle the deep-rooted attitudes that drive violence.

It is critical we show women more support for their experiences and take a hard-line approach when it comes to pursuing offenders. This is why we have made tackling violence against women and girls a top priority across the Safer Communities boards partnership plans.

Offences such as sexual violence, domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, female genital mutilation and forced marriage have no place in our society. It is vital we stop society viewing these acts as an inevitable part of being a woman.

Behind every headline and statistic, many more incidents of harassment and abuse remain unreported because society tolerates them. This has to stop. We have to listen to survivors and give future victims the confidence to step forward for help and support.

It is time for action. We will deliver an effective response to these issues, combining proactive enforcement and the use of all powers and resources to pursue and punish offenders whilst providing the appropriate and timely support for victims to ensure they receive the service they deserve.

More work needs to be done by all partners to prevent sexism, misogyny and violence in all its forms. There is no quick-fix. Tackling violence should be a shared responsibility and education needs to start as early as possible – in our classrooms, colleges and youth settings – and with offenders themselves to make sure they don't go on to commit further offences.

Most importantly – we must make sure victims and survivors receive the care and support they need to recover.

The creation of this Derbyshire-specific Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy has brought all relevant partners and organisations together to set out their plans. It shows a strong commitment to this very significant agenda and an understanding that tackling it is the responsibility of all.

We owe women and girls in Derbyshire the best possible quality of life, and we must all help to keep them safe.

Angelique Foster

Police and Crime Commissioner



Introduction

Partner agencies across Derbyshire have been working hard to tackle the issue of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) for many years and the progress made is significant. Good partnerships already exist including the county-wide Safeguarding Children Partnership, Adult Safeguarding Boards, Domestic and Sexual Abuse Governance Board, Safer Communities Boards, Criminal Justice Board and Community Safety Partnerships.

This strategy outlines the key ways in which Derbyshire's public sector agencies will work together to deliver change, seeking support from charities, the private sector, local communities and most importantly, listening to the voices of women and girls, to improve the lives of people across our county. It has been co-produced with the public and victims across Derbyshire and reflects the views and concerns raised through public consultation exercises carried out by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Derbyshire (OPCC) between November 2021 – January 2022.

For the results of this consultation, please access the following links: <https://www.derbyshire-pcc.gov.uk/public-information/public-information-secondary/Police-and-Crime-Commissioners-Violence-Against-Women-and-Girls-Consultation/>



Understanding violence against women and girls

Agencies across Derbyshire have access to a wealth of existing data to help understand the extent of the problem across the county. Due to improved awareness and recording practices, recorded crime levels tend to rise gradually from year to year, with significant changes across crime types generally only occurring in response to particular events.

Not all offences however are reported, with under-reporting evidenced in the results of the 2021-22 OPCC Public VAWG Survey. This strategy seeks to give more women and girls the confidence to report offences.

Whilst the following data is taken from police systems, agencies will increase future data and information sharing to gain a deeper understanding of the true extent of the problem.

Violent crime and sexual offences

The number of violent and sexual offences recorded in Derbyshire has risen considerably over recent years, largely due to an increased awareness of certain types of offences, increasing confidence amongst victims to report, and better recording practices. This provides agencies with more opportunities to engage with victims, and in turn offenders, to help prevent future offences being committed. During 2021-2022, there were 23,684 violent crimes recorded by the police in Derbyshire. Of those, 9,247 cases resulted in injury (of which 46.8% involved female victims) and 14,437 cases resulted in no reported injury (of which 50.5% involved female victims).

There were 9,174 individual female victims, which equates to 1.7% of the female population. 1,537 females reported they had been a victim more than once in the year, indicating that supporting repeat victims should be a priority. During the same period, 1,321 rape offences were recorded as well as 2,189 other sexual offences and 14,358 stalking and harassment offences. Females were disproportionately affected, making up 88.2%, 73.5% and 66.5% of these crime types respectively. Of the female stalking and harassment victims, 21% reported being a victim of this type of offence more than once during the year.

Honour-Based Violence (HBV)

In the three years to March 2022, **211** honour-based abuse crimes were recorded by the police with **83.9%** involving a female victim. Nine percent of female victims were under 16 years old.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Whilst only a single FGM crime has been recorded by the police, this does not reflect the true picture. The NHS report that 80% of their patients who were identified as being a victim of FGM were aged under 10 when the FGM was carried out, with a similar proportion born in Africa where the mutilation was carried out. In Derby City, there were around 35 patients identified as being a victim of FGM. In the Derbyshire County Council area, there were less than 10.

Demographics

Sadly, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) shows that certain groups are more likely to be victims of violent crime. For example, amongst adults aged 16 to 74 in the year ending March 2020, disabled people were more than twice as likely to have been victims of domestic abuse, stalking or rape than people without a disability.

In addition, when considering sexual orientation, gay, lesbian or bisexual people were more likely to be victims of domestic abuse than heterosexual people. This was also the case for stalking, sexual violence and rape.

Age is a factor in the likelihood of females being a victim of domestic abuse, sexual offences, and stalking and harassment. The risk is particularly high for females aged between 18 and 34 (who make up nearly half of victims), with the risk then reducing with age.

What will we do?

To make sure that we are continuing to build our understanding of these crimes, who they happen to, and who commits them, we will work across agencies, communities and with victims to:

- continue to improve our data collection and information sharing between agencies
- focus on raising awareness and public understanding of these crime types
- encourage reporting to the police and other bodies





Prioritising Prevention

Across Derbyshire, a long-term fundamental aim must be to reduce the prevalence of violence against women and girls. This will be achieved by ensuring there is a focus on preventing these crimes in the first place and by identifying and recording more of the crimes that we do not prevent. We want to see fewer victims experiencing these offences each year whilst increasing people's confidence to report them when they occur.

“ More needs to be done to prevent women and girls becoming victims...more done about the perpetrators, education about consent, boundaries, a change at societal level ”

Call for Evidence, National Public Survey.

Effective prevention must include early intervention to attempt to influence the right values in childhood and adolescence, as well as shifting social norms to become less accepting of violence and inequality. We must address the attitudes and behaviour that can underpin crimes of violence against women and girls as part of our approach to tackling them.

“ Education has to start early, and it has to address boys/young men as well. All too often, responsibility falls upon the girls/young women to behave in a manner to protect themselves or discourage violence against them ”

Call for Evidence, National Public Survey.

What will we do?

Prevention activity will focus on:

- Raising awareness and understanding of these crimes across the public, including amongst young people and professionals
- Identifying national best practice and implementing initiatives based on evidence of what has worked elsewhere
- Not only preventing crimes but also helping to make women and girls feel safer and more confident when going about their daily lives





Supporting Victims

All women and girls should have the confidence to report offences or incidents where they have felt threatened or harassed and to know that every effort will be made to bring offenders to justice. This will not happen unless victims feel supported, not just when taking the first step of reporting but right throughout the subsequent investigation and any court process.

“ Support services are vital. I would never (have) been able to overcome the abuse without specialised support. Some helplines were really hard to access. We need more services and investment as it took me days of trying to call all the time to get through ”

Call for Evidence, National Public Survey.

Key to achieving this is through upholding victims' rights as laid out in the revised Victims of Crime Code of Practice (Victims' Code), which came into effect on 1 April 2021. The revised Code sets out a clear framework for victims' rights, with 12 key overarching rights that set out what victims can expect from all criminal justice agencies. These include:

- to have the details of the crime recorded without unjustified delay
- to be provided with information when reporting the crime and with regular updates on the progress of their case
- to be referred to services that support victims and have services and support tailored to their needs
- to be given information about the outcome of the case and any appeals
- to be given the opportunity to make a Victim Personal Statement and be informed how it is used in court
- where eligible, under the Victim Contact Scheme, to be informed when an offender is released

What will we do?

Victim support activity will focus on:

- Listening to the lived experiences of victims to help identify where service improvements can be made
- Commissioning, co-commissioning and providing appropriate, tailored support to help victims of crime to cope and recover, minimising gaps in provision wherever possible
- Seeking opportunities for internal and external scrutiny, to help identify areas for improvement



Pursuing perpetrators and reducing re-offending

Many crimes of violence against women and girls all too often remain hidden. Many perpetrators remain unknown and knowledge of their characteristics is often limited. Although it is recognised that perpetrators can be male or female, nationally in 2020-2021, 93% of people prosecuted for VAWG offences were male. This compares with 86% of defendants for all types of crime being male.

There is some evidence that intervening early can prevent violence from escalating and further offending occurring, and there is some promising evidence from domestic violence perpetrator programmes.

“ If perpetrators aren’t punished quickly and severely, women will never feel safe and will never feel confident (in supporting police action against them) ”

Call for Evidence, National Public Survey.

We want all victims of these often complex crimes to have the confidence to come forward and report what has happened to them. But for this to happen, there must be an increase in the number of perpetrators brought to justice, particularly in cases of rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, and honour-based abuse, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. The Government’s recent End-to-End Rape Review Report on the criminal justice system reports how the volume of cases being referred by police, charged by the Crown Prosecution Service

and subsequently going to court has declined significantly since 2016. We need to reverse this trend and ensure that when offences are reported, victims do not feel forced to withdraw their support for a prosecution because of issues such as the length of investigations, lack of support or concerns about the criminal justice process.

Whilst learning from national best practice will be important to help improve the conviction rate for rape offences in Derbyshire, the County has seen a positive trend in relation to the conviction rate for domestic abuse offences.

The county’s rate in 2020-2021 was higher than that nationally and for the East Midlands as a whole. In contrast, with the overall continuing fall in convictions across the country, the volume of convictions in Derbyshire increased last year (2020-2021), from the lower level in 2019-2020, back to a similar level from two years previous (2018-2019).

An all too common reason why victims feel unable to support a criminal prosecution is the fear of further violence. More work is needed to afford victims protective measures to help alleviate their concerns and reduce the likelihood of further offences. Alongside this, it is essential that those victims at greater risk are identified and supported early.

What will we do?

The focus must not be on encouraging females to live their lives differently to avoid becoming a victim but must centre on perpetrators and how their behaviour should be influenced and controlled to reduce re-offending. Derbyshire agencies will work in partnership to:

- See adult perpetrators of these abhorrent crimes relentlessly pursued and brought to justice
- Commission and co-commission interventions across a range of risk levels aimed at changing perpetrator behaviour and keeping victims safe from harm, taking account of evidence of what is working elsewhere
- Embed robust risk assessment processes to identify those offenders presenting the greatest threat of harm, identifying serial perpetrators at an early stage





Delivery plan

To ensure this strategy is achieved, an under-pinning delivery plan will be developed by statutory partners in conjunction with voluntary bodies and victim service providers. Regular consultation will be undertaken to ensure the plan reflects the ongoing thoughts and concerns of the public and victims.

Progress will be overseen through the local Safer Communities Boards who will ensure the plan remains relevant, complementing existing workstreams and not duplicating work that is already taking place.

When developing the plan, partners will be mindful of the need to support other national strategies including the Home Office and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) strategies for Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls as well as the forthcoming Victims' Bill consultation, Women's Health Strategy, National Disability Strategy and the Hate Crime Strategy. The plan will also be designed to dovetail with other local plans developed through existing partnership boards.

Partners will be cognisant of national and local changes and will review and refresh this strategy on an annual basis to ensure local activity remains consistent with national expectations and national workstreams.

Through existing workstreams and public consultation, a number of gaps have been identified which require local focus, these are detailed in the next column. They will form the basis of a delivery plan but will be subject to consultation with local stakeholders. It is anticipated that through this consultation, further actions will be identified for inclusion.

Understanding violence against women and girls

We will:

Access existing data and information from across all agencies to develop a comprehensive county-wide Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) problem profile, to help understand and address the problem, particularly its impact on victims with protected characteristics

Develop a multi-agency VAWG Communications and Engagement Strategy, to raise awareness, inform the public about actions being taken to tackle VAWG and seek the views of communities and victims.

This will include:

- Analysis of community information concerning "unsafe spaces" obtained through the Home Office's new "Street Safe" online reporting tool
- Regular public consultation events to seek ideas and help assess if improvements are being delivered, ensuring that males too are engaged in the conversation

Improve awareness and recording of gender-based hate incidents, to gain a deeper understanding of when and how females are targeted, purely based on a hatred of their gender

Ensure police record reports of stalking and harassment separately, to gain a better understanding of the extent of stalking across the county

Prioritising Prevention

We will:

Work with other local bodies to ensure our children and young people understand what healthy relationships and behaviour look like through education across our schools, colleges and universities

Deliver “Active Bystander” training to help the public, including males, to safely contribute towards the prevention of offences

Identify and prioritise, through public engagement, public spaces where females feel unsafe and adopt a multi-agency problem-solving approach to improve feelings of confidence. This will include:

- Use of national funding streams such as “Safer Streets” to improve lighting and CCTV and target other design concerns in parks and town centres
- Increased police patrols of key night-time economy locations where on-street offences may occur. This will be assisted by an increase in police officer numbers through the government’s Police Uplift Programme
- Work with local transport providers to prevent offences, including those in and around taxi ranks and bus and train stations, to improve confidence when travelling, especially during the hours of darkness
- Gain support from licensed premise holders to help make their premises, events and surrounding areas as safe as possible for women and girls

Ensure that all key agencies display comprehensive, up-to-date online advice and materials for everyone to access. This should include information to support parents, females wanting to feel more confident when using public spaces and people wanting to understand how to report an offence and what to expect

Identify and work with larger employers and businesses across Derbyshire so they have effective policies and procedures in place to prevent crimes occurring on their premises, whilst supporting victims to report offences should they occur

Supporting Victims

We will:

Commission and co-commission general and specialist services based on appropriate needs assessments and monitor performance to deliver quality services to all victims

Undertake service needs assessments, to help identify and target gaps in support service provisions across the county and make pathways to support easier to access

Understand the barriers preventing victims with protected characteristics from reporting offences and accessing services

Ensure agencies review their own internal policies and standards so that all employees display appropriate behaviours both in the workplace and when meeting victims. Agencies will be encouraged to identify male ambassadors willing to support the international “He4She” movement

Supporting Victims

We will:

Ensure all officers and employees with responsibility for supporting victims are appropriately trained to deliver the best service possible. For police, this will include additional training around recognising vulnerability and conducting risk assessments

Work with the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) to make sure all agencies are held to account for upholding the revised Victims of Crime Code of Practice (Victims' Code)

Through the LCJB, make sure all agencies work hard to deliver an efficient and effective Criminal Justice Service in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic, with a particular focus on waiting times from charge to trial

Through Local Authorities, provide support for all females and their families fleeing their homes due to domestic abuse

NHS England and NHS Improvement will continue to support victims and survivors of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) through pilot clinics offering healthcare services and emotional and psychological support, whilst building an evidence case to help commission these clinics locally in a more sustainable way

NHS England and NHS Improvement to develop local 'pathfinder' projects for enhanced trauma-informed mental health support for sexual abuse victims and survivors with the most complex needs



Pursuing Perpetrators and Reducing Re-offending

We will:

Evaluate the success of, and continue to develop the recently introduced DRIVE perpetrator programme for high harm domestic abuse offenders as well as the new Home Office-funded programme of projects aimed at low to medium risk perpetrators

Take account of national best practice and identify other opportunities to develop and introduce perpetrator programmes aimed at offenders of non-domestic-related crimes, in particular, child offenders

Increase the percentage of reported crimes which lead to evidence-led prosecutions, prosecutions that don't rely on the support of the victim

Maximise the use of all available court orders and other tools which seek to control an offender's behaviour and increase enforcement action taken against offenders when breaches of conditions occur. This includes increased use of orders and tools such as:

- Domestic Abuse and Domestic Violence Prevention Orders
- Stalking Protection Orders
- Sexual Harm Prevention Orders and Sexual Risk Orders
- Forced Marriage Protection Orders
- FGM Protection Orders
- Restraining Orders
- Pre-charge police bail

Review victim and offender risk assessment processes, in particular:

- A full review of the operation of the well-established MARAC system (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference), to ensure it complies with national guidelines
- The introduction of a new risk assessment process for victims of stalking, in part to help identify and intervene with high-harm offenders

In partnership with the Local Criminal Justice Board, undertake a full review of the response to reports of rape and other sexual offences across the county, to improve the percentage of offenders brought to justice. This will include seeking out national best practice including recent successes by Police Scotland and fully support the national Rape Action Plan together with the Crown Prosecution Service

Everyone in Derbyshire should have the freedom to succeed and the right to public safety and protection under the law. Through this strategy and delivery plan, we will strive to ensure that violence and abuse are reduced across our county – at home, at work, at school, online, or on the streets



At a meeting of the county's Chief Executives on 25 March 2022, this strategy was approved and is supported by the Chief Executives of the following agencies:

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Derbyshire County Council
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Derby City Council
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Derbyshire Police
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Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service
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Peak District National Park
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Derby and Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group
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High Peak Borough Council
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South Derbyshire District Council
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Chesterfield Borough Council
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Erewash Borough Council
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Derbyshire Dales District Council
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North East Derbyshire District Council
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Bolsover District Council
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Amber Valley Borough Council
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