

North Yorkshire and City of York Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2028



North Yorkshire
Community Safety Partnership





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Acronyms

CYC	City of York Council
DA	Domestic Abuse
DAHA	Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance
DA-LPB	Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review
IDAS	Independent Domestic Abuse Services
IMD	Index of multiple Deprivation
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MATAC	Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination
NYC	North Yorkshire Council
NYP	North Yorkshire Police
OFPC	Office of Police Fire and Crime Commissioner
ONS	Office of National Statistics
RSHE	Relationship, Sex, and Health Education
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

In partnership with and supported by:



Forewords

“ As the independent Chair of the North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Board, I am both honoured and privileged to present the North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Strategy, 2024 - 2028, on behalf of our partners across the County. This strategy builds on the strong foundations created by our previous Strategy. It reflects the strategic approach of our highly committed partnership and sets out our planned intent to strengthen our well-established multi-agency approaches to domestic abuse whilst linking into national developments. When developing this Strategy, our ambition was to ensure it is underpinned by a sound evidence base alongside the views and experiences of people who have been impacted by domestic abuse and accessed services that we deliver. These views have been invaluable in our formation of this Strategy. We thank all who have collaborated on and contributed to this Strategy.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 means that there is now a definition of domestic abuse in law, emphasising that domestic abuse can encompass patterns of emotional, coercive, or controlling, and economic abuse that may occur alongside physical and/or sexual violence. We have reflected on, and are embedding, our new duties created by the Act, which recognises that children can be direct victims of domestic abuse when it is a facet of their lived experience or background. These developments are woven into the fabric of this Strategy.

We know that domestic abuse can have devastating consequences. Nationally domestic abuse is reported in the media on a weekly basis. Locally, we have sadly seen the deaths of victims, including those who have ended their lives as a result of the impact of domestic abuse. We have learned lessons from statutory reviews following fatal domestic abuse.

We recognise that anyone can be impacted by domestic abuse, regardless of characteristics such as gender, age, sexual orientation, and ethnicity. Domestic abuse not only affects the person who is being directly harmed; it also has a detrimental effect on those who witness or live with it. This particularly relates to children and young people impacted by domestic abuse - who can experience severe negative impacts on their development, as well as life-long effects without early intervention and support. These are some of the many reasons why partners in North Yorkshire take a trauma informed, coordinated and holistic approach to working with children and their families. This includes our being committed to ensuring that those who cause harm or deploy abusive behaviours are safely challenged and held accountable - but also supported to change their behaviour.

In North Yorkshire, we believe our people can live their lives in communities free from domestic abuse. We strive, through our Strategy, to raise awareness of what domestic abuse is, whilst demonstrating what services and communities working together can achieve whilst preventing or supporting and protecting all who are impacted by it. ”



Cheryl Henry Leach

Independent Chair

North Yorkshire DA Local Partnership board

“ This Strategy is a major milestone in our work across North Yorkshire and York to drive system-level change around Domestic Abuse, for the sake of all our communities and residents.

Far too many lives within our area are impacted by the devastating effects of domestic abuse – an estimated 32,500 adult victims alone in our area, many of whom will not be known to support services and who suffer from a hidden crime which often goes unreported. As a public health professional, I recognise the effect and burden of distress this places on people’s mental, emotional, social and physical health, never mind the wider costs to society. This needs to be an issue of urgency for all of us.

There is no one agency able to tackle this issue alone. So, we have to work together; that is why strategies like these are so important. Since Domestic Abuse is everyone’s business, tackling it requires a level of partnership, collaboration, and communication that I hope you will see reflected in this strategy, as well as as a preventive approach that always seeks to direct our actions to the earliest possible point of intervention, in order to avert future harm.

I welcome this strategy and invite all who read it to partner with us in tackling this key issue. ”



Peter Roderick
Director Public Health
City of York



Our Strategic Vision

“We will not tolerate domestic abuse within North Yorkshire and York, and we will strive to ensure everyone can live free from abuse and harm. We will create an environment where healthy relationships are the norm and where victims, survivors and their children have access to the right support at the right time.

Domestic abuse is everybody’s business. We will work collaboratively to create lasting change across all our communities with the voice of the victim at the heart of our response; and where perpetrators of abuse are held accountable for their behaviour.”



Introduction

The North Yorkshire and City of York Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2028 shows our commitment to our continued prioritisation of tackling domestic abuse. It builds on the achievements of North Yorkshire and York's multi-agency response and strategic approach, which has been in place since 2018.

We continue to recognise there is a high prevalence of domestic abuse within our

county, despite its underreporting and the devastating impact it has on the individual, their family, our communities, and wider society. There is a continued commitment to work together from statutory partners, the wider community and the voluntary sector which upholds the principles of a whole family and coordinated community response to tackling domestic abuse.

Our previous joint domestic abuse strategy 2018-2023 propelled our partnership response forward in many ways:

- We collaborated on commissioning arrangements to provide sustainable, long term domestic abuse services across York and North Yorkshire. These services ensure equity of support throughout the entire county, eliminating the post code lottery seen in many other localities. This was achieved through quarterly commissioning group meetings to identify service gaps and funding opportunities, enabling us to improve, develop, and sustain new services.
- We developed services for children affected by domestic abuse and young people beginning to demonstrate troublesome behaviours reflecting a truly whole family and partnership approach.
- We created services that are inclusive for all victims, irrespective of gender identity - male, female, trans, non-binary, marginalised or seldom heard. These services support those fleeing domestic abuse and those wishing to remain in their own homes, providing the necessary assets and support for them to do so.
- We raised awareness of domestic abuse by commissioning and delivering training packages to professionals across various agencies.
- We delivered behaviour change programmes for adult perpetrators of abuse and interventions for children and adolescents demonstrating violence towards their parents.



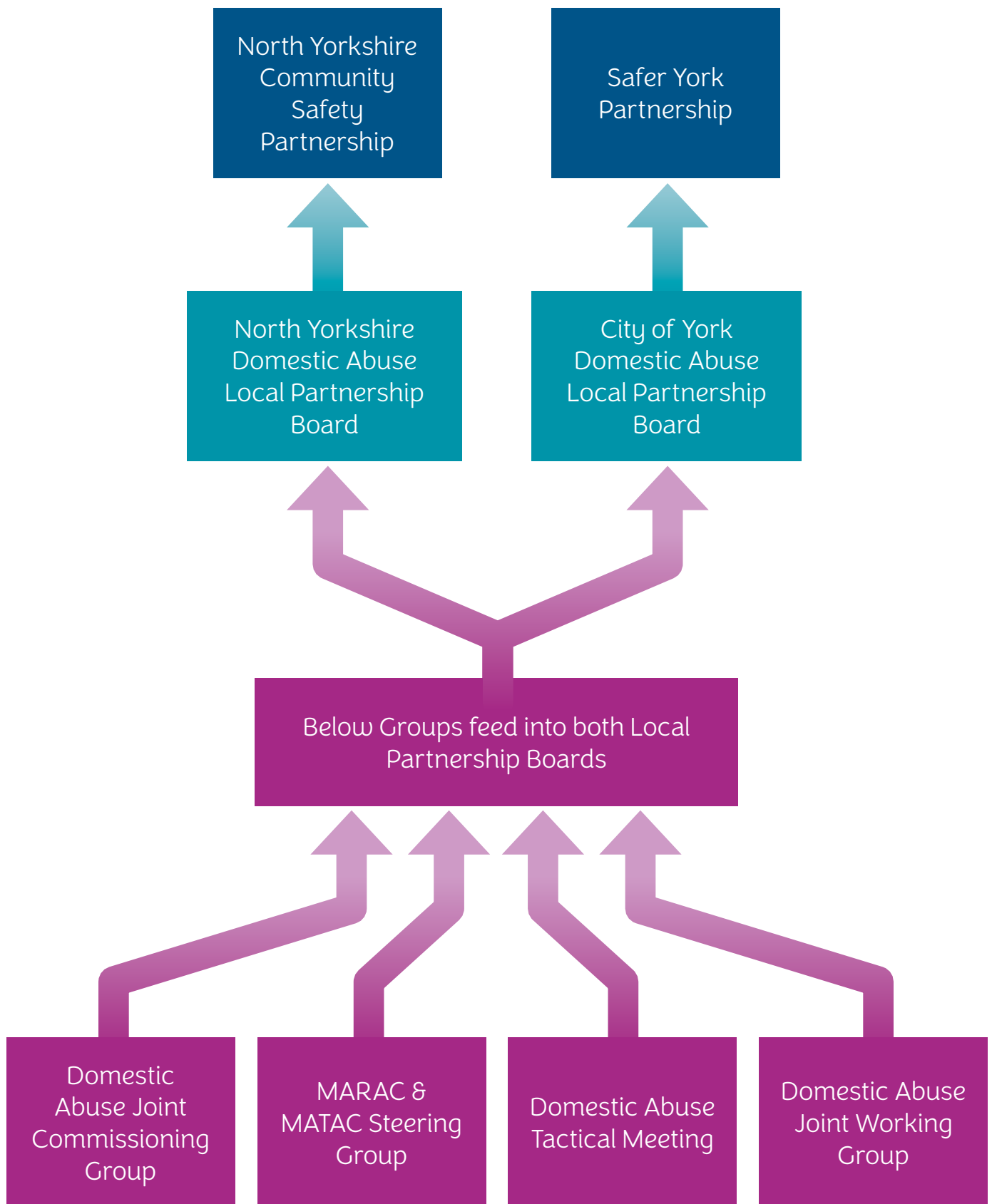
The development of our new joint strategy will build upon these achievements made in the last 5 years and contribute to the newly created Domestic Abuse Act 2021. We have also gathered substantial evidence through a Strategic Needs Assessment and whole system Public Health Review of our domestic abuse arrangements, undertaken by Safelives. This new strategy will further build on the findings of the Needs Assessment and Wider System Review, strengthening our whole family approach to supporting those impacted by domestic abuse and those who perpetrate it.

Following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), North Yorkshire Council and City of York Council have been required to establish Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Boards as part of their statutory duties as tier 1 authorities. The North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (NY DA LPB) and the York Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (CY DA LPB) were formed in 2022. This arrangement marks a departure from the previous Domestic Abuse Joint Coordination & Operational Group, which served as a joint governance arrangement for both authorities. Our new arrangements will place a greater focus on local needs, both demographically and geographically, playing a key strategic role in the collaboration and governance of agencies related to domestic abuse services within their respective areas. This ensures that they effectively meet the needs of local residents and partner organisations.

The development of this strategy has been co-produced and designed by the agencies represented by both North Yorkshire and City of York Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Boards and informed by engagement with our communities through the work undertaken as part of the Wider System Review activities with Safelives.

The roles of the DA LPB's are to oversee all activities related to the development, implementation, and review of the domestic abuse strategy for North Yorkshire and York. The North Yorkshire the DA LPB reports to the North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership and the York DA LPB reports into the Safer York Partnership.

Structure



Delivering the Strategy



To accompany this strategy, there will be a delivery plan that supports the implementation of our vision, priorities, and commitments. The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Boards will each be responsible for producing a dynamic and evolving delivery plan with agreed priorities and timescales. These plans will provide evidence of our activities and progress towards meeting our strategic priorities and the impact being made. The plan will be closely monitored through the partnership boards governance structures.

The National Context



The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, for the first time, created a statutory definition of domestic abuse. In this act domestic abuse is described as:

“ Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling 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. ”

Section 1 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 provides greater detail on behaviours which constitutes domestic abuse. The act specifies the following as types of abuse:

- a) physical or sexual abuse.
- b) violent or threatening behaviour.
- c) controlling or coercive behaviour.
- d) economic abuse.
- e) psychological, emotional, or other abuse.

Section 2 Definition of “personally connected”. (Abbreviated)

Two people are “personally connected” to each other if any of the following applies:

- a) they are, or have been, married to each other.
- b) they are, or have been, civil partners of each other.
- c) they have agreed to marry one another (whether the agreement has been terminated).

Section 3 Children as victims of domestic abuse.

This section applies where behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is domestic abuse. (2) Any reference in this Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who:

- a) Sees or hears, or experiences the effect of, the abuse, and
 - b) is related to A or B.
- 3) A child is related to a person for the purposes of subsection (2) if
- a) The person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child, or
 - b) The child and the person are relatives.
- 4) In this section - “child” means person under the age of 18 years; “parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act); “relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

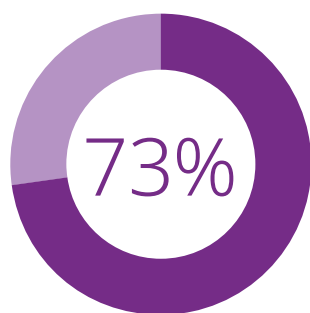
Aligning with this definition is the UK government's response to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and girls, also known as the Istanbul Convention. This treaty brought about the launching of the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2016, which aims to ensure justice and support for victims of crimes, particularly those committed by men against women. The VAWG Strategy also emphasises that domestic abuse and other forms of violence, including sexual offences, stalking offences, harassment, honour-based violence, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation are crimes in the UK.

The government also conducted consultative studies and research, resulting in the [Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan](#). This report details the government's strategy for enacting pertinent legislation and provides recommendations for domestic abuse agencies. It emphasises four key

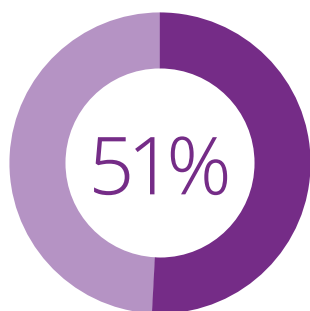
areas: prevention, victim support, perpetrator accountability, and strengthening the system. Additionally, it underscores the need for enhanced Relationship, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE) for young people to raise awareness about abusive behaviour. The plan also highlights the importance of community and workplace support services for victims and the necessity for effective systems within domestic abuse response agencies to manage perpetrators.

Another study contributing to the national efforts to address domestic abuse is [The Patchwork of Provision](#), released by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's office in 2022. This report evaluates the quality of domestic abuse service provision, analysing the effect of existing services on victims and survivors, and assesses the accessibility and availability of resources. The report identifies noteworthy gaps in service and proposes solutions to address them, with key findings including:

Overall impact of support services for victims and survivors



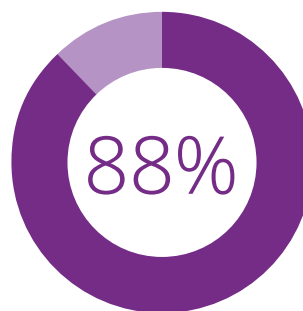
This report confirms that **73%** of individuals who seek domestic abuse services in England and Wales report feeling a greater sense of control in their lives.



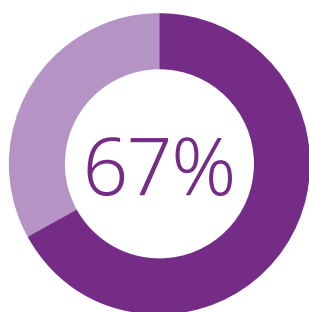
In Yorkshire and the Humber region, **51%** of those who learn about available services find it relatively easy to access help. The research also highlights those victims and survivors of domestic abuse

are more inclined to confide in health care professionals about their situations when compared with other types of professionals.

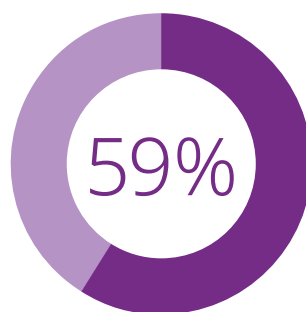
The study also reveals that a significant proportion of victims and survivors are aware of practical community-based support services such as helpline advice, one-to-one advocacy, caseworker assistance, and longer-term therapeutic support, like counselling and mental health aid. However, it points out that some victims especially those from minoritised groups, face challenges in accessing therapeutic support services.



Additionally, it shows that disabled victims and survivors have a greater need for mental health support (**88%**) compared with those who do not disclose a disability



(67%). The report also indicates that black victims and survivors are more likely than those from other ethnic backgrounds to express a desire for refuge,



with 59% showing interest, especially when compared to white victims and survivors, of whom only 25% express such wishes.

Victim and survivors' access to support services

The report also reveals several key findings including:

A significant percentage of black and minoritised survivors (67%), LGBT+ survivors (68%), disabled survivors (55%), and deaf survivors (16 out of 62) expressed the desire for access to specialist 'by and for' organisations to receive the help they needed.



There was a notable lack of organisations providing services for men, with 75% of men reporting that the support services they attempted to access appeared to be exclusively available for women.



There was significant disparity in the availability of specialist support for children affected by domestic abuse in various regions. In Yorkshire and the Humber for example, the report found that 38% of victims and survivors reported being unable to access support for their children.

Another service gap unveiled by this report has to do with individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage or additional needs, such as victims with unsettled immigration status and victims with learning difficulties.

Organisations providing domestic abuse support across England and Wales

The Patchwork of Provision report tells us that in the landscape of domestic abuse service providers, there is a diverse array of organisations, with approximately half being community-based services. Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of accommodation-based services are delivered by specialised domestic abuse and/or violence against women and girls' organisations. Specifically, 51% of support services are community based, and 64% are accommodation based across England and Wales.

This same report points out that the cost of domestic abuse in the UK is estimated to be

around £66 billion annually. This cost primarily stems from the physical and emotional harm experienced by victims. The report also highlights that about 62% of organisations providing domestic abuse services have an annual income of less than £500,000, with specialist 'by and for' services typically receiving less than £100,000. Additionally, there is a financial burden on the Exchequer, totalling £19 billion, which is attributed to the loss of economic output and expenses related to addressing the consequences of domestic abuse within the healthcare system, the criminal justice system, and the services for victims and survivors.

Local Context



We recognise that domestic abuse is widespread and persistently under-reported, although data and statistics are helpful in giving an indication of how far-reaching domestic abuse is. Reported incidents will be much lower than actual abuse levels and estimates may mask under-reporting within groups across populations.

We know that individuals and families may live with domestic abuse for a significant period and suffer several incidents before asking for help. As a partnership we recognise the

high level of unreported abuse taking place in North Yorkshire and York and that people in different circumstances are impacted by domestic abuse in different ways. It is important that we work together to strengthen our understanding of unreported domestic abuse and expand local research where needed to gain a clear picture of need.

Below are some of the key findings from the North Yorkshire and City of York Safelives Strategic Needs Assessment:

Figures captured 2021-2022

SafeLives Prevalence Tool estimates 32,500 adult victims of domestic abuse	7212 domestic abuse crimes	4876 victims accessing IDAS (Independent Domestic Abuse Services)
505 victims referred to refuge provision	129 victims accommodated in refuge	13,689 is the total number Adult and Child Victims
11,462 is the total number of victims Age 18-64	1512 is the total number of victims under 18	618 is the total number of victims Over 65
76.5% number female Victims	20.1% number of male victims	0.5% Trans & .005% non binary
1871 number of cases heard at MARAC. 28% increase from previous year	NY = 55 MARAC cases heard per 10,000 adult female population. Recommended number of cases 40	CY = 61 MARAC cases heard per 10,000 adult female population. Recommended number of cases 40

North Yorkshire

The County of North Yorkshire has a diverse and dispersed population of an estimated 615,400 people across a geographical area of over 8,000 square kilometres. Large parts of the county sit within two national parks and three areas of outstanding natural beauty. Ninety eight percent of the county is either sparsely (13%) or super-sparsely (85%) populated with just over a third of the population living in these areas. This results in a population density of just 77 people per square kilometre, compared with an England average of 432.

Harrogate has the largest population of 162,000, and Richmondshire having the smallest of 49,700. There have been various changes in population across the areas. Richmondshire has seen a decrease in population of 4.4% and Scarborough remains the same at around 108,000. All other areas have seen an increase with Hambleton seeing 1.8% ranging to 10.2% in Selby, at 92,000.

There is a large and growing older population in North Yorkshire with all areas seeing a significant increase in the over 65's population. Selby had the greatest increase, of 34.9%. This is compared to an overall increase of 20.1% in England.

Office of National Statistics (ONS) data from the 2021 census shows that 3.3% of individuals in North Yorkshire are Black, Asian, or racially minoritised.

We also recognise that North Yorkshire has a significant military community across Richmondshire and Catterick, with a military garrison having more than 13,000 service personnel with many originating from across the Commonwealth. We have a veteran's contingent across North Yorkshire in the region of 40,000.

North Yorkshire as a local authority area is amongst the least deprived in England. It was ranked 125th least deprived out of 152 upper tier local authorities in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), 2015. Scarborough is the most deprived district and there are pockets of high deprivation across the county.

With regards to domestic abuse, in the 2022/2023 financial year there were 6290 domestic abuse related crimes recorded by North Yorkshire Police that had occurred in North Yorkshire. The greatest number of domestic abuse related crimes were reported in several wards within the locality of Scarborough, followed by Selby during this period. Of the reported crimes, 68.6% of victims were female, typically aged between 31-40 years, whilst 70.58% of suspects were male of the same age.

North Yorkshire Police Domestic Abuse Related Crimes (North Yorkshire)

	20/21	21/22	22/23
Q1 (Apr-Jun)	1420	1523	1573
Q2 (Jul-Sep)	1615	1660	1778
Q3 (Oct-Dec)	1424	1625	1501
Q4 (Jan-Mar)	1307	1538	1438
Total	5766	6346	6290

York

According to the latest census data (2021) York has a population of 202,821 residents, which represents a 2.4% rise between 2011 and 2021, with a further forecast increase of another 13,000 individuals in the following two years.

The City of York is classed as predominantly urban and has two universities, the University

of York and York St John University, with 48,779 students in York. Our older population is growing year on year and has risen 12.7% since 2011 and there are currently 9,854 people over the age of 80 living in York.

7.3% of residents in York are from Black or minority ethnic groups, 5.5% are from White but non-British background and 10.8% were born outside the UK. York has a higher-than-average LGBTQ+ population compared to the regional and national statistics (5.5% York, 3.0% region, 3.1% England & Wales). Over 17.1% of residents are disabled and 7.7% have carer responsibilities.

York was ranked 140 out of 151 in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranking of the least deprived local authorities in 2019, having risen 5 places since 2015.

With regards to domestic abuse, in the 2022/2023 financial year there were 2,069 domestic abuse related crimes recorded by North Yorkshire Police that had occurred in York. The greatest number of domestic abuse related crimes were reported in Guildhall (263), Westfield (249), Micklegate (200) and Heworth (190) during the same period. Of the 2,069 reported crimes, 72% of victims were female, typically aged between 20-39 years, whilst 73% of suspects were male of the same age range.

North Yorkshire Police Domestic Abuse Related Crimes (York)

	20/21	21/22	22/23
Q1 (Apr-Jun)	541	581	504
Q2 (Jul-Sep)	561	611	599
Q3 (Oct-Dec)	502	575	604
Q4 (Jan-Mar)	460	551	362
Total	2,064	2,318	2,069



Existing Local Services & Demand

The local specialised domestic abuse services in North Yorkshire and the City of York are presently jointly commissioned by North Yorkshire Council and City of York Council, and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC). Managed through a central hub referral point, IDAS currently offers local victim support services, including a community-based support service, a refuge and accommodation service, and a service for children & young people affected by domestic abuse. Additionally, IDAS

provides a Respect Service, employing a Respect Accredited Programme to assist families where young people exhibit abusive behaviours toward their parents or within intimate relationships with other young people. As part of the joint commissioning arrangements, there is also the provision of an Adult Perpetrator Service, a voluntary behaviour change intervention for standard risk perpetrators of domestic abuse, currently delivered by Foundation.

The impact report for the 2022/2023 period from IDAS showed that they had received **9,739 referrals** and **17,012 helpline calls**



IDAS Hub which offers triage and short-term assistance to victims of domestic abuse, supported **80%** of these referrals.

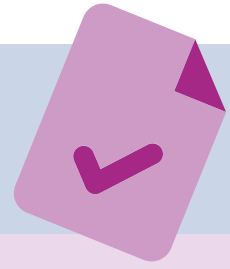
1,784 individuals were directed to community based service for extended support



In this same period, IDAS provided secure housing, either in refuges or dispersed units, for **164 adults** and **97 children**

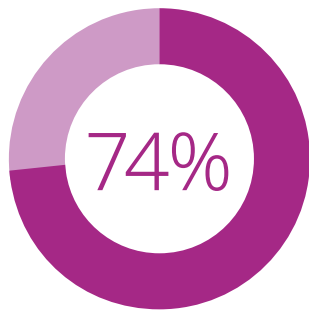


Across all services, **8,389 safety plans** were implemented



The whole family approach service supported **210 adults** and **132 children**, and the Respect service assisted **264 parents** and **76 children**

Impact report from our provider for the Perpetrator Behaviour Change Programme, Foundation, also underscores the achievements of the program. As an integral part of a comprehensive system approach, the program employs victim liaison officers in collaboration with IDAS to ensure a victim-centred strategy that minimises risk to the victim.



In the financial year 2022/2023, Foundation assisted 122 service users through the +Choices programme to address their behaviour, with **74%** of them showing reduced risk upon completing the program, as indicated by feedback received from the victims.

Besides jointly commissioning specialised services, several collaborative measures were established to tackle domestic abuse, including Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) and Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs). Weekly operational MARAC meetings occur for North Yorkshire and York, categorizing cases into specific localities such as York, Scarborough & Ryedale, Harrogate & Skipton, Northallerton, Richmond and Selby.

Monthly MATAC meetings convene to collectively discuss serial perpetrators in North Yorkshire and York within a single operational forum. The MARAC/MATAC Steering Group, meeting quarterly, oversees the performance of both process on behalf of North Yorkshire and York. All existing multi-agency arrangements report to their respective North Yorkshire and York DA Partnership Board.

Our New Strategy has key priorities and commitments and outlines the approach we will take to achieve them

Key Priorities and Commitments

Priority 1

Prevention and Early Identification

We will focus on prevention, by proactively increasing understanding of healthy relationships, regardless of age group, whilst raising awareness of domestic abuse to ensure early identification and promotion of specialist services to provide support and ultimately eradicate abuse altogether.

Commitments

- 1.1 We will raise awareness of all forms of domestic abuse to create a culture of prevention through the delivery of public facing campaigns, promoting the message that domestic abuse is everyone's business. This will Enable friends, colleagues, neighbours, and family members to spot the signs of domestic abuse and feel confident to help those experiencing it to access specialist support.
- 1.2 We will work with education settings, voluntary and private sector organisations to ensure that people of all age groups are effectively taught to understand what a healthy relationship is. The goal is to reduce domestic abuse in the future and increase awareness of what constitutes an abusive relationship, along with how to report it.
- 1.3 We will enable individuals & organisations to recognise all forms of domestic abuse to prevent future abuse or the escalation of abuse.
- 1.4 We will, as a partnership engage professionals across all agencies to improve the early identification of domestic abuse, ensuring local professionals can recognise signs and indicators of domestic abuse, as well as understanding the specific needs of seldom heard and marginalised groups. This will support developing a culture that

recognises and challenges victim blaming language through all process and practices.

- 1.5 We will enable and empower our urban and rural communities to recognise domestic abuse and all its harms, by providing the tools and developing awareness of the signs, indicators and risks associated with this abuse. We will improve access to information and advice, with clearer pathways to reporting concerns.
- 1.6 We will tailor our response to the needs of our communities, recognising

the specific requirements of urban and rural communities.

- 1.7 We will increase the number of people disclosing domestic abuse to services and being offered appropriate support/ response as a result, including from our most underrepresented communities and groups.
- 1.8 We will empower individuals to become active bystanders, ensuring individuals know how to safely intervene and challenge abusive behaviours.

Priority 2

Authentic & Inclusive Support for All

We will ensure services across North Yorkshire and York actively participate, stay well-informed, and remain responsive, and are adequately prepared to address the specific needs of every victim survivor and their families.

Commitments

- 2.1 We will provide specialist support services that are inclusive and accessible to meet the needs of local victims and survivors, consulting with those from marginalised communities with lived experience of domestic abuse.
- 2.2 We will embed the voice of victims and survivors into local systems and service design processes.
- 2.3 We will ensure that victims, survivors, and their children have access to a range of safe accommodation options that meet their needs.
- 2.4 We will provide a comprehensive response for victims and survivors of domestic abuse and their children which will offer

safe accommodation and strong support and meets our populations diverse needs, aligned to the existing priorities outlined within the North Yorkshire and City of York Safe Accommodation Strategy.

- 2.5 We will work towards achieving and maintaining the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation to ensure our housing provision across North Yorkshire and York is safe, secure and that our teams are empowered to recognise harm in all its forms, supporting victims, survivors, and their families to live free from abuse.
- 2.6 We will work in partnership with internal and external stakeholders to gather the authentic voice of victims, engaging with victims of domestic abuse where appropriate, to represent the views and voice of victims and service users at the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Boards.
- 2.7 We will ensure that marginalised communities and those with multiple complex needs feel safe and secure, whilst feeling they are able to report abuse and access services to help them cope and recover.

Priority 3

Drive Change Together

We will build upon our existing partnership approach to tackling domestic abuse, working together to achieve our collective priorities and commitments. We will work to improve how agencies effectively share information, assess risk and collaborate in their response to victims, survivors, their families and those that cause harm, with clear pathways into specialist support.

Commitments

- 3.1 We will further strengthen our existing Local Partnership Board arrangements, by ensuring stakeholders work together to address the identified gaps within the findings of our local needs assessment and wider system review.
- 3.2 Partners will work collectively to bring together comparable, accurate and consistent data on areas such as commissioning, provision, and gap analysis, enabling the effective monitoring of need and demand. This information-sharing will work to strengthen the future development of our strategic assessment and support our understanding around under-reporting, ensuring we learn lessons and draw out the right narratives from the evidence. Where necessary we will commission research where gaps in knowledge exist to strengthen our response to domestic abuse.
- 3.3 We will ensure partners participate in the Domestic Homicide Review process, and that learning from this, Serious Case Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews are proactively shared via the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Boards.
- 3.4 We will contribute to the wider strategic outcomes around serious violence and addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG) via their existing partnership arrangements and delivery plans.
- 3.5 As a partnership we will ensure that frontline practitioners have the knowledge of local referral pathways and how to respond appropriately to instances of domestic abuse.
- 3.6 We will work to a shared language and terminology that begins to recognise the positive benefits of a trauma informed and non-victim blaming way.
- 3.7 We will continue to develop and deliver practices and interventions, based on the latest research and best practice, such as Claire's Law and Operation Encompass. This will ensure that victims are aware and informed of the risks posed by perpetrators and that children witnessing domestic abuse have access to the appropriate support within education settings.
- 3.8 We will ensure through our MARAC & MATAC Steering Group that we have effective governance and oversight of the operational delivery of MARAC to effectively reduce repeat victimisation.
- 3.9 We will ensure that partners work collaboratively when dealing with adult and child victims of domestic abuse, adopting a whole family approach, to improve the safety of families by identifying the most effective interventions of support that align risks and needs.
- 3.10 We will ensure that children who witness domestic abuse are recognised as victims set out in the Domestic Abuse Act. We will provide comprehensive and coordinated support across all agencies to minimise the impact of such abuse to help them cope and recover.

3.11 We will make certain that the partnership arrangements take into account other specialised services designed for individuals with multiple complex needs, such as

mental health and substance misuse. This involves acknowledging and providing support for the additional needs that may be presented by these groups.

Priority 4

Accountability

We will focus on tackling and addressing abusive behaviour, holding individuals accountable, and providing support to facilitate the development of healthy relationship behaviours. We will deliver timely assistance to those concerned about their behaviour causing harm and to perpetrators of abuse, supporting them in understanding how to prevent abuse and change their behaviour.

Commitments

- 4.1 We will provide opportunities for perpetrators to change their behaviour through the commissioning of interventions that focus on all risk levels. We will look to inform and influence this through national decision making and future funding opportunities.
- 4.2 As partnerships we will ensure protection, support and information is available for all those who have experienced abuse during their engagement with the Criminal Justice System. All agencies should ensure that the voice of lived experience is heard throughout these processes and used to improve and enhance service provision.
- 4.3 As partnerships we recognise the importance of legal orders and notices (currently DVPN&O and soon to become DAPN&Os), therefore when a notice or order has been issued, we will promote multi-agency engagement with the victims during this window of opportunity to

support lasting recovery and space from the perpetrator. Partners should also work collaboratively, exploring options to remove those perpetrating domestic abuse from the home to disrupt abusive behaviour and make victims and survivors safer.

- 4.4 We will ensure through our MARAC and MATAAC Steering Group that we have effective governance and oversight of the operational delivery of MATAAC, with a particular focus on ensuring victim safety, risk management and the effective disruption of those offenders who do not engage in this process.
- 4.5 We will ensure that the partnership arrangements between MARAC, MATAAC and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) are robust, jointly recognising high risk perpetrators of DA and Stalking, so they are, where appropriate, considered for MAPPA management, and those timely referrals are made. MAPPA will quality assure referrals so that our response to managing the most serious offenders of domestic abuse and stalking reflects the risk they pose, and our protection of their victims is coordinated and strengthened.
- 4.6 We will ensure that we maximise opportunities to address harmful behaviours associated with child to parent abuse, utilising best practice and research to inform potential commissioning opportunities.



Contact us

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