



Rutland  
County Council



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# Domestic Abuse Strategy

## 2021-2024



Version & Policy Number	Version 1
Guardian	Local Domestic Abuse Partnership / Safer Rutland Partnership
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## Foreword

### **Cllr Lucy Stephenson, Chair of the Safer Rutland Partnership and Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.**

Welcome to Rutland's Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021 – 2024.

This strategy outlines how Rutland County Council will work together with its partners to meet the requirements of the new 2021 Domestic Abuse Act including specific duties to provide support for adult and child victims and survivors of domestic abuse in safe accommodation as part of the statutory requirements within part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act. The Safer Rutland Partnership and Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board has primary responsibility for tackling the issue of domestic abuse, and for developing and implementing this strategy, which covers a three-year period.

The issue around domestic abuse is complex, and we welcome the introduction of the new 2021 Domestic Abuse Act which recognises the wider context of abuse, where this is not only physical or sexual, but includes controlling and coercive harmful behaviours. The Act also recognises children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right, as well as young people who become victims of domestic abuse in their own relationships, to ensure effective support is provided at the right time.

Signed into law on 29 April 2021, the Domestic Abuse Act aims to provide further protections to the millions of people who experience domestic abuse, as well as strengthen measures to tackle perpetrators. Part 4 of the Act recognises the critical importance of support for victims and their children within relevant safe accommodation, as they rebuild their lives after the trauma of domestic abuse.

This is a corporate strategy owned by Rutland County Council as well as the partners who work with us to provide important services and support for our residents. Our aim is to help people and communities in Rutland become free from the harm caused by and the impact of domestic abuse.

Success will be achieved through the reduction of incidents of domestic abuse and providing support to victims/survivors by the collaborative working and efforts of all partner agencies and services responsible for the prevention of crime, health and social care.

# Our Vision – we want to prevent offending, protect all victims, and ensure they have the support they need when they need it.

## Executive Summary

*“Domestic abuse is an abhorrent crime perpetrated on victims and their families by those who should love and care for them. This landmark Bill will help transform the response to domestic abuse, helping to prevent offending, protect victims and ensure they have the support they need.”* **Victoria Atkins MP, Minister for Safeguarding<sup>1</sup>**

This Domestic Abuse Strategy is a partnership strategy detailing the relevant duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The Act aims to raise awareness and understanding about the devastating impact of domestic abuse on victims and their families, further improve the effectiveness of the justice system in providing protection for victims of domestic abuse and bringing perpetrators to justice and strengthen the support for victims of abuse by statutory agencies.

Part 4 of the Act details duties on relevant local authorities to assess the need for accommodation-based support by the completion of a strategic needs assessment and this strategy identifies the priorities to provide such support for victims. The Act is clear that children of domestic abuse victims who have seen, heard, or experienced the effect of that abuse are victims in their own right. Support should be provided to any child staying with a victim in safe accommodation.

Areas are required to provide safe accommodation support which should include **advocacy support, domestic abuse prevention advice, specialist support** for victims with relevant protected characteristics and for victims with additional and / or complex needs, **children’s support** to include play therapy and child advocacy, **housing-related support, advice service** including accessing benefits and support into work, and **counselling and therapy**.

## Summary of the findings from our needs assessment:

In Rutland the following number of incidents of domestic abuse were reported by all agencies in the last three years:

2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
529	466	453

- The highest age categories across the period are 25-34 and 35-44 years.
- There was an increase year on year in the number of 18–24-year-old victims.
- Child victims under 18 years account for under 12% of all victims in 2020-21.
- Children 0-5 years account for around half of all child victims.
- There has been a decrease in reports to all agencies except for adult social care.

The majority of adult victims are White or White British females. Data shows there has been a significant increase in the number of domestic abuse victims requesting homelessness assistance in Rutland.

<sup>1</sup> [Domestic Abuse Act 2021: overarching factsheet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/91111/Domestic-Abuse-Act-2021-overarching-factsheet.pdf)

UAVA (now Freeva, since April 2022) receive all referrals to a single front door jointly commissioned by Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR), which includes referrals for Safe Accommodation. There are nine dispersal units for victims available in Rutland. The Council of Europe recommendation is 1 family place per 10,000 population therefore this provision is above the recommended number.

We have identified the priorities below to address the conclusions from our needs assessment:

- **Raising awareness of domestic abuse and the prevalence locally**, which includes ensuring we are professionally curious, exploring potential hidden harm and under reporting of abuse in Rutland to protect and support more victims, and raising local awareness of domestic abuse to enable our community to recognise domestic abuse to support a change in attitude.
- **Safeguarding people at risk and providing support for victims and survivors by working more effectively with agencies** to ensure we listen to the voice of victims and survivors that enables the shaping of services and support, to meet local need, and ensuring victims have the confidence to report incidents of domestic abuse, including young people who in their own relationships can become victims of domestic abuse.
- **Changing behaviours of perpetrators and preventing reoffending** by providing effective perpetrator management programmes, to enable victims and children to remain living in their homes and communities, reducing disruption and trauma.
- **Ensuring all agencies/partners work together to provide a multi-agency response to tackling domestic abuse**
- **Providing support for victim and survivors in relevant safe accommodation** by providing specific targeted support for victims of domestic abuse that empowers victims and builds confidence, develops resilience and independence, and increases safety.

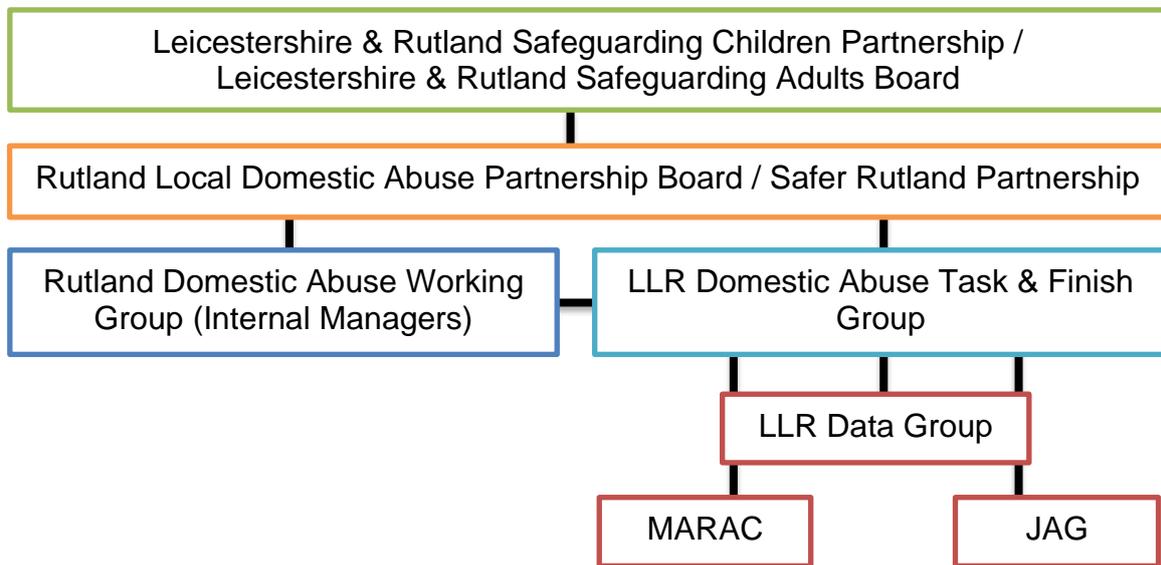
An action plan will be developed alongside this strategy which details how these priorities will be met and will focus on short and long-term actions.

## Domestic Abuse Governance in Rutland

In order to exercise its functions under section 57 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, all relevant local authorities in England must appoint a section 58 Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

Rutland's Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (LDAPB) incorporated within the Safer Rutland Partnership (SRP), has overall responsibility for the oversight of domestic abuse in Rutland including support within Safe Accommodation for victim-survivors and their children, and for the implementation and monitoring of the effectiveness of this strategy and action plan. The LDAPB / SRP meets each quarter and is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure, Highways, Transportation & Road Safety and attended by the Strategic Lead for Domestic Abuse (Strategic Director Children and Families).

Rutland is joined up with Leicester and Leicestershire in many of its functions and service delivery to include the delivery of specialist domestic abuse services and our additional local governance groups consist of the following:



## What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse is common but often hidden and therefore can be difficult to quantify. Anyone can be affected, regardless of their gender, age or race.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales year ending March 2020, reported an estimated 5.5% of adults aged 16 to 74 years (2.3 million) experienced domestic abuse in the last year. There was no significant change in the prevalence of domestic abuse experiences in the last year compared with the year ending March 2019, however the police recorded a total of 1,288,018 domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes in England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police)<sup>2</sup> in the year ending March 2020, suggesting that more victims are reporting to the police, as well as better recording of crime by the police.

Domestic abuse is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality, with women disproportionately reported as victims. Women are more likely to experience repeat victimisation, being physically injured or killed as result of domestic abuse and experience non-physical abuse (including emotional and financial abuse), than men.

Domestic abuse as defined by the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021 is abusive behaviour of a person towards another when each are over the age of 16 years and are personally connected to each other. Personally connected refers to two people if the following applies:

- They are or have been married to each other
- They are or have been civil partners to each other
- They have agreed to marry one another
- They have entered into a civil partnership agreement
- They are or have been in an intimate relationship with each other
- They each have or there has been a time when they each have had a parental relationship to the same child, under 18 years (parent of a child or parental responsibility for a child)
- They are relatives

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of their gender, their age, their ethnicity, their socio-economic status, their sexuality, or their background. It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct, and a victim of domestic abuse may experience the following:

### Physical abuse

Physical abuse, and violent or threatening behaviour, are forms of abusive behaviour, and can include being kicked, punched, scalded, poisoned, being denied access to medical treatment or equipment and this causing harm, and violence against pets.

### Sexual abuse

Many victims of domestic abuse experience behaviour that is sexually abusive in relationships, including rape, being pressured into having sex or doing a sexual act, being pressured into having unsafe sex, being forced to being involved in or watching pornography, and being hurt during sex.

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics, 'Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2020' [Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/domesticabuseprevalenceandtrends)

### **Controlling or coercive behaviour**

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent, and coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation. This can include control or monitoring someone's daily activities, isolating someone from their friends or family, withholding medication or treatment, using children as a form of control, including parental alienation and manipulation, and making threats to expose sensitive information.

### **Emotional and psychological abuse**

Domestic abuse often involves emotional or psychological abuse, and can include manipulation of a person's anxieties or beliefs, withholding affection, turning children and friends against the victim, stopping someone from seeing friends or relatives, and being insulted, including in front of others and about race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, faith, ability to parent and ability to work.

### **Economic abuse**

Economic abuse includes any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on an individual's ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or to obtain goods or services. This can include an individual's ability to acquire food, clothes, transportation, and utilities. Economic abuse can also constitute controlling or coercive behaviour.

### **Verbal abuse**

Examples of verbal abuse include repeated yelling and shouting, verbal humiliation either in private or in company, being laughed at and made fun of, insults and threats, and mocking someone about their disability, gender, sexual orientation, physical appearance etc.

### **Online and digital abuse**

Perpetrators can use technology and social media as a means of controlling or coercing victims. This happens frequently both during and after relationships with abusers and can include placing false or malicious information about a victim on their or others social media, being trolled, non-consensual distribution of private sexual photographs and films, hacking into, monitoring, or controlling email accounts, social media profiles and phone calls, using GPS locators on items such as phones and computers, and use of hidden cameras.

## The Power and Control Wheel

The power and control wheel<sup>3</sup> illustrates the common themes and experiences of victims of abuse, as well as the tactics used by perpetrators.

It is important to note that the model below generally applies to women experiencing abuse by men in intimate partner relationships. However, the same means of abuse are used by perpetrators of either gender, in same sex relationships and in family abuse; the difference will be on how much they rely on any one form of abuse to gain power and control within their circumstances.



<sup>3</sup> [Wheels - Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs \(theduluthmodel.org\)](http://theduluthmodel.org)

## The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

### The aim of the 2021 Act is to:

- To raise awareness and understanding about the devastating impact of domestic abuse on victims and their families.
- Further improve the effectiveness of the justice system in providing protection for victims of domestic abuse and bringing perpetrators to justice.
- Strengthen the support for victims of abuse by statutory agencies.

### The act will:

- Create a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, controlling or coercive, and economic abuse
- Establish in law the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner and set out the Commissioner's functions and powers
- Provide for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order
- **Place a duty on local authorities in England to provide accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation**
- Prohibit perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in the civil and family courts in England and Wales.
- Create a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts.
- Clarify the circumstances in which a court may make a barring order under section 91(14) of the Children Act 1989 to prevent family proceedings that can further traumatise victims.
- Extend the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse.
- Extend the offence of disclosing private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress (known as the "revenge porn" offence) to cover threats to disclose such material
- Create a new offence of non-fatal strangulation or suffocation of another person.
- Clarify by restating in statute law the general proposition that a person may not consent to the infliction of serious harm and, by extension, is unable to consent to their own death.
- Extend the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to further violent and sexual offences.
- Provide for a statutory domestic abuse perpetrator strategy.
- Enable domestic abuse offenders to be subject to polygraph testing as a condition of their licence following their release from custody.
- Place the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme ("Clare's law") on a statutory footing.
- Provide that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance.
- Ensure that where a local authority, for reasons connected with domestic abuse, grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an assured shorthold tenancy) this must be a secure lifetime tenancy.
- Prohibit GPs and other health professionals in general practice from charging a victim of domestic abuse for a letter to support an application for legal aid.
- Provide for a statutory code of practice relating to the processing of domestic abuse data for immigration purposes.

## **Part 4 of the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act - Specific duties to provide support for victims and survivors in Safe Accommodation**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires Local Authorities to ensure victims of domestic abuse have access to the right accommodation-based support when they need it. Victims may need to live in a variety of different forms of relevant safe accommodation that may consist of the following:

- **Refuge Accommodation** - A refuge is a safe house where women and children who are experiencing domestic abuse can stay free from fear.
- **Dispersed accommodation** – Safe self-contained accommodation with the same level of specialist domestic abuse support as provided within a refuge but which may be more suitable for victims who are unable to stay in a refuge.
- **Sanctuary Schemes** – Also called Target Hardening – is a survivor centred initiative that aims to enable a victim to remain in their own home and ensure safety by the installation of additional security to the property and perimeter
- **Specialist safe accommodation** - Dedicated specialist support to victims with relevant protected characteristics and/or complex needs such as specialist refuges for Black, Asian, and racially minoritised, LGBT+, and disabled victims and their children
- **Move on and/or second stage accommodation** - accommodation temporarily housing victims, who no longer require the intensive support provided in a refuge, but still require a lower level of domestic abuse specific support before they move to fully independent and permanent accommodation. May include support accommodation schemes
- **Other** forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation – a safe place with support giving victims an opportunity to spend a temporary period of time to consider and make decisions in an environment which is self-contained and safe.

***Accommodation such as Bed and Breakfast accommodation is not considered relevant safe accommodation and specifically excluded in the Regulations.***

Part 4 of the 2021 Act details duties on relevant local authorities to assess the need for accommodation-based support and prepare strategies to provide such support for victims. The 2021 Act is clear that children of domestic abuse victims who have seen, heard, or experienced the effect of that abuse are victims in their own right. Support should be provided to any child staying with a victim in safe accommodation. The vast majority of children of victims residing in safe accommodation will also be victims in their own right.

## Domestic Abuse Support within relevant Safe Accommodation is described as:

- **Overall management of services within relevant safe accommodation** – including capacity building, support and supervision of staff, payroll, financial and day to day management of services and maintaining relationships with the local authority (such functions will often be undertaken by a service manager)
- **Support with the day-to-day running of the service** – for example scheduling times for counselling sessions, group activities (such functions may often be undertaken by administrative or office staff)
- **Advocacy support** – development of personal safety plans, liaison with other services (for example, GPs and social workers, welfare benefit providers).
- **Domestic abuse prevention advice** – support to assist victims to recognise the signs of abusive relationships, to help them remain safe (including online), and to prevent re-victimisation.
- **Specialist support for victims**
  - Designed specifically for victims with relevant protected characteristics such as faith services, translators and interpreters, immigration advice, interpreters for victims identifying as deaf and / or hard of hearing, and dedicated support for LGBTQ+ victims.
  - Designed specifically for victims with additional and / or complex needs such as, mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support, including sign posting accordingly.
- **Children's support** – including play therapy, child advocacy or a specialist children worker
- **Housing-related support** – providing housing-related advice and support, for example, securing a permanent home, rights to existing accommodation and advice on how to live safely and independently.
- **Advice service** – including financial and legal support, including accessing benefits, support into work and establishing independent financial arrangements; and,
- **Counselling and therapy** – including group support for both adults and children, including emotional support.

## Rutland Domestic Abuse Profile

In order to capture a picture of the prevalence of domestic abuse in Rutland we commissioned SafeLives, a leading charity committed to ending domestic abuse, to complete a local strategic needs assessment - **the source of the below data is the needs assessment**. Information was sought from all agencies working with victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

### Number of incidents of domestic abuse reported by all agencies in Rutland in the last three years:

2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
529	466	453

Using the SafeLives Prevalence Tool it is estimated **410** older victims have experienced domestic abuse in Rutland in the last year.

The number of child victims identified by all agencies has decreased over the 3-year period.

In relation to Homelessness identification, as of July 2021, there have been **14** victims identified since March 2021, showing a significant increase in the number of domestic abuse victims requesting homelessness assistance.

The number of high-risk domestic abuse cases heard at MARAC has decreased each year over the 3-year period, from 33 (2018-19) to 16 (2020-21) cases.

Leicestershire Police report relative stability in the number of domestic abuse related crimes and incidents reports in Rutland across the three years.

There were no domestic homicides in Rutland, in the three-year period.

### Ages of victims/survivors:

The number of **child victims** varies over the 3 years. The highest age category across all 3 years is **0-5 years**, which equates to around half of all child victims.

For **adult victims**, the age range varies across the 3 years. The highest age categories across the period are 25-34 and 35-44 years. There was also an increase year on year in the number of 18–24-year-old victims. The number of older victims has doubled from 2019-20 to 2020-21.

### Gender of victims/survivors:

The majority of victims or survivors of domestic abuse in Rutland, aged over 18, are female.

There were no male victims at high-risk of domestic abuse heard at MARAC in the three-year period. The SafeLives recommendation is 5-10% of cases heard are male victim. Around a third of victims of domestic abuse in Rutland are male. Data collected shows **123** male victims were identified by services in 2020-2021.

### Ethnicity of victims/survivors:

Across all three years White or White British is the most prevalent ethnic group. A majority of victims' ethnicity was recorded as Other. The largest portion of ethnicity that was captured was

by Children's Social Care. The table below is inclusive of Black, Asian and Racially Minoritised groups:

2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
38 – 8.72%	29 – 4.05%	33 – 7.28%

### Disability:

No victims were identified through data gathering as having a learning disability to ensure victims remain anonymous when reporting low numbers, however we know women with learning disabilities and/or autism are three times more likely to experience domestic abuse than their non-disabled peers<sup>4</sup>.

Separate data from MARAC however, for high-risk cases, shows an increase in victims with an identified disability in 2020-21.

Public Health England (2015)<sup>5</sup> report that **disabled people**:

- Experience disproportionately higher rates of domestic abuse.
- Experience domestic abuse for longer periods of time, and more severe and frequent abuse than non-disabled people.
- Encounter differing dynamics of domestic abuse, which may include more severe coercion, control or abuse from carers.

### Sexual Identity:

There is limited data related to sexual identify with the majority unknown. According to research more than one in four gay men and lesbian women and more than one in three bisexual people report at least one form of domestic abuse since the age of 16<sup>6</sup>. Whilst victims are under identified overall, they are represented at MARAC.

### Socio-economic Characteristics:

Data regarding socio-economic characteristics is very limited with the majority unknown. Limited data capture relating to socio-economic characteristics can have a significant impact on victims' ability to access appropriate services when they need them, for example:

- **Marital status:** divorce and matrimonial rights to a home
- **Family make-up:** needs of a single person and those with children
- **Income**
- **Benefits:** a victim seeking safe accommodation may experience delays in claiming benefit, resulting in arrears. In addition, the impact in the change of circumstance affecting benefits

<sup>4</sup> [Outcomes for disabled people in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

<sup>5</sup> Disability & Domestic Abuse

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/480942/Disability\\_and\\_domestic\\_abuse\\_topic\\_overview\\_FIN\\_AL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/480942/Disability_and_domestic_abuse_topic_overview_FIN_AL.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [Recognise and Respond](#): Strengthening advocacy for LGBT+ survivors of domestic abuse

Research in the UK has consistently found vulnerability to domestic abuse to be associated with low income, economic strain, and benefit receipt. It is therefore useful to consider information available that provides insights in this area. There are three wards within Rutland that account for the highest prevalence of domestic abuse, with one over twice the national average rate of prevalence.

## Local UAVA Insights Data

UAVA (United Against Violence and Abuse), commissioned by Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, provides a single point of entry to dedicated domestic abuse support (now Freeva, since April 2022).

From the UAVA report (Quarter 1 2020-21) we can evidence the following local profile for victims accessing this service:

### Most common referral routes (Rutland):

Helpline	MARAC	Other
67%	17%	17%

### Client Demographics (duplicates removed)

#### Client age (Rutland):

White British and Irish	BME
83%	17%

#### Client age (Rutland):

21-30 years	31-40 years	51-60 years	61+ years
50%	17%	17%	17%

#### Gender (all clients):

Female	Male
95%	4%

#### Sexual orientation (Rutland):

Heterosexual
100%

#### Client with children or young people involved (Rutland):

100%

### Abuse profile at intake:

The most common abuse type is jealous or controlling behaviour, following by physical abuse, harassment and stalking, and sexual abuse.

## **Conclusions of our Strategic Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment (2021)**

**Calculated using the SafeLives prevalence tool, an estimated 1690 adult victims experienced domestic abuse in the last year, with around 8% experiencing both partner and family abuse.** This is higher than identified in the needs assessment. The number of victims reported by all agencies has decreased across the 3 years, which is not unexpected with the impact of Covid-19 and subsequent restrictions, reducing the opportunity for victims to reach out for support in ways that they might have done prior to the pandemic.

- **The highest age categories across the period are 25-34 and 35-44 years.**
- **There was an increase year on year in the number of 18–24-year-old victims.**
- **Child victims under 18 years account for under 12% of all victims in 2020-21.**
- **Children 0-5 years account for around half of all child victims.**
- **There has been a decrease in reports to all agencies except for adult social care.**

Data provided around protected characteristics has been inconsistent, and in some cases difficult to analyse effectively. However, it is evident that the number of victims with protected characteristics are under identified in data collection by most agencies. This would suggest that there are a significant number of hidden victims within Rutland that are not accessing appropriate support services. Implementing a more robust and consistent approach to data collection will ensure a clearer understanding of local need and enable more effective planning and commissioning of services.

**There has also been an increasing trend with victims requesting homelessness assistance with the same number of victims seeking support in the first 4 months of the current year as there were in 2019-20.** This increase suggests that more victims may present in need of safe accommodation, which consequently may increase the need for additional support.

**There were no domestic homicides in Rutland, whilst in England and Wales there has been a dramatic increase.** This national increase highlights the potential risk to victims who are unable to escape an abusive home environment, have recently separated or are attempting to separate.

### **Safe Accommodation Provision:**

All referrals to Freeva (since April 2022, formerly UAVA) enter through a single front door commissioned by Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR), which includes referrals for Safe Accommodation.

**The number of safe accommodation (dispersal units) spaces in Rutland of 9 is at the recommended level per 10,000 population, provided through Women's Aid.** The Council of Europe<sup>7</sup> recommendation is 1 family place per 10,000 population therefore this provision is above the recommended number.

<sup>7</sup> [Final Activity Report \(coe.int\)](#)

**Referrals for Safe Accommodation are increasing. 61% of referrals to UAVA were successful in 2020-21.** The source of referrals has consistently been the Local Helpline and DA Services. The exception to this is in 2020-21 when there was one referral from Housing Services, one from the local authority and 3 Other.

**The average length of stay in Safe Accommodation across LLR ranges from 102 days to 113.** Consideration should be given to recovery support that will enable survivors to move on to suitable accommodation and free up space for higher risk victims to access. Not all victims referred for Safe Accommodation will access this for a variety of reasons to include the location of the safe accommodation which may disrupt the education of children and prevent travel to work. A further understanding of these reasons is required to ensure provision can meet the needs of victims, particularly to ensure victims can remain living safely in their own homes and communities.

No data was available regarding the ages of victims or the number of children within the dispersed accommodation or within households which have accessed the sanctuary scheme. When considering that children account for a large portion of all victims and particularly children aged 0-5 account for almost half of all child victims, a high number may also access safe accommodation.

Support for children, such as play therapy and other therapeutic support, must be available in all forms of safe accommodation including Sanctuary Schemes/Target Hardening. Support for victims as Parents must also be available.

It is also fundamental that support is received from statutory services such as midwifery, health visitors and school nurse whilst victims are within relevant safe accommodation.

## **Our Domestic Abuse Priorities for 2021 – 2024**

A delivery plan, responding to the conclusions of the needs assessment will be developed which details how the objectives within this strategy will be met and will focus on the short and long-term actions identified, and address any identified gaps in relation to the new duties.

### **1. Raising awareness of domestic abuse and the prevalence locally**

- Ensuring professional curiosity to explore hidden harm and potential under reporting of abuse in Rutland to protect and support more victims.
- Awareness raising campaigns in order that our community recognises domestic abuse to support a change in attitude.

### **2. Safeguarding people at risk and providing support for victims and survivors**

- Work more effectively with agencies to ensure we listen to the voice of victims and survivors that enables the shaping of services and support, to meet local need.
- Victims will have the confidence to report incidents of domestic abuse and receive the right support from relevant agencies.
- Recognising that young people in their own relationships can become victims of domestic abuse to ensure they receive the right support early.

### **3. Changing behaviours of perpetrators and preventing reoffending**

- Consideration given to perpetrator management programmes, which could enable victims and children to remain in their homes and communities, reducing disruption and trauma already experienced.

### **4. Ensuring all agencies/partners work together to provide a multi-agency response to tackling domestic abuse**

### **5. Support for victim and survivors in relevant safe accommodation**

- Providing specific targeted support for victims of domestic abuse that empowers victims and builds confidence, develops resilience and independence, and increases safety.

## **What we are already doing to support victims of domestic abuse in Rutland and any gaps in relation to the new duties:**

We have recently jointly re-commissioned our domestic abuse service across LLR and there will be increased oversight of this contract to ensure effective monitoring of the support offered and outcomes achieved for victims. **Links to priorities 1, 2, 4 and 5.**

### **Adult Social Care**

The link to the Safeguarding Adults Board procedures details the duties and responsibilities of all agencies across LLR relating to domestic abuse, violence and coercive control.

<https://www.llradultsafeguarding.co.uk/domestic-abuse-violence-and-coercive-control/?hilite=%27domestic%27%2C%27abuse%27>

### **Children's Social Care**

All referrals for domestic abuse go through Freeva (since April 2022, formerly UAVA), and MARAC is utilised to coordinate and facilitate a multi-agency safety plan for critical cases. A safety plan is developed by children's social care with the child in a way that they understand. In responding to concerns around domestic abuse, we help children and young people distinguish between healthy and abusive behaviours. Children's social care always seeks to engage the perpetrator where it is possible to do so, we assess the risk and put safety first when engaging with perpetrators.

An area of focus in relation to the new duties is to ensure that we strengthen our offer to children and ensure that they have access to support services specific to domestic abuse. **Links to priority 2, 4 and 5.**

### **Community Safety**

There is a need for increased awareness of domestic abuse within all of our communities, particularly ensuring the signs of abuse are understood where there are concerns for potential hidden abuse. **Links to priority 1.**

Perpetrator Programme - The Safer Rutland Partnership is the beneficiary of the Partnership Locality Fund that currently funds the Changing Behaviour of Perpetrators programme. **Links to priority 3.**

Sanctuary Scheme - 24/7 Locks commissioned service partner to undertake works. Some victims in need of sanctuary support do not report these matters for an array of reasons and lose out on some of the benefits of this sanctuary scheme support. **Links to priority 5.**

### **Housing Options**

Housing has always and continues to manage domestic abuse in line with the new Act.

There is a fully established MARAC process for LLR and housing options plays an active role in this. **Links to priority 4.**

The gaps in relation to housing are out of area referrals where local authorities do not always accept the referral and often state there is no local connection. This is particularly challenging for service families and also in relation to refuge accommodation and the lack of commissioned accommodation for Rutland for emergency housing. **Links to priority 5.**

### **Impact Monitoring and Measuring – How will we know we have made a difference?**

- More victims / survivors of domestic abuse will report incidents of domestic abuse to the Police and access specialist Domestic Abuse Services
- Repeat victimisation will reduce
- More people who need it will be able to access safe accommodation and support
- Children and young people will receive support early to minimise their experiences of trauma
- The voices of victims and survivors will be heard and will tell us they feel safe and receive effective support
- Where possible, victims will be supported to remain living in their own homes in safety.

## Domestic Abuse Support

### Freeva (Free from violence and abuse) \*

Freeva is a registered charity working towards reducing domestic violence, rape and sexual assault in Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland. Their vision is to aspire to live in a society where everyone is free from violence and abuse.

Helpline - **0808 80 200 28**.

The Helpline is open 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am – 4pm on weekends and bank holidays. This is a free number from mobiles, landlines and payphones. This number is hidden on telephone bills.

<https://www.freeva.org.uk/>

**In an emergency, always dial 999.**

\* Dedicated domestic abuse support commissioned by Rutland County Council

### National Domestic Abuse Helpline

The free 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline National Helpline, provided by Refuge, is available in confidence 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

0808 2000 247

[www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk) and [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

### Family Action

Family Action works to tackle some of the most complex and difficult issues facing families today – including financial hardship, mental health problems, social isolation, learning disabilities, domestic abuse, or substance misuse and alcohol problems.

020 7254 6251 / [info@family-action.org.uk](mailto:info@family-action.org.uk)

[www.family-action.org.uk](http://www.family-action.org.uk)

### ManKind

Mankind support men suffering from domestic abuse. This can range from actual violence or object throwing to mental abuse such as constant bullying or constant insults. Confidential helpline is available for male victims of domestic abuse and male victims of domestic violence across the UK.

Confidential helpline for male victims of domestic abuse and domestic violence.

01823 334244 / Monday - Friday 10am - 4pm

[www.mankind.org.uk](http://www.mankind.org.uk)



## **Respect - Men's Advice Line**

Men's Advice Line is a confidential helpline, email and webchat service for male victims of domestic abuse.

We offer advice and emotional support to men who experience abuse, and signpost to other vital services that help men keep themselves (and their children) safe.

Freephone 0808 8010327 / Monday – Friday 10am – 8pm

Email support [info@mensadvice.org.uk](mailto:info@mensadvice.org.uk) / Monday – Friday 9am – 8pm.

Calls are free from landlines, mobiles and BT payphones within the UK. Calls will not show on phone bills.

[www.mensadvice.org.uk](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk)

## **Citizen's Advice Rutland**

The Citizens Advice Service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination

The service aims to provide the advice people need for the problems they face, to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives. We provide quality information, advice and representation by face-to-face, telephone, email, web-based information system, home visit and outreach service.

01572 723494

<http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/rutland/>

A large print version of this document is available on request



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