



Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse
Strategic Board

Oxfordshire's Domestic Abuse Strategic Board Annual Report 2023/2024



Oxfordshire Partners

I Am Lisa Ward Ltd.



HM Prison &
Probation Service



Reducing
the Risk
of Domestic Abuse



Oxford Against Cutting
Protecting Girls & Women



Support for Young People
Affected by Crime



Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust



Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire
and Berkshire West
Integrated Care System



Oxford Health
NHS Foundation Trust



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL



DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE



Vale
of White Horse
District Council



OXFORD
CITY
COUNCIL



South Oxfordshire
District Council



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Introduction and Board Overview

Chair's Foreword

Domestic Abuse can affect anyone and has a devastating effect on the lives of those affected. Delivering the intentions of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the aim of the Oxfordshire domestic abuse strategic board has been to ensure help and support is available to anyone who needs it, no matter their gender, age, ethnicity or other factors which determine their ability to access services. Everyone should be able to live a life free from abuse, feeling safe and thriving in their community.

It has been a privilege to lead our system wide partnership board to deliver on key strategic objectives set out in the [Oxfordshire Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy](#) and the accompanying [Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy](#).

The strategic board are now truly in the delivery phase of the strategy, working closely with partners to progress actions that will make it easier for those in need to access inclusive domestic abuse services.

We have taken a true partnership approach to ensuring safe accommodation is accessible and the pathway around it is accessible to those who need it. The safe accommodation strategy is undergoing a refresh which will be published at the end of 2024.

Together we have worked closely with our Lived Experience colleagues to co-produce a set of actions that are delivered through a series of board task and finish groups.

We've engaged with local employers and members of the public to promote our commissioned training and upskill professionals, so they have a strong toolkit to approach conversations concerning domestic abuse.

We are also working through our system wide processes for high risk victims, reviewing the [MARAC](#) process to make it more effective for victim survivors.

Significant progress has been made to understand the profile of Domestic Abuse in Oxfordshire, through the development of a quarterly data surveillance pack, helping to identify emerging areas of need, and understand the impact of changing pathways. This has been complemented by a recent compressive Oxfordshire survey around domestic abuse in the LGBTQIA+ community and a deep dive into the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people. The outcomes of these will be seen over the next year.

We are piloting an evidence-based perpetrator service [DRIVE](#), focusing on reducing repeat occurrences of abuse.

Whilst good progress has been made, we know there is more to do. We are confident that we have the foundations and mechanisms in place to drive partnership activity, to both prevent and address the impact of Domestic Abuse in Oxfordshire to make it a safer place for victims-survivors and their families.

Kate Holburn
Chair
Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board

Lived Experience Advisory Group

The voices of those with lived experience of Domestic Abuse are crucial to ensuring systems wide change and ensuring the best possible outcomes for victim-survivors.

The past year has seen the engagement with Oxfordshire's Domestic Abuse Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) increase rapidly, with representation at all the strategic partnership meetings.

Group membership numbers have risen as more people become aware of the LEAG, and the diversity of those in the space is also improving. The longer-term vision is that this group continues to become more intersectional, as momentum builds.

Colleagues across the sector frequently highlight how valuable this engagement is, and we know that this type of work also has benefits for individuals' recoveries too, enabling people to see themselves as something more than their experience of Domestic Abuse, with valuable skills and insights.

As one member stated: ***"Just by being a member I feel like my voice and my experiences matter, like my survival makes a difference to someone other than myself."***

Key highlights this year have included the voices of this group informing the communications campaign in October 2023 which was seen across libraries in the county.

This ensured that information was presented in a way which resonated with victim-survivors. The work of the LEAG was also presented at a Domestic Abuse Commissioners (DAC) meeting and at the South- East Public Health Conference 2024 in London.

Here we were able to outline our approach, which is grounded in having a fully independent structure, in order to ensure that the groups voices remain independent of services and commissioners.

Experiences of domestic abuse were also presented at a conference, celebrating local best practice. Here the group and other victim-survivors were able to impart information about what good service delivery looks like, as well as views on improvements needed.

Though local provision remains a challenge, with the need for support outweighing the resource available, the continued ability to develop and learn from the voices of victim-survivors is evident. This can be seen by the assurance that the voices of children and young people will become a greater priority in forward plans, with commissioning embedding this as a requirement.

This can also be seen in the push to ensure the voices of those often 'easy to ignore' are amplified, with a specific focus on LGBTQIA+ survivors recently. This has evidenced clear gaps in services knowledge of how domestic abuse and sexuality/gender intersect, and also gaps in knowledge from members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

It is a real privilege to be the link between those with lived experience, and local partners and to be able to help people connect the dots to ensure that locally domestic abuse is prevented where possible, and that the right support is in place when it does occur.

Lisa Ward
Lived Experience Advisory Group

Key achievements on a page

- Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (ODAS) & Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service (IDVA) services working with partners to ensure effective service pathway. Provision and integration of child play therapy at the refuge
- Safe Accommodation pathway - supporting “move on”
- Review of MARAC process, showing good practice and highlighting potential emerging needs
- Operation Encompass review facilitating the link between Thames Valley Police, MASH and education partners
- Partnership engagement in campaigns – Clare’s Law, DA awareness
- Co-ordination of an Oxfordshire LGBTQIA+ survey and report
- Improving access and support in for all populations: eg Asylum Welcome, (specialist training re Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse concession), DA champions training to military, accessibility in rural communities
- DRIVE perpetrator programme pilot through TV Police And Crime Commissioner

Enablers

- Well attended quarterly multi agency partnership board meetings
- Co-production with people with lived experience across strategic actions
- Mobilisation of board task and finish delivery groups
- Creation of data surveillance pack identifying key trends / highlighting needs in domestic abuse – including a CYP deepdive



Strategic and local context

- The 2021 Domestic Abuse Act confers statutory duties to tier one local authorities.
- The Domestic Abuse Strategic Board is a system wide partnership group responsible for providing strategic leadership for Domestic Abuse in Oxfordshire to deliver these duties.
- This report details successful outcomes undertaken by the board to deliver on the aims set out in the [Overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy](#) and the [Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy](#) under the four pillars, Prevention, Provision Pursuing and Partnership, more about these priorities are detailed on the next slide.



Domestic Homicide Reviews

- DHRs are a statutory responsibility of the district Community Safety Partnerships, reporting to the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership
- The board maintains oversight of live DHRs in Oxfordshire
- Summaries of completed DHRs come the board. The board heard two summaries in 2023/2024.
- The board seek assurance from CSPs that learnings are embedded in various agencies

Priorities



1. PREVENTION

Preventing domestic abuse from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviour which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it.



2. PROVISION

Providing high quality, joined-up support for victims-survivors where domestic abuse does occur.



3. PURSUING

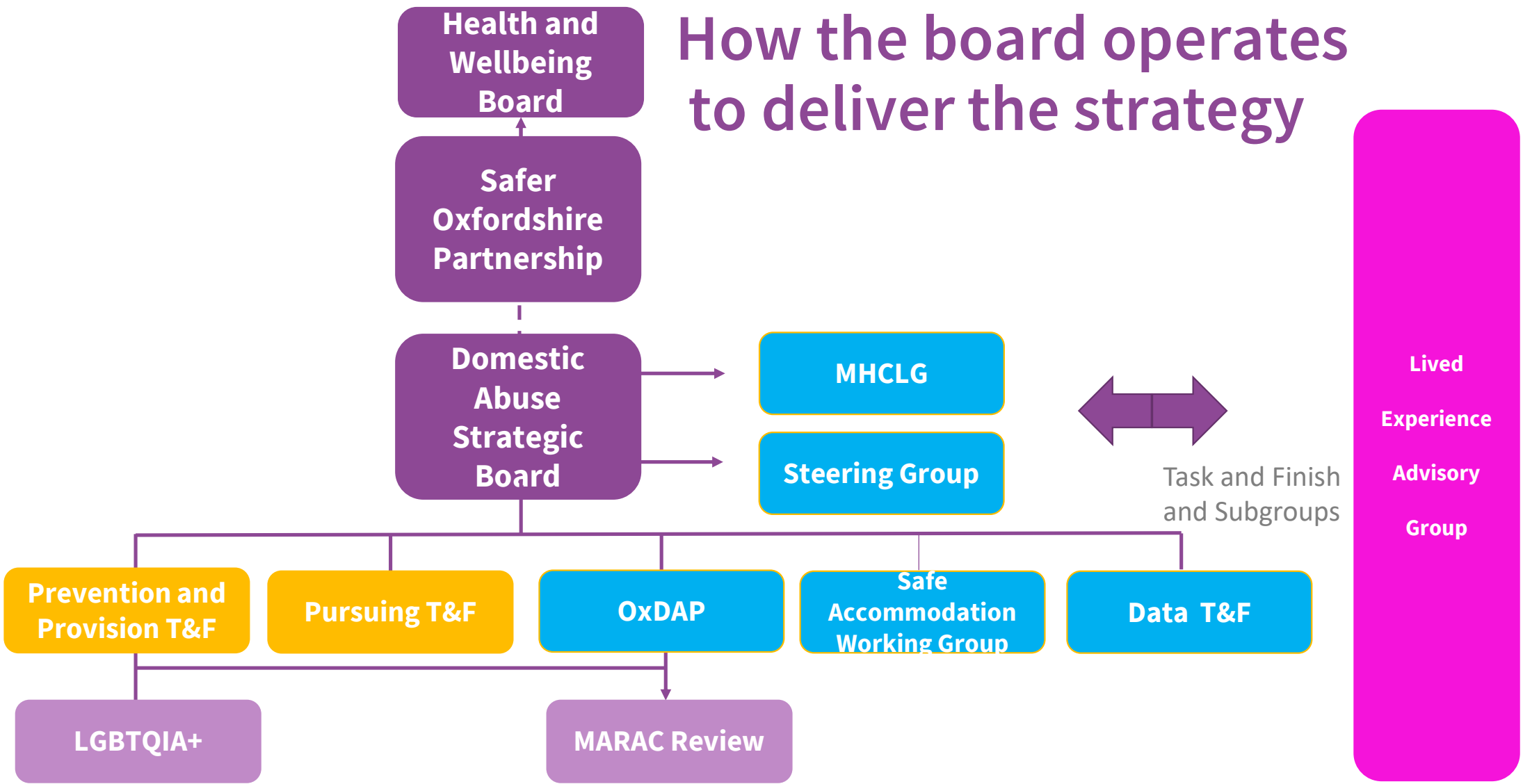
Taking action to reduce the harm to victims-survivors of abuse by ensuring that perpetrators are held to account and provided with opportunities for change in a way that maximises safety.



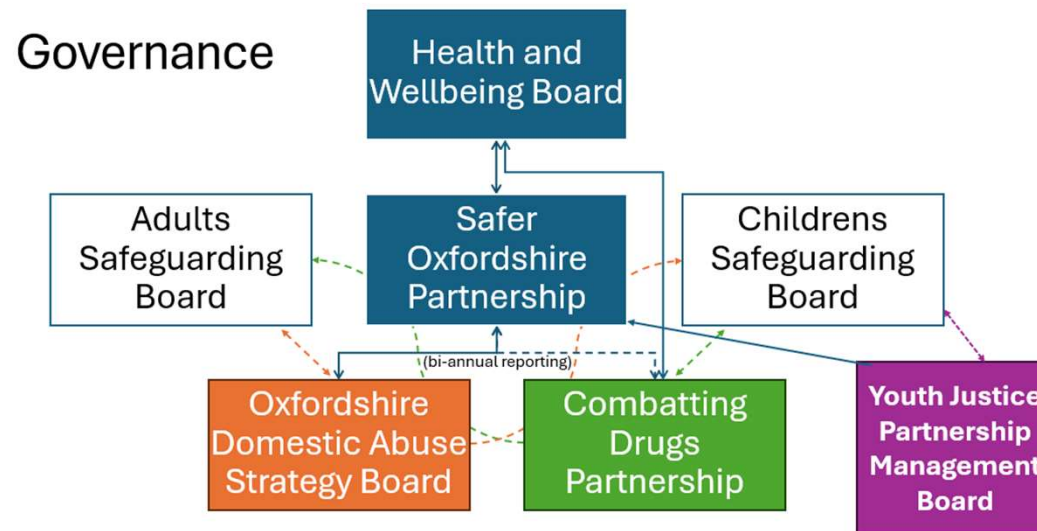
4. PARTNERSHIP

Working in partnership to obtain the best outcome for victims-survivors, children and their families.

How the board operates to deliver the strategy



Partnership geography (governance)





How the board have delivered on our priorities



1. PREVENTION

Preventing domestic abuse from happening by challenging the attitudes and behavior which foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it.

Outcomes from prevention work

Communication

- Improved the current web offering by creating dedicated webspace for professionals and members of the public. A scoping exercise is underway to explore options for further web improvements to increase engagement, enhance functionality and improve user experience.
- Created a short animation video outlining the four pillars of the strategy and how it will be delivered.
- An October DA awareness month campaign was coproduced with LEAG & internal stakeholders. 4 themes were selected for promotion in 42 libraries across the county with fresh content promoted weekly.
- Lived Experience partners coordinated a calendar of partnership activities
- A Clare's Law and Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service poster campaign was distributed in libraries, council buildings and across the community to raise the profile of Domestic Abuse.

Training

- Oxfordshire's domestic abuse champions programme, led by [Adolescent Safeguarding Consultancy](#), is a space where anyone who supports families affected by domestic abuse in either a professional or voluntary role can connect, be inspired and learn. The board actively share ideas on how to promote training across a range of agencies to increase sign up. There is a growing network of 71 DA champions.
- Oxfordshire's commissioned training provider, [Social Led](#) offers [domestic abuse training](#) covering of Domestic Abuse related topics.

Outcomes from prevention work

Work Place Settings

- Reviewed county council Domestic Abuse Policy and created repository of partnership polices to share best practice.
- Published a refreshed Domestic Abuse Policy at County Council with internal comms campaign to raise staff awareness of domestic abuse. The policy was coproduced with Lived Experience partners, internal and external stakeholders.

Education Settings

- The prevention and provision subgroup contributed to a Thames Valley Police review of Operation Encompass, facilitating the link between Thames Valley Police, MASH and education partners. This has resulted in 1000 schools reconfirming or providing email addresses to support the project.
- [SAFE! PACT](#) and Thames Valley Police co-presented at the Education in Safeguarding Conference, spreading awareness of Domestic Abuse key messages and services which can be disseminated to primary and secondary schools.



2. PROVISION

Providing high quality, joined-up support for victims-survivors where domestic abuse does occur.

Outcomes from provision work

Commissioning

- The board works with our commissioned service providers who deliver joined up support for victim-survivors of domestic abuse:
- Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service ([ODAS](#))-provided by a2dominion offer practical support for all victims of domestic abuse, including children and young people.
- The Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service (IDVA)-provided by [Reducing the Risk](#) offer support for high-risk victims of domestic abuse.
- The [Lived Experience Advisory Group](#) ensure effective representation of people with lived experience, including children and young people, in service design and delivery.

Children and Young People

- SAFE! hosted a Children and Young People Event in partnership with our Lived Experience colleagues to ensure Children and Young People's views are represented in strategy, service delivery and development.
- SAFE! are delivering specialist support to children in refuge through weekly groups.

Outcomes from provision work

LGBTQIA+

- A multi agency working group, reporting to the board via the Prevention and Provision task and finish group, conducted a wide reaching LGBTQIA+ survey to explore barriers LGBTQIA+ community accessing Domestic Abuse services. Recommendations will be made to the Strategic Board in September.

Marginalised Communities

- DA Champions training is being delivered by commissioned trainer to military personnel based in Brize Norton.
- We work with community groups and partner organisations to improve accessibility to domestic abuse services within rural communities.
- Colleagues have worked with our domestic abuse service provider ODAS and Asylum Welcome to ensure the application of Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse concession help to victims with No Recourse to Public Funds.

Outcomes from safe accommodation work

Overview

- The Safe Accommodation Working Group drive the delivery of the Safe Accommodation Strategy, which outlines how we will implement the statutory duties associated with the provision of safe accommodation, as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- The Safe Accommodation Working Group have a stable and committed membership that includes representation of those with Lived Experience, commissioned providers, district and city partners, police and health agencies.
- Relationships forged through the SAWG have enabled smoother move on processes within the county.

Achievements and Strategy Refresh

- The SAWG hosted a partnership event attended by district and city councils and safe accommodation providers across the county. The event was an opportunity to raise awareness of roles and improve relationships between providers and local authority colleagues.
- The Safe Accommodation strategy is undergoing a refresh, due to be published by the end of 2024.
- Commissioned safe accommodation delivers provision for trauma informed therapeutic support for Children and Adults



3. PURSUING

Taking action to reduce the harm to victims-survivors of abuse by ensuring that perpetrators are held to account and provided with opportunities for change in a way that maximises safety.

Outcomes from pursuing work

MARAC

- The pursuing task and finish group are currently reviewing the [MARAC](#) processes in Oxfordshire. A number of measures are being taken improve local processes further to surveying the strategic board on the annual report. Emerging areas of need have been highlighted for further investigation.

Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme

- The pursuing task and finish group are working with TVP to have oversight and awareness of ongoing reviews regarding the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme.

Outcomes from pursuing work

Courts

- [Hope After Harm](#) attended the pursuing task and finish group to share lived experience in the family court system with a view to identifying pain points and working with partners to improve the system.

Perpetrators

- [The Thames Valley DRIVE project](#), currently being piloted, is taking a collaborative approach to tackling domestic abuse by working with police officers, support workers, case workers and those presenting challenging behaviours. This project is supported by funding from Oxfordshire's MHCLG grant.



4. PARTNERSHIP

Working in partnership to obtain the best outcome for victims-survivors, children and their families.

Outcomes from partnership work

Meetings

- Functions of the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategic Board and Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (OxDAP) were reviewed.
- The board continued to develop strategic action plans.
- Task and Finish groups, chaired by multi agency partners were mobilised to deliver strategic action plans.
- OxDAP recognised as a forum for providers to share operational intelligence and feed into board activity where required. OxDAP has been renamed as Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Forum, OxDAF, to reflect.

Data

- Multi agency data task and finish group formed
- Surveillance data presented at quarterly board
- Deep dives are commencing into particular areas of concern after reviewing data. The first and current deep dive is investigating Domestic Abuse and Children and Young people to identify gaps in service provision.

Outcomes from partnership work

Lived Experience

- Greater engagement with Children and Young People with engagement at Children in Care Council Events
- Engagement in a countywide campaign with awareness posters placed in all libraries in the county using words provided by the LEAG
- Representation across all Strategic Board Sub Groups ensures the voices of those with lived experience are heard at every opportunity
- Showcasing the work of the LEAG and it's set up through the Domestic Abuse Commissioners office

Conference

- We delivered the first domestic abuse partnership conference, a celebration of good practice in Domestic Abuse services in Oxfordshire. The conference welcomed more than 50 multiagency partners. This was a new opportunity for collaboration across different sectors nationally and locally, to share good practice, learn about changes in service provision and take away key learnings from adults and young people with lived experience. The feedback was largely positive and encouraged us to host our next annual conference in January 2025.



Data

Domestic Abuse in Oxfordshire - in numbers

- All types of domestic abuse are under-reported and also often under-recorded across all services
- It is predicted that the police data is only the 'tip of the iceberg'

ADULT VICTIMS

7,977



Police recorded number of victims of domestic abuse in Oxfordshire aged 16 years and over

Year ending December 2023. Rate varies by district – Cherwell the highest and South Oxfordshire the lowest.



68%

victims were female

PERPETRATORS

7,187



Police recorded number of perpetrators of domestic abuse in Oxfordshire aged 16 years and over

Year ending December 2023. Rate varies by district – Cherwell the highest and South Oxfordshire the lowest.



69%

perpetrators were male

CHILD VICTIMS

3,907



Police recorded domestic abuse crimes involving children in Oxfordshire in 2023/24

Varies by district – Oxford the highest and South Oxfordshire the lowest.



~26,700

Estimated number of adult victims of domestic abuse in Oxfordshire

Based on national prevalence of 4.4% (Crime Survey for Eng & Wales 2022/23)



Specific groups are at an increased risk

These include BAME, those with long term illness or disability, LGBT+, those with mental health needs and/or substance misuse, pregnancy and older adults. There is currently limited local data collected on these specific groups.



~29,900

Estimated number of children in Oxfordshire who may have experienced or witnessed domestic abuse in their childhood

Based on national prevalence of 20% (SafeLives estimate)
No official national statistics are collected on the number of children who are victims of domestic abuse.



Future Priorities

Priorities for 24 / 25

- Publishing refreshed strategy for Safe Accommodation
- Whole System Pathway Mapping Exercise
- Improving web offer and continuing to promote service provision and training and raising awareness
- Link with mental health and complex needs explored
- Use data to improve understanding into the effect of domestic abuse on children and young people, and take action based on learnings
- Develop Perpetrator Pathways