

WIRRAL DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY 2026-2029



FOREWORD

If you are reading this because you have experienced domestic abuse, we want you to know one thing above all else: **you are not alone.**

Domestic abuse causes serious harm, both physically and mentally to the victims and survivor, as well as those around them. It can affect how safe you feel in your own home, your finances, your health, your confidence, and your relationships. You may still be living with abuse, you may have left, or you may not yet be sure what you want or need to do next. Wherever you are on that journey, your experiences matter, and they have shaped this strategy.

If you are a person who has caused harm, there is support available for you to change.

Domestic abuse takes many forms - including control, fear, economic abuse, emotional harm and violence- it affects adults, children and their friends and families in different ways.

This strategy recognises that some people have children and some do not, and that everyone deserves support, safety and dignity regardless of their circumstances.

It also recognises that leaving an abusive relationship is not always immediate, straightforward or safe, and that recovery takes time.

We want Wirral to be a place where:

- **You are believed**
- **You are treated with respect and compassion**
- **You do not have to navigate services alone**
- **You are supported to be safe in ways that work for you**
- **The responsibility for abuse is placed on the person who caused it**

This strategy commits to improving how organisations collaboratively work together so that support is easier to access, responses are more consistent, and help is available wherever you first reach out – whether that is to a specialist domestic abuse service, a housing officer, a GP, a school, a hairdresser, a community organisation or someone else you trust.

You do not need to be in crisis to ask for help. You do not need to be sure what you want to do. Simply reaching out for information or support does not commit you to any particular decision. It is about giving you choices, understanding your options, and putting your safety and wellbeing first.

If there is one message we want you to take from this strategy, it is this:

You deserve to feel safe. You deserve support. And there are people and services in Wirral who are here to stand alongside you.

A REFLECTION ON DOMESTIC ABUSE – NO EXCUSE 2020-2025

The previous Wirral Domestic Abuse Strategy, *Domestic Abuse – No Excuse*, established a strong foundation by acknowledging it was time for change, and time to listen. It increased awareness across the partnership, strengthened multi-agency working, and improved access to specialist support for victims.

A REFLECTION ON DOMESTIC ABUSE – NO EXCUSE 2020-2025

Learning from delivery, Domestic Homicide Reviews, practitioner reflection and national developments has highlighted areas where Wirral must now go further. Previous responses were weighted towards intervention once harm had escalated, with less emphasis on early prevention, housing stability, economic harm, consistent perpetrator management and universal system capability. Support pathways were sometimes fragmented, particularly for adults without children and victims experiencing economic abuse or housing insecurity.

Since the publication of *Domestic Abuse – No Excuse*, expectations have changed significantly. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 strengthened statutory duties, especially around safe accommodation, and national best practice increasingly emphasises a collaborative, place-based and early-help-led approaches. Locally, Wirral's Family Help transformation and the maturity of partnership working provide a clear opportunity to embed domestic abuse responses more deeply into everyday practice.

A REFLECTION ON DOMESTIC ABUSE – NO EXCUSE 2020–2025

This strategy builds on previous strengths while setting a clear direction: from awareness to **early action**; from fragmented responses to a **coordinated system**; and from crisis response alone to **prevention, housing stability, perpetrator accountability and recovery**.

For organisations

This strategy covers the period **2026–2029** and applies to all statutory, voluntary, community and faith sector partners across Wirral. It provides a shared framework for preventing domestic abuse, protecting victims and children, supporting adults without children, holding perpetrators to account, and enabling change. When referring to ‘Wirral’ throughout this strategy, we are referring to the Wirral Domestic Abuse Alliance.

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VISION AND PRINCIPLES

Wirral's vision is to be a place where domestic abuse is identified early, responded to consistently and challenged robustly. Victims and survivors – adults and children – will be supported to be safe, secure and able to recover, and perpetrators will be held accountable for their behaviour, and supported with interventions which will enable them to stop.

This strategy is underpinned by shared principles:

- **Domestic abuse is everyone's business**
- **Responsibility for abuse lies with the perpetrator**
- **Safety, dignity and choices for victims are paramount**
- **Children experiencing domestic abuse are victims in their own right**
- **Adults experiencing abuse, with or without children, are entitled to protection and support**
- **Trauma-informed, housing-aware practice improves outcomes**
- **Early intervention and housing stability prevent escalation and long-term harm**

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO DOMESTIC ABUSE IN WIRRAL

Domestic abuse affects people at every stage of life and often presents through housing instability, financial difficulty, health concerns, education settings, employment issues or community safety incidents. A strong response therefore depends on all agencies working together.

Wirral's collaborative approach aligns Family Help, safeguarding, police, probation, health, schools, housing providers and specialist domestic abuse services around shared accountability. MARAC, MATAC, housing pathways and early help routes operate as connected components of the same system.

A key system strength is the **Wirral Domestic Abuse Alliance**, which brings together organisations from across Wirral.

Wirral's Domestic Abuse Alliance will deliver this strategy by operating as a coordinated system rather than a collection of individual services. Domestic abuse will be treated as a shared responsibility across safeguarding, Family Help, housing, health, education, community safety and criminal justice, rather than being owned by any one part of the partnership.

In practice, this means that domestic abuse will be a standing consideration within key governance forums, including the Community Safety Partnership, Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Safeguarding Adults Board.

Learning, data and intelligence will be routinely shared across these arrangements so that risks, patterns and gaps are identified early and responded to consistently. Delivery will be monitored collectively, with an emphasis on joint accountability rather than siloed performance.

The Wirral Domestic Abuse Alliance will act as the core delivery and linkage mechanism within this system. It will ensure that strategic decisions are shaped by frontline experience and survivor voice, and that specialist domestic abuse expertise informs policy, workforce development, commissioning and practice improvement across all partners.

WORK TO SUPPORT THE STRATEGY

A series of co-produced workshops with the Domestic Abuse Alliance, alongside extensive public health-led qualitative insight work, and the production of a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, has played a central role in shaping the Domestic Abuse Strategy.

These workshops and engagement activities gathered rich lived-experience evidence from survivors and victims, as well as perspectives from people who use abusive behaviours, frontline practitioners, and partner organisations across statutory and voluntary sectors.

This insight highlighted key barriers to access, gaps in support, and opportunities for earlier intervention, safer responses, and more trauma-informed practice.

KEY DELIVERABLES | 2026–2029

PERPETRATOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND MATAAC

Strengthen MATAAC governance; align MATAAC, MARAC, housing and Family Help; use enforcement, civil and housing powers consistently. Use the full powers of the criminal justice act and legislation to address offending.

Outcome: reduced repeat abuse and improved perpetrator management.

ECONOMIC ABUSE

Embed the Economic Abuse Checklist; link housing and financial support pathways; strengthen accountability for economic harm.

Outcome: increased identification and response to economic abuse. increased financial and housing stability.

UNIVERSAL AWARENESS AND SIGNPOSTING

Deliver baseline awareness; maintain clear signposting across housing, health, education and community services.

Outcome: earlier help-seeking and fewer missed opportunities.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Deliver tiered training and embed learning from reviews, including housing-related learning.

Outcome: confident, trauma-informed practice across the system.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND SCHOOLS

Embed whole-school approaches and early prevention.

Outcome: reduced tolerance of abusive behaviours in future generations.

VICTIMS AND HOUSING STABILITY

Strengthen advocacy, housing options, sanctuary schemes and recovery pathways.

Outcome: victims feel safer, housed and able to recover.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2026-2029



HOLDING THOSE WHO HARM TO ACCOUNT AND ENABLING CHANGE



Reducing harm requires early identification and consistent challenge and behaviour change of those who harm. Wirral will strengthen a system-wide perpetrator pathway, linking policing, probation, safeguarding, housing, health and specialist services.

The Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) process will be central to this work. MATAC will operate as a partnership tool, not solely a police function, with active involvement from housing, probation, Family Help, safeguarding services and specialist providers. By sharing information about patterns of behaviour rather than isolated incidents, the partnership will be better placed to manage risk, escalate concerns and intervene proportionately.

RESPONDING TO THOSE WHO HARM

MATAC will be aligned closely with MARAC, Family Help and housing pathways so that victim safety, housing stability and children's wellbeing remain central to all decisions. Where perpetrators are offered behaviour change interventions, these will be evidence-based and risk-assessed, and they will always be delivered alongside safety planning for victims. Participation in a programme will never be treated as an indicator of reduced risk or as a substitute for enforcement action where this is required.

Housing, civil and criminal justice powers will be used proactively, where lawful and appropriate, to disrupt perpetrator behaviour. This approach reinforces the principle that responsibility for abuse lies with the perpetrator and not with the victim who should not bear the burden of displacement or loss of stability.

Wirral will shift from a predominantly reactive response to perpetrators toward an approach that identifies, challenges and disrupts abusive behaviour earlier and more consistently. This will be achieved through a strengthened, system-wide perpetrator pathway that clearly sets out how perpetrators are identified, assessed, managed and held accountable across agencies.

INTERVENTIONS FOR THOSE WHO HARM



Interventions with those who harm will be delivered through a parallel, risk-informed and tightly governed tiered approach that prioritises victim safety and accountability. The purpose of this work is to reduce harm and prevent repeat abuse, not to excuse or minimise behaviour.

At the early tier, interventions will focus on identification and disruption. This includes recognising patterns of concerning behaviour, sharing information appropriately, and using civil, housing or criminal justice tools to challenge abuse at an early stage. Consistent messaging across services will reinforce that abuse is unacceptable and that responsibility lies with the perpetrator.

At the targeted tier, those who harm who present an ongoing risk may be offered access to structured, evidence-based behaviour change programmes.

These interventions will only be used where assessed as safe and appropriate, will be linked to wider risk-management arrangements, and will run alongside active safety planning and support for victims. Engagement in an intervention will never be treated as a proxy for reduced risk.

At the highest tier, perpetrators who pose a significant or escalating risk will be managed through intensive multi-agency arrangements, including MATAC, criminal justice oversight and coordinated enforcement activity. Interventions at this level will emphasise disruption, accountability and protection rather than therapeutic change alone.

Movement between tiers will be informed by risk, behaviour and compliance, with escalation where harm increases or opportunities for abuse persist.

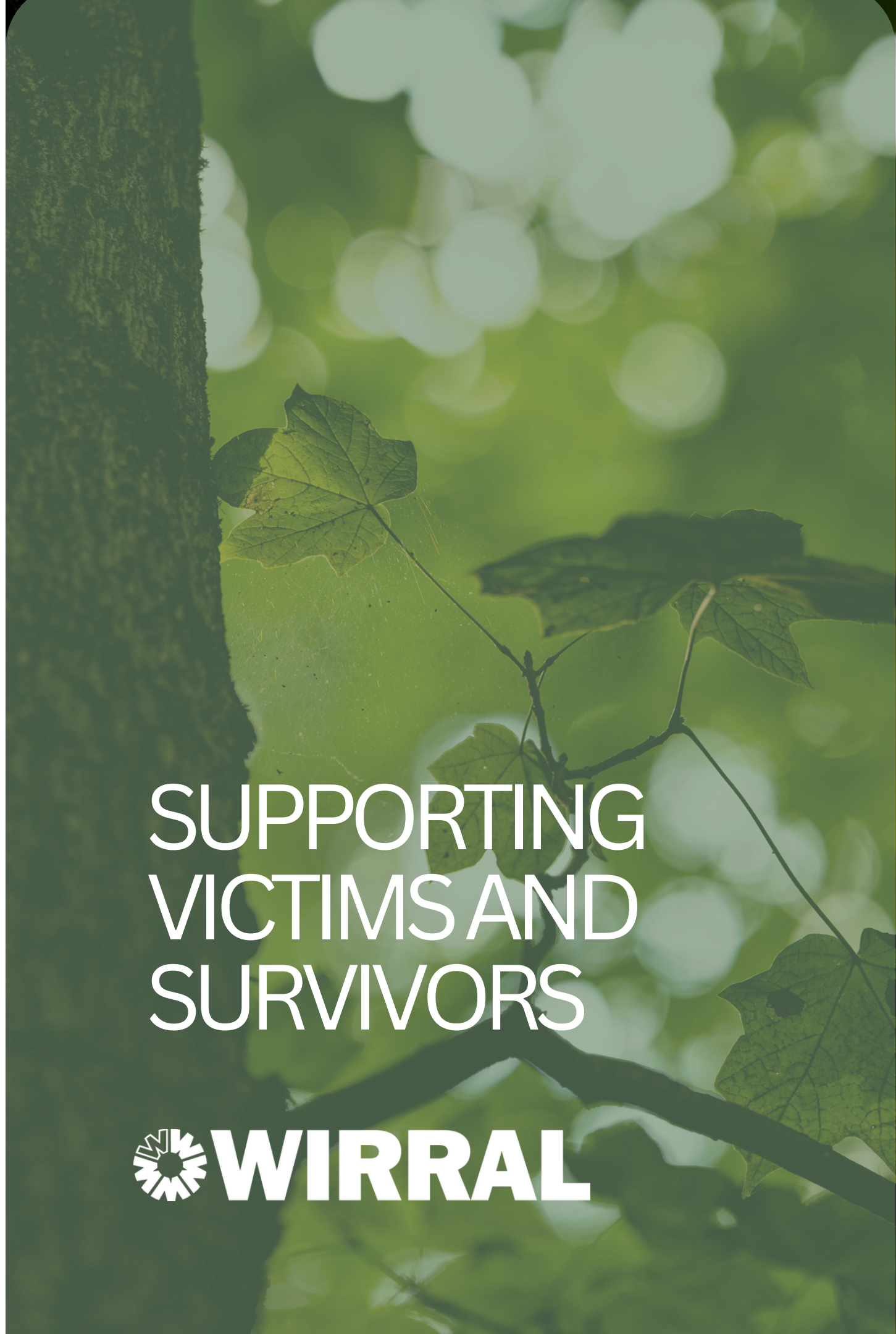
ENSURING QUALITY, SAFETY AND LEARNING

All interventions, both for victims, survivors and those who harm will be underpinned by clear standards, regular review and learning from practice. Outcomes will be monitored not only in terms of programme completion or service engagement, but in terms of reduced harm, increased safety and improved stability for victims and children.

Learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews, safeguarding reviews and lived experience will inform ongoing refinement of tiered interventions. This ensures that Wirral's approach remains grounded in evidence, responsive to emerging risks and focused on long-term change.

We will work
across the
partnership
to:

- Ensure there are the systems in place to identify and challenge harmful behaviour
- Identify and deliver appropriate support and interventions
- Use all pathways available to us (housing, civil and criminal justice) to ensure that risk is reduced



SUPPORTING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS



Wirral will deliver a needs-led response that ensures adults experiencing domestic abuse receive support regardless of whether they have children. Adults without children will have equitable access to advocacy, protection, housing advice and recovery support, and responses will not rely solely on child safeguarding thresholds.

Health services, housing providers, community safety teams and voluntary organisations will act as routes into support, ensuring that adult victims are not rendered invisible within child-focused systems.

An effective response to domestic abuse requires a comprehensive range of interventions that recognise differing levels of need, risk and readiness for change. Wirral will therefore deliver a **tiered approach to intervention**, ensuring that support and accountability are proportionate, timely and aligned across the system for both victims and survivors of domestic abuse and those who cause harm.

This approach is grounded in the principle that **victim safety is always the priority**, and that work with perpetrators must be delivered alongside, and never instead of, support and protection for victims and children.

TIERED INTERVENTIONS FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

Victims and survivors experience domestic abuse in different ways and at different stages. Some may need immediate protection and crisis support, while others may benefit from early help, recovery-focused or longer-term interventions. Wirral's tiered model ensures that support is responsive rather than one-size-fits-all.

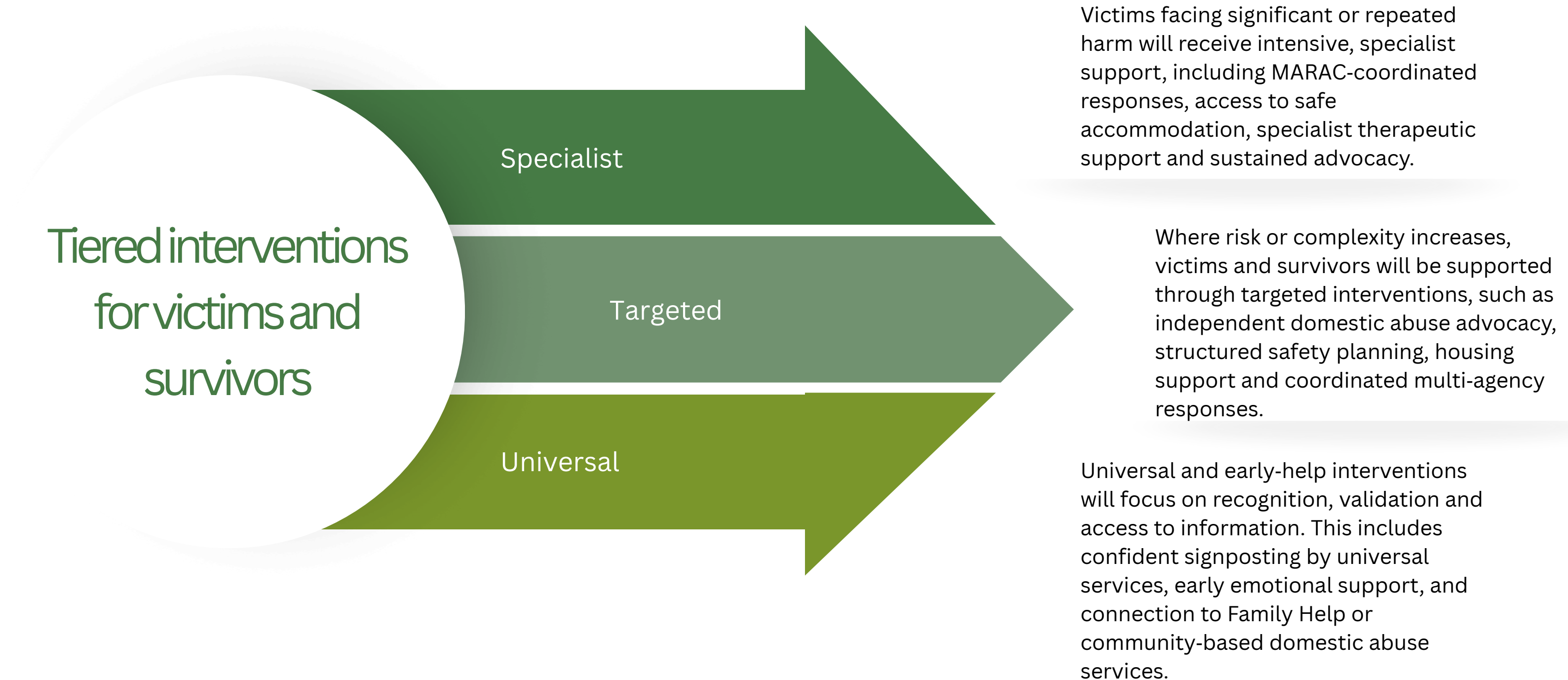
At the earliest tier, universal and early-help interventions will focus on recognition, validation and access to information. This includes confident signposting by universal services, early emotional support, and connection to Family Help or community-based domestic abuse services. The aim at this stage is to reduce isolation, increase safety awareness and prevent escalation.

Where risk or complexity increases, victims and survivors will be supported through targeted interventions, such as independent domestic abuse advocacy, structured safety planning, housing support and coordinated multi-agency responses. These interventions will be trauma-informed and survivor-led, recognising that people may make different choices at different times.

At the highest tier, victims facing significant or repeated harm will receive intensive, specialist support, including MARAC-coordinated responses, access to safe accommodation, specialist therapeutic support and sustained advocacy. Throughout all tiers, victims will be supported regardless of whether they have children, and responses will reflect additional needs such as disability, economic abuse, immigration status or health challenges.

Movement between tiers will be flexible, recognising that risk and need can change over time. Victims will not be expected to "fit" services; instead, services will adapt to changing circumstances.

TIERED INTERVENTIONS FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS



ADDRESSING ECONOMIC ABUSE AND FINANCIAL HARM

Wirral recognises that economic abuse is often the mechanism through which control is exercised and sustained, particularly after separation. Economic abuse will therefore be addressed as a safeguarding, housing and recovery issue rather than as a secondary or specialist concern.

As a pilot area for the Economic Abuse Checklist, Wirral will embed the tool within existing assessment and decision-making processes across Family Help, safeguarding, housing, homelessness and adult-facing services. This will support practitioners to consistently identify indicators of economic abuse, explore financial control safely and respond appropriately without increasing risk to victims.

Workforce development will strengthen understanding of how economic abuse presents in practice, including through rent arrears, benefit disruptions, coerced debt and threats to housing security. Clear pathways will link domestic abuse services with welfare advice, debt support, employment assistance and legal remedies so that victims receive coordinated support rather than fragmented responses.

Economic abuse will also be considered explicitly within perpetrator accountability pathways, including MATAC, ensuring that financial harm forms part of risk assessment, disruption and enforcement activity. Learning from the pilot will be shared across the partnership and used to refine training, supervision and service design.

SPECIALISED SUPPORT

Although Wirral's data shows that most reported victims of domestic abuse are women, we recognise that domestic abuse is **significantly under-reported**, for example: men, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with additional needs, and people who are asylum seeking, displaced, or living with insecure immigration status. Each of these groups may face distinct barriers to disclosure and may require **specialist and tailored support** to stay safe and begin recovery. Wirral is committed to ensuring that all victims can access safe, timely, and appropriate support for everyone.

Wirral will take a collaborative approach to improving identification and response to domestic abuse, recognising that different groups experience abuse and seek help in different ways. Inclusive screening and routine enquiry will be embedded across health, housing, criminal justice, and children's and adult services to improve identification where abuse may otherwise remain hidden.

Referral pathways and public-facing communications will clearly acknowledge that domestic abuse can affect everyone, helping to reduce barriers to disclosure and improve access to support.

Specialist responses will be strengthened to ensure support meets differing needs. This includes improving workforce confidence and capability through trauma-informed and culturally responsive practice. Services will be commissioned and delivered to provide **appropriate, flexible, and specialist support**, ensuring that victims who are less likely to report abuse receive effective protection and improved outcomes.

We will work
across the
partnership
to:

- Identify and deliver appropriate support and interventions that are accessible
- Ensure we are able to more accurately identify and support victims of economic abuse
- Improve identification of risk for those groups where domestic abuse is under-reported



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AS VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE: FROM UNBORN BABIES TO ADULTHOOD

Children and young people are victims of domestic abuse in their own right. Exposure to domestic abuse can begin before birth and have significant, lasting impacts on physical, emotional and psychological development across childhood, adolescence and into adulthood.

This strategy recognises that domestic abuse is a form of harm that affects children at every stage of life and requires a collaborative, coordinated and trauma-informed response from across the partnership.

UNBORN BABIES AND PREGNANCY

Domestic abuse during pregnancy presents a heightened risk to both the pregnant person and the unborn baby. Abuse at this stage is associated with increased risks of physical harm, stress-related complications, and adverse birth outcomes, as well as long-term impacts on attachment and development. For this reason, Wirral will ensure that pregnancy is treated as a critical point for early identification and intervention.

Midwifery services, health visitors, Family Help and safeguarding partners will work together to identify and respond to domestic abuse during pregnancy. Safe enquiry, information sharing and support will be embedded within maternity and early years pathways, ensuring that risks to unborn babies are recognised early and addressed through coordinated safety planning. The main forum for accessing the right support is through an established pre-birth liaison meeting, which has specialist Domestic Abuse Service as a key part of the meeting. The focus will be on protection, stability and reducing stress and harm during pregnancy.

BABIES AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

Babies and very young children can be deeply affected by domestic abuse, even when they are not directly subjected to physical violence. Exposure during early childhood can disrupt attachment, emotional regulation and neurological development, with long-term consequences for wellbeing and relationships.

Wirral will ensure that domestic abuse is routinely considered within early years services, including health visiting, Family Hubs, early education and Childrens Sevices. Practitioners will be supported to recognise signs of harm in babies and young children, respond with curiosity rather than judgement, and link families into appropriate support early. Interventions will prioritise safety, nurture and stability, recognising that work at this stage can prevent escalation and reduce long-term harm.

SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

School-aged children living with domestic abuse may experience anxiety, behavioural changes, difficulties with learning, disrupted attendance and poor peer relationships. Their experiences may go unnoticed or be misinterpreted as behavioural or emotional difficulties rather than understood as responses to trauma.

Alongside Operation Encompass notifications, Wirral will ensure that schools play a central role in identifying and supporting children affected by domestic abuse. Education staff will be supported through training, clear safeguarding pathways and strong links to Family Help and specialist services. Domestic abuse will be recognised as a potential underlying factor when concerns arise about attendance, behaviour or emotional wellbeing.

Support for school-aged children will balance protection with early help, ensuring that responses are proportionate and do not unnecessarily stigmatise families. Children's voices will be actively sought and reflected in plans, helping them to feel heard, safe and supported.

ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Adolescence brings additional risks and complexities. Young people may experience domestic abuse within the family home and may also experience abuse within their own peer relationships. Harmful behaviours may be normalised, particularly where young people have grown up with domestic abuse, increasing the risk of victimisation or perpetration in later life.

Wirral will adopt a dual focus for adolescents: protecting young people from harm while also preventing the development of abusive behaviours. Services will recognise adolescent relationship abuse, coercive control and digital abuse as serious safeguarding issues. Responses will be trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate, avoiding punitive or criminalising approaches where support and early intervention are more effective.

Youth services, schools, health services and Family Help will work together to provide targeted support for young people at increased risk, alongside universal healthy relationships education. This will support young people to recognise abusive behaviour, develop respectful relationship expectations and seek help safely.

PREVENTING FUTURE HARM THROUGH HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION

Prevention will be treated as a core safeguarding and public health activity rather than an optional education initiative. Wirral will support schools to adopt a whole-school, trauma-informed approach to healthy relationships education that is embedded in curriculum, culture and policies.

Education will be aligned with statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education and will focus on respect, consent, boundaries, equality and non-violent relationships, with attention to coercive control, digital abuse and adolescent relationship abuse. Education staff will be trained to recognise concerns, respond safely to disclosures and link children and families into Family Help and specialist support where needed.

Targeted interventions will be available for children and young people identified as being at greater risk, and young people's voices will be used to shape content and approaches over time.

TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

The impact of domestic abuse does not end at 18. Many young adults continue to experience the effects of childhood exposure to abuse, including difficulties with mental health, housing stability, education, employment and relationships. Some young adults may also continue to experience abuse within their family or intimate relationships.

Wirral will ensure that support for young people affected by domestic abuse does not fall away at adulthood. Transitions between children's and adult services will be planned, coordinated and informed by the young person's experiences. Domestic abuse will be recognised within adult services, including housing, health and community support, ensuring continuity of care and protection.

We will work
across the
partnership
to:

- Ensure training is embedded across the system so practitioners understand the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people and how to support them
- Use children and young people's voice to inform service developments and interventions
- Protect children and young people from the earliest stages of life, supporting recovery where harm has occurred, and preventing the cycle of abuse from continuing into future generations.

UNIVERSAL AWARENESS AND CONFIDENT SIGNPOSTING – DOMESTIC ABUSE AS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS



Many victims first disclose to housing officers, hairdresser, reception staff, health professionals, teachers, community workers or volunteers, rather than specialist services. These interactions are critical opportunities for early intervention and prevention.

Wirral will ensure that everyone working with the public has a shared, baseline awareness of domestic abuse and the confidence to respond appropriately when concerns arise. This is based on the understanding that many victims first disclose in everyday settings such as housing offices, schools, GP practices, community organisations or faith settings rather than through specialist services.

Universal awareness will be delivered through consistent messages in induction, training and leadership communication across partner organisations. Staff will be supported to recognise domestic abuse in all its forms, including coercive control and economic abuse, and to respond in a trauma-informed, non-judgemental way.

Professionals will be clear that they are not expected to investigate or manage risk themselves. Their role is to listen, respond safely and connect people to the right support. To enable this, Wirral will maintain clear, accessible and up-to-date signposting pathways so that individuals can be supported quickly and appropriately, whether or not children are involved.

This approach ensures that the first point of contact becomes a positive intervention rather than a missed opportunity.

BUILDING A SKILLED, CONFIDENT AND CONSISTENT WORKFORCE



Alongside universal awareness, Wirral will invest in a tiered workforce development approach that reflects different roles and levels of responsibility across the partnership. Training will be meaningful, proportionate and embedded into everyday practice rather than delivered as one-off events.

Universal training will focus on recognising domestic abuse and responding safely. Enhanced training for frontline practitioners will deepen understanding of coercive control, trauma-informed practice, economic abuse, housing instability and the impact of abuse across the life course. Advanced training for specialist and leadership roles will support effective supervision, professional curiosity and the management of complexity and risk, including the tools to effectively support this.

A key priority within this Domestic Abuse Strategy is to strengthen and embed high-quality social care practice at every stage of our response. This includes ensuring that practitioners across children's and adult services are equipped with the skills, confidence and supervision needed to identify, assess and respond effectively to domestic abuse, with a clear focus on safety, trauma-informed approaches, and whole-family working. We will promote consistent practice standards, improve multi-agency collaboration, and ensure that the voice and lived experience of victims, including children, are central to assessment and intervention. By prioritising reflective, systemic practice, we aim to achieve better outcomes for individuals and families affected by domestic abuse and reduce the risk of harm

We will work
across the
partnership
to:

- Empower people to listen to victims of domestic abuse and respond in a trauma informed way
- Build a tiered training offer that is accessible for all, ensuring a range from general awareness to specialist evidence-based training and accreditations
- Ensure that the range of services available are well publicised, through partnership campaigns and events

HOUSING AND SAFE ACCOMMODATION FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Safe and stable housing is essential for both safety and recovery. Many victims are unable to leave abusive relationships because they fear homelessness, and housing instability is a major factor in repeat abuse. Tackling domestic abuse is therefore central to preventing homelessness, in line with the government's National Plan to End Homelessness (2025).

Wirral will take a whole housing, whole system approach, making housing a core part of safeguarding rather than a crisis response. This reflects national priorities for early intervention and partnership working to prevent homelessness.

HOUSING AND SAFE ACCOMMODATION FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE



Victims will be able to access a range of safe housing options. This includes refuge where immediate safety is needed, as required under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 duty to provide support in safe accommodation. At the same time, we will focus on preventing homelessness wherever possible, in line with the legal duties set out in the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Where it is safe, victims will be supported to remain in their own homes through measures such as sanctuary schemes, legal protections and specialist housing support. This reflects the *Whole Housing Approach*, which ensures people have a real choice about whether to stay or move, based on their safety needs.

Our housing pathways will be inclusive and flexible. They will meet the needs of:

- adults with and without children
- victims experiencing economic abuse
- disabled victims
- people with multiple or complex needs

This is in line with national guidance to ensure services are accessible to all victims.

Victims who are homeless or at risk of homelessness will be treated as being in **priority need** and will not have to prove vulnerability to access support, as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. We will act early, within the 56-day prevention and relief duties, to stop homelessness before it happens

HOUSING AND SAFE ACCOMMODATION FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE



Housing services will be fully involved in MARAC, MATAC and safeguarding processes. This will ensure that housing decisions are part of wider safety planning and risk management. It also supports the national focus on joined-up working across services.

We will also support victims experiencing economic abuse through joined-up housing, welfare, debt and legal support. This recognises the link between financial hardship and homelessness risk.

Our approach will prioritise helping people move into safe, settled, long-term housing, reducing reliance on temporary accommodation and supporting long-term stability.

All services will be **trauma-informed, accessible and survivor-centred**. We will reduce the need for people to repeat their story and ensure support is delivered with dignity, choice and respect.

The Domestic Abuse Alliance will lead continuous improvement in housing responses. This will include learning from survivors, frontline staff and reviews, in line with national expectations for co-production and ongoing improvement.

**We will work
across the
partnership
to:**

- Where we can, we will support victims to stay in their own home- this could include safety measures such as legal orders and additional security devices
- Ensure housing is a key part of safeguarding and integrated in key processes-rather than a crisis response.
- Provide additional support to those in temporary accommodation due to domestic abuse

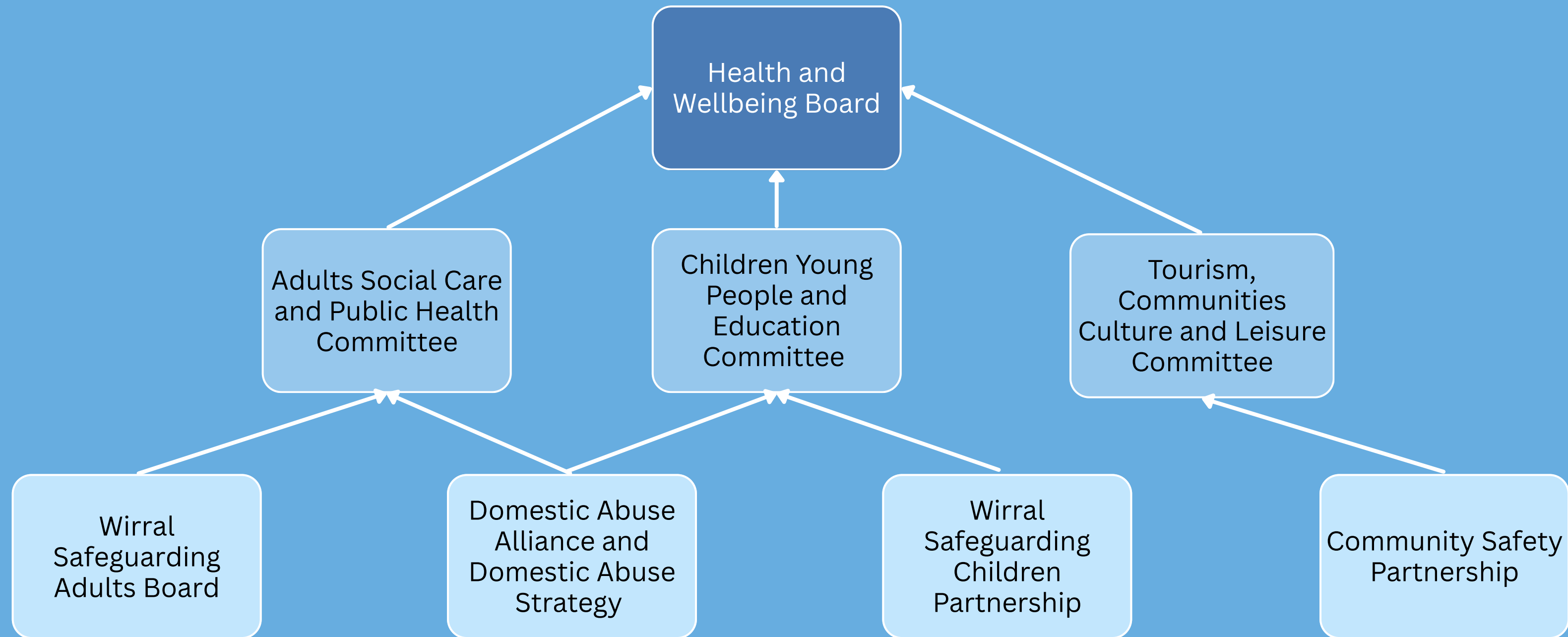
Governance, Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

GOVERNANCE, MONITORING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Delivery of this strategy will be overseen through the Community Safety Partnership, with strong links to the Safeguarding Children Partnership, Safeguarding Adults Board and ultimately overseen by the Health and Wellbeing board.

The **Wirral Domestic Abuse Alliance** will remain central to governance and delivery, supporting implementation, championing survivor voice, embedding specialist expertise, and driving learning, innovation and system improvement.

The Domestic Abuse Alliance will support implementation, partnership coordination and system learning, ensuring that emerging risks, good practice and survivor insight shape ongoing delivery. This approach ensures that the strategy remains responsive, effective and grounded in real-world practice throughout its lifespan.



Closing message to victims and survivors

As this strategy comes to an end, we want to return to what matters most: you.

Living with, leaving, or recovering from domestic abuse takes strength, courage and resilience - often more than anyone else will ever fully see. What you have experienced may still be affecting your sense of safety, trust, confidence or hope. Healing does not happen **all** at once, and it does not look the same for everyone.

This strategy cannot undo what has happened, but it represents a commitment: a commitment to listen, to learn, and to do better.



Across Wirral, organisations are committing to work together so that you are:

- **believed when you speak**
- **treated with dignity and respect**
- **supported whether or not you have children**
- **helped to be safe in your home, your finances and your future**
- **not expected to carry the responsibility for someone else's abusive behaviour**

Some days your next step may be big. Some days it may be small. Some days it may be simply getting through. All of those steps matter. Support is there whether you are ready to leave, deciding what you want, or rebuilding your life after abuse.

You deserve safety. You deserve kindness. And you deserve a life free from abuse.

And when you are ready, help will be there.

GLOSSARY

Domestic abuse: A pattern of behaviour including physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or economic abuse within personal relationships.

Economic abuse: Control or exploitation of a person's access to money, employment, housing or financial resources.

MARAC: Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, coordinating responses for victims at high risk of serious harm.

MATAC: Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination, managing high-harm and serial perpetrators.

Family Help: Wirral's early help model providing coordinated support for children, adults and families.

Trauma-informed practice: An approach that recognises the impact of trauma and seeks to avoid re-traumatisation.

Sanctuary measures: Practical safety measures to enable someone to remain safely in their own home.

Domestic Abuse Alliance: Wirral's partnership bringing together statutory and specialist agencies to deliver coordinated responses.

Operation Encompass: notifications of domestic abuse incidents, from Police to early years settings and schools.