

Our priority

Sexual violence and abuse is any sexual behaviour which is unwanted and takes place without consent or understanding. Sexual offences include rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, forced marriage, so-called honour based violence/abuse, female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation, and organised abuse. The majority of incidents take place with someone who is known to the victim - only a minority of perpetrators are strangers. This type of crime can have a devastating effect on a person's health and wellbeing. Many victims and survivors do not want their immediate family to know what has happened and are reluctant to report the crime to the police. The under-reporting of sexual abuse exists in all communities, so it is important that every victim in West Yorkshire can feel confident that the police and its partners will put their needs first when handling reports of sexual violence.

How we are going to deliver

Our main objective is to ensure that the right services are in place to meet the needs of victims and survivors, meeting their immediate and longer term health needs, and maximising the chance of a conviction. West Yorkshire now has a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC); an Independent Sexual Assault Adviser (ISVA) service; and a network of rape crisis centres. Demand for these services is increasing as more victims come forward. It is important to build on what has been achieved so far. The Domestic Abuse Board and Strategy provides the framework to enable the delivery of our intentions including that we will:

- Engage with and respond to the needs of victims and survivors and those who use our support services to make sure that we deliver the most appropriate support. **Listening to people.**
- Develop strategies to reach out to communities where we believe there is under-reporting of sexual violence incidents or who may not be aware of the services available, such as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. **Understanding our communities.**
- Encourage closer working between agencies to enable (where appropriate) integration and provision of consistent services across West Yorkshire. The Domestic Abuse Board remit will be broadened to incorporate sexual violence and deliver the commitments made in the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy **Working together.**
- Encouraging early intervention, evidenced based practice, and an openness to innovation, to prevent abusive behaviour before it happens, and challenge myths and stereotypes about its victims and survivors. **Preventing and intervening earlier.**
- Monitor and evaluate the services that have been commissioned, and respond to issues that arise, such as the current need for SARC premises that will enable greater integration of therapeutic and courts services. **Improving our services.**
- Utilise available resources to provide support to all victims/survivors of sexual violence – regardless of gender, ethnicity, age or locality. **Providing resources.**

How we will know whether we've delivered

We will measure our progress against this priority, and our objectives set out in the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy, through the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Board and quarterly contract meetings with service providers and grant recipients. A range of qualitative and quantitative data, information, and national guidance will be provided to enable us to assess progress. In addition to this, we will monitor performance through our Delivery Quarterly report (which will assess how we safeguard vulnerable people), and through our Community Outcome Meetings, which allow scrutiny of police and partner activity and the work to support victims.

- More people will report sexual abuse as confidence increases.
- More victims of sexual abuse will be satisfied with the service they receive.