

Domestic Abuse Strategy 2015-2020 Consultation

Invitation to respond to the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy

As the Minister for the Home Department, I am pleased to publish for consultation, this draft Strategy for tackling domestic abuse.

Families and individuals have a right to be safe from domestic abuse in the Bailiwick of Guernsey. Unfortunately, for many, it still remains a hidden crime. As is the case in the UK, we know that reporting figures do not reflect the full picture as, all too often, violence and abuse remains unreported, under the radar of public view with many victims too afraid or embarrassed to seek help.

It is a shocking reality that in 2013 domestic abuse makes up around 49% of violent crime in the Islands, and figures indicate there are, on average, 13 incidents being reported to the police every week. Domestic abuse impacts on virtually every aspect of victims' lives and all too often has long term consequences for children and adults, in some cases, leading to tragic and untimely deaths.

This strategy builds on the previous Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2011-2014. The new draft strategy document has, at its core, a clear, unequivocal message that domestic abuse is a crime, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We know that it will take considerable time to eradicate domestic abuse, and even if the incidence of violence and abuse falls, robust protections still need to be put in place for those at risk, and victims still need to be given support to rebuild their lives.

Following pre-consultation engagement with staff within States departments, voluntary agencies and specialist domestic abuse services, and a survey of domestic abuse survivors, we believe that the focus on the strategic outcomes and priorities set out in the Strategy Documents are the correct ones, but we want to hear your views. In particular, we want to hear the views of survivors of domestic abuse, and those of professionals working with families affected, to understand how we can offer the best possible protection.

We would appreciate your views on the overarching vision of domestic abuse set out in the strategy plus the six key outcomes, and five priority areas of focus.

The consultation asks for your views on the proposed new definition of 'domestic abuse'. It also asks if changes to the law around domestic abuse might be beneficial either to fit with the proposed definition of domestic abuse or to strengthen local law by adopting some of the newer aspects of UK law that have been introduced in the last few years.

You can answer all, or just some of the questions, as you wish. You can also include any general comments at the end. Please note that once you have completed and exited the online questionnaire, further information cannot be added at a later date.

We know that our States departments have had tremendous support from community and voluntary sector organisations in bringing the initial domestic abuse strategy into being. I would like to thank all who have supported the development of this consultation document and taken part in the recent domestic abuse survey in order to continue to develop and improve the local response to domestic abuse.

Deputy Peter Gillson
Minister
Home Department

Statement of Confidentiality

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the Data Protection (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law, 2001. For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Data Protection Commissioner's Office:

Data Protection Office,
PO Box 642, Frances House,
Sir William Place
St Peter Port,
GY1 3JE

Tel: 742074
Website: www.dpr.gov.gg

***1. Please tick to state if you want your response to be anonymised.**

- I want my response to be anonymised.
- I do not want my response to be anonymised.

***2. I am responding as (please tick one option only).**

- A member of the public
- On behalf of a States department
- On behalf of a charity
- On behalf of a private sector organisation

Other (please specify)

3. Please enter your Name below:

4. Your Job Title

5. Your Organisation

Definition of Domestic Abuse

For the purpose of this draft strategy, the definition of domestic abuse are as follows:-

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

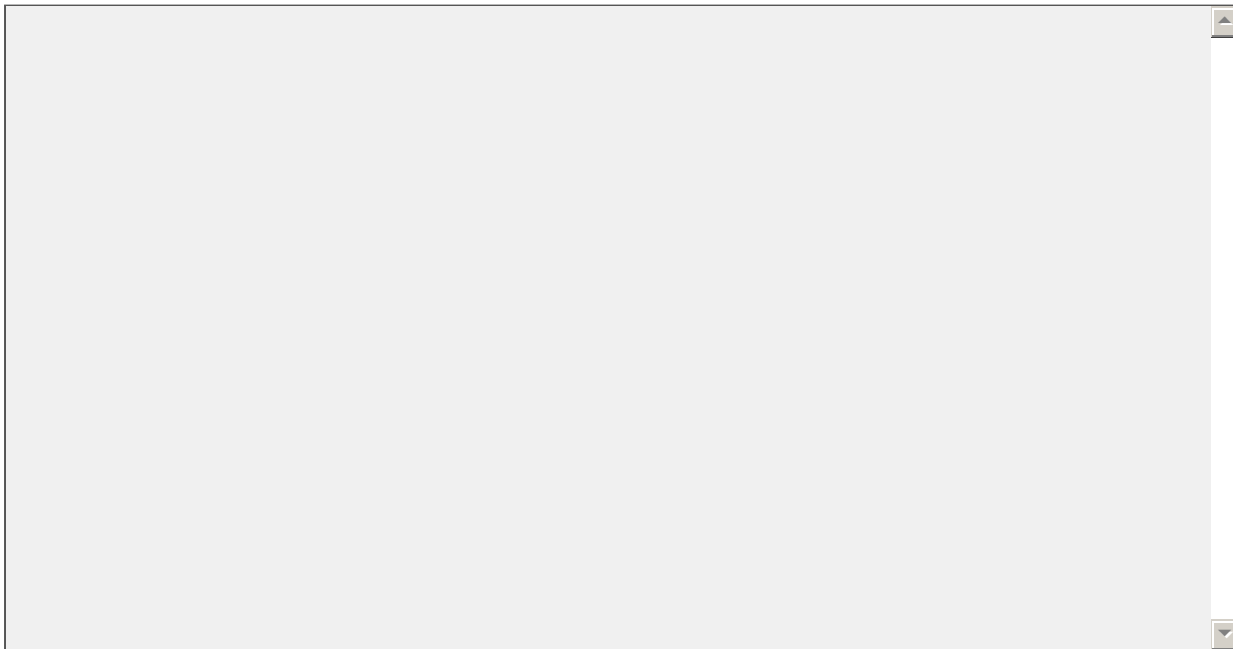
Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

6. Do you agree with the definition of domestic abuse as outlined in the Strategy?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please add any comments you wish to make about the definition.



Strategic Vision

The States of Guernsey's Strategic Vision regarding domestic abuse incorporates:

1. Consistent positive action from States Departments and other agencies, including:
 - A clear, unequivocal message that domestic abuse is a crime, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated;
 - A consistent demonstration of the importance of interagency collaboration and interagency policy implementation including good information sharing;
 - The provision of dedicated resources to address policy and practical issues;
 - Research and replication of best practice, effective responses and interventions.

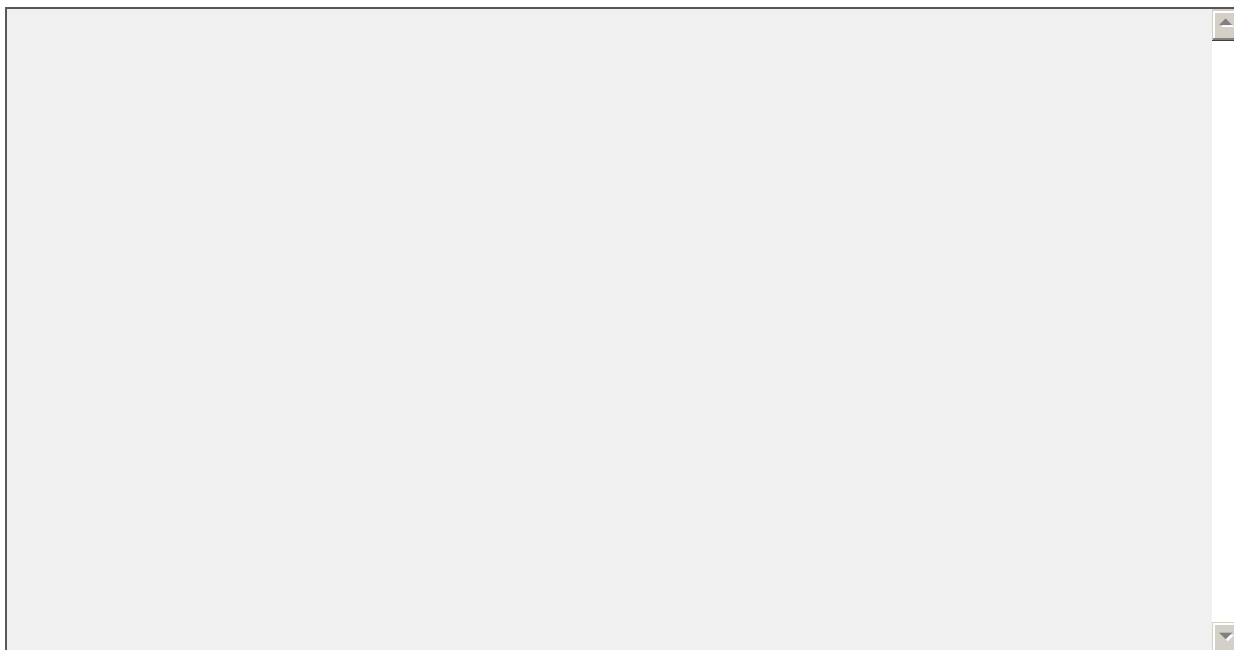
2. The development of better, more equitable, accessible and effective service provision providing:
 - A co-ordinated network of services that meet the needs of all victims;
 - Appropriate protection and support for all victims experiencing domestic abuse;
 - Appropriate safe solutions for all victims escaping domestic abuse;
 - Easily accessible information to ensure that help is available for any victim;
 - Education and training both to help prevent domestic abuse and to identify it early and provide help and support.

3. Improved protection and support for victims and effective deterrents through:
 - Holding abusers accountable for their behaviour;
 - Changing the criminal and civil law where necessary.

7. Is the draft Strategy Vision reflective of what we want to achieve?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Please add any comments that you wish to make regarding the Strategy Vision.



Key Priorities

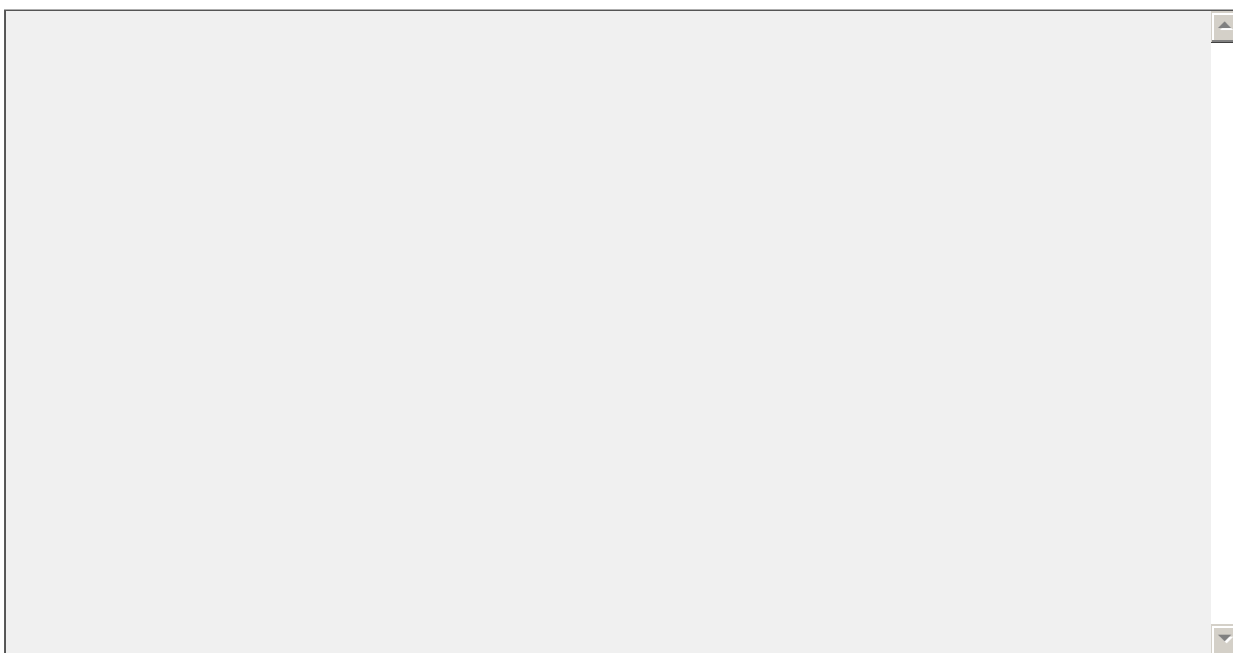
The Domestic Abuse Strategy Advisory Group's Key Priorities in 2015-2020 are:

1. To address the needs of young people affected by domestic abuse, both those living with abuse in their family and those experiencing abuse in their own intimate relationships.
2. To put in place protocols to identify and address the needs of families / individuals who are experiencing a combination of domestic abuse, mental ill health and drug/ alcohol misuse.
3. To improve data collection and performance monitoring processes in relation to domestic abuse.
4. To provide early intervention to encourage disclosure and signposting to specialist services.
5. To review Court processes and the criminal justice response to domestic abuse.

8. Do you agree with Key Priority 1: to address the needs of young people affected by domestic abuse, both those living with abuse in their family and those experiencing abuse in their own intimate relationships?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

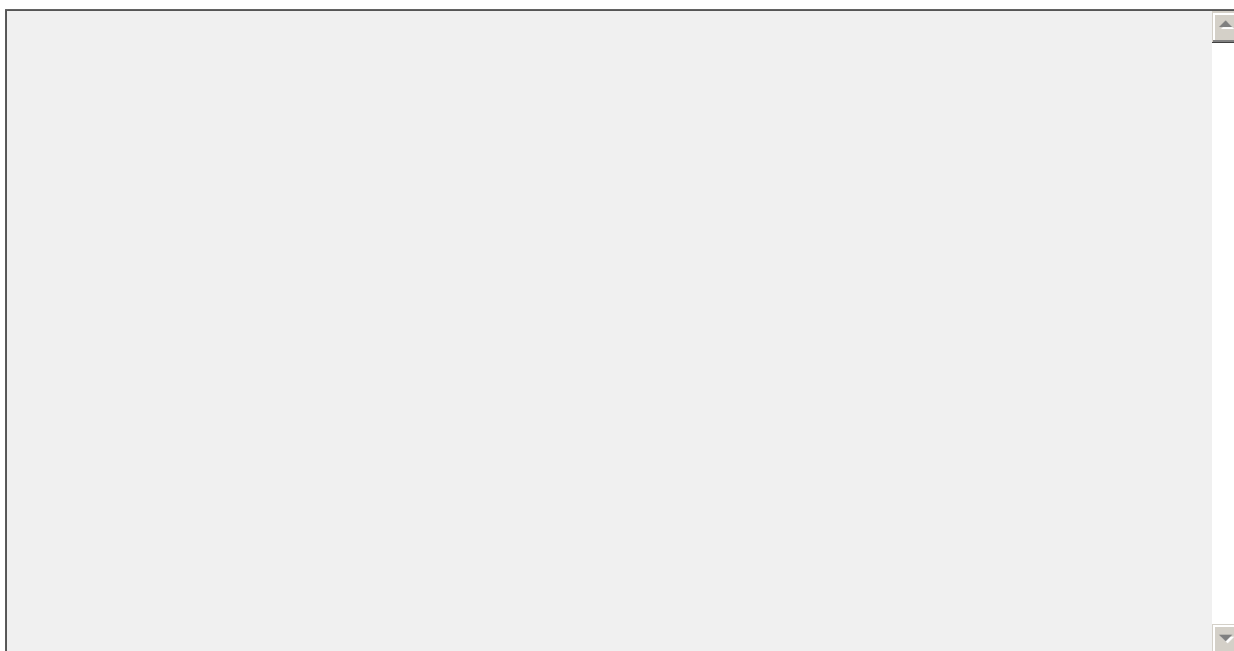
Please add any comments you wish to make about Key Priority 1



9. Do you agree with Key Priority 2: to put in place protocols to identify and address the needs of families / individuals who are experiencing a combination of domestic abuse, mental ill health and drug/ alcohol misuse?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

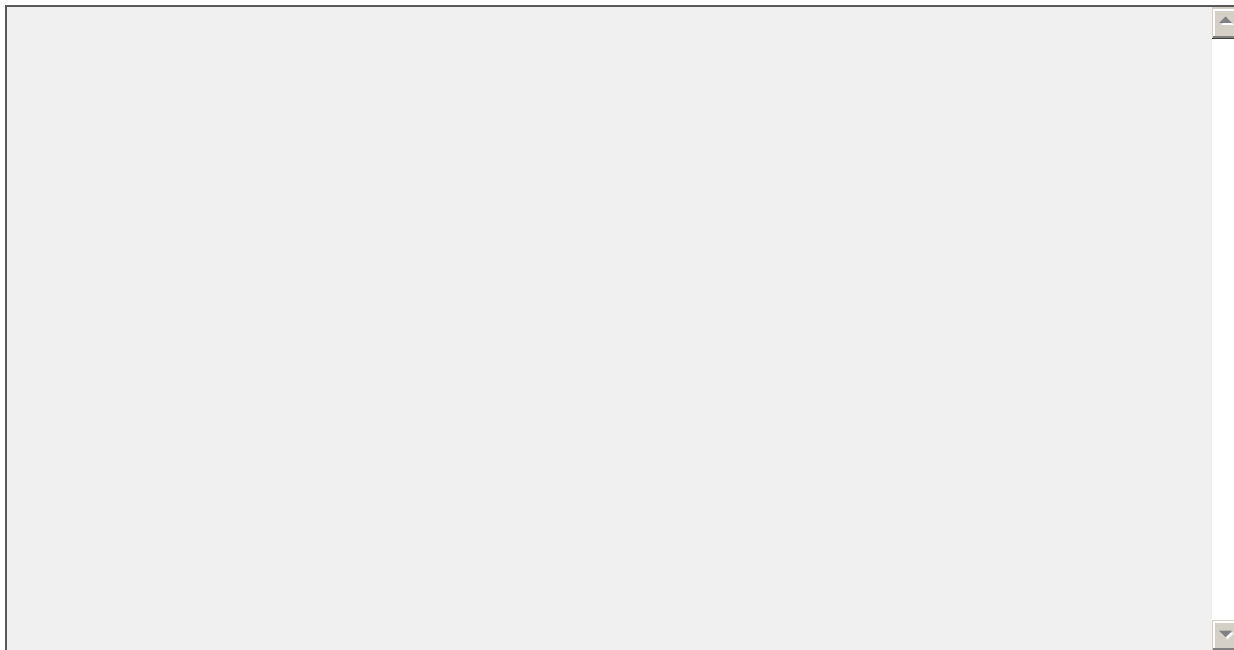
Please add any comments you wish to make about Key Priority 2



10. Do you agree with Key Priority 3: to improve data collection and performance monitoring processes in relation to domestic abuse?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

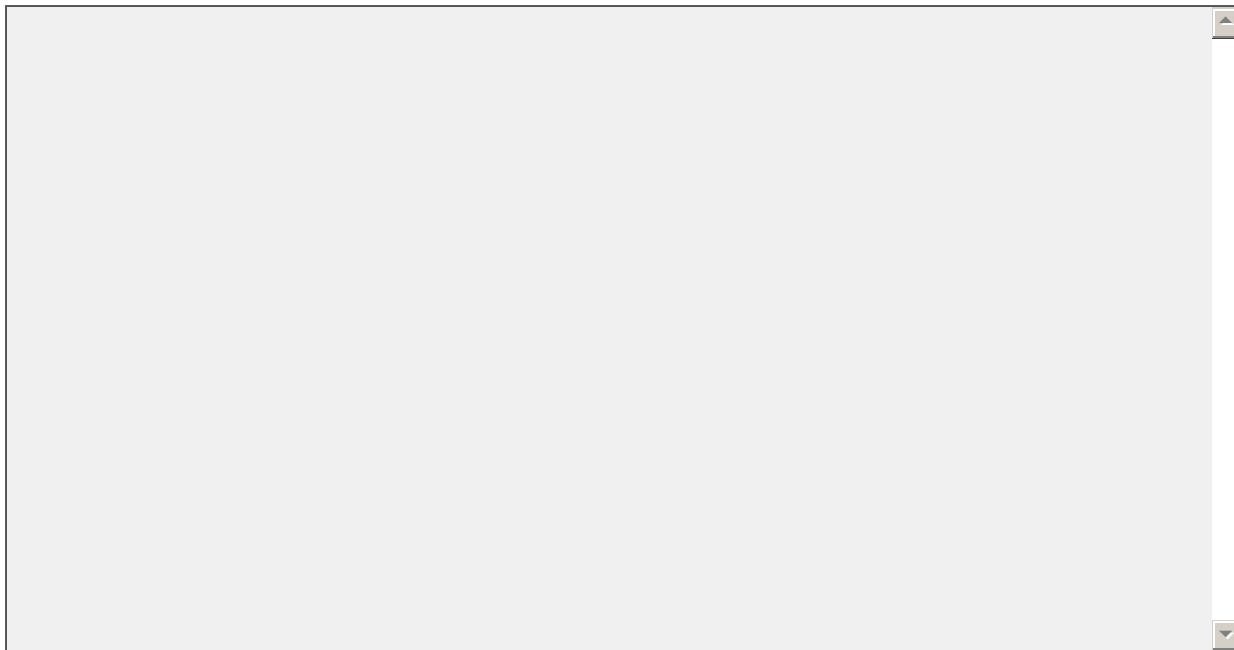
Please add any comments you wish to make about Key Priority 3.

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11. Do you agree with Key Priority 4: To provide early intervention to encourage disclosure and signposting to specialist services?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

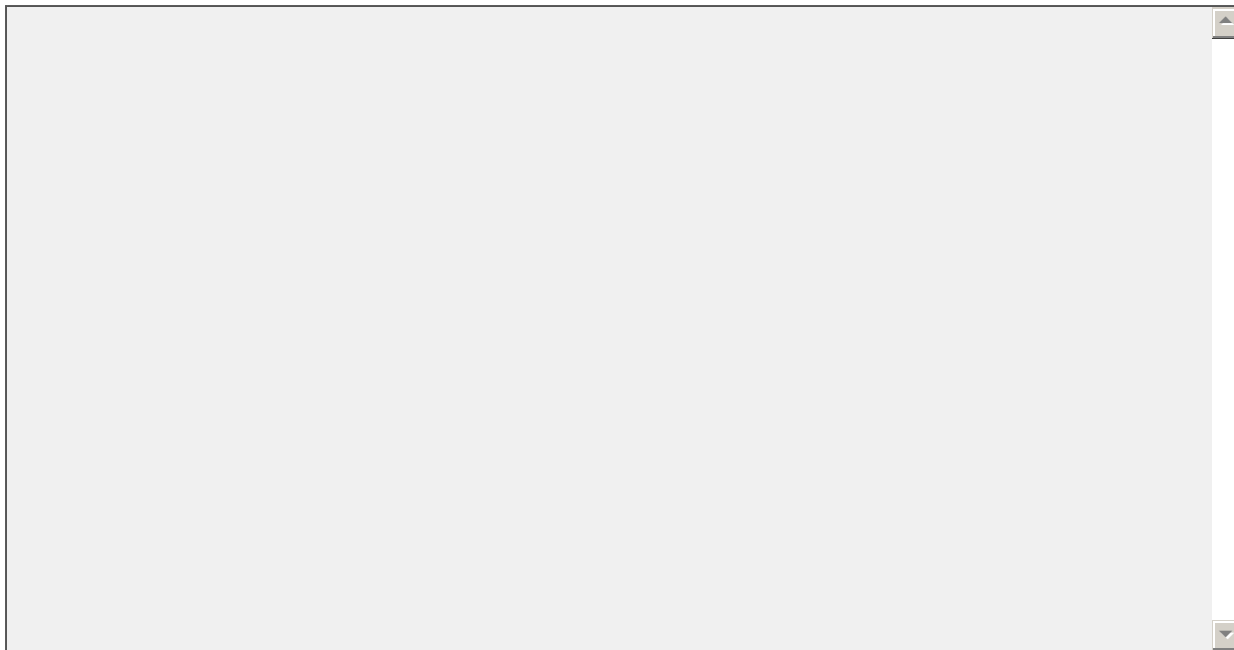
Please add any comments you wish to make about Key Priority 4.



12. Do you agree with Key Priority 5: To review Court processes and the criminal justice response to domestic abuse?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please add any comments you wish to make about Key Priority 5.



Strategic Outcomes

The Home Department is aiming to implement the Strategy over a five-year period (2015-2020). Its key strategic outcomes are:

1. A decrease in social tolerance of domestic abuse.
2. An increase in the knowledge and skills of children, young people and adults about forming healthy relationships.
3. An increase in the safety of survivors (adults and children).
4. A reduction in the risk of harm from perpetrators.
5. Services meet the needs of victims / survivors of domestic abuse.
6. Justice responses to domestic abuse are effective.

13. Do you agree with the strategic outcomes in this Strategy? (set out in full on page 14 of the Strategy document)

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
1. A decrease in social tolerance of domestic abuse.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. An increase in the knowledge and skills of children, young people and adults about forming healthy relationships.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. An increase in the safety of survivors (adults and children).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. A reduction in the risk of harm from perpetrators.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Services meet the needs of victims / survivors of domestic abuse.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Justice responses to domestic abuse are effective.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please add any further comments you wish to make regarding the Strategic Outcomes

The Law

Since 2004, many additional changes have been made in respect of the UK Law to protect victims of abuse. These include:

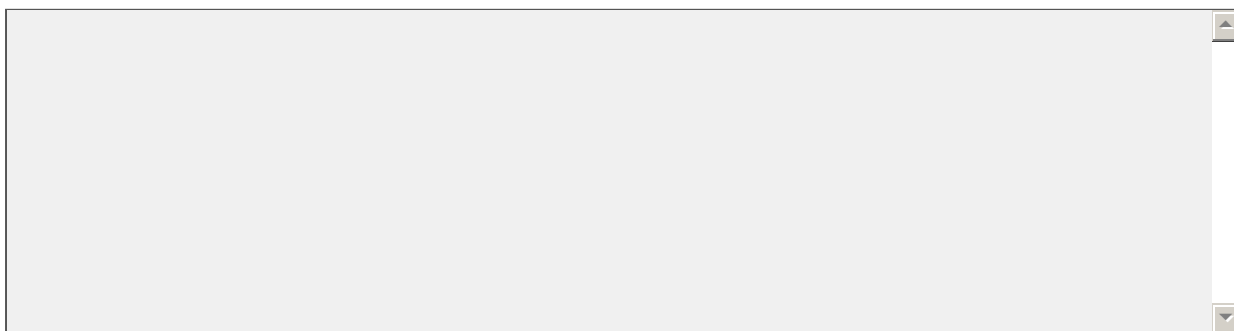
- Making breaches of 'non molestation order' a criminal offence, with a maximum penalty of 5 years.
- Extending the availability of domestic violence injunctions to same sex couples, and to those who have never cohabited.
- Introducing a domestic violence disclosure scheme (Clare's Law) which allows the police to disclose information to an individual about a partner's previous violent offending and allowing individuals to request information about a partner if they suspect that he/she has a history of abuse.
- Introducing Domestic Violence Protection Orders which, in the aftermath of a domestic abuse incident, allows the police and magistrates to ban a perpetrator from returning to their home and from having contact with the victim for up to 28 days.
- Adding a new section to the UK Protection from Harassment Act 1997 to protect victims of stalking. This offence carries a maximum 5 year sentence.
- The UK Government is also being petitioned, and is considering, making domestic abuse, including coercive control, a crime.

The Home Department is seeking views on whether the local law needs to be strengthened to offer better protection to local victims of domestic abuse.

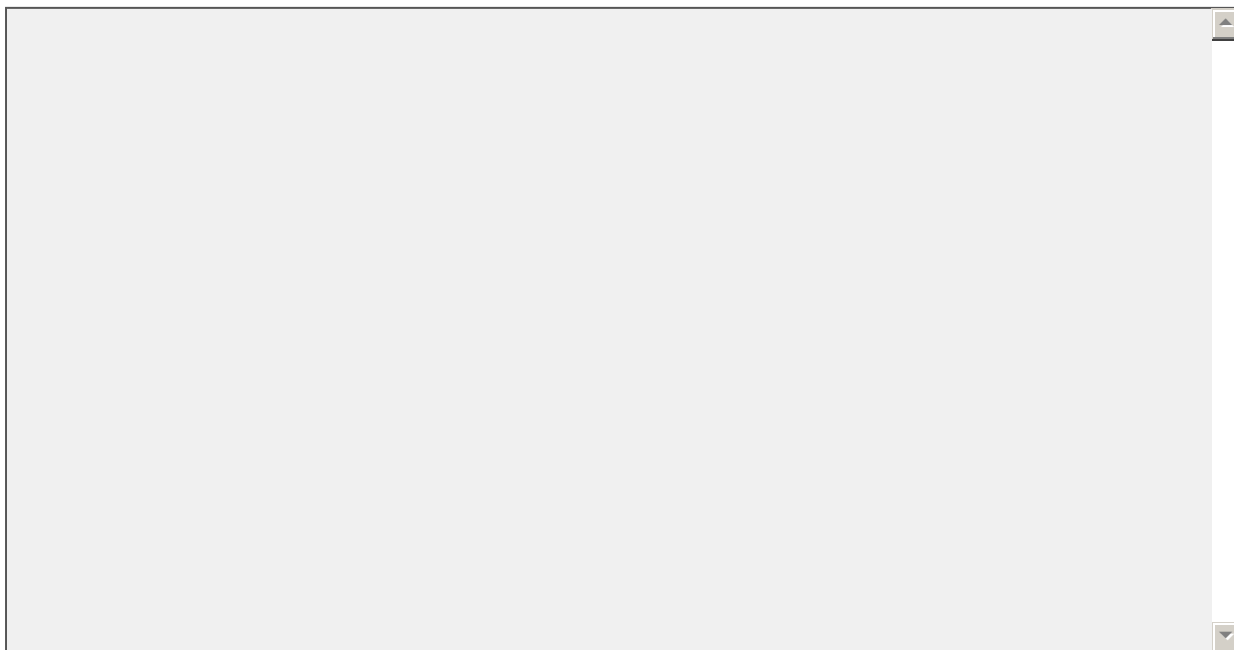
14. Does the existing law in the Bailiwick of Guernsey adequately provide sufficient protection to victims of domestic abuse?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please add any further comments you wish to make about the law in relation to domestic abuse in Guernsey and Alderney



15. If you do not believe that the local law provides sufficient protection to victims of domestic abuse, in what ways could the law be strengthened?



16. Please add any further comments that you wish to make about the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy. It would be helpful if you reference which part of the document you are commenting on. If you refer to any other documents, please provide the title and author.

