



West Midlands Sexual Assault and Abuse Strategy 2020 – 2023

Improving the response to those affected
by sexual assault and abuse

West Midlands Sexual Assault and Abuse Strategy 2020 – 2023



West Midlands Sexual Assault and Abuse Strategy

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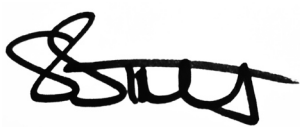
Commitment

The West Midlands is committed to adopting a partnership approach to ending violence, interpersonal abuse and exploitation. Sexual assault and abuse are abhorrent crimes and as such; there is no place for them in society.

As a partnership the Sexual Assault and Abuse (SAA) Board will work to prevent such crimes; eradicate the discourse which allows perpetrators to feel entitled; reduce their means to act and support the criminal justice system to work towards ensuring it can safeguard communities by dealing effectively with those who commit such crimes.

We are dedicated to protecting and supporting communities, listening to them when they talk about their experiences and responding to safeguard, protect and support anyone affected. We will work together to break down the barriers to disclosure and support whilst strengthening links with all sexual assault and abuse services; ensuring they utilise trauma informed practices to support the lifelong impact that sexual assault and abuse can cause. We pledge to affect the system wide change needed to address the inequalities that interpersonal abuse currently affords.

Signed,



SAA Board membership;

Chaired by Superintendent Sally Simpson, WMP and Deputy Chair Natalie Thompson, CEO CRASAC

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Introduction

Sexual assault and abuse are forms of interpersonal abuse that can affect anybody, at any age, from any background, at any time. As multi-agency partners we need to ensure we are working towards preventative measures to reduce these crimes as well as working responsively through justice, health, safeguarding and support services to react when these crimes occur so that we can support those affected and hold perpetrators to account.

This strategy aims to locally embed the national NHS England (NHSE) Strategic direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services, Lifelong care for victims and survivors: 2018 -2023ⁱ which aims to improve local, regional and national multi-agency governance, partnerships and strengthen pathways for victims and survivors. It outlines how services need to evolve and improve to ensure that individuals are safeguarded, supported at times of crisis and in particular, at the point of report and longitudinally. It offers a framework in how to do this by working in partnership across all sexual assault and abuse services including NHSE, Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG), Local Authorities (LA), Police forces and Police and Crime Commissioners alongside the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Home Office (HO) to commission and support robust, sustainable and high quality sexual assault and abuse services.

Definitions

This strategy adopts the previous Rape and Sexual Violence Strategic Governance Group Standards (RSVSGG, 2016)ⁱⁱ definition of sexual violence:

West Midlands Definition of Sexual Assault and Abuse (Sexual Violence):

'Sexual violence' and/or 'sexual abuse' can both be defined as any behaviour perceived to be of a sexual nature that takes place without consent or without understanding. It encompasses a broad range of activities, physical, visual and verbal, that are: of a sexual nature; take place without consent or without understanding; are experienced, at the time or later, as a threat, invasion or assault and that take away the ability to control intimate contact. Whilst sexual violence has been recognised as a cause and a consequence of gender inequality disproportionately affecting women and girls, we recognise there are heterosexual male victims, and victims within the LGBT+ community.'

Sexual assault and sexual abuse is a form of exploitation and this strategy adopts the previously established West Midlands definition of exploitationⁱⁱⁱ:

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West Midlands Definition of Exploitation:

'An individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child, young person (under the age of 18), or adult and exploits them a) through violence or the threat of violence, and/or b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or c) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants. The victim may have been exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Exploitation does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology.'

Historically, sexual assault, abuse and exploitation were regionally supported through the Preventing Violence Against Vulnerable People (PVVP) Board. This strategy explains the new direction, strategic governance and multi-agency work ongoing to support the sexual assault and abuse agenda moving from 2020-2023 within the West Midlands. This strategy covers the West Midlands metropolitan area which consists of Walsall, Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell, Birmingham, Solihull and Coventry.

Scope of the Strategy

This strategy responds to:

- Adults, children and young people who are or who have experienced sexual assault and/or abuse whether recently or historically.
- Those who are perpetrating sexual assault and/or abuse.

It responds to sexual assault and abuse in the context of:

- Any non-consensual sexual activity within any context
- Any penetrative or non-penetrative offence
- Child sexual abuse
- Child sexual exploitation
- Sexual exploitation and grooming
- Trafficking of people for the purpose of sexual exploitation
- Pressure or coercion into sexual activity
- Sexting
- Sexual abuse via social media and online technology
- Sexual harassment
- Upskirting
- Image based sexual abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (as a form of VAWG with the impact of SAA)

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Vision

The vision of this strategy is to reduce and prevent all forms of sexual assault and abuse. The Sexual Assault and Abuse (SAA) Board will work to ensure the West Midlands offers a multi-agency, holistic and seamless service to victims of sexual assault and abuse; to enhance the services provided to those affected through the criminal justice pathway, to provide therapeutic support to victims to help them rebuild their lives and to hold offenders to account for their behaviour.

Guiding principles

Responses to sexual assault and abuse are underpinned by the following understanding:

- Sexual assault and abuse are gendered crimes; affecting women and girls, caused by societal attitudes rooted in gender inequality, male dominance and the misuse of power. These attitudes are further extended by the portrayal of women in pornography, experienced inequality and forced dependency due to society's gap in pay, employment, education, housing, health and social mobility. All of these structural determinants of gender inequality compound the ability for women and girls to live happy, healthy lives. Such attitudes can be attributed to the continued abuse of women and girls. Sexual assault and abuse should sit within a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) agenda to ensure its focus directly addresses this. It is this unequal gendered discourse which contributes to a victim blaming culture sustaining further barriers for women and girls to disclosure and keeping these crimes hidden from sight.
- Despite women and girls being disproportionately affected, sexual assault and abuse is widespread. Although certain groups are disproportionately impacted, it can occur in any neighbourhood and in any community. It knows no barriers, affecting any socio-economic group, ethnicity, age, gender identity, relationship, sexual orientation, disability, race or religion.
- Although the vast majority of sexual abuse is perpetrated by men on women and girls, men and boys are subject to sexual assault, abuse and exploitation, as are Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Transgender plus (LGBT+) individuals.

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Guiding principles

- Gender norms also further compound trauma for men and boys experiencing sexual assault and abuse and evidence shows they are even less likely to report due to the social stigma which exacerbates victim blaming culture and gender stereotypes^{iv}.
- As hidden crimes, most sexual assault and abuse are not reported. There are large individual and societal barriers to disclosure and there are groups which may find it more difficult to report sexual assault and abuse including; Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Transgender plus (LGBT+) and Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, men, those with learning disabilities, sex workers and those within the prison population.
- The culture of blame and scepticism surrounding sexual assault and abuse makes it difficult for all individuals to report.
- Child abuse is even further hidden from view, often perpetrated in the child's own home by a close family member or associate.
- There are further barriers for children dependent on age, language, understanding, disabilities, family relationships and contact with care agencies. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or those in care are further at risk. These contextual factors should form part of the overall holistic and person-centred view of the child and their needs.
- There are complexities that occur when sexual assault and abuse happens within extra familial environments. Professionals should use contextualised safeguarding approaches to best understand these risks, engage with children and young people and help keep them safe.
- It is important to note that when a child is below the age of puberty there is less of a gendered bias to experiencing sexual assault and abuse with boys and girls both being at risk of abuse from an offender who will predominantly be male.
- Sexual assault and abuse is intentional behaviour and the responsibility for it lies with the abuser. The responsibility to end sexual assault and abuse also lies with the abuser and with partner agencies to shape a culture where perpetrators are held to account and any form of abuse is not tolerated.
- Combating sexual assault and abuse requires a comprehensive and coordinated interagency response. Those affected often experience abuse in isolation but have needs spanning a multitude of services with interweaving timespans.
- Services need to be effective at meeting short, medium and long term needs over a lifetime; care needs to be trauma informed and considered as part of an integrated and whole system pathway of care.
- Trauma informed care is a "strengths based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasises physical, psychological and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment" (Hopper et al 2010)^v.
- Individuals who have experienced sexual assault and abuse are significantly more likely to experience depression, anxiety, despair, trauma symptoms, self-harm and suicidal ideation and be service users of mental health services.
- Recognition that the needs and types of support for adults and children and young people will be different and the response should be tailored accordingly.

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Partnerships must demonstrate an appropriate approach to safeguarding and responding to sexual assault and abuse in communities, which is evidence based, trauma informed and scrutinised by the Sexual Assault and Abuse (SAA) Board to inform understanding of local needs. The SAA Board holds the multi-agency regional governance for sexual assault and abuse and is where this strategy is housed. A stronger evidence base of what works is needed and will be embedded into all interventions to protect victims of sexual assault and abuse.

Impact of Sexual Assault and Abuse

Sexual assault and abuse can have a lifelong impact on a person. It can take many years for an individual to disclose sexual assault or abuse, particularly those people who have been abused or assaulted as a child. For children; discovery is more common than disclosure and non-verbal cues and behaviour change are often the first signs that abuse has or is occurring. Evidence shows us that some of the most prevalent reasons why women and girls in particular do not report abuse is the fear of being blamed/shamed or of not being believed (CSEW, 2018 Table 23).^{vi} Victim blaming compounds a person's trauma and does not allow them to seek the support that they may want or need.

The trauma caused by sexual assault and abuse can be further exacerbated if the response that an individual receives when the abuse is discovered or disclosed is not met with choice, empowerment and support. The key is to ensure responses to sexual assault and abuse are trauma informed.

The impact of any sexual assault or abuse is largely hidden and often not fully understood by public society. The damage and devastation caused by sexual assault and abuse can be enormous and varied. Trauma manifests differently; it is repressive and can be triggered latently; often leading to bouts of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress. Any aspect of someone's life can be affected, leading them to struggle to cope with everyday activities. The effects of sexual assault and abuse present in different ways for different individuals; the common thread being serious compound trauma.^{vii}

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Impact of Sexual Assault and Abuse

Service quality for victims of crime is important. Both statutory and voluntary sector specialist agencies provide access to support throughout a person's lifetime but don't all have the capability to offer recurring or long term support. Commissioners of sexual assault and abuse services now need to work towards an approach focusing on longevity of access to allow for lifelong care and support and to ensure that there is no disparity between the offers of support to all members of society in an inclusive, person-centred and trauma informed way by using models that recognise the trauma that people have faced in their lives holistically and structure systems around recognising and responding to that trauma. Through co-production the needs of individuals can be better reflected and their feedback used to shape future service provision.

Prevalence

National picture

Nationally sexual assault and abuse disproportionately affect women and girls with 1 in 5 females estimated to experience sexual assault and abuse from the age of 16 years old and 1 in 25 males estimated to experience sexual assault and abuse within the same age bracket (CSEW, 2018).^{viii} The prevalence of sexual assault and abuse experienced by children under 16 years is estimated to encompass 7.5% of the current adult population (CSEW, 2020).^{ix} To caveat this it is important to recognise that under-reporting means the true prevalence of sexual assault, abuse and exploitation is not fully understood.

As hidden crimes, only around 10-15% (CSEW 2018)^x of incidents become known to policing. Currently only 1.4 percent of reported rape offences are prosecuted in England and Wales (Home Office 2020).^{xi} The difficulties that the criminal justice process faces are starkly seen by the calls for reform and the work ongoing within government and through several recent national rape inspections to identify the areas in which improvements need to be made.

Regional picture

Within the period 2014-2019 the West Midlands recorded on average an increase of reporting or identification of incidents of sexual assault and abuse. This data comprises of the following –

- West Midlands Police – Since 2014, reported adult rape offences have increased by over 40%. Since 2014, reported child rape offences have increased by over 55%.^{xii}

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- SARC – Rising initially; since 2017 there have been a stable pattern of referrals for Adult SARC remaining around 420-450 referrals per year.
- Specialist support providers – Referrals for therapeutic services have risen by 53% from 2014 to 2019 (based on monitoring data to the OPCC from CRASAC).
- Health – Since 2014 safeguarding referrals for adults have risen almost 8 fold. For children, safeguarding referrals have yo-yoed significantly across time period reflecting great changes in the data seen (based on data from Birmingham & Solihull CCG).

The West Midlands Strategic Police and Crime Board Hidden crimes paper of January 2020 (2019/20)^{xiii} citing the Data Driven Insights (January 2020) paper^{xiv} highlighted that nearly 50% of all sexual assault and abuse reports are filed due to victim attrition taking place either at the very outset of an investigation or pre-charge. Attrition can happen due to length of time, re-triggering of trauma, the personal and intrusive nature of the investigation, contextual risk factors, re-exploitation and/or the difficulty to move forward due to these factors. Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA's) are the important link to ensure that victims get independent support and advice to help them make decisions around both the criminal justice process and their own holistic needs and outcomes. The attrition rate and poor criminal justice outcomes demonstrate the work needed to identify where policy and process can help and support victim engagement through the criminal justice system journey.

In 2020 as the Covid-19 pandemic swept the UK, the risk of abuse from within the home rose. Reporting of domestic abuse to West Midlands Police escalated to the highest levels ever seen. Children and young people were at further risk of child abuse from within the home and online harms. The inability of the population to leave their homes and/or seek support has led to a concerning national increase in multiple forms of abuse and neglect. Disclosure of interpersonal abuse usually occurs historically so it is important to ensure communities are aware of the support and services available to them and know where to go when they need help. Now more than ever it is crucial to be present and available to those in need, to act quickly to support the agencies delivering sexual assault and abuse services and strengthen their abilities to supply services.

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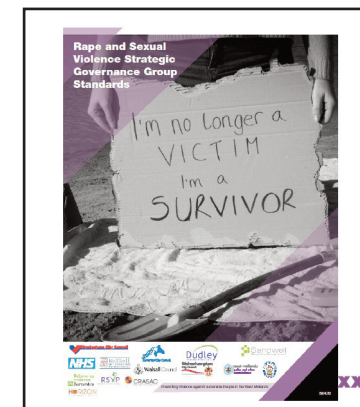
Overarching Strategies

This strategy is underpinned by the following national strategies and guidelines (right click to access documents on e-copy) and using the Strategic Direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services, Lifelong care for victims and survivors: 2018-2023^{xv} as the primary source to create the West Midlands Sexual Assault and Abuse Strategy 2020-2023.

National –



Local –

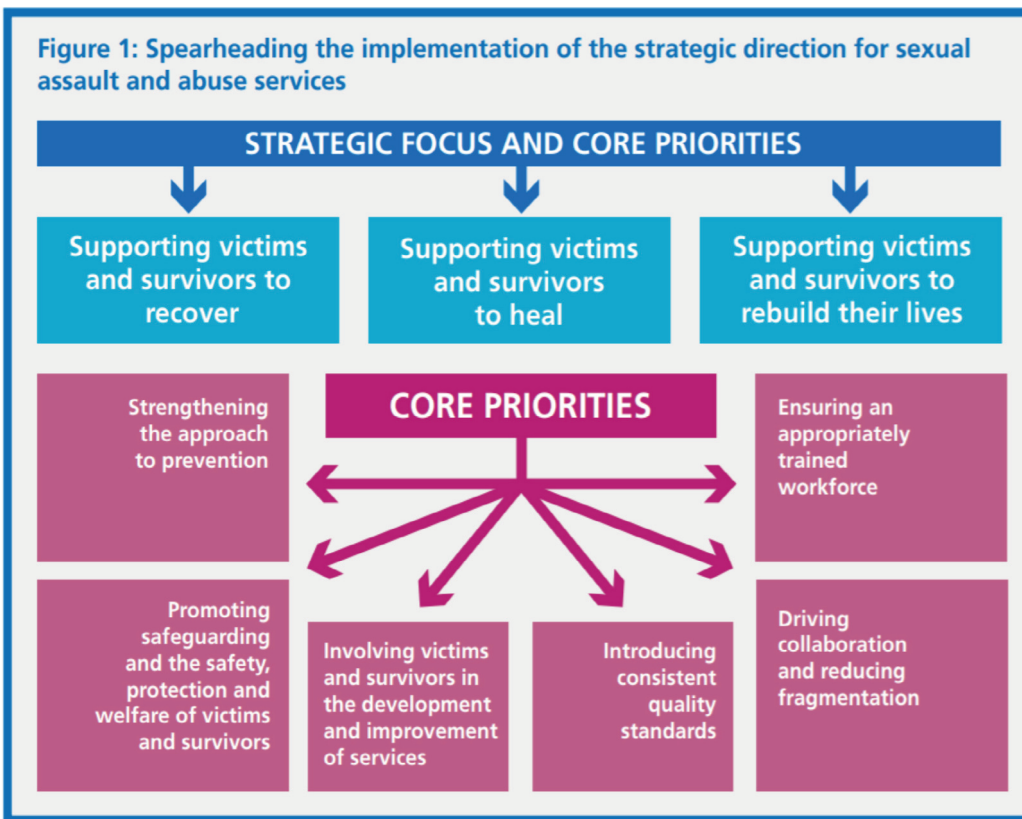


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West Midlands Priorities

The West Midlands is embedding locally the national NHSE Strategic Direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services, Lifelong care for victims and survivors: 2018 - 2023^{xxi} and the six core priorities held within it which are as follows –

Figure 1: Spearheading the implementation of the strategic direction for sexual assault and abuse services



Additional regional priorities –

- 1) Education for children and young people on consent, healthy relationships and respect.
- 2) Adopting multi-agency contextual safeguarding approaches to prevent sexual assault and abuse
- 3) Breaking down barriers to support for victims of sexual assault and abuse.
- 4) Longer-term solutions & securing provision for specialised services offering support.
- 5) Regional & National research agendas and evoking best practice.

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West Midlands Priorities

The Sexual Assault and Abuse (SAA) Board holds the governance for the West Midlands Sexual Assault and Abuse Strategy and it's action plan is based around the six core priorities of the NHSE Strategic Direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services, Lifelong care for victims and survivors: 2018-2023.	
What this means.....	How to achieve this.....
The SAA Board and wider Exploitation and Abuse Board structure has strategic oversight from the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) who own the first priority "Strengthening the approach to prevention."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with the West Midlands VRU through regular intervention, coordination of the Exploitation and Abuse Boards and quarterly monitoring of the action plans and outcomes of the SAA Board (through the VRU's Programme Board). • Work towards further interventions in the preventative space; through trauma informed work with children and young people referencing best practice and contextual safeguarding, tailoring training to professionals, through targeted interventions in the perpetrator arena. • Strengthen the link into education using the new Relationship & Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education to support young people's understanding of healthy relationships.
The membership of the SAA Board will proactively engage through its strategic links to local and regional safeguarding partnerships, boards and community safety partnerships to ensure that "Promoting safeguarding and the safety, protection and welfare of victims and survivors" is a key strand running through the board and its wider work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the pathways and ensure that routes into sexual assault and abuse services are promoted, communicated and publicised. • Use priority six's aim to establish exploitation and abuse training in all partner agencies to ensure employees know what to do when they have concerns about the safety and welfare of an individual or family. • Get connected with the Safeguarding Partnership Boards' strategic priorities and learning from Safeguarding Practice Reviews (SPR) and Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR). • Support the relationship and governance through the West Midlands Community Safety Partnership to ensure issues are responded to in an appropriate and timely manner, supporting partner agencies through multi-agency campaigns.
The Police and Crime Commissioner's Victim's Commission and future Victim's voice work planned ensures that the voices of victims are strengthened through "Involving victims and survivors in the development and improvement of services."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pledge to use the voices of victims and survivors to change services for the better. Be creative in gathering sources of feedback; directly from individuals, through the Victim' Commission and through the Sexual Violence Consortia specialist providers. • Use multi-faceted avenues to gather feedback and look to change process, policy and outcomes for victims of crime through co-production and co-design.
The previous West Midlands Rape and Sexual Violence Strategic Governance Group Standards published in 2016 are being refreshed to sit alongside this strategy updating and "Introducing consistent quality standards."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through co-production; refresh and republish the regional Sexual Assault and Abuse standards to align with this strategy and require partner agencies across the West Midlands to meet the same consistent standards in their response to sexual assault and abuse focusing on prevention, intervention and enforcement.
The SAA board has a commissioning sub-group to support "Driving collaboration and reducing fragmentation" and help identify gaps, strengthen pathways and ensure lifelong care and support for victims and survivors in the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with multi-agency commissioning partners i.e. NHSE, CCG, LA, PCC and national funds via MoJ and Home Office to look at service provision for sexual assault and abuse services within the West Midlands.^{xxii} • Use victim and survivor feedback and academic input to shape the basis of this work. • Ensure that there is a local plan in each of the seven West Midlands metropolitan areas which prioritises and owns sexual assault and abuse; requires a recent needs assessment, local strategy and houses the strategy under a local governance structure.
Improving on the RSVSG's 2016 standards to update the workforce training requirements for partners "Ensuring an appropriately trained workforce" and ensuring employers are providing a safe and supportive working environment with sexual harassment policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work through the Exploitation and Abuse Boards to ensure that all partner agencies have in place joined up trauma informed training programmes with core competencies for exploitation and abuse. • Work with the West Midlands Police Sexual Harassment Project Officer to create an effective sexual harassment policy and share learning to support other agencies in establishing their own policies.

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Sexual Assault and Abuse (SAA) Board

The West Midlands Sexual Assault and Abuse (SAA) Board has been established to ensure that there is an effective joined up approach to preventing, identifying and responding to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk of or experiencing sexual assault and abuse across the West Midlands metropolitan area.

The Board provides strategic governance to implement and endorse the national Sexual Assault and Abuse strategy (SAAS) for the West Midlands region which includes oversight for the seven West Midlands metropolitan authorities and includes membership from the following partner agencies -

- Health and Social care
- Local Authorities
- Criminal Justice Services
- Specialist Third Sector Agencies
- Academic Institutes

The Board is responsible for the development and delivery of multi-agency strategies which through partnership with local authorities, police and health agencies; **prevent** children, young people and adults from being harmed through sexual assault, abuse and exploitation in the West Midlands Police Force area; **protect** those who have been harmed; **pursue** offenders who have harmed them; and ensure that key stakeholders are effectively contributing towards delivery of the Board's priorities.

The Board encompasses the priorities as outlined in the embedded NHSE Strategic Direction for Sexual Assault and Abuse Services, Lifelong care for victims and survivors: 2018-2023^{xxiii} within its action plan. The Board's core priorities for 2020/21 are as follows –

- Ensure that there are local sexual assault and abuse plans housed in each of the seven local areas to embed the SAAS.
- Include workforce requirements for trauma-informed training in sexual assault, abuse and exploitation for professionals in related fields (see SAAS) within the quality standards.
- Require all providers to develop workforce plans, identify training needs and work with commissioners to ensure that they have plans for meeting any gaps.
- Look to better align and support pathways and awareness of services for victims to allow a smoother transition after disclosure for support and help.

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Exploitation and Abuse Board Structure

The West Midlands Sexual Assault and Abuse (SAA) Board is part of a wider structure of four Exploitation and Abuse Boards which have been established to ensure that there is an effective joined up approach to preventing, identifying and responding to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk of or experiencing exploitation and abuse across the West Midlands. The other Boards have priorities over –

- Domestic Abuse
- Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking
- Criminal Exploitation & Missing

Joint Action Plan

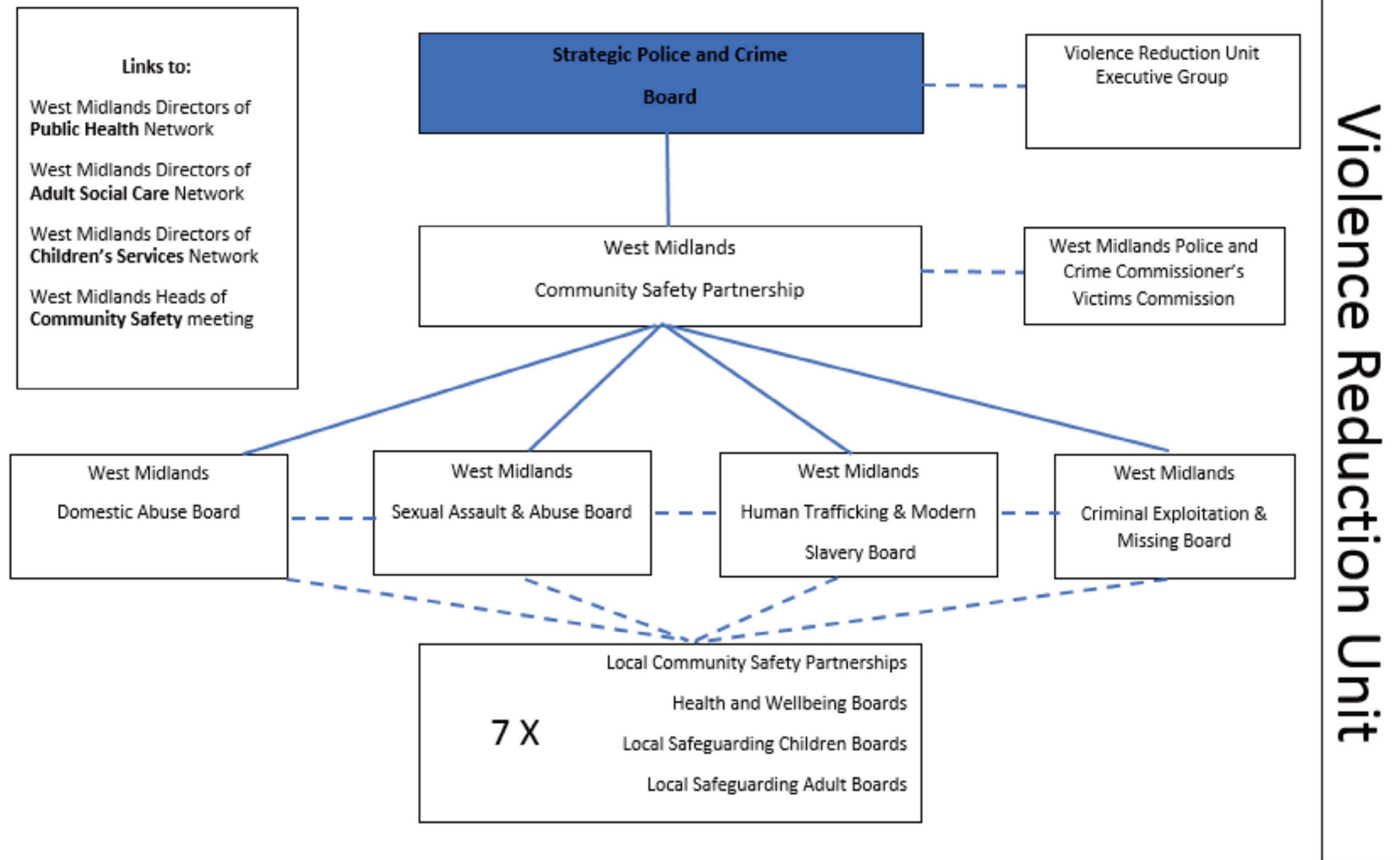
The Boards as a collaborative hold the following joint priorities that they coordinate regionally together –

- Lead on designing and developing multi-agency whole system approaches to exploitation and abuse.
- Develop workforce strategies and plans to ensure that key professionals are equipped and trained to effectively prevent, identify and respond to exploitation and abuse.
- Develop sector-led improvement programmes and identify and share good practice.
- Lead on the development of datasets/dashboards in order to further develop the region's understanding of exploitation and abuse and its impact and use this to inform commissioning and development of service responses.

The overarching governance structure for the boards are reflected in the diagram on the following page, requiring six monthly reporting to the West Midlands Community Safety Partnership, the Violence Reduction Board, Directors of Children and Adult Services Networks, Local Community Safety Partnerships, Victim's Commission and other related forums such as the Local Criminal Justice Boards e.g. Victims and Witnesses Delivery group. The Board will work with all members from third sector specialists through to local safeguarding partnerships in order to achieve the above priorities.

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The strategy will be monitored through the following governance structure –



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Ensuring Equality in the Response to Sexual Assault and Abuse

As partners, we are committed to the principles of equality and diversity. No person should receive less favourable treatment, directly or indirectly because of a protected characteristic relevant to their person. Sexual assault and abuse is widespread throughout every socio-economic group and occurs across all neighbourhoods and communities, amongst all ethnicities, gender identities, ages, disabilities, relationships, sexualities, religions or beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds but certain groups are disproportionately impacted.

Sexual assault and abuse are gendered crimes; predominantly affecting women and girls. This is why the response to sexual assault and abuse needs to ensure that it sits within a Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) agenda. It also affects women who are pregnant and during maternity. There is significant evidence that shows that those going through gender reassignment or identifying as transgender are also at a significantly higher risk of abuse.^{xxiv}

Sexual assault and abuse also disproportionately impacts children and vulnerable adults and those who have been within a care setting. Reporting or access to support is harder for Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Transgender plus (LGBT+) and Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, men, those with learning disabilities, sex workers and those within the prison population.

It is important to utilise an intersectional lens in acknowledging the different and unique experiences of discrimination that occurs through sexual assault and abuse. In identifying under reporting within communities and raising awareness of reporting options within those groups we can help reduce the health and social inequalities that permeate this agenda. The aim is through training staff that they have awareness of diversity and culture and are able to support communities in further breaking down the barriers to the unhelpful rhetoric, myths and stereotypes so often found around sexual assault and abuse.

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Prevention

In changing the system for victims and survivors of sexual assault and abuse it is crucial to address how perpetrators of said crimes are dealt with; the criminal justice response, the focus on rehabilitation and what programmes are used regionally to address and attempt to change the behaviour of these individuals. Further work is needed to look at best practice. More emphasis is needed on preventing crime and to look through ingenuity at violence reduction. Through the Exploitation and Abuse Board's governance structure there is collaborative working with West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and their partners. The focus will move away from a reactive attitude to crime towards a preventative one; through a public health approach.^{xxxv}

It is important to ensure there are provisions and services to manage and identify perpetrators of sexual assault and abuse; risk assess and address the basis of the offending behaviour to attempt to limit it, support behaviour change and reduce access to opportunities where offences could occur. There is a need to support those with additional needs and vulnerabilities. For children exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours there is a need to ensure there is provisions for support, education and behaviour change to help them to move healthily into adult society.

Review and Audit

Decisions on how to implement and monitor the strategy and its related standards will remain with the multi-agency Sexual Assault and Abuse (SAA) Board, reporting six monthly to the regional West Midlands Community Safety Partnership Board, the Violence Reduction Board, Directors of Children and Adult Services Networks, Local Community Safety Partnerships, Victim's Commission and other related forums such as the Local Criminal Justice Boards e.g. Victims and Witnesses Delivery group.

An audit of the SAA strategy and standards will be completed every two years with the next planned for autumn 2022 to ensure that both are being adhered and worked to by all partner agencies.

Author

This strategy was written by West Midlands Sexual Assault and Abuse Coordinator Jennifer Alder (funded by NHS England and NHS Improvement - Midlands and employed by West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner) in consultation with regional multi-agency partners and members from the regional Sexual Assault and Abuse (SAA) Board throughout the summer and autumn of 2020.

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