

Your voice matters Domestic Abuse Commissioning survey results

Introduction

Shropshire Council's Domestic Abuse Prevention Team (DAPT) ran the Shropshire Domestic Abuse Commissioning Survey from **2nd to the 23rd of June 2025** to help shape future support services. Commissioning means identifying local needs and arranging services to best support those affected by domestic abuse. The survey was open to all Shropshire residents, including those with lived experience, professionals, and anyone wanting to share their views.

A total of **305 people took part**, and the team is grateful to everyone who contributed. The feedback **highlights what's working, where improvements are needed, and how services can be more inclusive and effective.**

Participant Snapshot

- **Gender:** Most participants identified as female (**243**). There were **54** male participants and **3** non-binary. **1** participant said other and **4** preferred not to say.
- **Sexuality:** The majority were heterosexual (**277**), with smaller numbers identifying as bisexual (**14**), gay or lesbian (**5**), or other (**2**). **7** participants preferred not to say.
- **Disability:** Most participants (**230**) reported not having a disability, while **11** participants preferred not to disclose. Among the **64** participants who did have a disability, conditions ranged from neurodivergence and mental health issues to physical and sensory impairments, as well as hidden disabilities.
- **Ethnicity:** Most participants identified as White (**259**), with a few from mixed or multiple ethnic backgrounds (**2**), Asian or Asian British (**1**), Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African (**2**), and other (**3**).
- **Age:** Ages of participants ranged from 7 to 75+, with most between 45–54 years old (**89**). Overall there was very few participants who were under 25 or over 65.
- **Location:** **45%** live or work in central Shropshire, with others spread across the county.

While this survey provides valuable insights, it represents only a small portion of Shropshire's population. Therefore, the findings are being used alongside insights from the Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment, lived experience advisory groups, and market engagement events to ensure the commissioning process reflects the voices and needs of the wider community.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

Participants were asked whether existing domestic abuse services met their individual needs and gender identity in terms of accessibility and inclusivity. Of those surveyed, **106** responded yes, **50** responded no, **108** were neutral, and **3** preferred not to answer. Among the **50** participants who indicated that services were not accessible and inclusive based on their individual needs and gender identity, **36** stated that they believed a specialist service tailored to their specific requirements and identity would be advantageous.

Participants were also asked what would make accessing support easier, top responses from the options provided included a safe and confidential environment (**38**) and flexible appointment times (**37**) such as evenings and weekends and clear information about rights and available services (**32**).

Awareness

Participants were asked which types of relationships between a victim and a perpetrator of domestic abuse are you aware of.

Most participants were fully aware of domestic abuse between intimate partners, awareness was lower for other relationship types such as child-to-parent abuse, extended family, and sibling abuse. This

highlights the need for broader education on the varied dynamics of domestic abuse.

Support

Participants were asked; if you needed domestic abuse support which of the list provided, would you like to be available? They could select multiple options. The top answers were **253** participants said they would prefer one-to-one support, **258** wanted access to a 24/7 helpline and **237** wanted advice and guidance for family/friends to support victim/perpetrator.

Participants received a list of support options and were asked to indicate who should have access to these forms of support. Responses indicated that support for victims and children was considered necessary, and there was also acknowledgement of the need to provide some support options to perpetrators.

Community

Participants were asked about the role of the wider community in preventing domestic abuse and could select multiple options. The most selected option was creating safe spaces where victims feel heard and believed (**278**). This was followed closely by raising awareness and challenging harmful stereotypes (**277**).

Policies

150 participants said their organisation has a domestic abuse policy, **62** were unsure, **36** said no, and **57** found the question not



applicable. Additionally, **268** participants did not know if their community group or parish council has such a policy, indicating a need for clearer communication and greater visibility across sectors.

Specialist Services

90% felt it's important that services are delivered by a combination of 'by and for' groups or specialist providers to ensure support is shaped by and for the communities it serves.

Improvement

65% of respondents (**197** participants) indicated that there is a lack of understanding and competency in addressing domestic abuse across different communities in Shropshire.

These **197** participants were then provided with multiple options of how understanding and competency in addressing domestic abuse across different communities could be improved. The top three responses are detailed below:

- **161** participants said "involve survivors from diverse backgrounds in shaping services and training materials".
- **150** participants said "expanding training for domestic abuse professionals to include cultural norms, religious sensitivities, and community-specific barriers".
- **139** participants said "community partnerships, working with local leaders, faith groups, and grassroots

organisations to build and improve outreach".

- Other responses included "commissioning by and for services" (**102**). Participants also said "provide materials in multiple languages and ensure services are accessible for people with disabilities" (**125**).

Funding Priorities

Participants ranked budget priorities as follows:

1. Support for victims
2. Support for children and young people
3. Prevention (e.g. education and awareness)
4. Safe accommodation
5. Perpetrator interventions

Lived Experience Insights

More than half of survey respondents (**166**) reported lived experience with domestic abuse. These participants were given a series of statements regarding their experience of accessing services and could select multiple responses relevant to them.

48 respondents indicated that services were available to meet their needs.

The other key findings were

- **73** participants experienced barriers such as stigma, language difficulties, or lack of awareness.
- **74** respondents noted that services were not available at suitable times or locations.
- **55** were unaware of available safe accommodation options.



Participants who did not seek specialist support mentioned lack of awareness and stigma as reasons. They also noted barriers related to age, gender, disability, family circumstances, and inadequate responses from police or social services. Suggested improvements included better training, single-sex options, and addressing post-separation abuse. Male survivors also noted stigma and exclusion.

Safe Accommodation

Of the **166** participants with experience of domestic abuse, **21** accessed safe accommodation, while an additional **5** participants accessed safe accommodation, but left within a month.

Participants who did not access accommodation (**124**) or left within a month (**5**) reported multiple reasons (multiple responses allowed):

- **60** stated they did not need or want it.
- **17** noted that no accommodation was available.
- **8** indicated feeling pressure from the perpetrator to return.
- **5** said they did not like the accommodation, and another 5 stated it did not meet their needs.
- **3** reported that it did not meet their gender needs.
- **2** cited having too many children or insufficient space.
- **1** mentioned pressure from other agencies to leave due to unsuitability for their children.

Participants who accessed safe accommodation provided feedback on the facilities and support offered to them and any children accompanying them. Some described the refuge as helpful and staff as supportive, while others identified challenges including inaccessible facilities, limited suitable housing, and restricted follow-up services. Several participants suggested improvements in coordination, accessibility, and investment in skilled professionals.

Next Steps

The survey findings will help the Domestic Abuse Prevention Team make informed decisions about commissioning services that are inclusive, accessible, and shaped by lived experience across Shropshire.

If you are interested in sharing your experience or ideas?

Contact Kate at

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Kate is our Lived experience project Officer who is keen to hear from and amplify your voices in upcoming projects and much more.

To find out more about her role have a look at this [Kate's Blog](#) or get in touch and she will arrange a chat with you.

