



Crossing Pathways - Integrating Best Practice within Health and Domestic Abuse

Network Terms of Reference

Context

Domestic Abuse is a public health issue. Domestic abuse can seriously impact a survivor's physical, emotional, mental and sexual health – this can be both chronic and acute in impact. Health settings are often the first and/or only point of contact for many survivors, this means health services are often a lifeline for survivors (for example see [Safelives evidence of impacts of DA](#) and [The role of healthcare services in addressing domestic abuse \(parliament.uk\)](#)).

All survivors deserve safe, trauma-informed, empathetic and appropriate responses to abuse in all health settings to support them to rebuild their lives free from abuse. From our work we know that this good practice does exist but is inconsistent. Some healthcare professionals face barriers to enquiring about domestic abuse, and there are gaps in joint working and referral pathways. The Crossing Pathways – Integrating Best practice within Health and Domestic Abuse network exists to support key stakeholders to drive forward systemwide change to address this.

Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse

Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse (STADA) is a national charity bringing communities together to end domestic abuse. We exist to keep survivors and their families safe, hold abusers to account, and end domestic abuse by transforming the way organisations and individuals think about, prevent, and respond to it. We do this through an approach that we pioneered, for which we are known across the UK and internationally, called the Coordinated Community Response ([CCR](#)).

We pioneered the “Whole Health” approach to domestic abuse, recognising the need for a systemic approach to responding to domestic abuse across the health economy. This was evidenced through the [Pathfinder Project](#) (Which STADA led on in partnership with AVA, Imkaan, IRISi and SafeLives) and the recommendations from this are included in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Guidance.

Following the recommendations made in the [Statutory Guidance issued under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#), STADA was awarded a contract by the Home Office to understand and drive improvements in the health response to domestic abuse across England. This funding for STADA to deliver the Whole Health project has now come to an end. The Crossing Pathways Network was established during this project and over the past two years has been instrumental in mapping the health and domestic abuse landscape, increasing collaboration and coordination between sectors, and ultimately improving responses to domestic abuse survivors. STADA recognise how key the network is in continuing this work together, rather than in siloes, and have therefore committed to continuing to facilitate the network.

Purpose and Aims

The purpose of the Crossing Pathways – Integrating Best Practice within Health and Domestic Abuse network is to improve knowledge, pathways, and responses to domestic abuse in the health system by promoting a coordinated community response to domestic abuse and strong partnership work between health and domestic abuse sectors.

To support and drive system change, Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse have set up a network of eight regional multi-agency Crossing Pathways groups across 9 regions of England. Building on knowledge from a wealth of resources (including [Pathfinder](#), [In Search of Excellence](#), [Survivor Voices](#) and [The Crossing Pathways Project](#)), and with consideration to legislation and statutory frameworks, each group brings together health and domestic abuse specialists and system decision makers. The aim is to work collectively to develop and embed best practice, effective organisation and sustainable systemic change to elevate health's response within a CCR framework.

The activities of this group will be reviewed regularly and may include:

- Applying and enhancing Pathfinder Toolkit 2020 and Crossing Pathways 2025 recommendations within health and domestic abuse sectors.
- Providing opportunities for working together, problem solving and sharing ideas on how the health response to domestic abuse can be improved.
- Disseminating resources and learning on domestic abuse within health settings from training, case studies, Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews and research through an intersectional lens.
- Sharing knowledge from our Health Survivor Network and wider Survivor Voice work
- Sharing national developments in domestic abuse and health practice.
- Showcasing examples of strong innovation or good practice.
- Creating equal space for healthcare professionals across disciplines, domestic abuse specialists, system decision makers and experts by experience to connect and strengthen links.
- Learning from systems, identifying concerns and themes regionally and nationally.
- Informing and influencing the development of national policy and practice by collaborating with the Crossing Pathways National Leadership Group (see diagram in Three health and domestic abuse forums section).

Membership

The ambition is that each regional group will include full representation across health and domestic abuse sectors, from all respective Integrated Care Systems within the region. Example members include strategic and/or clinical leads from the following organisations:

- Acute Trusts
- Mental Health Trusts
- Community Trusts
- IRISi
- Integrated Care Boards
- Primary Care Networks
- DA specialist organisations including By and Fors and perpetrator services
- Domestic Abuse Partnerships
- Local Authorities
- Adult and Children's Social Care
- NHSE
- DAC Office
- Survivor Voices
- Wider health partners such as ambulance trusts, dentistry, ophthalmology, drug and alcohol, sexual health, reproductive health

Standing Together will invite guests from other agencies, organisations and survivors to share expertise and inform thematic discussions.

Regions

The five regional Crossing Pathways groups cover the following nine regions of England: North West, North East, Yorkshire and Humber, West Midlands, East Midlands, East of England, South West, South East, and London. .

Accountability

Members are expected to regularly attend and participate in Crossing Pathways meetings, and to delegate a representative to cover any planned absences.

In the spirit of collaboration and a Coordinated Community Response (CCR) approach, each member organisation's representative will remain accountable to their own organisation feeding into and back on activities and key discussions arising from the group. We seek to highlight areas of best practice, learning and innovation to support leaders to collaborate, influence change and shape models of practice locally.

Each member will also consider how they can link with other relevant local & regional strategic and operational groups feeding into and back on activities and key themes where relevant and proportionate to do so to meet the group's purpose & aims.

Lastly, each member of this group will continue to take a stand to amplify the core values of the Crossing Pathways – Integrating Best Practice within Health and Domestic Abuse within their organisations and improve their workplaces response to domestic abuse.

Frequency

Meetings are held virtually every 2 months to keep the drive, passion and improvement plans for the region's best practice response to domestic abuse ignited whilst also recognising the capacity of colleagues across sectors.

Confidentiality

Members are required to respect confidentiality of specific topics discussed at the meeting as requested by other members.

Documents circulated by the chair of the group, its members and the notes from the meetings can be shared externally unless expressly stated as confidential or in draft form.

Any safeguarding concerns must be escalated in line with your own individual organisational policies and procedures.

Data and Information

When you join the Crossing Pathways Network, the following information is recorded and retained: Date Joined, Region, Type of Organisation, Name of Organisation, Role, Name of Member, and Email Address. This information is used by STADA to report on regional engagement levels and to map the types of organisations participating in the network, helping to identify any gaps.

If you are forwarded an invitation to a Crossing Pathways meeting by a colleague and choose to attend, in order to be added to the distribution list for future meeting invitations and network updates, you can provide your email address to the Health Coordinator facilitating the meeting.

Members may request to be removed from the distribution list at any time by emailing health@standingtogether.org.uk. Upon such a request, STADA will delete your personal information (Name and Email Address). For reporting purposes, STADA will retain a record of the Date of Removal and the Reason for Removal.

At the beginning of each calendar year, members who have been part of the Network for over six months but have not attended any meetings will be contacted via email to confirm whether they wish to remain in the Crossing Pathways Network. If no response is given, they will be removed from the distribution list by the date specified in the confirmation email.

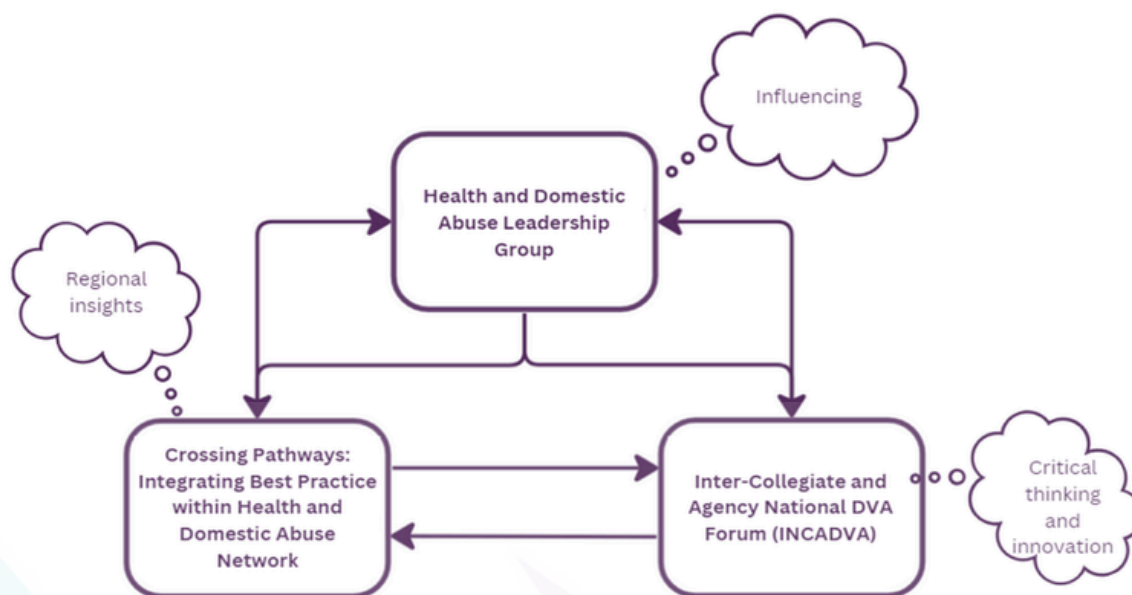
Values

As a collective our values determine our priorities and ethos, these will be:

- **Taking a stand:** We will be bold, brave and courageous and take a stand for all survivors' rights, wellbeing and safety.
- **Inclusivity/intersectionality:** We will continuously learn and widen our lens to include the perspective of all survivors and specialists so no one is ever left behind, recognising that members of the group may have lived experience of domestic abuse.
- **Honesty and Transparency:** With ongoing integrity we will be truthful, transparent and show humility where we need to make a sustainable change as an organisation and as local/regional partnerships and show understanding in a cross-sector group where there may be different perspectives and ideas.
- **Collaboration:** Working together to improve the intersection of health and domestic abuse in line with a CCR model: In Search of Excellence – Standing Together.
- **Putting survivors at the heart of everything we do:** We will always centre our work around survivors needs, voices and experience and learn from experts by experience.
- **Informed by evidence:** We will draw on research, data and evidence to inform the groups.

The Health and Domestic Abuse Forums

The five Crossing Pathways groups are integrated to feed in and out of the well-established INCADVA forum and the Health and Domestic Abuse Leadership Group. This creates a responsive framework to drive forward system change.



Contact Information

Region	Health Coordinator	Health Inbox
North	Isabella Hunt i.hunt@standingtogether.org.uk	health@standingtogether.org.uk
South		
East of England		
Midlands		
London		

Please note, these Terms of Reference can be reviewed at any time and remain flexible as these groups evolve and embed.