

Strategy for the Provision of Support within Safe Accommodation

Southampton City Council





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Introduction

Domestic abuse (DA) is an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence. In most cases it is perpetrated by a partner or ex-partner, but the perpetrator may also be a family member or carer. DA is very common. It is frequently experienced by women and perpetrated by men. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (the Act) aims to transform the national response to DA by:

- preventing offending, protecting survivors and children, and ensuring they have access to support;
- placing a range of duties on statutory agencies, such as local authorities and criminal justice system agencies; and,
- requiring relevant local authorities including Southampton City Council (SCC) to establish a DA multi-agency partnership board, carry out a safe accommodation needs assessment and publish a strategy for the provision of accommodation-based support in their areas before 5 January 2022.

These duties under the Act are separate to local authority housing duties under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002. The Act does not place a requirement on authorities to provide DA survivors with accommodation.

Safe accommodation for the purposes of s 57 of the Act is defined by the Domestic Abuse Support (Relevant Accommodation and Housing Benefit and Universal Credit Sanctuary Schemes) (Amendment) Regulations 2021. It includes accommodation provided by a local housing authority, a private registered provider of social housing, or a registered charity whose objects include the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse, which is:

- refuge accommodation;
- specialist safe accommodation;
- dispersed accommodation;
- second stage accommodation;
- part of a sanctuary scheme; or,



• other accommodation designated by the local housing authority, private registered provider of social housing or registered charity as domestic abuse emergency accommodation.

Bed and breakfast accommodation (accommodation which is not separate and self-contained premises, and in which any one of a toilet, personal washing facilities or cooking facilities are shared by more than one household) is specifically excluded from the definition of safe accommodation.

SCC has been provided with funding for 2021/22 by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to carry out its duties under the Act by commissioning services to meet the need for support in safe accommodation in its area. Future years' funding has yet to be allocated by Government The recent spending Review made a commitment to 3 years funding, the level of which is still to be confirmed. SCC's executive appointed a Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership Board (the Board) in August 2021. The Board met for the first time on 5 October 2021. SCC has undertaken a needs assessment to inform both this strategy and a forthcoming 'whole-system' strategy for tackling domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (to be published in 2022). This Strategy for the Provision of Support in Safe Accommodation will form part of the whole-system strategy.

This is SCC's first Strategy for the Provision of Support in Safe Accommodation. The strategy sets out how SCC, in partnership with members of the new Board, will explore ways to improve the offer of support in safe accommodation - to meet identified need - over a three-year period, taking into consideration any available and approved expenditure of New Burdens funding. Actions by SCC and its partners will enhance existing services, pathways and structures and improve the gathering of data and intelligence. There are opportunities to make links between Part 4 of the Act and other areas, especially those that relate to housing. There is also potential for Hampshire-wide approaches to be developed.

The adoption of the Safe Accommodation Strategy is the first stage of a review of Southampton's approach to tackling serious violence, violence against women and girls and sexual violence in all its forms. A new Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy, incorporating violence against women and girls will be developed in 2022 for implementation from 2022 to 2027.

Key facts and figures

2.3 million (5.5%) adults in	Women (7.3%) are more	Nationally, DA is most	75% of domestic homicides	Nationally, DA is a leading	Seeking safety harms
England and Wales	likely than men (3.6%) to	prevalent for 16-19 year	take place in the home.	cause of homelessness for	housing prospects. 53% of
experienced DA in 2019-20.	experience DA. Women are			women.	women lost a secure
	more likely to be victims of				



	homicide, experience high levels of fear, repeat victimisation, sexual violence and serious physical harm.	olds (9.5%) and 20-24 year- olds (7.4%).		Approximately 10% of presentations to Southampton Housing Needs are DA related. A homelessness hostel in Southampton reported that 90% of female residents experienced DA.	tenancy after accessing refuge.
There were 3,156 victims of domestic flagged crime identified in Southampton in 2020/21. 27.4% of domestic crime victims experienced more than 1 crime in the year, with repeat victims accounting for 50.7% of domestic crimes.	Hampshire Police data shows 70% of DA survivors are female. DA services show an even higher proportion of women accessing services. Most survivors requiring safe accommodation are female.	19% of Southampton's population is 15-24, compared 12% nationally. The specialist young people's DA service in Southampton received 1204 referrals 2018-21.	Nationally and locally, additional barriers to accessing safety are experienced by some survivors, such as Black and minority ethnic communities, LGBT+, disabled, and survivors who have No Recourse to Public Funds or Multiple Disadvantage.	There is a 30% shortage of refuge spaces nationally. 64% of refuge referrals are declined, with lack of space being the most common reason. 66% of referrals to refuge in Southampton are declined, with lack of space being the most common reason (20%).	62.5% of women in refuges had children and children make up the majority of survivors in refuge. Over 50% of women in Southampton refuge had children. One refuge supported 115 children (2018-21).

^{*}local data sources

Successes and Challenges for the City

Successes	Challenges
Southampton Integrated Commissioning Unit and the other independently funded. Both show examples of good practice, positive outcomes for survivors and risk reduction.	, , , , , ,



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pathways into settled accommodation (e.g. social tenancies) from refuge and survivors retaining secure tenure. Professionals regard SCC Housing positively. There is a range of Registered Providers in Southampton, some of which are also DAHA accredited.	information about current DA responses in these settings was available. There was limited data available on pathways into settled accommodation, retention of tenure and outcomes for survivors accessing social housing or PRS in response to a homelessness intervention.
There is a range of supported housing options in the city, including extra care, sheltered housing, supported living and hostels.	Hostel settings report that a high proportion of female residents have experienced DA, and that in some cases DA is a contributory factor in them accessing hostel accommodation. There is no dedicated supported housing provision for women. Little information about current responses to DA in these settings was available.
There is a specialist community DA service for the Children and Young People's (CYP) service, providing a range of interventions. Both refuges provide dedicated support for CYP. There are several supported accommodation services for CYP in the city.	Little information was available on the DA-related accommodation needs of CYP, how these are currently being met and whether provision is adequate. Limited information was available about DA responses in supported accommodation settings for CYP.
Most services responded positively to data and intelligence requests, with some providing case studies and survivor experiences. Prevalence data is very robust. There are opportunities to develop local data and intelligence through new systems, such as Care Director and the appointment of a dedicated DA Data Lead post. Contributing to regional and national data is being explored.	Limitations in data and intelligence impacted on the ability to accurately identify barriers, gaps and provision required in the needs assessment. Some case management systems require development to capture recommended data. The ability to track journeys of survivors through accommodation was limited. There needs to be an embedded approach to survivor engagement / consultation / co-production to ensure the voice of the survivor is heard.
There are established structures in place for responding to DA locally, both strategically and operationally. The Domestic and Sexual Abuse (DSA) Strategic Group was closed down to create the new Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership Board. A DSA Operational Group will be developed to	The Coordinated Community Response (CCR) 9 is not yet fully embedded locally, which impacts on the ability to respond to DA strategically and operationally and effectively coordinate the implementation of the Act, including Part Four.



support the new Board. The appointment of a DA Coordinator has been agreed and will be of significant benefit to the partnership. There are opportunities to develop the approach to DA through the DSA strategy refresh.

Priority One: Early identification, intervention and prevention

Why is this important?

Taking a prevention and early intervention approach reduces risk and harm, preventing homicide in the most serious of cases. Survivors often struggle to access the services and support they need. This is partly due to a lack of awareness of support available. Southampton survivors stated that finding out about services and options earlier would have improved their experiences.

DA is a leading cause of homelessness for women. Abuse is not always disclosed by survivors at the point of access to homeless support. DA can lead to loss of accommodation due to complaints of anti-social behaviour, rent arrears and property damage associated with the abuse. Preventing homelessness and loss of tenure achieves better outcomes for survivors and children and saves public money. Effective intervention at the earliest possible stage reduces the risk of losing accommodation and protects security of tenure.

National data shows that 85% of survivors sought help five times in the year before they got the help they needed. 7 It is vital that local services, especially housing providers, identify DA and intervene at the earliest possible stage. DAHA accreditation provides a framework for DA good practice in housing. Specialist DA services must have the expertise and knowledge to support the diversities and complex realities of survivors.

Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership Board – 3 year focus	When
Continue to deliver and seek to expand awareness raising campaigns about the signs of DA and where to access support. To address low representation of survivors with protected characteristics in services, targeted awareness raising campaigns will be delivered.	2022-2024



Map registered and supported housing providers' and work with them to develop shared approaches to identifying and responding to DA.	2022/23
Ensure, through contract requirements, staff working in commissioned specialist DA services (including refuge) have access to training on: housing law, Destitution Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC), the domestic violence rule in immigration law, economic abuse and home ownership and providing services to survivors with protected characteristics, such as, Black and minority ethnic communities, LGBT+, and people who are disabled or experience multiple disadvantage.	2022-2024
Work with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and other Local Authorities in Hampshire to explore the potential to develop training that is accessible to staff working in supported housing settings and private rental sector (PRS) landlords.	2022-2024
Work with the OPCC and other local authorities in Hampshire to further explore how to enhance safeguarding conditions and standards within the PRS HMO Licensing Regulatory Schemes to include explicit requirements regarding DA.	ТВС
Explore the with the OPCC, police and other local authorities in Hampshire the potential for engagement opportunities with local Privately Owned Housing (POH) stakeholders.	2022/23
Seek to raise awareness about DA (including referral pathways) with local PRS and POH stakeholders to improve identification / interventions.	2022/23
SCC Housing will maintain DAHA Accreditation and enhance the existing DA Champions initiative via the DAHA Champions training programme. Locally / in partnership with other local authorities in Hampshire, Registered Providers / supported housing providers will be encouraged / required (e.g. in future contracts) to attain or be working towards accreditation.	2022-2024



Across supported housing provision (prioritising those most likely to be working with survivors), start to map / develop current approaches to supporting DA survivors (e.g. routine enquiry, referral practices and trauma informed approaches).	2022/23

Priority Two: Survivors have access to a range of appropriate housing options and support services, which increase safety and prevent homelessness / loss of tenure

Why is this important?

Survivors should not have to choose between having to sell or move home to achieve safety. Many survivors experience secondary victimisation due to having to move or sell their property (rather than the perpetrator) and / or through losing security of tenure.

A Whole Housing Approach (WHA) provides a framework for DA and housing sectors to work together to address the immediate and longer-term housing needs of survivors. A WHA considers the complex realities and needs of diverse communities of survivors across all housing tenure types (social, private rented, privately owned and supported accommodation) to increase survivor accommodation sustainment and reduce homelessness. A properly coordinated WHA increases housing options and support for survivors. Increased options help remove barriers to safety and reduce inequalities for marginalised survivors.

Refuge is a vital and lifesaving crisis resource, but is not suitable for or accessible to all. Additional security measures (Sanctuary) at home can increase safety for some survivors, but others will be unable to remain in accommodation due to risk. It is crucial that there are other local options to complement these provisions. Many survivors will be in other forms accommodation-based services, such as supported housing, and it is vital these services are DA informed. Settled, secure housing, particularly after survivors have been required to move due to DA, is a critical need.

Community DA services play a vital role in supporting survivors to access housing options, which in Southampton have been historically very strong, and legal advice. Without effective professional pathway navigation, many survivors would be unable to access the support they need. While men and boys do experience DA, national and local data shows most survivors are female. DA responses must be underpinned by a gender-informed approach, with access to women-only services being vital. DA service commissioning should be underpinned by Government requirements. 10



Working together with neighbouring authorities enables pooling of resources and a proportionate approach to meeting needs of diverse survivors. It has the potential to provide funding opportunities for the 'by and for' sector, often at a disadvantage when tendering.

Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership Board – 3 year focus	When
 Review the current refuge offer of women-only services with no locality caps or restrictions and explore: the introduction of a requirement for providers to work towards WAFE 11 / Imkaan Quality Standards; 12 reviewing the suitability and capacity of existing refuge properties, within the scope of the provisions of the Act; the opportunities and funding to increase the current offer by a further 20%; and, the potential for inclusion of advocacy, therapeutic and resettlement support. 	2022-24
New DA Coordinator to scope regional and local approaches to establishing specialist safe accommodation for survivors with protected characteristics (LGBT+, Black and minority ethnic communities etc.) as well as men and boys.	2022-24
Explore opportunities to expand the offer of Sanctuary as part of homelessness prevention for survivors presenting at Housing Needs (e.g. offer of Sanctuary made with the purpose of enabling a survivor to remain in existing accommodation).	2022-24
Start to map / develop pathways for additional security measures in Registered Provider stock, including waiting times and other barriers / challenges.	2022-24
Work with Portsmouth City Council and other Local Authority partners within the region to appraise potential for a managed reciprocal arrangement with neighbouring local authorities and Registered Providers.	2022-24



Using new burdens funding to work with partners to establish a dedicated Flexible Fund, inclusive of dedicated resource pool of safety equipment such as personal safety alarms, door-bell and window alarms.	2021/22
Explore and develop safe accommodation pathways for women with complex needs experiencing DA.	2022/23
Consider extending and expanding the existing mobile advocacy pilot service (Domestic Abuse Plus Service (DAS+)) to ensure there is a sustained long-term local mobile advocacy service. Any expansion to consider the inclusion of survivors who face barriers to accessing or maintaining safe accommodation, such as men, survivors who experience multiple disadvantages or come from minority ethnic communities.	
Explore with Advice, Information and Guidance (AIG) services opportunities for survivors to have access to specialist debt / financia advice to support recovery from economic abuse and impacts on housing.	2022/23

Priority Three: The needs of children and young people (CYP) are understood and supported

Why is this important?

Southampton has a large population of CYP. Young people aged 16-24 are most likely to experience DA. Referrals to the local specialist DA CYP service are high, showing that CYP require community support in the city. Numbers of CYP (especially those 0-5) in local refuge services are high, showing that dedicated support in this setting is much needed. Local data shows that rates of DA are high in CYP known to social care, indicating that enhancing the social care response to CYP affected by DA is a priority. Education in schools on topics such as consent and healthy relationships is a vital component of an effective response to DA and professional views support this. The DA Act means that CYP are now considered to be survivors in their own right. The impact of this is not fully understood. The local DA related needs of CYP, including safe accommodation, must be fully scoped to inform future strategic planning.

Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership Board – 3 year focus	When	ı
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Ensure commissioned refuge services continue to include specialist CYP provision and where possible explore scope to expand the offer.	2021/22	
Commission a review of our High-Risk Domestic Abuse Arrangements (within the Children's MASH) and explore potential for a single, shared front door to domestic abuse support and interventions.	2021/22	
Work with CAFCAS, Family Court, Children's Services and IDVA's to explore potential to create dedicated Family Court IDVA support.	2021-23	
Ensure commissioned Community DA services continue to provide current levels of support for CYP and explore how additional funding can enhance the existing limited offer of specialist CYP service, including advocacy, therapeutic support and education.	2021/22	
Utilise learning from internal audits of children's services and IDVA case work to improve practice. Ensure workforce is aware and understands implications of children of families experiencing domestic abuse, being assessed as victims in their own right.	2021/22	
Provide perpetrator focused training to develop professional champions within our children's workforce, including health, housing and commissioned services.	2021-2022	
Provide training to practitioners working with children and families to understand the high harm pathways of abuse and violence for perpetrators of domestic abuse.	2022-2023	
Start to map / develop accommodation-based services and pathways in and out of services for young people, including the domestic abuse support available within services and where relevant, explore funding options to meet identified gaps.	2022/23	
	'	
Priority Four: DA responses are survivor-led		
Why is this important?		



This strategy recognises the importance of including the voice of survivors throughout the local response to DA so their lived experience can become a catalyst for change and the voice of the specialist sector. Many practitioners in the specialist sector are survivors themselves and have built expert knowledge over time. There is a commitment to consult with survivors and to co-produce future strategies.

Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership Board – 3 year focus	When
Build on the agreement to resource a local approach to survivor engagement and inclusion, which will amplify survivor voice and facilitate a co-production approach. To include those from minority communities and people who experience multiple disadvantages.	•

Priority Five: Effective perpetrator management

Why is this important?

Effective perpetrator management increases safety for survivors and children. It has the potential to shift the burden from survivors for achieving safety, such as leaving their accommodation (and potentially losing security of tenure in the process) to holding perpetrators accountable. Housing providers have a key role to play. They can utilise a range of legal powers and initiatives, such as the relocation of perpetrators. Perpetrator services, such as The Hampton Trust, also play a vital role in the multiagency approach to perpetrator management.

Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership Board – 3 year focus	When
Build on the existing funding committed for a small, commissioned community-based perpetrator services, and SCC internally resourced Male Engagement Worker within IDVA service to ensure there is an effective perpetrator management approach in Southampton.	2022/23
Start to map / develop perpetrator management approaches in all housing settings.	2022/23
Seek to develop / enhance the multiagency approach to perpetrator management, including housing providers, criminal justice system agencies and DA services.	2022/23



Priority Six: Improve data and intelligence

Why is this important?

Data and intelligence are vital to the commissioning cycle, understanding need and developing strategic and operational responses. Because this is the first Strategy for the Provision of Support in Safe Accommodation for Southampton, it was expected there would be data and intelligence gaps as there has been no requirement to record some metrics previously. The ability to track survivors' journeys through accommodation and capture lived experiences is crucial. There is a commitment to improve local data and intelligence for future needs assessments and strategies. There are local, regional and national opportunities to develop and share data to begin to build a comprehensive picture of safe accommodation need. By creating a regional dataset, monitored centrally, tracking survivors' journeys, outcome and unmet need becomes more robust. The power to influence central government increases. By harnessing the power of 'Big Data' on safe accommodation across the country, it will be possible to gain greater insights into patterns, trends, and associations. It will evidence the need for future funding for safe accommodation services.

Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership Board – 3 year focus	When
Supported by a dedicated DA Data Lead, establish a partnership minimum dataset, including standardised baseline metrics for safe accommodation and Key Performance Indicators. Monitored by the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership Board.	2021/22
DA Coordinator and data lead to explore potential for shared case management system for internally and externally provided domestic abuse services to support single point of view, case work flow and data reporting.	2022-24
SCC Housing Management and Needs Case Management System(s) reviewed / developed to ensure relevant data can be provided.	2021/22
Work in partnership with other local authorities to agree approaches to regional data, agreeing shared metrics and data that can be shared.	2022-24



Consider how local and regional data can contribute to national datasets. Including how existing national datasets (such as Homelessness Case Level Collection 13) can be enhanced and build use of national case management systems that support national data reporting 14.

2022-24

Priority Seven: Develop and embed Coordinated Community Response to DA

Why is this important?

DA is a complex social problem that impacts people, communities and services across our society. Agencies are often responding to one aspect of the issue and / or the same problem from different angles. The Coordinated Community Response (CCR) 9 brings statutory and voluntary agencies, including housing and homeless services providers, together to work in partnership in an integrated and coordinated manner to address DA, increase survivor safety and hold perpetrators to account. The Act presents Southampton with an opportunity to develop and embed a local CCR to support local Act implementation. The Act has direct implications for statutory agencies, including SCC. Implementation impacts on other agencies, even where specific duties are not imposed by the Act. Systems, pathways, processes and structures will be impacted. Aspects of the Act overlap and intersect with each other and a coordinated approach is required to manage impact. Development of this approach will support partners with individual duty implementation, ensure all partners understand implications of the Act and identify linkages / implications for all partners. Strategic / operational changes can be identified and responded to effectively. Risk is shared and managed and resources across the partnership are maximised. Resourcing decisions are intelligence led. The CCR will achieve wider, long-term benefits for the partnership that extend beyond the implementation of the Act, such as reductions in risk and harm, improved efficiencies and resulting cost savings. Taking a pan-Hampshire approach has the potential to achieve mutual benefit for authorities through prevention of homelessness and loss of secure tenancies. It increases regional housing options for survivors and assists authorities to meet Act duties. Coordination is shared across the region and resources are shared and used proportionately.

Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership Board – 3 year focus	When
Undertake a refresh of the partnership shared vision and DSA wider strategy to take a gender informed approach underpinned by CCR principles. 9	2021/22



Consider whether SCC's Homelessness Prevention Strategy 15 should include specific reference to DA / the Act.	2023 (date strategy expires)
Utilising the newly appointed DA Coordinator, seek to embed coordination of DA responses across the partnership.	2021-2024
Seek effective implementation and coordination of the Whole Housing Approach (WHA), including coordination of responses to / implementation of Part Four and Seven duties. Develop pan-Hampshire approaches.	2021-2024
Develop the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership Board and DSA Operational Group to ensure they provide appropriate strategic / operational leadership for the partnership, including local Act implementation.	2021/22



ly who report they	% reduction in waiting times for Sanctuary (where not provided by SCC) 6 to 12

% increase in survivors nationally, regionally or locally who report they were able to access the right support, at the right time*

% increase in survivors with protected characteristics / those underrepresented accessing services*

% decrease in risk for survivors accessing accommodation related support*

% increase of housing providers who are DAHA accredited

% staff report increased confidence in areas of their practice as a result of training, improved communications and increased awareness*

% increase in identification of DA within housing settings*

% increase in referrals to DA services from housing settings*

% reduction in waiting times for Sanctuary (where not provided by SCC) 6 to 12 months after involvement with the service*

% increase provision to survivors by up to 20% of Sanctuary support as part of homelessness prevention*

% reduction in declined referrals to refuge due to lack of space **

% increase in survivors supported via Managed Reciprocal*

% Accommodation providers prioritise the maintenance of accommodation for survivors*

% reduction in multiple moves / waiting times for settled accommodation*

% increase in number of survivors who retain security of tenure as a result of seeking safety*

% increase in the number of perpetrators engaged in services*

% increase in survivors successfully maintaining settled accommodation*

*baseline data required

Potential Indicators of Success

** baseline data currently available from Home Group only



How does this link to our other strategies and structures?

Homelessness Prevention Strategy
DSA (VAWG) Strategy
Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco strategy
Youth Justice strategy
Safe City Strategy
Joint Health and Wellbeing strategy
Hampshire Police DSA strategy
Southampton City Council strategy
Children and Young People's strategy

