



Equality Impact Assessment

What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and why does the County Council do them?

The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (PSED) is an obligation within the [Equality Act 2010](#) ("the Act"), which asks public authorities, like Hampshire County Council, to give 'due regard' to equality considerations, in particular to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This includes assessing the impact of policies and practices on individuals and communities with a protected characteristic, as defined in the Act and some other specific groups. The County Council uses EIAs to ensure it has paid 'due regard' to equalities considerations when there are changes to a service or policy, a new project or certain decisions.

EIA author	Position & Department	Contact
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Title:	Domestic Abuse Support in Dispersed Safe Accommodation (AS22013)
Related EIAs:	None

EIA for Savings Programme:	No
Service affected	Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Services across Hampshire
Description of the service/policy/project/project phase	<p>The service is designed to offer domestic abuse specialist support to victims-survivors within self-contained dispersed safe accommodation. This forms part of the Council's statutory duty to provide accommodation-based support to victims-survivors of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation, and to improve the types of safe accommodation accessible to victim-survivors. Following a Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment in 2021, it was identified that there is a county-wide refuge provision and sanctuary scheme accessible to victims-survivors, and that some victims-survivors require support in alternative accommodation to current provision to meet their specific needs. The Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Strategy (2023-2026) includes a statement on the safe accommodation vision which is to ensure "inclusive, affordable and appropriate safe accommodation support is available to all victims-survivors of domestic abuse, including their children, irrespective of their needs and backgrounds". Hampshire County Council is committed to developing a model of domestic abuse support in dispersed accommodation alongside its refuge provision to meet the needs of victims-survivors, especially those with protected characteristics, and those facing multiple disadvantages.</p>
New/changed service/policy/project	<p>The development of a domestic abuse support service in self-contained dispersed safe accommodation is a new service designed to be delivered alongside refuge provision. The new service aims to be delivered across Hampshire county and will provide short-term emergency type accommodation for victims-survivors who would benefit from self-contained dispersed provision. This includes a number of groups of victims-survivors identified through the needs assessment. There is also a new referral service that will support the delivery of the domestic abuse support, and enable victims-survivors to access the provision in a timely and appropriate way.</p>

Engagement

A market testing event was held as part of the procurement process. This involved key partners who could potentially be involved in delivering the service or who had expressed an interest in the service. The event involved a presentation by the Domestic Abuse commissioning team alongside procurement colleagues. This was followed by a questionnaire. The responses to the questionnaire were used to inform the development of the Service Specification for the new Domestic Abuse Support in Dispersed Safe Accommodation service.

Equalities considerations - Impact Assessment

Age

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>The Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment identified that older adults are under-represented in the current refuge provision. There is also evidence to suggest that older adults can be more likely to remain in an abusive relationship, as they may face barriers to accessing services, including access to shared accommodation. In Hampshire, there are estimated to have been 2,079 men and 7,921 women aged over 60 affected by domestic abuse. Data gathered through the Needs Assessment shows only 392 victims who are over 65 being supported in community and safe accommodation services in Hampshire in 2021/22. Age UK report that one in four recorded victims of domestic abuse are over the age of 60. This would suggest that older victims are under represented in services and are not accessing support or safe accommodation. A report by SafeLives suggests that victims aged 61+ are much more likely to experience domestic abuse from adult family members and that older victims are less likely to leave the perpetrator of the abuse. Older victims are also more likely to have a disability. There is also an increased likelihood that older victims are either a carer for the perpetrator or are being cared for by the perpetrator, increasing the barriers for them to leave the relationship and home. Other issues to consider that can increase barriers for victims accessing support are financial dependence, home ownership, generational and cultural considerations.</p> <p>The option of self-contained safe accommodation with the same level of support that is provided in refuge will provide an alternative for older victims-survivors. Part of the requirements for the new referral service is to work with key partners in the community who are supporting victims-survivors who are under-represented in services to ensure that there is an increased awareness of the support services available in addition to the refuge provision.</p> <p>Age can also be a barrier for victims-survivors who have male teenage children and our</p>

	current refuge provision cannot accommodate boys aged over 16. Self-contained safe accommodation provision will allow victims-survivors with older teenage boys to be accommodated.
Mitigation	

Disability

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Women's Aid report that disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse than non-disabled women (1995 British Crime Survey) and they are likely to experience abuse over a longer period of time and to suffer more physical injuries as a result of violence. SafeLives report that almost a third (31%) of disabled victims were living with the perpetrator compared to 18% of non-disabled victims. They also report that disabled victims are more likely to report abuse from multiple perpetrators, 19% for disabled victims as opposed to 6% for non-disabled victims.</p> <p>Stop Domestic Abuse report that within the Hampshire service 20% of refuge residents and 15% of community outreach / Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) clients identify as having a disability. SafeLives estimate that, given that disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse, the percentage of disabled women represented in services should be nearer 28%. Stop Domestic Abuse report that 4% of victims with a disability (n=12) who were referred to Hampshire services were denied access to refuge in the year 2020/21. There is only one fully adapted bedspace across the Hampshire refuge provision and there is evidence to suggest that, whilst service providers try to be as flexible as possible, this provision is not enough to meet the needs of all victims with a disability.</p> <p>The development of this new service will increase the number of accommodation units available as there is a requirement in the specification that there should be a minimum of one accommodation unit per lot (3 lots) that is adapted to be accessible for victims-survivors who have disabilities (is compliant with the current Equalities Act 2010).</p>
Mitigation	

Gender Reassignment

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Our current refuges are designated women only spaces which is important to provide safe, secure and trauma informed spaces for victims-survivors to recover. This creates some barriers for trans gender victims-survivors accessing communal living spaces. The new domestic abuse support in dispersed safe accommodation will increase access as the new service provides self-contained accommodation and therefore are not designated women only spaces.</p> <p>It is clear from the data collected for the needs assessment that trans gender people are under-represented in current service provision. On a national and local level there is a reported lack of specialist service provision for trans gender people. The Hampshire Needs Assessment shows that there are very few transgender victims in the community outreach / IDVA service and being supported in safe accommodation. This is reflective of the national picture as SafeLives estimates that only 1% of IDVA-supported victims identify as LGBT+. Hampshire does not have any specialist provision for transgender victims which again is indicative of the national picture. Galop report that there are only six providers nationally delivering LGBT+ specialist support (Birmingham, Brighton, London, Manchester, Sheffield). There are no LGBT+ specialist refuges in England and less than 1% of refuges nationally provide specialist support to LGBT+ survivors. In Hampshire, qualitative evidence suggests that trans people are also unable to access women only refuge provision and there are very few transgender victims who approach the local authority housing services for support.</p> <p>The new service will go some way to increasing options for transgender victims-survivors to access domestic abuse support in self-contained dispersed safe accommodation. There is a requirement for the provider of the new service to develop local partnerships with specialist support organisations and it is anticipated that a holistic approach to supporting trans gender people will reduce barriers and improve the service offer.</p>
Mitigation	

Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>National research shows that domestic violence has overtaken gestational diabetes and pre-eclampsia as the leading cause of foetal death. Domestic abuse affects an estimated 1.3 million women each year – 8.2% of the population. Around 30% of domestic abuse begins during pregnancy, while 40–60% of women experiencing domestic abuse are abused during pregnancy (Friend. J (1998), 'Responding to violence against women: a specialist's role', Editorial, Hospital Medicine, September, Vol 59, No. 9, pp 98-99.) Many women are reluctant to involve the criminal justice system because they fear reprisals. If a woman does not have adequate community support to allow her to protect herself, then arrest and prosecution of her assailant may result in more severe violence on their release. The Hampshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment highlighted barriers to refuge access particularly for victims with large families, victims with adolescent boys, male victims with children, LGBTQ+ victims with children, victims and children with disabilities, and victims with complex needs who also have children</p> <p>Our current refuge provision accommodates women who are pregnant or who have children up to a certain age. There is also specialist support within refuge to support children and young people. This new service would provide additional provision for safe accommodation which could be accessed by women who are pregnant and have children and will meet the needs of families with children who currently cannot access or face barriers to accessing the current refuge provision, as identified through the needs assessment.</p>
Mitigation	

Race

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>In the 2020 Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment, the data on ethnicity for refuge residents was relatively comparable to the wider population in terms of estimated prevalence rates for those experiencing domestic abuse from different ethnic backgrounds. However, anecdotal evidence from partner organisations showed that there can be barriers for victims accessing services from different ethnic groups. This can include victims with English as a second language, lack of recognition and acceptance of domestic abuse within</p>

	<p>a culture, mistrust of professional bodies, and lack of cultural sensitivity.</p> <p>Our current refuge provision can accommodate victims-survivors from diverse ethnic backgrounds and take an integrative approach to ensuring victims-survivors receive the level of support needed. Staff are trained to understand the needs of victims-survivors from diverse ethnic backgrounds and draw on peer support where available. Across the staff team a number of different languages are spoken and staff can access translation services. There is no evidence to suggest that victims-survivors are being refused access to refuge because of their race but there may be a preference for them to be accommodated in self-contained safe accommodation and this service will widen the choice available for victims-survivors.</p>
Mitigation	

Religion or Belief

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Staff in refuge are all trained to understand the needs of victims-survivors from different religious and cultural backgrounds and will take an integrative approach to supporting victims-survivors. Staff are trained and receive peer support around harmful cultural practices. There is no evidence to suggest that victims-survivors are being refused access to refuge because of their religion or beliefs but there may be a preference for them to be accommodated in self-contained safe accommodation and this service will widen the choice available for victims-survivors.</p>
Mitigation	

Sex

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral

Rationale

Our current refuge provision is designated female only space as there are shared spaces. This meets the statutory definition of refuges as defined below:

Refuges – single gender or single sex accommodation (generally women only) and domestic abuse support, which is tied to the accommodation. The address is not publicly available. Victims-survivors, including their children, will have access to a planned programme of therapeutic and practical support from staff. Accommodation may be in shared or self-contained housing, but in both cases the service will enable peer support from other refuge residents.

Our needs assessment highlighted that male victims do not have access to our current refuge provision and there is some evidence that suggests that when victims-survivors are unable to access safe accommodation they may end up in temporary accommodation, become homeless or remain in or return to the abusive relationship. Mankind reports that half of male victims do not tell anyone they are a victim of domestic abuse and are two and a half times less likely to tell anyone than female victims. They also estimate that around 300 men are sleeping rough because of partner abuse every night.

Fears of homelessness and being forced to live in unsuitable or unsafe housing features as one of the challenges facing female domestic abuse victims. The Safe at Home: Homelessness and Domestic Abuse (Safe Lives Spotlight Report 2018) highlights that:

- 32% of homeless women said domestic violence contributed to their homelessness.
- Over half (52%) domestic abuse victims need support to secure new accommodation or to stay safe in their own home. Without receiving this support at the right time, survivors of domestic abuse can easily become homeless.
- Over 10% of those supported with housing were moved out of their local authority area.
- After receiving support, survivors of domestic abuse are unlikely to be living in sustainable housing, with 87% of women leaving refuges for continued temporary accommodation according to research by Solace Women’s Aid.
- Women experience higher rates of repeated victimisation and are much more likely to be seriously hurt or killed than male victims of domestic abuse.

The new domestic abuse service in dispersed safe accommodation will offer safe, (secure and dedicated to supporting victims-survivors of domestic abuse), self-contained accommodation with a similar level of specialist domestic abuse support as provided within a refuge but which may be more suitable for victims-survivors who are unable to stay in a refuge with communal spaces (statutory definition of dispersed accommodation). This will enable male and female victims-survivors, with or without children to be offered a support service at a similar level to refuge in dispersed safe accommodation.

Mitigation

Sexual Orientation

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Our current refuge provision is designated female only space as there are shared spaces. This meets the statutory definition of refuges as defined below:</p> <p>Refuges – single gender or single sex accommodation (generally women only) and domestic abuse support, which is tied to the accommodation. The address is not publicly available. Victims-survivors, including their children, will have access to a planned programme of therapeutic and practical support from staff. Accommodation may be in shared or self-contained housing, but in both cases the service will enable peer support from other refuge residents.</p> <p>Gay or bisexual men, with or without children are not able to access our current refuge provision. Data from our needs assessment shows that there are currently low numbers of LGBT+ victims-survivors accessing refuge and community services. Galop reports the national estimate that more than one in four gay men and lesbian women and more than one in three bisexual people will have been affected by domestic abuse since the age of 16. They also report that gay or bisexual men might be twice as likely to experience domestic abuse compared to heterosexual men. Research conducted by Stonewall also suggests that the prevalence of domestic abuse in men who identify as gay is much higher than for men in the general population. For men in the general population around 17% will experience domestic abuse, whereas for gay men this percentage rises to 49%. Galop also suggest that 60-80% of LGBT+ victims have never reported domestic abuse to the Police or sought out advice, support or protection.</p> <p>The development of this new DA support service in dispersed safe accommodation will have a positive impact on gay and bi-sexual men as they will be able to access accommodation that is self-contained and therefore is not a designated women only space. This will provide additional safe accommodation options to this group as they will be able to access specialised domestic abuse support in safe accommodation. There is a requirement for the provider of the new service to develop local partnerships with specialist support organisations and it is anticipated that a holistic approach to supporting gay and bisexual victim-survivors will reduce barriers and improve the service offer.</p>
Mitigation	

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact on public	Neutral

Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Our current refuge provision accommodates women regardless of their relationship status. This new service would provide additional provision for safe accommodation which could be accessed by victims-survivors.</p> <p>In the 2020 Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment there was very little evidence gathered around marital status and the impact that this may have on domestic abuse and access to services. However increasing options for service provision is positive for all people regardless of their marital or civil partnership status</p>
Mitigation	

Poverty

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>Poverty is associated with domestic abuse as both a cause and a consequence. It prolongs women's exposure to abuse by reducing their ability to leave and it makes women poorer on leaving the relationship. Poorer households show higher rates of domestic abuse. Women in households with low incomes are 3.5 times more likely to experience domestic violence than women in slightly better-off households. Disabled women have even fewer resources due to their lower rates of employment and wider gender pay gaps compared to disabled and non-disabled men. Disabled women will face additional barriers to leave due to inaccessible services, transport and available adapted homes, but also because their abusive partner is often their carer. Many migrant women have what's called 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF). This means they cannot use the social security, housing or women's refuge services available to other women. Women with no recourse to public funds by virtue of their migration status are a group that is economically very vulnerable to domestic abuse. Their options on leaving are even worse than for other women, as they can't access benefits and only a reduced number of refuges and shelters can accommodate them.</p> <p>The new DA support service in dispersed safe accommodation will provide additional options for victims-survivors needing to access safe accommodation and receive the same level of support that is offered through refuge.</p>

Mitigation

Rurality

Impact on public	Positive
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>It is recognised that in rural communities nationally and in Hampshire victims are more vulnerable to domestic abuse. For many victims in rural areas, their nearest specialist can be up to two bus-rides away from their home. If the partner controls access to a car, denies the victim petrol money, checks the victim's mileage, or demands an explanation every time the victim leaves home, that distance can mean a victim is unable to get to a specialist support worker. Similarly, in a small community where a new vehicle would be noticed, a victim cannot be safely visited by a support worker on a regular basis, in case the perpetrator is informed that a strange car has been seen at their home.</p> <p>The new DA support service in dispersed safe accommodation will provide additional resources to victims-survivors who may need to leave their area to access safe and secure accommodation with the same level of support that is offered through refuge.</p>
Mitigation	

Geographical Impact:All Hampshire

Equality Statement

Additional information:

None

Overview Statement:

A summary assessment to show that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been paid, which is undertaken when a full EIA is not needed:

