

Hampshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

November 2021

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

The Domestic Abuse (DA) Act 2021¹ aims to bring more clarity around what domestic abuse is and who it affects. It also aims to ensure there is better protection and support to victims of domestic abuse through the introduction of statutory duties and legal powers.

Part 4 of this 2021 DA Act² places statutory duties on Tier 1 local authorities to fund support for victims and their children in safe accommodation. The DA Act and statutory guidance clearly defines what safe accommodation is for victims of domestic abuse and gives clear definition and guidance on the support that should be provided.

Tier 2 local authorities are required to co-operate with Tier 1 authorities to assist them in delivering their statutory duty. The Act also gives those who are homeless because of domestic abuse priority need for accommodation secured by the local authority.³

Tier 1 local authorities have a duty under the Act to assess the need and demand for safe accommodation and accommodation-based support, and to subsequently develop and publish strategies, and give effect to these strategies by making commissioning decisions. Tier 1 local authorities will be required to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies and report back to central government.

The Hampshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment forms part of that statutory duty and has been conducted with regard to the statutory guidance and needs assessment framework provided by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

2. Hampshire County Local Context

Hampshire is a large Tier One Local Authority that has 11 Tier Two districts and boroughs within its boundaries. There are also 3 unitary authorities within the local system, namely Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight.

There are both cross-boundary services that deliver across Hampshire and into neighbouring Counties, and those that operate on a more local level within the district and borough boundaries. These include, but are not limited to CCGs, Police,

¹ [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

² [Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

³ [Homelessness - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Probation, Housing Teams, Community Safety Partnerships, Registered Housing Providers, Armed Forces, Domestic Abuse Services, Children's and Adult Services. There is a need to ensure that Hampshire's DA Safe Accommodation Strategy is developed and implemented in partnership and acknowledges that victims will not recognise geographical boundaries and will encounter services and access support across the whole system.

Hampshire has a Domestic Abuse Partnership Board⁴ established in 2008, that reflects the breadth of partners across the County. Hampshire has a Domestic Abuse Strategy which was developed by the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Board in 2017 and runs until the end of March 2022. An interim Domestic Abuse Strategy will be developed for 2022/23 supported by the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy (2021/23), with the intention of developing a new full strategy from 2024 onwards.

The strategy identifies four key aims:

- Promoting healthy relationships and preventing domestic abuse from starting
- Ensuring victims are protected and supported
- Reducing the impact of abuse on children, families and communities
- Reducing those who perpetrate abuse and reduce unhealthy behaviour

In May 2018, a needs assessment for domestic violence and abuse⁵ was conducted and the associated report published. In September 2018, a supplement to the Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment⁶ was published focussing on children affected by domestic abuse.

During October to December 2020, a Hampshire County Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Rapid Review was carried out.

All of these documents have been used to inform the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment 2021.

Hampshire currently commissions Stop Domestic Abuse to deliver domestic abuse services across Hampshire County. Stop Domestic Abuse⁷ also deliver the front door service in the form of the advice line, which provides a single point of contact for victims, perpetrators and professionals to access domestic abuse provision and advice. There are also several community-based services provided by Stop Domestic Abuse which include IDVA (high risk support), outreach and services to children and young people.

⁴ [Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Board | Health and social care | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://hants.gov.uk/stop-domestic-abuse-partnership-board/)

⁵ [HampshireDomesticAbuseNeedsAssessment.pdf \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://hants.gov.uk/domestic-abuse-needs-assessment/)

⁶ [ChildrenaffectedbyDomesticAbuse.pdf \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://hants.gov.uk/children-affected-by-domestic-abuse/)

⁷ [Stop Domestic Abuse](https://stopdomesticabuse.org/)

There are several other local domestic abuse providers in Hampshire including the PARAGON (part of The YOU Trust), Aurora New Dawn and the Andover Crisis and Support Centre (sub-contractors to Stop Domestic Abuse).

The Hampton Trust⁸ are the commissioned provider delivering perpetrator services. The Hampton Trust have provided these services in Hampshire for a number of years and became the first commissioned provider for perpetrator services in April 2019.

3. Data Sources and Processes

Data and information for the Needs Assessment was gathered from several sources including but not limited to specialist domestic abuse services (victims services), crime data, ambulance data, health data and housing data. Hampshire County Council are grateful to all partners who spent their time and resources gathering data for this needs assessment. DLUHC provided guidance and a template for capturing data around safe accommodation, which was adapted and used to inform data that was collected.

Through this process, some gaps in gathering domestic abuse data have been identified and there is a need going forward to work with key partners to develop improved systems to inform future needs assessments and subsequent strategies effectively and robustly. The needs assessment has also identified a gap in effectively gathering the voice of the victim, including children. Some case studies were gathered to inform the needs assessment but due to restrictions in time and resources there was no direct consultation with victims; this will be a priority for the first phase of the strategy.

4. Hampshire Domestic Abuse Service Mapping and Data Analysis

The Hampshire Domestic Violence and Abuse Needs Assessment (2018) estimated that there were 17,686 men and 38,004 women aged over 16 who had been affected by domestic abuse in the previous year in Hampshire.

Crime data where a crime was reported and coded as domestic abuse in Hampshire has increased year on year from 12,603 in 2018 to 14,145 in 2020.

Across the two years (2019-21), 1,012 residents across Hampshire were assessed as being owed a homelessness duty due to being at risk of or having experienced domestic abuse under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Across the commissioned Hampshire refuges, for the two years 2019-21, 500 victims were accepted into refuge. This represented around 47% of those referred. Of those accepted into refuge, 77% came from outside Hampshire borders.

⁸ [Hampton Trust](#)

In the year 2020/21, around 40% (n=135) of victims referred to refuge were unable to be accommodated due to lack of space, suitable accommodation, capacity to support and refuge not being a suitable place to support their needs.

A substantial number of Hampshire residents are being affected by domestic abuse, many of whom will be supported in the community and will continue to live in their own homes. Those who are at risk of losing or who have already lost their accommodation are reflected in much of the information presented in the needs assessment.

The mapping of safe accommodation provision across Hampshire shows that:

- There are currently 92 bed spaces for victims, and 124 spaces for children in 10 refuges across Hampshire.
- Women and children (up to 16, subject to risk assessment) are eligible for refuge provision, if they are identified as at risk from domestic abuse identified on assessment using the Domestic Abuse Stalking and Honour-based Violence (DASH-RIC) risk assessment, and who have a need for accommodation associated with domestic abuse. No male victims are accepted into refuge, and those with No Recourse to Public Fund cannot be accepted unless funding can be found.
- Refuge provision is delivered against the Women's Aid National Quality Standards and Stop Domestic Abuse use a trauma informed approach to working with residents.
- There is specialist provision within the refuges, which includes:
 - Harmful Cultural Practices Support Worker
 - Mental Health Support Workers
 - Substance Misuse Support Worker
 - No Recourse to Public Funds Support Worker
 - Children and Young People's Support Workers
 - Two bed spaces with full disabled access
 - Five ground floor bed spaces suitable for women with low level mobility
- There is a well-established Target Hardening service which supports Hampshire victims to remain in their own homes where it is safe to do so.
- There are 14 identified properties across Hampshire that are used to provide accommodation to domestic abuse victims, currently used for victims requiring lower levels of support or as move-on from refuge.

Although this needs assessment does not include any assessment against quality standards, the service mapping shows the type and level of support given to refuge residents and the flexible and in part specialist approach to accommodating victims with different needs within the restrictions of the physical space and the need to ensure safety for all refuge residents and their children.

It has also highlighted some aspects of community provision that positively impact on the need for safe accommodation, using prevention and early intervention measures (e.g., target hardening the victims' home as a form of safe accommodation) and services that seek to engage with victims before their accommodation is threatened,

such as Domestic Abuse Advocates in Emergency and Maternity Departments, Isolated Community Engagement Project (ICEP), DVA (Domestic Violence and Abuse) Cars and support within Registered Housing Providers.

The analysis of demographic data gathered for the Needs Assessment has provided information on the characteristics of those who are accessing the safe accommodation provision and has also highlighted where they may be underrepresentation. Conclusions have been drawn on the key groups that are facing barriers to safe accommodation and the key gaps in safe accommodation provision.

Key groups of victims who are currently unable to access refuge either because of the eligibility criteria or because of a specific need include:

- Women with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) who do not have children
- Women with male children over 16
- Male victims, including men with children, gay and bisexual men and trans people.

There are also barriers to accessing refuge for victims with particular needs, which includes:

- Older adults
- Victims with disabilities
- Large families
- Victims facing multiple disadvantage/exclusions.

The gaps identified in safe accommodation provision across Hampshire have been identified as follows:

- There is no dispersed refuge provision.
- There are no specialist refuges including services that are led by those that also share the protected characteristic (also known as 'by and for' support).
- Whilst there are move-on options for victims through the local housing services, there is limited support currently being offered in designated move-on accommodation.

The needs assessment review process has also highlighted the difficulty in assessing unmet need and understanding the needs of those who are not currently visible to services. Considering the number of potential victims across Hampshire, it is very important to ensure that residents are not remaining in violent and abusive relationships because they do not feel able to access specialist services or feel that the services do not reflect their identity or need.

The Needs Assessment has also highlighted a number of key areas that would have a positive impact on the provision of safe accommodation for victims, and these include:

- Using the Survivor's voice to inform the strategic direction of safe accommodation provision across Hampshire

- Increasing options for victims to move using a managed reciprocal scheme⁹ within social housing.
- Continuing to deliver and develop the Target Hardening provision
- Developing early intervention and prevention opportunities
- Developing better partnership working opportunities

5. Conclusions

Safe accommodation for those experiencing domestic abuse must meet the needs of those who are at risk from domestic abuse, and who are at risk of losing or have already lost their accommodation.

From the analysis of data and information presented throughout this needs assessment, the following conclusions have been drawn on the safe accommodation provision across Hampshire, and gaps in this provision have been identified.

Conclusions have also been drawn around the gaps in data and information available to inform any future needs assessment, and gaps in capacity to deliver against the DA Act 2021, Part 4 statutory duty.

In terms of the Hampshire Safe Accommodation provision:

1. Hampshire currently uses refuges as the main type of safe accommodation providing 92 units of accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and their families.
2. Refuges are currently not accessible or suitable for victims who are:
 - Women with NRPF without children.
 - Male victims, gay and bisexual men, and men with children
 - Transgender people
3. There are barriers to accessing refuges for victims:
 - With disabilities
 - With No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)
 - With mental health, substance misuse, or those facing multiple disadvantage/exclusions.
 - Large families
 - Families with adolescent sons.
 - Older adults

⁹ A managed housing reciprocal scheme enables individuals and families who are at risk of domestic abuse or violence and who have a social tenancy, to move to a safe area whilst retaining their tenancy. It is a formal collaboration between social housing providers that is coordinated by an independent agency. The coordinating agency manages the referral process and keeps track of moves, ensuring that the system is fair for all housing providers involved and that victim/survivors can move as quickly as possible. [Whole Housing Toolkit - daha - Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance \(dahalliance.org.uk\)](http://dahalliance.org.uk) Accessed 15/09/21

4. There are gaps in the safe accommodation provision that is offered across Hampshire which results in victims being turned away from support. These gaps include a lack of dispersed safe accommodation, and lack of safe accommodation that can meet the needs of victims with multiple disadvantages/exclusions.
5. There are currently no services that are led by those that also share the protected characteristic (also known as 'by and for' support) offered to people with protected characteristics e.g., victims for different ethnic backgrounds.
6. There is limited move-on provision dedicated to domestic abuse, where victims receive a lower level of domestic abuse support, and a need to improve move-on pathways for victims leaving refuge.
7. There is an established Hampshire-wide Target Hardening service for victims of domestic abuse who can remain safely in their homes.
8. DA pathways in health settings are currently limited to the DA Advocates roles in Emergency and Maternity Departments across the three Hampshire Hospital Foundation NHS Trust sites.
9. There are limited DA pathways between the specialist DA providers and key partners, such as Hampshire Tier 2 local authorities, Registered Providers and neighbouring local authorities.
10. When considering the gaps and barriers in safe accommodation across Hampshire, the Whole Housing Approach represents a best practice model as a way to address these issues. Evaluations to date strongly suggest that the Whole Housing Approach¹⁰ is the most cost-effective model of safe accommodation for people affected by domestic abuse.

In terms of the gaps and limitations of data and information:

11. There were limitations to information and data that was made available for the purpose of this needs assessment within the timeframe and within the existing systems used by key partners (e.g., Tier 2 Housing services, Registered Social Housing Providers, and Health). This includes limited information regarding the extent to which quality standards are met and to which a trauma informed approach is used.
12. There is a lack of information on the existing needs of and services for:
 - Adolescents engaged in domestic abuse
 - Private owners or private tenants e.g., related to experience of economic abuse (including that committed post-separation).
13. There is currently a gap in representation and inclusivity of the survivors' voice (actual and potential service users) in informing future needs assessments,

¹⁰ [What is the Whole Housing Approach? - daha - Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance \(dahalliance.org.uk\)](http://dahalliance.org.uk)

strategy development, and commissioning decisions regarding safe accommodation from the following groups: women, children and young people, victims who are from ethnic minorities, LGBT+, victims with disabilities, male victims (including men with children), armed forces, older victims, those from rural communities, women with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) (including those with no children), large families, families with adolescent sons.

14. There is currently a gap in representation and inclusivity of perpetrators to inform future needs assessments, strategy development, and commissioning decisions regarding safe accommodation so that perpetrators are prevented from continuing to commit DA and victims are made and kept safe.
15. There is currently a capacity gap in leading and co-ordinating the DA Act in its entirety and the DA data in relation to the DA needs assessments (unmet needs) data and commissioning performance (demand) data in informing the overarching DA Strategy, DA Safe Accommodation Strategy, and a DA data dashboard.

The conclusions have been used to inform the recommendations put forward in the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021-2023. The Strategy has 5 Objectives which can be summarised as follows:

1. Improved local information and data collection, collation and analysis processes
2. Improved intelligence on the particular needs of 14-25 year olds experiencing domestic abuse to inform development of services
3. Improved domestic abuse identification and prevention, and the development of effective and efficient pathways to safe accommodation for all victims of domestic abuse
4. Establish the Whole Housing Approach to domestic abuse and safe accommodation, using a phased approach to develop a range of safe accommodation options that includes refuge and offers safe alternatives to refuge, ensuring services meet quality standards, are trauma informed and are accessible to victims with social disparities and who are facing multiple disadvantages / exclusions.
5. Establish a robust survivor voice (including children and young people) and perpetrator voice mechanism that is fed into the strategic development of domestic abuse services across Hampshire.