



The Domestic Abuse Act 2021: Local partnership board and needs assessment

**Chaired by Jo Silver, Director of
Quality and Innovation**

8th September 2021

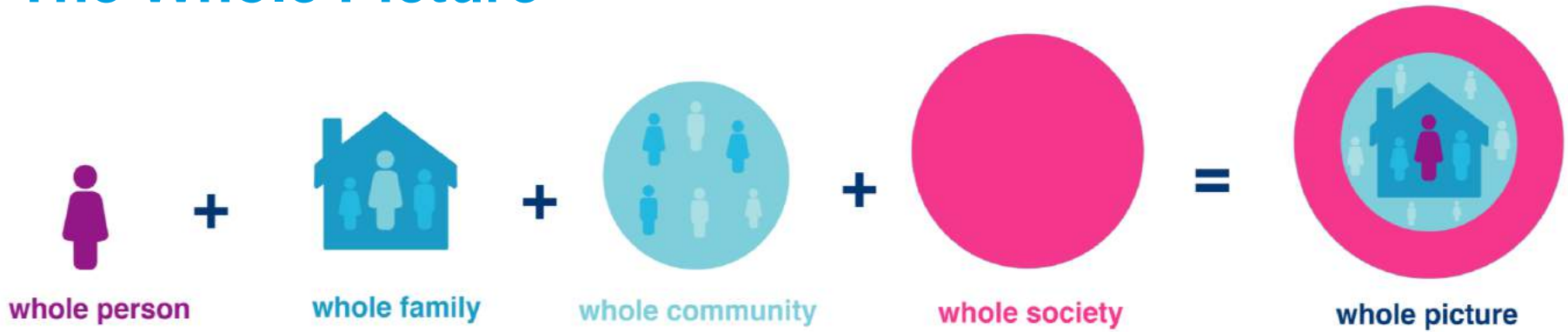
About SafeLives

We are a national charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, for good. We combine insight from services, survivors and statistics to support people to become safe, well and rebuild their lives.

No one should live in fear. It is not acceptable, not inevitable, and together – we can make it stop.

Ending domestic abuse

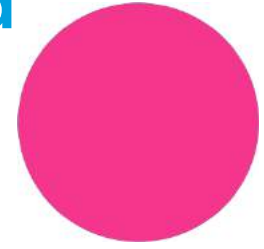
The Whole Picture



The whole person:
domestic abuse is never
all of someone's
experiences or situation.

Ending domestic abuse

Our strategy to end domestic abuse, for good



	Whole Person Seeing and responding to the whole person, not addressing a series of issue	Whole Family Adult victims, survivors, those who harm, individuals connected to the victim/perpetrator including extended family	Whole Community All communities of geography, identity and online spaces	Whole Society The general public and those who influence them: the media, politicians, employers, key opinion formers and commentators
Act before someone harms or is harmed	People are treated as just that – people, and not issues. The complexity of domestic abuse and links to other adverse experiences are understood.	Protective factors are put in place for those at risk of abusing or being abused – people and services sufficiently understand domestic abuse and what makes it more or less likely to happen	Communities of geography, identity and online spaces are equipped to identify and act on early risk factors and warning signs of abusive situations.	Gender stereotypes are challenged and deconstructed – particularly those of masculinity – supporting boys and men to break these norms. Societal shifts see a reduction in the motivation and opportunity for different types of power to be abused.
Identify and stop harmful behaviour	Harmful behaviour is addressed by proactively identifying all motivating factors and consequences, such as other violence, abuse and criminality.	Individuals who abuse any family member are appropriately assessed for the risk they pose to all family members – and themselves.	Community members know they are more than passive bystanders – there is low tolerance and high urgency about identifying and holding to account those who abuse.	
Increase safety for those at risk	The protection offered to people means proactively checking that all risks posed have been addressed, not just the initial presenting issue.	The safety and wellbeing of all non-abusive family members – physical, mental and emotional – is defended from those who pose a risk to them.	Communities of geography, identity, online spaces and employers/businesses understand the risks posed by those who abuse and their role in protecting the safety and wellbeing of those at risk.	
Support people to live the lives they want after harm occurs	People are responded to as people, not an issue or series of issues. Both crisis and longer term responses to people who have experienced abuse are sensitive to their possible vulnerability to future adverse experiences.	When an immediate experience of abuse is over, all family members' safety and wellbeing – physical, mental and emotional – are (re)built. People are supported to live the lives they want, drawing strength from each other.	People who speak about their experience of abuse are believed. Communities and society validate their experience and support their process of creating safety, wellbeing and resilience so they can live the lives they want. The voices, strengths and needs of survivors are paramount, and survivors draw further strength from one another	



Local partnership board

Nikki Kelly, Practice Consultant
SafeLives

Safe Accommodation Statutory Framework

The DA Act places a statutory framework for the delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in safe accommodation providing clarity over governance and accountability:

It places a duty on each tier one local authority in England, the Greater London Authority and the Isles of Scilly Council to:

Appoint a multi-agency domestic abuse local partnership board which it will consult as it performs certain specified functions

Develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, having regard to the needs assessment

Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support in their area for all victims or their children, including those who come from outside the area

Give effect to the strategy (through commissioning / de-commissioning decisions)

Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy

Safe Accommodation Statutory Framework

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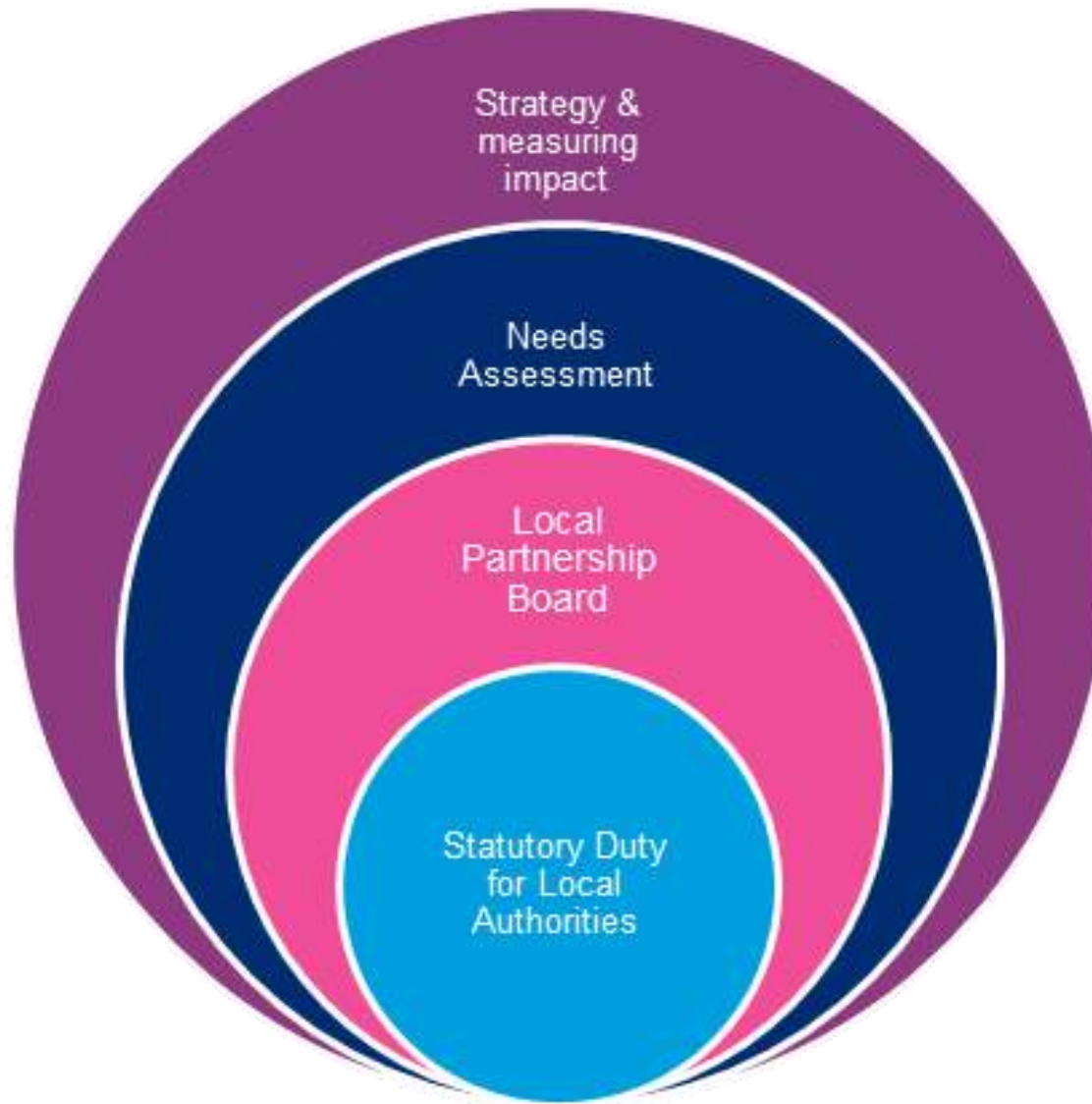
Report back to central Government

Require local authorities to have regard to the statutory guidance in exercising their functions

Require tier two councils (district or borough councils, and London Boroughs) to cooperate with the lead local authority, so far as is reasonably practicable

Require the Secretary of State to produce statutory guidance, having consulted the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, local authorities and such as other persons as considered appropriate

Structure



Ending domestic abuse

To provide advice to the Local Authorities about its functions under Section 55

- A multi-agency partnership board will have a core membership as set out in the DA Act and statutory guidance
- Authentic voice for both adult and child victims is essential
- Responsibilities are:
 - Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in their area, including those who require cross-border support
 - Develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, having regard to the needs assessment
 - Give effect to the strategy (through commissioning / de-commissioning decisions)
 - Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.

To provide advice to the Local Authorities about its functions under Section 55

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- Authentic voice for both adult and child victims is essential
- Responsibilities are:

Opportunity to consider how this links into your areas integrated care system development and links to new system boards and feedback mechanisms

and for accommodation-based domestic abuse victims in their area, including those who require support

Develop a strategy for the provision of such support having regard to the needs assessment

strategy (through commissioning / decisions)

evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.

To provide advice to the Local Authorities about its functions under Section 55

Membership	
Chair	Representative of the Tier One authority
Representative of Tier Two authorities within the Tier One authority area	Representative of the interests of adult victims of domestic abuse
Representative of the interests of children victims of domestic abuse	Representative of the interests of charities and other voluntary organisations that work with victims of domestic abuse in its area
Representative of the interests of charities and other voluntary organisations that work with victims of domestic abuse in its area (by & for Services)	Representative of the interests of persons who provide, or have functions relating to, health care services in its area
Representative of the interests of persons with functions relating to policing or criminal justice in its area	Representative for Housing Services

Local Partnership Board

To provide advice to the Local Authorities about its functions under Section 55

We recommend involving your commissioned child advocacy service in this process to provide a representative. Also to consider how are young people under the MCA, MHA or Guardianship/LA Care represented?

We recommend involving your survivor network in this process to provide a representative. Links to patient engagement groups and system feedback mechanisms to give a greater representation whilst making best use of existing pathways to connect

We recommend that there is a representative from by and for victims services such as LGBTQ+, Black, Asian and Racially minoritised groups where possible. Also to consider differences in how communities – rural communities may engage only with agriculture charities so how are we reaching more isolated victims?

New roles have been created in local communities through the NHS 10 year plan – Social Prescribers, Health Coaches, PCN Care-Coordinators all have great insight and can also support survivor voice

Importance of authentic voice

“We’ve walked through fire to get our voices back; we’re not going to give them up now.” Ursula, Pioneer

To truly transform the response to domestic abuse, we must place the expertise of survivors at the heart of everything we do.

Working together as a whole system we can aggregate and amplify survivors’ voices and interweave authenticity and independence throughout all our work – these systems and touch points in your communities exist to some degree. By listening and responding to views that are different to our own, professionals and survivors can critically assess and address challenges together. To do this authentically we support survivors to tell their truth and speak with an unmediated voice.

Consider victim and survivor communication needs and how best to support them to engage. Many different local community networks exist to help and support especially through the development of integrated care systems in your area. Think about meeting structure, times of meetings, how the meetings are communicated to give people time to engage and of course remember the impact for the person bravely sharing their experience.

Ending domestic abuse

Importance of by and for services

Anybody can experience domestic abuse, and support must be tailored to each individual victim's needs. 'By and for' services, or specialist services, are a vital part of the domestic abuse response.

The barriers to support faced by victims of domestic abuse will differ depending on their age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or gender – 'by and for' services understand these barriers and are therefore equipped to better support each victim's individual needs.

Authorities must ensure appropriate and adequate support within safe accommodation meet the needs of all victims including those with relevant protected characteristics and / or multiple complex needs and who's support needs may not be able to be met within generic domestic abuse safe accommodation.

Importance of by and for services

We must consider intersectionality, the needs of and specific barriers to victims who may fall into more than one protected characteristic and / or unique complex needs.

The additional barriers for these groups must be taken into consideration when commissioning safe accommodation and services tailored to meet their needs.

We must listen to those dedicated services who have the expertise, specialist knowledge and perspective of those who they represent.





Lillie Green

**Healthy Homes Officer,
Leicestershire County Council**

The importance of including survivor feedback on local Partnership Boards



**Leicestershire
County Council**

Leicestershire County Council, Lillie Green

Local Partnership Boards

- ▶ Tier One authorities must appoint a Local Partnership Board consisting of key partners with an interest in tackling domestic abuse and supporting victims, including their children.
- ▶ Tier One authorities should ensure the Board adequately considers and factors in the voice of victims and service users when making local decisions. Consideration should be taken as to the appropriateness of how this is approached.
- ▶ Local authorities may wish to have direct representation from a victim on the Board or alternatively through a separate dedicated forum specific to hearing the voices and views of victims, a representative of which can sit on the Board.



Key to the success of our local services is embedding the voice of survivors and taking an evidenced based approach to commissioning services. It is through feedback from service users where we can start to identify gaps and needs locally, having these voices heard and validating these within local partnership boards are essential.



It is essential that we build what we do in Leicestershire by understanding in depth what is happening, through both qualitative and quantitative data; identifying opportunities and strengths; then co-creating with key stakeholders' solutions which are based on what works.

Why should obtaining survivors voices be at the heart and start of the issue?

- ▶ Victims and survivors have the most authentic understanding and experience of domestic and sexual violence.
- ▶ Victims of domestic abuse are the experts in their situation, no professional or service has the ability to understand individual needs of each of the service users that require support.
- ▶ No service should provide a one size fits all approach when supporting victims of domestic abuse, everybody experiences domestic abuse differently some victims suffer from long lasting effects such as trauma and post traumatic stress disorder and some are able to overcome abuse with a lot less interventions.
- ▶ If we build services around what service users state they would have needed to leave their situation initially we are more likely to provide a preventative approach to support and see a lot less victims walking through the door requiring support for ongoing abuse.

How we are reaching out to members of the community across Leicestershire

- ▶ Liaising with local Domestic and Sexual Abuse organisations collating quantitative and qualitative data through capturing real life case studies.
- ▶ Attending refuges to discuss this work in house meetings
- ▶ Using COMMS to reach out to those that have been unable to access services both internal and external to the district council.
- ▶ Forming focus groups to hold discussions around what is needed across Leicestershire to offer a whole family approach to support

What information is gathered from Victims/ survivors?

- ▶ To understand from survivors what type of help and support they need.
- ▶ To understand the services that survivor's access and the extent to which they meet their needs.
- ▶ To understand the safe accommodation services that survivor's access, the barriers to accessing and the extent to which they meet their needs.
- ▶ To understand the support needs of the wider family, and to what extent they were met.
- ▶ To understand what an ideal support offer would look like.

Aims of the focus groups/ 1-1 meetings

- ▶ To gather the end-to-end journey taken by DA victims/survivors, and their children, in trying to access DA support within safe accommodation in the last 12 months.
- ▶ To establish the current pathway of support and what that looks like, from the victims/survivor's perspective.
- ▶ To gather your experience accessing and receiving support through Women's Aid - the strengths and weaknesses of the service

Objectives of the focus group/ 1-1 meetings

- ▶ To influence best practice guidance to reduce the prevalence, likelihood and harm of domestic and sexual violence and abuse on all.
- ▶ To use Expert knowledge and experience to inform future delivery of DA and SV services.
- ▶ To include service users voices in staff meetings and feedback any strengths and weaknesses of the service

Information required to inform service provision

Was the service accessible

Was the service culturally sensitive

What support worked for you?

What could services have done better to support your individual needs?

Did you feel heard and listened too?

Were you denied access to safe accommodation? If so what were the reasons?



Lioness Tamar

Lioness Circle



The Importance of By & For Services

Lioness Tamar - Author, Trainer & Speaker

Co-founder of Lioness Pride CIC

Founder of Lioness Circle - specialist 'by & for' support service

Safelives Webinar: The DA Act 2021 - Local Partnership Board & Needs Assessment

Individually We Survive, Together We Thrive

Introduction

Today I'd like to talk to you about the importance of specialist 'by and for' services but before I do, I'd like to share a little about my own journey and why I set up my own specialist support service, The Lioness Circle.

You can read more about my story or the work I do, in my book *The Lioness Uncaged* - available on Amazon.



My Story

- At 5yrs old, I was sexually abused by a family friend;
- At 8 years old, I was sexually molested by my step dad; and
- Around 13yrs old, I was drugged rape by a church decon who is also a friend family.

My Story - The Impact

- . Identity
- . Health/Mental Health
- . Education / Work
- Social Peer Groups
- Law/Criminal Record
- Confidence & Esteem

My Story - What Changed?

- One to one mentoring: Breaking barriers
- Gives me an overall context of the bigger picture so I can see where I could effect positive changes in my life.
- Culture/ Identity/lived experience
- Non-judgemental / un-bias
- Creative
- Caring

The Lioness Circle

- a survivors' led DA “After-care” support network, providing long term emotional & wellbeing support as well as personal development learning to:
 - Women and girls living in London (18+)
 - Who are born of the African and Caribbean heritage and
 - Recovering from domestic abuse and sexual violence.
 - Org & Services created, developed and led by survivors

The Importance of Specialist Service

- Victims/ survivors have very complex needs - failed by system (understanding, compassion, resources, etc)
- Accommodation . Finance . Childcare. Support
- Lived-experience: those who've experience certain challenges are in the best place to know their challenges and solutions
- Break barriers: survivor open to receive support
- more trusting and brings hope
- Non-judgemental - culture vs racism vs biases
- Representation

The Importance of By & For Services

Transformational Time - people want more say over things that matters to them.

Need for more inclusivity: lived experience & culture

Female survivors' needs are complex and ever changing

The Importance of By & For Services

Change of structure, culture, mindset and attitudes

More specialist 'by and for' services

Survivors voice at leadership level

Importance of Specialist Services

I am Lioness Tamar, and I'm leaving you with the healing power of Love & Light.

To get in touch:

Please email: Tamar@lionesstamar.com OR

Find us on social media: @lionesscircle



Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

**Lauren Fleckney, Practice Consultant,
SafeLives**



Needs
assessment

Local Authorities must assess the need for support in their area for all victims of domestic abuse (including children) [who need to reside] in relevant accommodation.

This includes those that require highly specialist support as well as cross-border support.

- **Who** - Tier 1 LA to carry out through DA Local Partnership Boards, others who must co-operate are Tier 2 LA, DA services, refuge services.
- **When** - Every 3 years
- **How** - Using the template provided, gather data from local sources
- **What** - Mapping current provision for safe accommodation and support
 - Mapping current need, who and how much need for safe accommodation and support

**Needs
assessment**

What is required and what should be considered?

Consider the need for support and services for victims within the area and for those whose original residence was located out of area

Tier one Authorities and board members, must take steps to understand the barriers that prevent victims with certain relevant protected characteristics and/ or multiple complex needs from accessing and using support within relevant safe accommodation and other services

Use the expertise and knowledge of local specialist services to support in identifying and understanding the level and types of needs, including the needs of children

Survivor voice is an essential component of this needs assessment and throughout the whole Statutory Duty

Ending domestic abuse

Needs
assessment

What is Safe Accommodation & Safe Accommodation Support

- Refuge, Specialist, Dispersed, Sanctuary Schemes, Move on and/or second stage, other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation
- It is not generic temporary accommodation – B&Bs, hostels etc
- It is only safe accommodation if you have the support element
- Must not detract from community based services
- The importance of specialist women's provision



What we have found so far

- Lack of demographic data resulting in agencies not understanding or supporting those who face additional barriers and disadvantage appropriately including
 - Sexual identity
 - Disability
 - Ethnicity
- Children are not always identified as victims
- Limited data available regarding socio-economic characteristics
 - There is huge importance in understanding these characteristics as it represent the whole person and a whole family. This information should be captured to ensure victims get the right support at the right time.
- Barriers to accessing services include
 - Lack of space
 - Unable to meet support needs eg, Mental Health, substance misuse,
 - No Recourse to Public Funds

Needs assessment

What we have found so far

- Hidden homelessness is a key issue – 62% of single homeless people are ‘hidden’ from support services and official statistics
- Move on accommodation - Barriers such as lack of suitable permanent accommodation in appropriate locations can lead to extended stay in safe accommodation
- Step down and recovery options - Connect pilot in Beacons site shows

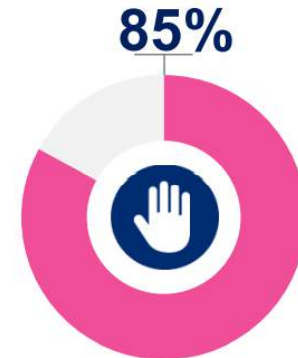


Clients received an average of **7 contacts** and on average were supported for **23 weeks**



84%

Of victims and survivors said their **well-being had improved** after receiving support



Of victims and survivors said they **felt safer** after receiving support

Ending domestic abuse



Needs assessment

Next Steps

- Informs your strategy, not only for safe accommodation but for the domestic abuse system as a whole
- It is important to view this in the context of a whole picture approach, not only doing what is necessary but thinking of the art of the possible
- Where authorities currently assess the needs for support within safe accommodation alongside need for wider domestic abuse and / or VAWG services, we would encourage authorities to continue this approach
- The Government is clear that that the introduction of this duty should not result in any negative impact on non-accommodation based local domestic abuse services
- It is expected that support in safe accommodation should sit alongside and complement the support that is already available to victims

Ending domestic abuse



Elize Freeman

**Service & Training Development Lead,
Dewis Choice**



The Dewis Choice Initiative

The Centre for Age, Gender and Social Justice
(Centre Director Sarah Wydall)



Elize Freeman

Service and Training Development Lead

David Cowsill

Research Assistant and Choice Support Worker



Dewis Choice

Falling outside the ‘public story of domestic abuse?’

The Systemic Ageism of Domestic Abuse

“There has been a tendency by researcher, policy-makers, and activists to assume the aspirations for justice of people experiencing domestic violence.”

(Holder and Daly, 2017, p. 2)

Policy and Service Response aimed at white heterosexual female victim-survivors with young children



Dewis Choice



Systemic ageism – misplaced paternalism?

(Wydall et al., 2018)

Access to a Domestic Abuse Response



If you are 59 years or below

Welfarisation - Diverted from a Domestic Abuse Response



If you are 60 years or above





**HIS DAUGHTER
WAS HIS PRIDE
AND JOY, NOW
SHE'S TAKING
BOTH.**

 @choiceolderpl
#choiceop



Designing Dewis Choice: Participatory Action Research

'Practitioners and researchers in adult protection need to find ways to improve access to research with service users and to minimise the concerns of wary gatekeepers that can inhibit research that promotes the voice of vulnerable adults.'

(Davies et al., 2009)

De-bunking the myths about help-seeking in later life:

Intimate partner relationships - the majority of older people do choose to leave the abusive partner;

Adult family violence – two thirds of clients separated from adult family member and moved into independent living;

➤ Thus challenges elder abuse framework where supposed ‘intrinsic vulnerabilities’ in the research literature about ‘frailty, dependency and age-related factors inhibited help-seeking;

➤ Extrinsic vulnerabilities – a lack of service provision create non-enabling environments increasing the risk of harm.



Older victim survivors – accommodation barriers and needs

Barriers to accessing safe accommodation

- Low visibility in domestic abuse provision
- Lack of available/suitable accommodation
- Limited availability of one bedroom accommodation
- Joint home ownership and assets
- Higher likelihood of complex health needs and disability (care and support needs)
- Higher likelihood of reduced mobility
- Reluctance to remove a perpetrator who has complex health needs and/or disability
- Fixed income (Pension)
- Less knowledge of rights and entitlements to housing and benefits
- Likely to want stay in local area with support networks/family/community (location know to perpetrator)

Accommodation needs

- Accessible refuge spaces:
 - Local
 - Ground floor
 - Able to accommodate care and support needs
- Secure tenancies (less likely to move on)
- Accessible dispersed accommodation
- Sheltered accommodation
- Consideration over proximity to perpetrator (older people's housing can be grouped in one place)
- Supports independence and autonomy e.g. access to services and transport
- Assistance with grants/furnishings e.g. emergency housing pack that meets specific needs



Older victims - accommodation needs assessments

- Demographic mapping of local population by age
- Demographic mapping of local population combined with intersections e.g. age, gender, disability
- Mapping of existing generic and specialist service provision with user data sets disaggregated by age
- Ensure survivor engagement activities reflect the whole life course:
 - Identify and address barriers to participation for older victims
- Identify and address local gaps in data on older victims of domestic abuse using:
 - Regional data sets
 - National data sets
 - Research data
 - Small scale studies
 - Adult Safeguarding, Health and Social Care data
 - Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Ensure survivor voice includes **older victim-survivors**
- Ensure Domestic Abuse Local Authority Partnership Boards include representation from an older persons organisation (e.g. Advocacy Service)
- Ensure older victims are a consideration in **Equality Impact Assessments**

Resources

- Research Publications
- Practitioner Guidance
- Safety planning tool
- Adapted Power and control wheel
- 25-minute discussion on dementia and domestic abuse looking at case studies

<https://vimeo.com/525708785>

Password: Dewis

- Coming Soon:
 - Domestic abuse and dementia tools for practitioners
 - Practitioner film – Older LGBTQ+ people and domestic abuse



<https://dewischoice.org.uk/>





Our research publications:

References:

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- Clarke, A., Williams, J. and Wydall, S. (2016) 'Access to justice for victims/survivors of elder abuse: A qualitative study', *Social Policy and Society*, 15(2), pp. 207–20.
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- Sharp-Jeffs, N. and Kelly, L. (2016) *Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Case 20 Analysis: Report for Standing Together Against Domestic Violence*, available online at http://www.standingtogether.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/STADV_DHR_Report_Final.pdf (accessed 2 July 2018).



Us Too Project Team Beverley Lewis House



Us Too: the voice of experience

The DA Act 2021- Local partnership board and needs assessment webinar

8th September 2021

Claire, Emma, Katy & Steph

A few facts



Women with learning disabilities are:

- Three times more likely to experience domestic abuse
- Twice as likely to stay in abusive relationship
- Three times more likely to be in a forced marriage

In our surveys:

- None of the women with learning disabilities or autism we asked knew how to contact local DA services
- Only 10% of DA services felt confident that their service would be accessible to people with learning disabilities or autism

Some key messages



- No two people with learning disabilities or autism are the same
- Language can be the biggest barrier, but no two communication styles are the same
- Talk to us. Ask us. Give us a chance to talk.
- Be person-centred, not label-centred.
- If a service is accessible to someone with a learning disability or autism it is accessible to anyone.

Some more key messages

- We want justice
- Ask us what we want
- Help us take control
- *Talk to us. Ask us. Give us a chance to talk.*





Us Too: the voice of experience

The DA Act 2021- Local partnership board and needs assessment webinar

Thanks for giving us a chance to talk . . .

Find out more about our training and our FREE resources:

<https://arcengland.org.uk/project-resources/the-us-too-project/>

rod.landman@arcuk.org.uk

The logo consists of the letters 'L&Q' in a dark blue, stylized font. The 'L' is tall and blocky, the ampersand is a simple loop, and the 'Q' is rounded with a small tail. The logo is positioned on a yellow rectangular background that has a 3D effect, appearing to be a card or a sign that is slightly offset from the main yellow background.

Beverley Lewis House

Supported Living Service for Adults with a Learning
Disability and complex needs with a history of trauma and
abuse

Beverley Lewis House

Beverley Lewis house (BLH) is a unique care service for vulnerable woman with learning disabilities and Complex needs seeking refuge from violence and abuse. We are the only kind in the country and currently have a standing waiting list as we are at full capacity.

At BLH we work uniquely to deliver trauma informed person centred care and support. This allows us to support our clients, meeting their individual needs and attempting to understand and work with their individual challenges. We identify where there may be capacity issues and work with social care to promote and advocate their voices.

We use Positive Behaviour Support to understand and contextualised learned, repetitive and damaging behaviours. We also have a Team of Therapists, including a life skills coach, dedicated to supporting these women through their journey from crisis to relative stability.

We work within a multiagency approach, work closely with commissioners in social care and health along side other statutory and non statutory services including the police and advocates to ensure care packages are robust and fit for purpose.

Some of the residents before coming to BLH struggled to find a place that felt safe, where they were understood and could begin to repair their lives

– here are some snippets of their story.

Resident 1 (KB)

"I remember sitting with my social worker till 3am trying to find a place because there were none around with space. I had been sectioned so many times because no one understood me and now hospitals trigger me. I ended up staying in hospital and the next morning they told me they found a place in London. I was scared and thought London was far but there no other place for my support or a bed space"

This resident was sectioned because of the misunderstanding of her diagnoses. The more she is involved in her care plan the more we are able to train our staff accordingly to make sure her support needs are met and we can continue to enhance her ability to independent living

"I feel safe at BLH better than the other place I lived. At BLH they understand me better and help me improve. This is my home"

This resident was being constantly abused in the community and even being in support the abuse continued because her needs were not met. After tailoring her support around her needs and the capacity to make a bad choice in a safe way as an adult the abuse stopped.

#Resident 2 (SS)

Domestic Violence

- National Centre for Domestic Violence receives 230 calls from women looking for a place in a refuge everyday
- 6/10 people are turned away because of insufficient resources/bed spaces
- Each week 2 women are murdered by a partner each week
- Dispatchers (Channel 4) March 2019

Needs and Capacity

The Voice of our customers

- “Having a learning disability does not mean I automatically lack capacity”
- “No decision should be made for me or about me without me”
- “Ask me about my experiences now, don’t just read about my past and assume you know what I need”
- “Make information accessible, just because I have additional needs doesn’t mean I won’t understand if you give me information in ways I can process it”
- “One size does not fit all”
- “Make my support ‘Person centred’. Let me be at the heart of my care and support plan”



Ioana Hanis

Chief Executive,
Stay Safe East

Stay Safe East



Barriers and Challenges to Safe Accommodation

Ioana Hanis, CEO Stay Safe East

Who are Stay Safe East?



Stay Safe East is a user led disabled people's organisation. We aim to tackle all forms of abuse against disabled people.

The service we provide to disabled is long term holistic advocacy. This means we can work with clients on the following areas:

- Risk management and safety planning
- Support to report to the police
- Benefits and entitlements support
- Housing
- Adult safeguarding and care packages
- Child protection support

How we work / Social model of disability



- Part of how we work with our disabled clients is using the social model of disability, meaning we aim to remove barriers that disabled people face rather than seeing their impairment as the problem.
- Furthermore, all our staff are disabled people and we provide positive role models to our disabled clients.

Disability and domestic abuse



- Disabled people are 3 times more likely to experience violence than non-disabled people.
- Studies have shown that disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse and are also twice as likely to suffer assault and rape;
- People with disabilities may also experience domestic abuse in wider contexts and more often from significant others, including intimate partners, family members, personal care assistants and health care professionals;
- Disabled people who are experiencing domestic abuse are twice as likely to have previously planned or attempted suicide (22% vs 11%)

Domestic abuse - a housing issue



'No-one knows what is happening behind those walls. When you are disabled and live with your abuser, you are scared to talk. Particularly if you are trapped with him at home, or reliant on his money or care.'

Maria, disabled victim of domestic abuse

Barriers and challenges of accessing safe accommodation



- There is no data about even the percentage of disabled people in London (estimated 1.4 million), let alone of disabled women;
- Lack of access to safe, secure housing;
- Vast majority of disabled survivors are turned away - poor physical access, direct discrimination, rules about who a refuge will or will not take (women with “complex needs”)

Provision on Routes to Support



- Of the 11,187 refuge vacancies available during 2016/17, only 1.7% had wheelchair access.
- Only 1/5 of refuge services said they were able to accommodate a carer.
- Only 21.4% of refuge services offered support for women with learning difficulties.
- Only 3.3% of refuges employ staff proficient in British Sign Language.

Accessible housing crisis



- There are 14.1 million disabled people in the UK. Yet just 9% of English homes currently provide the most basic accessibility features;
- The proportion of all homes required to be accessible and adaptable fell from 776,608 (32%) in 2019 to 671,381 (29%) in 2020
- This means there will be just one new accessible home built in the next 10 years for every 77 people in the population, down from one for every 67 people in 2019

Recommendations:



- Government to establish the accessible and adaptable standard as the baseline for all new homes and set clear expectations for a proportion of new homes across the country to be wheelchair accessible;
- A specific Access Audit of all refuges and TA to be undertaken;
- Investment to provide more accessible refuge spaces for disabled victims;
- Shaping Our Lives has created a list of easy and inexpensive adaptations that may be helpful in refuges. This can be found in the best practice toolkit(<https://www.shapingourlives.org.uk/resources/ourresources/shaping-our-lives-a-refuge-for-all-best-practice-toolkit>)

Thank You!



How to access support from Stay Safe East:

- Mobile / SMS Text: 07865340122
- Email: enquiries@staysafe-east.org.uk
- Twitter: @StaySafeEast
- Facebook: Stay Safe East
- Open 10.00 a.m - 5.00 p.m, Monday through Thursday.
- If you are in danger, always ring the police on 999
- If you are Deaf or without speech, you can contact 999 by SMS text. To register, text 'Register' to 999. When you get a reply, follow the instructions.

Additional Resources

- Resources from [Galop](#)
- Women's Aid's ['Nowhere to turn' report](#)
- SafeLives ['Safe at home' report](#)
- SafeLives [Hidden victims spotlights](#)
 - [#1 Older people and domestic abuse](#)
 - [#2 Disabled people and domestic abuse](#)
 - [#3 Young people and domestic abuse](#)
 - [#4 'Honour'- based violence and forced marriage](#)
 - [#5 Homelessness and domestic abuse](#)
 - [#6 LGBT+ people and domestic abuse](#)
 - [#7 Domestic abuse and mental health](#)
 - [#8 Parenting through domestic abuse](#)