
BRISTOL DOMESTIC ABUSE SAFE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY 2022-2025



July 2022

This strategy describes the programme of work addressing the accommodation elements of the forthcoming Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy

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Versions of this strategy

Version	Date	Notes	Updated by
V1	October 2021	Draft version published online in line with the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The draft format was made available for comment as part of the consultation on the recommissioning of domestic abuse and sexual violence services (Dec 2021-Jan 2022)	Lizzie Henden, Senior Public Health Specialist, BCC Communities and Public Health Team
V2	June 2022	Updated following the completion of the Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2022 and feedback from the consultation (Dec 2021-Jan 2022).	Lizzie Henden
V3	July 2022	Updated following feedback from Housing Colleagues and the Multiagency Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Delivery Group	Lizzie Henden
V3	November 2022	Inclusion of reference to modern slavery	Lizzie Henden

Section 1: Introduction

Context

The Scope of the Bristol Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy

The Bristol Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2022 – 2025 outlines how Bristol will implement the statutory duties that relate to safe accommodation, included within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

This document will form part of our wider strategy for tackling Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Bristol which will be published in 2022. The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy will address the broader partnership response to domestic abuse and sexual violence, including further detail of elements such as early intervention, the whole family approach and working with perpetrators.

The Bristol Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy seeks to describe how safe accommodation and support for domestic abuse victims will be provided. This strategy covers a three-year period but will be reviewed annually to ensure we are responding to the emerging needs of victims and survivors of domestic abuse who access support in Bristol.

It will focus on both the immediate and longer-term actions that need to be taken to enrich Bristol's safe accommodation offer.

What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse causes significant harm to individuals, children, families, and communities.

This strategy adopts the Government definition of domestic abuse which is outlined in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act¹.

In 2020/21, the rate of domestic abuse related crimes and incidents was 30.3 per 1000 for England². This has increased from 28.0 in 2019/20. Based on local police data, 10,796 domestic offences and incidents were recorded in Bristol in 2020/21, a slight decrease from 10,873 in 2019/20. The rate of domestic abuse related incidents and crimes per 1,000 population (aged 16 and over) was 28.4 per 1000, a decrease from 28.8 per 1000 in 2019/20.

Of those crimes and incidents that were recorded, 64.2% met the definition of a crime, up from 62.5% in 2019/20. For Bristol in 2020/21, 43.3% of all recorded domestic abuse related crimes were a repeat incident³. Repeat offences are defined as multiple offences committed against the same victim within 12 months of the latest offence.

In Bristol, females over the age of 16 are 2.9 times more likely to be a victim of a domestic abuse related crime in Bristol than males. Women in the 30-39 year old age bracket are most likely to experience a domestic abuse related crime (at a rate of 45.6 per 1000) (source: police data).

Domestic abuse is widely recognised as a gendered crime. Whilst both men and women may experience incidents of inter-personal violence and abuse, women are considerably more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of abuse, including sexual violence.

Violence is an outcome of interactions of a range of risk factors at the individual, relationship, community and the societal level. A robust strategic response to Violence Against Women and Girls is required to address the risk factors at each level with equal importance incorporating work to address cultural and societal norms.

These potential barriers span the inequalities of gender, culture, race, and class. These factors have an effect on the actual experience of domestic and sexual abuse survivors face and their access to the services they need. Some survivors are affected by one or more of these factors, and some by all. There is evidence that women who experience the most extensive abuse and violence (both as children and adults) are more likely to face other adverse circumstances in their lives such as poor mental and physical health, disability, substance misuse, poverty, debt, poor housing and homelessness.

We must also be aware of the potential for domestic abuse to intersect with other harms, taking into account other safeguarding functions when considering the needs of victims, alongside pathways for intervention for perpetrators. Many harms and adverse experiences intersect with one another to either drive abusive behaviour, or to exacerbate vulnerabilities in those who have experienced abuse - for example, where there is a suspected risk of serious violence, modern slavery or child sexual exploitationⁱ.

Housing, Homelessness and Domestic Abuse

Homelessness and domestic abuse often coexist, and each can perpetuate the other creating a chronic cycle of abuse and homelessness. Without receiving this support at the right time, survivors of domestic abuse can easily become homeless. Many homeless people will not be rough sleeping; but even in less dangerous situations housing problems can lead to a survivor of abuse feeling they have little choice but to return to the perpetrator.

Homeless women — including the 'hidden homeless' — are particularly vulnerable to multiple forms of victimisation including forced, coerced, or manipulated sexual activity. Levels of victimisation that women endure before, during, and after episodes of homelessness remain enormously high, often occurring in multiple settings at the hands of multiple perpetrators⁴.

There is a shortage of affordable housing in the city of Bristol and rising homelessness. Between 2016 and 2036 the emerging target for Bristol is around 33,000 homes and

ⁱ Home Office's [*Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance \(July 2022\)*](#)

the need for affordable homes in Bristol is projected to be an additional 18,800 between 2016 and 2036⁵.

The private rental sector is becoming particularly unaffordable to those on benefits or on low incomes. Social housing lets have reduced in the city to 1,800 per year, down from 3,000 per year 10 years ago.

Bristol City Council found in 2018-19, 40% of people coming onto the streets were 'returners' and the top 3 reasons for people rough sleeping were eviction, relationship breakdown and leaving prison/remand.

Mental health, drugs, alcohol, physical health and offending are the top five areas that people identified as needing support around in 2018-19 in the Reducing Rough Sleeping Needs Analysis. The majority of people (over 70%) who were sleeping on the streets and had contact with the Rough Sleeper Service were between the ages of 26-50.

Women represent 18% of people rough sleeping in the city in 2018-19; there has been a slight shift in the gender of people accessing the service, with the number of female clients increasing compared to the average for the last three years.

The number of people sleeping rough in snapshot counts in Bristol has increased by 811% between 2010 and 2018 (from 9 to 82) and has risen by 165% nationally (from 1768 to 4677). The number of people sleeping on the streets has risen significantly in Bristol since 2013, in a similar way to all parts of the country.

Section 2: The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced a number of tools and powers that will positively impact on victims and survivors, their children and perpetrators⁶.

The draft Domestic Abuse Bill achieved Royal Assent in April 2021 and is now enshrined in law as the Domestic Abuse Act. The Act is intended to improve the response to domestic abuse as follows:

Protect and support victims – to enhance the safety of victims and the support they receive.

Transform the justice process – to provide support to victims throughout the justice process and an effective response to perpetrators to end the cycle of abuse.

Improve performance – to drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse.

Promote awareness – put domestic abuse at the top of everybody's agenda.

The new Domestic Abuse Act (2021) has created, for the first time, a cross-government statutory definition of domestic abuse, to ensure that domestic abuse is properly understood, considered unacceptable and actively challenged across statutory agencies and in public attitudes. The definition of domestic abuse is in two parts. The first part deals with the relationship between the abuser and the abused. The second part defines what constitutes abusive behaviour.

The Domestic Abuse Act also introduces a new 'Safe Accommodation' duty for Tier 1 Local Authorities, this Safe Accommodation Strategy outlines Bristol City Council and its partner's response to this new duty.

Overview of the Local Authority Statutory Duties

The new Act includes a number of measures for Local Authorities including placing a statutory duty on Tier 1 Local Authorities to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children within refuges and other safe accommodation. It has created a four-part statutory framework for the delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation and provide clarity over governance and accountability:

- 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.

Local Authorities will be required to appoint a 'Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board' which it will consult as it performs certain specified functions. Within the Act, there is a definition to support commissioners in understanding what safe accommodation and support means.

The Safe Accommodation Duty

Definition

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines safe accommodation as “...solely dedicated to providing a safe place to stay for victims of domestic abuse, including expert support...”⁷.

Safe Accommodation Types

Refuge accommodation

A refuge offers accommodation and intensive support which is tied to that accommodation. Victims, including their children, must be refuge residents to access expert emotional and practical support.

Specialist safe accommodation

Specialist refuges for Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Questioning and other (LGBTQ+) communities, and disabled victims and their children. These may provide single gender accommodation with dedicated specialist support to victims who share a protected characteristic(s). This includes services that are led by those that also share the protected characteristic and/or have complex needs.

Dispersed accommodation

- i. Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of DA), self-contained accommodation with the same level of specialist domestic abuse support as provided within a refuge but which may be more suitable for victims who are unable to stay in a refuge with communal spaces due to complex support needs or for families with teenage sons for example.
- ii. Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse), self-contained ‘semi-independent’ accommodation which is not within a refuge but with support for victims who may not require the intensive support offered through refuge, and are still at risk of abuse from their perpetrator(s).

Move-on and / or second stage accommodation

These are interchangeable terms for projects temporarily accommodating victims, including families who no longer need the intensive level of support provided in a refuge, but would still benefit from a lower level of domestic abuse specific support for a period before they move to fully independent and permanent accommodation. There is no expectation that every victim will require this. Many victims are ready to move straight to a permanent new home from refuge. However, move-on and / or second stage accommodation may be helpful in some cases.

Sanctuary Schemes

Properties with Local Authority installed Sanctuary Schemes or other similar schemes, which provide enhanced physical security measures within a home. A Sanctuary Scheme is a survivor centred initiative which aims to make it possible for victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice, and where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation.

Other accommodation designated by the local housing authority, registered social landlord or registered charity as domestic abuse emergency accommodation

I.e. a safe place with support. To give victims an opportunity to spend a temporary period of time to make decisions in an environment which is self-contained and safe. This would include access to wrap around support and specialist support for victims with complex needs (including mental health needs and substance misuse).

Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation

The Domestic Abuse Act statutory guidance⁸ describes Domestic Abuse Support within Safe/ relevant Accommodation as:

Overall management of services within relevant safe accommodation

Including capacity building, support and supervision of staff, payroll, financial and day to day management of services and maintaining relationships with the Local Authority (often undertaken by a service manager)

Specialist support, designed specifically for victims with additional and / or complex needs

Such as, mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support [not limited to], including sign posting accordingly

Specialist support, designed specifically for victims with relevant protected characteristics

Including 'by and for', such as faith services, translators and interpreters, immigration advice, interpreters for victims identifying as deaf and / or hard of hearing, and dedicated support for LGBTQ+ victims [not limited to]

Support with the day-to-day running of the service

For example, scheduling times for counselling sessions, group activities (such functions may often be undertaken by administrative or office staff)

Advocacy support

Development of personal safety plans, liaison with other services (for example, GPs and social workers, welfare benefit providers)

Domestic abuse prevention advice

Support to assist victims to recognise the signs of abusive relationships, to help them remain safe (including online), and to prevent re-victimisation

Children's support

Including play therapy, child advocacy or a specialist children worker (for example, a young people's violence advisor, IDVA or outreach worker specialised in working with children)

Housing-related support providing housing-related advice and support

For example, securing a permanent home, rights to existing accommodation and advice on how to live safely and independently

Advice service

Including financial and legal support, including accessing benefits, support into work and establishing independent financial arrangements

Counselling and therapy

Including group support, for both adults and children, including emotional support

NB: This list of support is not an exhaustive list and other relevant support services can be put in place (based on victims' needs).

Safe Accommodation Duty Funding

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has committed to providing a three-year settlement for the delivery of the Safe Accommodation duty. Bristol City Council's (BCC) allocation for 2021/2022 is **£1,079,426**. The allocation for 2022/2023 is £1,082,414. BCC also received a Capacity Building Fund of **£50,000** to enable preparation for the new duty. Funding is restricted to spend on accommodation-based support and the administrative burdens associated with implementing the requirements of the Act. This funding cannot be used for community support, prevention work or perpetrator interventions; however, there is other funding the Council has allocated for these areas and this will be addressed in the wider Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy and Commissioning Strategy.

The New Burdens Funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is subject to an annual spending review.

In the unlikely event of significant financial changes or reductions to the funding as a consequence of the yearly national spending review, BCC has several mitigations in place.

These include working closely with services, providers and departments across the Council, including housing, to ensure there is flexibility in our design, and we are building in a number of optional approaches. This will be embedded within our commissioning plans.

Local Needs Assessment

Bristol City Council has commissioned a needs assessment as outlined in the Local Authority statutory duties to help inform and develop this Safe Accommodation Strategy. This information will also be used to inform the wider city strategy for domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The requirement for the needs assessment was that it followed a standardised approach as set out by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to create consistency across the country and better ensure authorities are considering the needs of all victims in their area. More details of the needs assessment can be found in section 6.

Supporting Documents

The Safe Accommodation Strategy has also been informed by, and will support the delivery of:

[Mayoral Commission on Domestic Abuse 2020](#)

[Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership Strategic Plan \(2020-23\)](#)

[One City Plan](#)

[The Belonging Strategy \(2021-2024\)](#)

[BNSSG Principles for Trauma Informed Practice \(March 2021\)](#)

[National Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy \(2021-2024\)](#)

[Bristol City Council Corporate Strategy](#)

[Bristol Drug and Alcohol Strategy \(2021-2025\)](#)

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Services for Bristol: Commissioning Strategy (2022-2027)

This list is not exhaustive.

Section 3: Statutory Guidance for the Provision of Support to Victims of Domestic Abuse, Including Children in Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Services

This section makes reference to the Statutory Guidance for the Provision of Support to Victims of Domestic Abuse, including children in domestic abuse safe accommodation services, which can be found [here](#).

The Statutory Guidance was developed in close partnership with the specialist domestic abuse sector, and what has been included has therefore been shaped by them, reflecting their expertise in providing safe accommodation and support to survivors, and the views of those with lived experience.

The statutory guidance acknowledges that this duty is 'separate to local authority housing duties under the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002 and does not place a requirement on authorities to provide domestic abuse victims with accommodation'. The guidance however does state that it is possible for support under this (Part 4) duty to be provided in accommodation associated with another duty such as a Housing Act 1996 Part 7 duty.

Safe accommodation support should be delivered by knowledgeable and/or experienced specialist providers, charities, and other voluntary organisations whose purpose is to provide support to victims of domestic abuse. This includes considering any specialist domestic abuse services that exist to support people with relevant protected characteristics or with additional and or complex needs.

All support provided under the duties must be provided to victims of domestic abuse, including children, who reside in relevant safe accommodation as set out above and such support should meet the DLUHC Quality Standards⁹, [Women's Aid National Quality Standards](#), [Imkaan Accredited Quality Standards](#), [Male Domestic Abuse Network Service Standards](#) and/or [DAHA Accreditation Framework for Housing Providers](#).

Support under this duty should not be provided in any shared, mixed gender accommodation (such as a mixed gender homeless hostel) as this would not be in line with the descriptions of domestic abuse relevant safe accommodation set out above

and we recognise these are threatening and re-traumatising environments for women who have experienced male violence.

The guidance recognises the importance of multi-agency working in responding to the needs of victims of domestic abuse within safe accommodation. Stakeholder feedback highlighted the value of close relationships between local authorities and a variety of agencies, most notably Police and Crime Commissioners and specialist domestic abuse services. The latter deliver expert support to survivors and represent the experiences and needs of survivors and their involvement in Multiagency Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Delivery Group is considered vital for carrying out its responsibilities.

The Multiagency Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Delivery Group (termed ‘Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board’ in the guidance) includes relevant representation from services and / or organisations that support the needs of children, ensuring the unique needs of children as victim/survivors of domestic abuse in their own right are adequately considered and addressed, as specified in the Domestic Abuse Act.

The local needs assessment will take steps to better understand the diverse needs of those accessing support within safe accommodation, including those who share relevant protected characteristics. The assessment will also consider the number and level of need of victims who must flee the local authority area to access safe accommodation, including how Bristol is working with neighbouring Local Authorities to take account of the needs of victims from outside of the local area.

In commissioning support services under this duty, Bristol is required to ensure that services are provided in accommodation that comes within the definition of relevant accommodation as described [see Section 2: Safe Accommodation Types] and should ensure that the delivery of support within these settings meet the agreed and recognised quality standards. This includes MHCLG’s Quality Standards, the Women’s Aid National Quality Standards, and Imkaan Accredited Quality Standards.

Section 4: Approach to the Strategy

The purpose of the strategy is to provide safe accommodation and support for women, men and children who are at risk of, or have experienced domestic abuse. This duty is required under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Gender Informed

The strategy recognises the gendered nature of domestic abuse as “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately” (CEDAW, 1992)¹⁰.

Organisations and services commissioned to deliver support services will be specialist, with an understanding of domestic abuse as gendered and a cause and consequence of inequality between women and men, which intersects with other inequalities.

Gender-informed provision of safe accommodation and support considers the needs of women and men survivors. Separate, single-sex provision of accommodation and support for victim/survivors of domestic abuse is essential for safety.

We know that the majority of those affected by domestic abuse are women but equally that male survivors and survivors from the LGBTQ+ community have specific needs. Potential providers will be expected to explain how they will meet the needs of men and those from the LGBTQ+ community, recognising the need for separate spaces and specific services for a range of people

Specialist Services

This strategy recognises the importance of including the voices of victims/survivors so that their lived experience can become a catalyst for change. It is recognised that many practitioners in the specialist sector are survivors themselves and build expert knowledge overtime.

Survivor Led

Bristol has a commitment to consult with survivors, including those who face intersecting forms of oppression and discrimination, and to co-produce future versions of the strategy. The Bristol Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Survivor Forum is now well established, and this group is critical to helping to shape future iterations of the strategy.

Expectations of Services

Access to services and pathways should be clear, with a 'One Front Door' approach where appropriate. The services should meet the appropriate 'industry' standards. For example, domestic abuse services should meet Safe Lives/Women's Aid standards. There are also standards for counselling and housing related support. Providers should demonstrate cultural competence and have a commitment to workforce diversity. Services should be trauma-informed and recognise the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences. The BNSSG Principles for trauma-informed practice should be embedded into all work (see [Principles for Trauma-Informed System \(bristolsafeguarding.org\)](https://www.bristolsafeguarding.org)).

Section 5: The Multi-agency Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Delivery Group

The Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (named Multi-agency Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (MADASV) Delivery Group hereafter) is a partnership group responsible for supporting Bristol City Council in meeting its duty under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act.

The MADASV Delivery Group will work together to support, advise and work in partnership with Bristol City Council to ensure victims of domestic abuse have access to adequate and appropriate support within safe accommodation services, in order to:

- Improve outcomes for victims of domestic abuse, including their children, through a strategic approach to identifying and addressing gaps in support within safe accommodation services.
- Improve outcomes for victim-survivors of sexual violence, through a strategic approach that considers the victim-survivors support needs from crisis to recovery and ensures there is a focus on those with multiple risks and vulnerabilities.

The MADASV Delivery Group in relation to the Safe Accommodation Duty seeks to:

- Assess the need and demand for accommodation-based support for all victims and their children, including those who require cross-border support. This will be conducted via an annual safe accommodation assessment of need.
- Develop and publish strategies for the provision of support to cover the locality and diverse groups of victims.
- Give effect to strategies by making commissioning decisions.
- Meet the support needs of victim – survivors and their children.
- Monitor and evaluate local delivery, reporting back to central Government.

Section 6: Needs Assessment and Unmet Need in Bristol

Needs Assessment Methodology

Bristol City Council, in partnership with Bath & North East Somerset Council, Somerset Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council, commissioned an Avon and Somerset Domestic Violence Needs Assessment. Coming together in procuring the needs assessment brought efficiencies, whilst also providing comparable data that would assist all areas better understand the needs of service users who may require cross-border support. Each area had its own report produced, focusing on the needs of their own local area. Find the [full report for Bristol](#).

Key Findings from the Needs Assessment

Safe Accommodation

Currently Bristol has more units of refuge spaceⁱⁱ than the estimated capacity required. The Council of Europe (COE) estimate that one family refuge space is required per 10,000 residents in the community. Based on the number of adults over the age of 16 in Bristol the total number of refuge spaces required is 38 spacesⁱⁱⁱ. Currently in Bristol

ⁱⁱ Refuge spaces are counted as one space per household and sizes of the accommodation can vary from single spaces up to spaces suitable for women with 5 or more children.

ⁱⁱⁱ Rounded up from 37.7

there are 49 units of safe accommodation. However, it has been identified that not all of the units of accommodation meet the needs of those experiencing domestic abuse. More consideration is needed for alternative provision for disabled people, LGBT+ victims/survivors, and men.

The majority of spaces that are currently commissioned are suitable for single people with less available for families. Of those that do access the service, the majority have younger children aged under 5 than older children which has been a stable trend over the three-year period. There is limited space for survivors with four or more children.

Over the past 3 years the majority of victims/survivors of domestic abuse accessing safe accommodation services are aged 25-44 years old. There have also been small increases in the number aged 25 to 34 years old. There has been a small increase in women over 65 who needed safe house. All spaces are also only for women, and there are currently no commissioned spaces for men in Bristol.

The majority of victims/survivors accessing this accommodation are heterosexual, and a small proportion (6%) identify as LGBTQ+. There is no specific LGBTQ+ refuge in the South West so the service provider supported women in the generic safe house. This was risk assessed for each case and support was put in place around them.

Across the service the majority of service users were White/White British, however the extent varied between the safe house service (57%) and the complex needs safe house (97%). The referrals numbers from those who are Black or Black British have reduced slightly but not significantly. Asian or Asian British client referrals have remained consistent, with the exception of a small spike in 2019/20. There is a Black, Asian and Minoritised communities safe house in Bristol.

A large number of those who report having a disability or health condition report Mental Health issues. Other health issues identified more commonly were physical disabilities or mobility impairments and learning difficulties. Of those with additional support needs, financial support and homelessness was one of the most common needs for victims/survivors referred to refuge, followed by legal support then substance misuse support. Next Link have two safe houses for women with complex needs.

During 2018/19 and 2019/20, the majority of victims/survivors stayed for less than 4 months in refuge. In 2020/21, however, the majority stayed between 4 and 6 months. There is a significant reduction in clients who stay for more than one year. In Bristol, the move on pathways appear to be good with the majority (44%) of victims moving on in to social housing. Although most survivors do not stay in refuge long, and quickly have a positive move on, we know that 23% continue to have to move before they achieve a long-term housing solution. This included victims who moved on to another refuge, temporary accommodation, or friends/family.

Homelessness Pathway

Approximately 7.5% of homeless applications were from households experiencing domestic abuse. This is slightly less than the national average, in which 1 in 11

households (8.7%) recorded domestic abuse as their main reason for being homeless or threatened with homelessness. Of domestic abuse victims presenting as homeless, the majority of applicants (58%) were single people presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse and 42% of those presenting with domestic abuse had children.

Support Requirements

The most commonly referenced support need for survivors in Bristol was mental health support. It was highlighted that support is needed both within the relationship and at the point of leaving, but with a recognition that post separation abuse was prevalent and the impact of abuse can be long term, so support must be too.

It was identified that many survivors had experienced economic abuse, with experiences including perpetrators controlling access to finances and victims even being forced out of education and employment. It was highlighted that victims would have liked help and support around finances. The impact of economic abuse can be long term and significantly impact a survivor's ability to be free from abuse, particularly in terms of safe accommodation.

Staying Safe in your Own Home

More survivors wanted to stay in their own homes than the number that wanted to leave. The needs assessment highlighted the difficulty that moving home and fleeing could entail. Where survivors do move, they can lose their tenure status which highlights the need for a whole housing approach which includes options such as management transfers within provider stock, as well as reciprocal arrangements between providers. This would considerably increase the options available to survivors in Bristol. The needs assessment also found that there are needs for perpetrators to be considered in terms of a whole housing approach. Accommodation needs and support needed around finance were highlighted as factors that could cause perpetrators to continue contact and attempting to reside with victims as the only option.

Support for Victims/Survivors with Protected Characteristics and from Minoritised Communities

In 2020, the total population in Bristol was approximately 463,377. To estimate the prevalence of domestic abuse, we consider the population aged over 16 in line with the statutory definition of domestic abuse. There are 377,594 individuals aged 16 or over in Bristol, of which we can estimate around 67,150 will have experienced domestic abuse over their lifetime. On an annual basis, this equates to 19,960 individuals every year who experience domestic abuse (both familial and intimate partner violence). Police data highlights that in Bristol 35% of all violent offences are domestic abuse related.

Domestic abuse is one of the biggest safeguarding concerns for children and families in Bristol. In fact, 17% of all children social care referrals relate to domestic abuse

which is almost 2 in 5 families. We also found that over half (55%) of children who become looked after in Bristol have experienced domestic abuse. This highlights the crucial need for support services at both an early intervention level as well as statutory need to consider the best ways to support non abusive parents, whilst removing the risk (perpetrators).

Age

Police data highlights that the 25 to 34 year age banding forms the largest age group of domestic abuse victims, accounting for 31% of the total in the most recent year.

In Bristol there are 158,650^{iv} children and young people between the ages of 0-24. Of those, 94,136 were under the age of 18 so legally defined as children. Overall, 20.3% (n=94,136) of the population in Bristol are under the age of 18 which is in line with the national average for England and Wales (21%^v of the overall population).

Based on the population of young people in Bristol, we estimate that 6,340 young people between 16-24^{vi} will experience domestic abuse every year. Of those around a quarter (n=800, 12.6%) will be 16-17-year-olds. Children on a Child Protection plan due to domestic abuse differed in age depending on whether they were male or female. The majority of female children on a plan were aged 1-9 whereas the majority of males were aged 5-15.

In total there are 79,308 people over the age of 60 in Bristol which makes up 17% of the total population^{vii}, slightly lower than the national average (around 22%). Based on the age of the population in Bristol, we estimate around 2,570 individuals over the age of 60 will experience domestic abuse every year^{viii}.

Sex

Based on the population split of men and women in Bristol, we estimate that there are 13,380 female, and 6,580 male victims of domestic abuse each year^{ix}.

In each of the past three years, female victims have consistently accounted for approximately 70% of all domestic abuse victims reporting to the police in Bristol. This is generally in line with our estimated prevalence in the previous section which suggested around 67% of victims are likely to be female, based on the sex

^{iv} Office for national statistics mid-year estimates (2020)

^v Census (2011)

^{vi} This is based on the number of young people in the population from the ONS (2020) mid year estimates and the prevalence amongst young people in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020)

^{vii} ONS (2020) mid-year estimates

^{viii} This is based on the number of young people in the population from the ONS (2020) mid year estimates and the prevalence amongst older people in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020) for over 75 we have used SafeLives estimates based on Insights data (2020)

^{ix} This is based on the number of young people in the population from the ONS (2020) mid year estimates and the prevalence across gender the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020)

demographic across Bristol. This suggests that male victims locally feel able to report their experiences to the police.

Overall, 76% of homeless applicants experiencing domestic abuse were female. Our prevalence estimates in the previous section suggest that around 32% of victims are likely to be male which would mean they are underrepresented within the homelessness pathway. Of those on the housing register, 92% were female and the majority were aged 26 to 45 years old. In terms of children on Child Protection plans due to domestic abuse males and females are equally represented.

Sexual Orientation

Based on the national estimate of 7% of the population identifying as LGBTQ+, we can estimate that there are around 26,430 individuals in Bristol that identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer/questioning.

Based on this we estimate in Bristol that there will be around 2,410 victims of domestic abuse within the LGB+ community every year. There are very few organisations who record sexual orientation of victims and perpetrators in Bristol, which is common across the Avon and Somerset region. There is no police recorded data around sexual orientation.

The majority of domestic abuse victims/survivors presenting as homeless were heterosexual, five were Gay/Lesbian and a large proportion were unknown.

Where known, the sexual identity of the majority of domestic abuse perpetrators identified through probation were stated as 'heterosexual/straight', accounting for 79% of perpetrators. Bristol and South Gloucestershire Probation Delivery Unit have the highest number of LGBT offenders over the force area with 2% identifying as gay, lesbian or bisexual. However, 20% of cases did not have a recorded sexual orientation, so further work should be done to improve data collection and recording.

As discussed above, the majority of domestic abuse perpetrators in the probation cohort were male, accounting for 97% of the total. In terms of age, a high proportion (44%) of perpetrators were aged between 25 and 34 years.

Disability

We can estimate there are around 91,740 individuals with a disability in Bristol. Of those individuals, around 10,520 are likely to experience domestic abuse every year^x. A number of organisations do not consistently collect data on disability. There is no police recorded data around disability. Although not all of those individuals will experience physical disabilities, it could be beneficial to create these spaces with mobility and accessibility in mind.

^x This is based on the number of young people in the population from the ONS (2020) mid year estimates and the prevalence amongst disabled people in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2020).

Victims and survivors who have accessed the Home Choice housing register in Bristol have been more likely to be disabled than the general population. In Bristol we have estimated based on national prevalence data that around 23.5% of the population will have some form of disability. The Bristol housing register indicates that 54% of victims have some kind of disability. Based on the data available it may suggest that victims of domestic abuse are more likely to have a disability.

The data probation collect on perpetrators around disability is unknown in a high number of cases (58%). Of those where data has been collected through probation, almost half (42%) of domestic abuse perpetrators have some kind of disability which is significantly higher than the general population.

Ethnicity

Almost a quarter of the population (23.5%) in Bristol are from Black, Asian and Minoritised communities. Using this figure alongside the estimated prevalence of domestic abuse, we can estimate that around 3,450 victims of domestic abuse in Bristol will be from a Black, Asian and Minoritised community^{xi}.

The most common minoritised communities are Black (7%) and Asian (6%), so where services are designed, particularly in terms of languages for public awareness communications or campaigns, they should be in line with the local population demographic.

Ethnicity data has not been recorded for approximately 37% of domestic abuse victims reporting to the police in Bristol City in the past three years. Where known, and as defined by Avon and Somerset police force, the largest proportion of victims have been defined as 'White – North European'. The next largest group have been defined as 'Black', followed by 'Asian'.

Overall, 53% of victims/survivors were White or White British. Given the population in Bristol is only 23.5% Black, Asian and Minoritised communities, the number of Black, Asian and Minoritised victims presenting as homeless through the statutory service is double.

The ethnicity of the majority of known DA perpetrators was listed as 'White or White British', accounting for 78% of the total.

Perpetrator Management

We know through probation data that perpetrators in Bristol^{xii} have a wide range of needs with around half of the cohort having identified support needs around substance use, with alcohol being slightly more common (55%) than drug use (47%). In addition

^{xi} CSEW (2020)

^{xii} Note that the probation PDU includes South Gloucestershire so this is representative rather than absolute.

to this, the demographic that access probation are significantly more likely than the general population to have a disability, but due to limitations in data systems it is not clear what the nature of these disabilities are.

We also found that there are needs for perpetrators to be considered in terms of a whole housing approach. Probation data indicated that 48% of DA perpetrators had an accommodation criminogenic^{xiii} need and 37% required support around finances. These factors could cause perpetrators to continue contact and attempting to reside with victims as the only option.

Recommendations from the Needs Assessment

Based on the needs assessment carried out as required by the Domestic Abuse Act, a number of recommendations were made (please note not all of these are relevant to support within safe accommodation).

Systems Learning and Gaps

Disclosing Domestic Abuse

- The domestic abuse partnership should work with the office for the police and crime commissioner and police force to gather satisfaction feedback from victims that report to the police to understand how likely they would be to report again.
- Bristol domestic abuse partnership should work with regional partners to develop a public awareness campaign focussing on improved awareness within the population around the dynamics of domestic abuse, and that non-physical violence is still abuse.
- Bristol commissioners should work with commissioned domestic abuse providers to develop a local campaign which highlights relationships where domestic abuse has not been physical to increase identification and help seeking, this will hopefully also address the stigma survivors note about feeling embarrassed or ashamed.
- Bristol local domestic abuse partnership should review current communications and campaigns across all services to ensure there are clear messages that domestic abuse can happen to anyone, with a range of people including those in employment as 'professionals' as well as a range of diversity demographics. This should focus on reducing survivors' feelings of shame and embarrassment by highlighting the prevalence of abuse for all groups.

^{xiii} Criminogenic needs are characteristics, traits, problems, or issues of an individual that directly relate to the individual's likelihood to re-offend and commit another crime.

- Bristol commissioners should work with commissioned domestic abuse providers to review colocation within setting across the area to ensure there is adequate pathways with GP and educational settings as these are where most survivors would disclose.

Support Requirements

- Commissioners should ensure domestic abuse service provision directly offers or has established pathways with mental health services as this is the highest support need identified throughout the needs assessment. As per the previous recommendation, this could include colocation models.
- Domestic abuse services should be developed with clear pathways with the financial, debt and legal sector locally so that survivors have access to meeting their practical economic needs which was a significant support need identified.
- The local partnership should review the current governance structure and membership and ensure that the Board includes representatives from financial, debt and legal sectors and clear working agreements between sectors.
- Commissioners should work with the local commissioned services to ensure all communications and promotional activity is clear about the confidentiality aspects of the service as this was the most important factor of support for survivors.

Accessing Safe Accommodation

- The local domestic abuse partnership should review its membership to ensure the right level of representation from across the housing sector including registered providers, housing options and representatives from wider social and private landlords in order to develop a whole housing approach.
- The local partnership should work with housing options and advice to review the data from housing to ensure all demographic data is captured to ensure a good overview of demand and need.
- The local partnership should work with housing options and advice to review homelessness applications as there are slightly less than the national average. This could be due to mis recording data.
- Commissioners should work with specialist domestic abuse providers to create pathways within housing providers with the specialist service to ensure victims have outreach support to enable them to stay safely within their own home. This could include a direct mechanism from when a DVPN/O is issued for wrap around support.

- Bristol domestic abuse partnership should work with other regional Local Authorities and Avon and Somerset police to ensure target hardening and the use of protective orders such as DVPN/O's are included within local data collection dashboards. This should include the number applied for, demographics of the victim/perpetrator and support and signposting undertaken.

Perpetrator Management

- A high proportion of perpetrators through probation appear to have a disability. The local partnership should work with the PDU to break this data down further and identify whether adapted support would be required to achieve behavioural change.
- Commissioners should work with substance use and mental health services locally to ensure pathways of support are available and skilled to work with perpetrators of domestic abuse, including knowledge of the referral pathways into perpetrator provision, given the high level of complex needs identified through the needs assessment.
- Bristol domestic abuse partnership should review the outcomes for perpetrators after a DVPN/O has expired to track whether they return to the home or move on.
- The local domestic abuse partnership should review the accommodation pathways for perpetrators to ensure there are enforcement options to keep them away from the survivor's home.

Prevalence and Demand in Bristol

Prevalence and Capacity Requirements

- Domestic abuse commissioners should consider increasing capacity for dispersed accommodation, particularly for victims with a physical disability and male victims. These should be considered in terms of mobility access to ensure victims with a disability, including older people are able to access them.
- The local domestic abuse partnership should conduct an ethnicity audit across specialist domestic abuse services and housing options and advice to understand why Black, Asian and Minoritised victims are presenting beyond estimated prevalence.
- The most prevalent Black, Asian and Minoritised communities are Black and Asian. The local partnership should work with Local Authority analysts to understand this further in terms of languages spoken to ensure domestic abuse

campaigns are shared in community spaces, and translated into the most common languages spoken.

Further Considerations

Feedback on the Draft Safe Accommodation Strategy

In December 2021-January 2022, members of the public, representatives from service providers and other key stakeholders were able to give feedback on the draft Safe Accommodation Strategy as part of the overall consultation on the upcoming commissioning plans of Bristol City Council.

Almost half (46%) of respondents were people who had been affected by domestic abuse or sexual violence 22% were responding as service providers (on behalf of an organisation)^{xiv}.

Key themes that will be addressed through this strategy and the upcoming re-commissioning include:

- Ensuring survivors have the option to remain in their own homes and the support to do so.
- A variety of safe accommodation options available.
- Specialist provision and safe accommodation for minoritized communities, LGBTQ+ survivors and those experiencing or have experienced 'honour' based abuse and forced marriage.
- Specialist support for young people aged 16-25 years old.
- Specialist support and safe accommodation for male survivors.
- A highly trained workforce supporting those accessing safe accommodation.
- Improved mental health support.
- Increase the number of units of safe accommodation.
- Improve understanding of domestic abuse, in particular other types of abuse that may occur in different types of relationships.
- Support for communities, families and friends of those experiencing domestic abuse.
- Provision of single sex accommodation and services.
- Specialist support for children including therapeutic and resettlement support.
- Training for housing support staff and a specialist worker such as an IDVA based within housing teams.
- Older victims also need support.
- Ensuring victims and agencies know the services and support available to those experiencing domestic abuse.
- Consideration of the diversity of victims but still understanding that domestic abuse is a gendered crime.

^{xiv} Respondents were asked to select one option only that best described them.

One City Plan

The One City Plan (Bristol One City, 2021) is an ambitious, collaborative approach to reach a shared vision for Bristol. The Plan will aim to use the collective power of Bristol's key organisations by supporting partners, organisations, and citizens to help solve key challenges, which includes improving the mental and physical health of all residents.

The One City Plan sets out a clear goal for Bristol: that by 2050 "Bristol will be a city free from domestic abuse and gender inequality".

The One City Plan has a specific target related to housing and domestic abuse specifying, "*all housing associations have DAHA accreditation to combat domestic violence and working with Bristol's legal sector we have developed pro-bono support for those facing domestic abuse*".

DAHA accreditation^{xv} is the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse in the UK.

The aim to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards and an accreditation process.

The accreditation framework includes eight priority areas that considers an organisation's operations and delivers safe and effective interventions in domestic abuse. It builds in processes that help guide staff to adequately address the needs of survivors and hold abusers to account.



Figure: Source www.dahalliance.org.uk 2022

^{xv} <https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/what-we-do/accreditation-for-housing-providers/>

Section 7: Safe Accommodation provision in Bristol

Support in Safe Accommodation in Bristol

In Bristol many of the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 are being met and we have been providing support to victims of domestic abuse, including children, in domestic abuse safe accommodation. However, the new funding will enable the city to extend our supported accommodation services.

What is Bristol Already Doing?

Bristol has a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for access to Domestic Abuse Support and safe house provision.

Victim-survivors of domestic abuse that require accommodation routinely present to housing teams at the Council and are prioritised for temporary accommodation whilst a move on plan is established. Permanent housing solutions are also considered, and referrals made into the DA accommodation and support services are routinely conducted.

Next Link provide refuge accommodation for Bristol City. They have 49 shared refuge spaces available, seven of which are dispersed flatlets. The majority of refuge provision in Bristol City is suitable for women who are either single or have up to three children. There are two spaces available for those with a disability and the service will take children up to the age of 18. The service will also look at each case on an individual basis to explore options for clients, such as those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPFs).

Bristol City's Next Link service has all 49 refuge spaces fully commissioned. All spaces in Bristol City are fully commissioned, meaning there are no spaces that are partially or not commissioned. Therefore, Bristol City do not have any costs for non-commissioned spaces.

Bristol has seven safe houses in the city, including a dedicated house for black and minoritised women and children, a house for single women, access for those with disability, and a block of self-contained units for families. For 2021/22, Bristol is also taking part in the Respite Rooms 12-month trial offering short term safe accommodation with intensive support to victims of domestic abuse and violence. The project will offer women short-term assistance to ensure they get the support they need, in advance of further guidance to help them towards longer-term solutions for their personal needs. This project has 10 spaces and is funded by a grant from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Note: Please see Appendix 1 for current community-based services in Bristol.

What Opportunities has Bristol Taken and Will Take to Improve Services Further?

Bristol City Council held a number of engagement events at the end of 2019 and then carried out the Mayoral Commission which gave a number of recommendations, including ones that the new funding could be used to address. The Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment also highlighted gaps and made further recommendations to be met by the strategy (see Section 6). The public were consulted on the draft Safe Accommodation Strategy and gave feedback on what they would like to see happen in Bristol (see page 23-24).

Staff and service users fed back that more staff support was needed at the complex needs safe house. The funding has been used to increase staffing to cover the safe house 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

For children, play work is being funded in both the safe houses and move on accommodation.

For young people, a full-time wellbeing coach for domestic abuse and sexual violence has been funded through one of our supported living provisions for young people.

A specialist Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) has been employed to work with LGBT+ victims and survivors in the safe house and other supported accommodation.

The capacity has been increased within the Council with additional staff time to work on the domestic abuse and sexual violence agenda.

The Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership has worked closely with specialist providers in the city to set up a Survivor Forum. This group will meet on a regular basis, with participants able to attend virtually or in person. The aim of the group is to ensure the voice of the survivor is central.

Bristol City Council has funded a housing specialist Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) placed within the Housing Management & Estates and Housing Options divisions within the Council.

A wider training offer for Housing staff to improve awareness of Domestic Abuse and response including support to start working towards the criteria required for Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation.

Currently Bristol has no formalised Sanctuary Scheme offer and this is delivered in an ad hoc way through local police. We want to formalise this process and ensure victims supported through the Sanctuary Scheme receive supported accommodation services.

Bristol will ensure that responsive and effective domestic abuse support is delivered alongside safe accommodation.

Re-commissioning of Safe Accommodation Based Domestic Abuse Support Services from October 2022

Bristol City Council is commissioning a range of services to address the needs of those affected by domestic and sexual abuse. These services include:

- Accommodation based support
- Specialist domestic abuse services
- Sexual violence services
- Community prevention and recovery services.

The accommodation-based support element will include support for those affected by domestic abuse within a range of safe accommodation and includes services for children and young people, services for equalities groups and support and accommodation for those experiencing multiple disadvantage. There is a requirement that a minimum of 50 safe accommodation spaces will be provided and the provider will also be expected to work with the Local Authority to develop and embed new housing related projects such as a Sanctuary Scheme. The contract will be from 1st October 2022 - 31 March 2027 (4.5 years), with an option to extend for a further 2 years (1 + 1) beyond this date.

The key priority groups to benefit from this service are those affected by domestic abuse in Bristol including children, as they are now recognised as victims in their own right (Domestic Abuse Act, 2021). We know that the majority of those affected by domestic abuse are women but equally that male survivors and survivors from the LGBTQ+ community have specific needs. Potential providers will be expected to explain how they will meet the needs of men and those from the LGBTQ+ community. Victims of so called 'honour based' violence and forced marriage will also be supported by these services.

The key components of the service will include:

- A seamless service for service users
- Safe accommodation
- Overall management of services within relevant safe accommodation
- Support with the day-to-day running of the service
- Advocacy support
- Domestic abuse prevention advice
- Specialist support for victims with protected characteristics
- Specialist support for victims with complex needs and/or those experiencing multiple disadvantage
- Children's support
- Housing-related support providing housing-related advice and support
- Advice service
- Counselling and therapy
- Co located services

- Partnership working with the other specialist provider/s
- Other partnership working.

A minimum of 50 units of safe accommodation (including spaces in the complex needs safe house) for individual service users, with some being suitable for adults and children. The units will be a mix of shared and individual units. These units will be as accessible as possible to individuals with the following characteristics (this list is not exhaustive):

- Single adults
- Families with children (including those up to the age of 18 years)
- Physically disabled people and people with learning disabilities
- Clients with mental health issues
- Clients with substance and alcohol misuse issues
- Victims of honour-based abuse and/or forced marriage.

There will also be support to meet the specific needs of young people aged 16-25.

The provider is required to provide safe house accommodation for at least seven single adult females (over the age of 18) where the domestic violence and abuse victim has substance misuse issues and/or additional complex needs. The safe accommodation could be comprised of communal or independent units, or a combination of both and will be staffed 24 hours per day, seven days a week.

There will also short-term intensive specialist support for women experiencing multiple disadvantage. This project will provide short-term intensive specialist support and accommodation to women only with a history of rough sleeping who have been a victim of domestic abuse or sexual violence. The provider will deliver specialist domestic abuse support to the project, working in partnership with the specialist homelessness and housing service providing the accommodation units and housing support. It is anticipated that this will be within the current 'Respite Rooms' project.

Domestic abuse support will be available for those in safe accommodation (see page 8) as defined by the Domestic Abuse Act and will include support outlined on page 9.

The work of the IDVA based in Bristol City Council Housing will continue through the new contract as will the work of the LGBTQ+ IDVA.

A key focus of the new contract is the children and young people's support in safe accommodation services which will include the provision of therapeutic support and dedicated support for children and young people including dedicated worker/s.

The key priority groups to benefit from this service are those affected by domestic abuse in Bristol including children as they are now recognised as victims in their own right (Domestic Abuse Act 2021). We know that the majority of those affected by domestic abuse are women but equally that male survivors and survivors from the

LGBTQ+ community have specific needs. Providers will be expected to meet the needs of men and those from the LGBTQ+ community. Victims of so called 'honour based' violence and forced marriage will also be supported by these services.

Section 8: How Will we Know we are Making a Difference?

1. Bristol's Multiagency and Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Delivery Group will develop and implement a delivery plan, which will be annually refreshed and reviewed on a quarterly basis. This will identify short-term transitional arrangements and improvements as well as medium to long-term work that is required to deliver the strategy. A set of measures will be developed to monitor the impact of the strategy.
2. To address current gaps, service commissioning options for additional safe accommodation and support will be developed and delivered.
3. Awareness raising, training and communications on the Domestic Abuse Act and the wider issue of domestic abuse will be delivered for professionals across Bristol's agencies.
4. Bristol City Council will raise awareness of domestic abuse and communicate safe accommodation and the broader DA offer to residents of Bristol.
5. Bristol will monitor progress to deliver the strategy and report to the Multiagency Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Delivery Group and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Indicative markers:

- More victim-survivors are reporting incidents of domestic abuse to the police and are accessing Bristol's Domestic Abuse Services.
- Bristol will develop and agree measures to monitor the impact of the Safe Accommodation Strategy. The objectives of the strategy will have been delivered when:
 - Bristol will have a range of safe accommodation options where victims/survivors and their children can access a range of support options.
 - Victims/survivors of domestic abuse that require safe accommodation and support are not housed in generic temporary accommodation in Bristol.
 - That the numbers of victim-survivors experiencing domestic abuse related repeat victimisation is reduced.
 - The workforce in Bristol is familiar with the safe accommodation offer and utilise this appropriately.
 - As part of their statutory duties, Tier 1 Local Authorities are required to monitor the implementation of their accommodation-based support strategy and report back to central government annually.

Notes on Language

Victim/survivor: These terms are used interchangeably throughout this report to refer to people who have or are currently experiencing domestic abuse.

Perpetrator: This term is used throughout to refer to the person using abuse.

Lived experience: This term refers to individuals who share their expertise and knowledge based on their first-hand experiencing of domestic abuse, including

controlling or coercive behaviour, economic abuse, psychological or emotional and/or physical and sexual abuse.

Specialist domestic abuse service: This term refers to organisations/services independent from the state (i.e. third sector), whose core business is to support victim/survivors and/or perpetrators and/or children and young people impacted by domestic abuse and other forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) - including sexual violence, forced marriage, so called 'honour based' violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, trafficking and modern-day slavery. There is currently no UK government definition of a 'specialist service' in the context of domestic abuse and VAWG services. Within the VAWG sector there is a shared understanding of 'specialism', developed from established knowledge and practice approaches identified by Imkaan and its network of members. Some of these principles have now been adapted into a definition of 'specialist' developed by Welsh Women's Aid, recently adopted by the Welsh Government in [statutory commissioning guidance](#).

Refuge/Safe House: Refuge services are support services that provide safe accommodation for women and children escaping domestic abuse. As such, the specialist staff play a vital role in supporting survivors of domestic abuse and moving them on to independent living and the next stage of their recovery. Whilst in refuge, residents receive a planned programme of therapeutic and practical support from staff and access peer support from other residents.

Women's Aid (2021)

These terms are used interchangeably throughout this report to refer to support services that provide safe accommodation.

Tier 1 Authority: The national guidance makes reference to Tier 1 and Tier 2 authorities. Many parts of England have two tiers of local government:

- County Councils
- District, Borough or City Councils

In some parts of the country, there's just one (unitary) tier of local government providing all the local services. The three main types are:

- Unitary Authorities in Shire areas
- London Boroughs
- Metropolitan Boroughs

Bristol City Council is a Unitary (Tier 1) Authority and there are no Tier 2 Authorities under Bristol City Council. For more information on types of Council:

<https://www.gov.uk/understand-how-your-council-works>

Criminogenic Needs: Criminogenic needs are characteristics, traits, problems, or issues of an individual that directly relate to the individual's likelihood to re-offend and commit another crime.

Appendix 1

Current Services and Support in Bristol for Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

The current support in Bristol for domestic abuse and sexual violence includes:

Next Link, Domestic Abuse Service

- Community IDVAs to Black, Asian and Minoritised women and girls.

- Specialist support to Black, Asian and Minoritised female survivors through criminal justice system.
- IRIS training and coordination within GP practices.
- Group therapeutic interventions to survivors and families.
- Universal community-based support services.
- IDVAS service within University Hospitals Bristol.
- 3 additional domestic abuse support officers to be embedded within BCC Family in Focus early help teams.
- Specialist support embedded within Families in Focus locality teams.

Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual Abuse Support (SARSAS)

- Telephone line advice service onward pathways to community based therapeutic interventions to victims and survivors of historic and current sexual abuse.

One25

- Support to street sex workers experiencing domestic and sexual violence.

Victim Support

- Specialist independent domestic violence support and advocacy to women and girls - embedded within Lighthouse Safeguarding Unit.
- Dedicated independent domestic and sexual abuse advisor role specifically for male survivors.

Bristol City Council is due to recommission domestic abuse and sexual violence services in 2022.

References

¹ [Domestic Abuse Act \(2021\)](#)

² [OHID \(2022\) Public Health Outcomes Framework](#)

³ *Police recording has changed since JSNA section September 2019 so figures for repeat crimes cannot be directly compared.*

⁴ [Riley E. D., Cohen J., Knight K. R., Decker A., Marson K., Shumway M. \(2014\) Recent violence in a community-based sample of homeless and unstably housed women with high levels of psychiatric comorbidity](#)

⁵ [Bristol City Council \(2020\) Reducing Rough Sleeping Needs Analysis](#)

⁶ [Domestic Abuse Act \(2021\)](#)

⁷ [Domestic Abuse Act \(2021\)](#)

⁸ [DLUHC \(2021\) Domestic abuse support within safe accommodation](#)

⁹ [DLUHC \(2021\) Annex B, Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services](#)

¹⁰ [UN \(1992\) Recommendation 19, General recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women](#)