

DRAFT

Bury Locality Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment & Strategy 2025-2028

Executive Summary

Keeping people safe from harm, supporting victims of crime and safeguarding Bury's communities is central to the work of Bury Council and the wider Bury Community Safety Partnership.

Domestic Abuse can affect anybody, regardless of social status, wealth, race, or gender. Indeed, we see examples of it touching all parts of society, and unfortunately, its impacts can be dire and long-standing for both individuals and wider communities. For this reason, it is imperative that as a local authority, we respond to the needs of those impacted by domestic abuse which aims to both support immediate needs and to reduce long-term harm.

A core component to this relates to the provision of, and support associated with safe accommodation for those fleeing from harm, and for this to support breaking the cycle of domestic violence. This strategy sets out the different components of what is considered self-accommodation, consideration of existing arrangements, and a set of actions to further evolve the local offer to best meet the needs and experiences of local people.

Context – Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This strategy sets out Bury's approach to delivering on statutory duties set out in the Domestic Abuse Act of 2021 ('the Act'), namely to

- (a) assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of, the need for accommodation-based support in its area,*
- (b) prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support in its area, and*
- (c) monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.*

Domestic abuse involves any single incident or pattern of conduct where someone's behaviour towards another is abusive, and where the people involved are aged 16 or over and are, or have been, personally connected to each other (regardless of gender or sexuality).

The abuse can involve, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional
- violent
- threatening
- controlling behaviour, acts designed to make a person subordinate or dependent
- coercive behaviour, *act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.*

'Personal connection' means the individuals concerned:

- are due to be, are currently, or have been, married or civil partners to each other
- are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- are, or have been, parents (or had a parental relationship) to the same child
- are relatives (the Act gives further definitions of 'relatives')

Children are recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse between two personally connected individuals who are aged 16 or over.

Part 4 of the Act defines 'accommodation' as:

- a) "accommodation-based support" means support, in relation to domestic abuse, provided to victims of domestic abuse, or their children, who reside in relevant accommodation;*
- b) "relevant accommodation" means accommodation of a description specified by the Secretary of State in regulations.*

Statutory Guidance published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2021) gives examples of various types of safe accommodation, which includes the following:

- **Refuge** - offers single gender or single sex accommodation and domestic abuse support which is tied to that accommodation. The address will not be publicly available. Victims, including their children, will have access to a planned programme of therapeutic and practical support from staff. Accommodation may be in shared or self-contained housing, but in both cases the service will enable peer support from other refuge residents.
- **Specialist safe accommodation** – offering single gender or single sex accommodation, alongside dedicated domestic abuse support which is tailored to also support those who share particular protected characteristic(s) and / or who share one or more vulnerabilities requiring additional support). Accommodation may be in shared or self-contained housing, and the address will not be publicly available. This includes ‘By and For’ services where victims are able to see themselves reflected in the staffing, management and governance structures. By and For services are designed and led by those that share the same protected characteristic(s) as the victims they aim to serve. For example, a specialist domestic abuse organisation that is led by Black and minoritised women and children, for Black and minoritised women and children
- **Dispersed** - Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse), self-contained accommodation with a similar level of specialist domestic abuse support as provided within a refuge but which may be more suitable for victims who are unable to stay in a refuge with communal spaces, and/or where peer support from other residents may not be appropriate, due to complex support needs, or where older teenage sons cannot be accommodated in a women only refuge, for example. Can also be 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, but are still at risk of abuse from their perpetrator/s
- **Sanctuary Schemes**– Sanctuary Schemes properties with local authority or private registered providers of social housing installed Sanctuary Schemes which provide enhanced physical security measures to a home or the perimeter of the 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. This is done by providing additional security – ‘installing a sanctuary’ – to the victims’ property or perimeter.
- **Second Stage** - Accommodation temporarily provided to victims, including their children, who are moving on from other forms of relevant accommodation and/or 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

settled accommodation. Where second stage accommodation is in shared housing it should be single gender or single sex. There is no expectation that every victim will require this. Many victims are ready to move straight to a settled new home from refuge.

- **Other forms**– A safe place (single gendered or single sex, secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse) with domestic abuse support tied to the accommodation to enable victims to make informed decisions when leaving a perpetrator and seeking safe accommodation. For example, short term (e.g. 2-3 weeks) accommodation providing victims with the space and safety to consider and make informed decisions about the options available to them.

The Duty recognises that some support is directly provided by staff on site (e.g. within refuges), whereas other support will be provided to victims through a support worker visiting them, including in their own homes including the case of a sanctuary scheme.

Safe accommodation support can include:

- **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 (such functions will often be undertaken by a service manager)
- **Support with the day-to-day running of the service** – eg 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 recognise the signs of abusive relationships, to help them remain safe (including online)
- **Specialist support for victims**
 - **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].
 - **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.
- **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).
- **Advice service** – including financial and legal support, including accessing benefits, support into work and establishing independent financial arrangements; and,
- **Counselling and therapy** – (including group support) for both adults and children, including emotional support.

In addition, statutory guidance from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2021) states that:

Where a victim is homeless, the relevant housing authority must also assess what housing duties are owed to the victim and ensure those are met. Local housing authorities owe duties under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 to victims of domestic abuse who are eligible and homeless. If the household is homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse, they will have priority need for accommodation secured by the local authority.

These pieces of national guidance reflect the national tackling domestic abuse plan which sets out to tackle the stubbornly high prevalence of domestic violence; the significant loss of life resulting from such violence; and the negative health, emotional, economic and social impact victims and survivors face during and following domestic abuse. Central to the principles of this strategy are the areas of national focus on

- Identifying more domestic abuse cases
- Greater collaboration and coordination between and within organisations
- Improving our knowledge about domestic abuse through better data

In 2024 this was re-emphasised nationally through the Government's Safer Street mission, including overhaul the policing response to domestic abuse and to halve the incidents of violence against women and girls within a decade

The following sections outline existing provision and arrangements in relation to the approaches set out above, and actions to develop Safe Accommodation further within Bury.

Local strategic context

Across the Team Bury Partnership, Bury's *LET'S Do It!* strategy and approach sets out an ambitious goal for Bury to achieve faster economic growth than the national average with lower levels of deprivation by 2030. In doing so, it looks to tackle inequalities, improve quality of life for local residents and shift the behaviours of public services working with communities.

The key principles of the *Let's Do It!* strategy are:

- **Local:** ensuring that services are place-based for example by engaging with people where and how they live.
- **Enterprising:** removing barriers that prevent people from connecting local people to opportunities through their skills, confidence, and relationships for example by opening doors at every opportunity.
- **Delivering Together:** championing a new relationship between public services, communities and businesses based on co-design and accountability, for example by empowering resident and groups to take decisions and harness resources.
- **Strengths-based:** building on strengths of our communities and taking an evidence-led understanding of risk and impact, for example by listening to understand each other and our shared potential.

In the context of this Safe Accommodation Strategy the LETS principles will guide the approach – with a targeted focus to ensure that the services that available reflect and are informed by the needs of our **local** Bury community and anchored into neighbourhood support; the approach will seek to be innovative with an **enterprising** approach on how best to use resources to provide the best quality Domestic Abuse provision. By working **together** as agencies and building on lived experiences, provision can be tailored and take a **strengths-based** approach which builds on what already works well within the Borough, looking to apply learning to different areas of the system and supporting people to break the cycle of abuse.

Bury Community Safety Partnership

Community Safety Partnerships were introduced by Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to bring together local partners to work together in creating and delivering on strategies to tackle crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour in their communities.

Bury Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is committed to continuing to make the Borough of Bury one of the safest places to live, work, study and visit in the region. The vision of the partnership is for strong and resilient communities, where all are able to thrive, safe from harm.

Domestic Abuse was a priority for the CSP within the 2022-2025 period and In March 2025, Bury CSP published a refreshed strategy, setting out local priorities borne out of data and community insight, alongside a cross-reference with GM Police and Crime Plan activity. One of the priorities of this refreshed plan is to embed a trauma

informed, whole system response to Domestic Violence and Abuse in the context of the trio of vulnerability (ie DA alongside substance use and mental wellbeing). More detail on the deliverables against this overarching priority can be found through the following link whilst this priority will inform the direction of this strategy in the context of aligning safe accommodation related support with broader support offers:

<https://councildecisions.bury.gov.uk/documents/s43505/DRAFT%20Bury%20CSP%20Strategy%202025-2028%20v1.00.pdf>

Bury Domestic Abuse Partnership Board

Reporting to the Bury Community Safety Partnership is the Bury Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (DAPB). This multi-agency partnership, a requirement of the Act, brings together colleagues from the local authority (adult's social care and safeguarding; public health; housing; children's Family Help and social care; education; elected councillors); health system representatives (including NHS GM Bury; primary care; Northern Care Alliance; Pennine Care Foundation Trust); Greater Manchester Police; Probation services; Victim Support services; perpetrator services and Bury's local VCFSE infrastructure organisation.

The Board meets every two months and is chaired by the Executive Director of Children's Services, Bury Council, and incorporates a survivor's story case study in each meeting, alongside a focus on four priority areas:

<u>Priorities</u>	<u>Descriptor</u>
1. Driving and prioritising prevention	Reduce the amount of domestic abuse, domestic homicide, and suicides linked to domestic abuse, by stopping people from becoming perpetrators and/or victims to begin with
2. Supporting victims	Help all victims and survivors of domestic abuse to live their life with support for their health, emotional, economic and social needs.
3. Improving processes and practice	Improve the systems and processes that underpin the response to DA across society. Specifically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More DA cases being identified and responded to appropriately • Improved collaboration and co-ordination between and within organisations • Improved data on, and knowledge of, domestic abuse
4. Pursuing Perpetrators	Reduce the amount of people who are repeat offenders and make sure that those who commit the crime feel the full force of the law.

Work is currently taking place to refresh Bury's DAPB Delivery Plan in light of the refreshed Community Safety Partnership Plan. It is recognised that domestic abuse spans across broader community safety priorities, including serious violence [the Serious Violence Duty specifies Domestic Abuse within it]; safeguarding practices and supporting cohesive communities.

There is also a need for this Safe Accommodation Strategy to integrate in the context of broader strategic planning activity, including

- **The Bury Housing Strategy** – including other accommodation and associated floating support provision, eg [Review of Neighbourhood Housing Support Services- Complex Needs and Floating Support-Dispersed accom.pdf](#)
- **The Bury Homelessness Strategy** - Domestic Abuse outreach and the safe accommodation service is an important component of the Bury Homeless Strategy. This service is an important in providing skilled prevention measures for all victims of domestic abuse, including perpetrators and supports with stopping homelessness both in a statutory and non-statutory way. Homelessness prevention is key to developing an effective response to ending homelessness.
- **Bury Health Inequalities Position Paper**, which looks at addressing the impacts of health inequalities within the Borough, including broader determinants of health such as having a safe place to live.
- **The Family Safeguarding Model** – which looks at providing families in the children's social care system with the best support they can get through a commitment to multi-agency teams to ensure that children can, if possible, remain safely with their families.

Reflection on current provision and arrangements in Bury

Prior to the Domestic Abuse Bill being implemented in 2021, there was no specific commissioned safe accommodation provision for victims of DA situated within the Borough of Bury. There was limited accommodation provision locally with support able to be accessed through provision outside of Bury but action was taken to commission in Borough provision.

Initially this predominantly took the form of refuge-based provision in order to ensure a rapid step up of a number of units of provision and associated support. Over the past three years additional units of provision have opened to vary the mix of provision.

The table below sets out the current status of provision across the types of safe accommodation outlined in the statutory guidance.

Nature of Safe Accommodation provision	Local provision
Refuge	First stage refuge provision 'OH' located in Bury. 7 bed units, delivered by Safenet through Council Safe Accommodation commission. Greater Manchester districts including Bury jointly fund a male-refuge offer for the region which is hosted by Trafford which Bury residents have been referred into where appropriate.
Specialist safe accommodation	No dedicated specialist accommodation in the Borough currently but routes to access through wider Calico provision
Dispersed accommodation	No dedicated DA dispersed accommodation provision in the Borough currently; four flats identified close to existing move-on provision by existing provider..
Sanctuary Schemes	There are informal arrangements where high risk cases considered at MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) can include requests from agencies for target hardening approaches and measures to reduce vulnerabilities/ increase the resilience of a person's home.
Second stage	Second stage provision through: 'BH' located in Bury. 10 bed units, delivered by Safenet through Council Safe Accommodation commission. This provides an opportunity to move on from 'OH' but can also

	be utilised as a first stage refuge dependent upon the volume and nature of presenting demand.
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	‘SM’ located in Bury. 4 unit provision of self-contained flats.
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Beyond the immediate bricks-and-mortar of accommodation provision, safe accommodation support in Bury includes:

- Victim support services to work with an individual/ family who are fleeing domestic abuse including through Independent Domestic Violence Advocates; Floating Support; Family Help, Family Safeguarding colleagues (where a family is open to Child Protection Plans) and Catch 22 (Greater Manchester Victim Services). This includes core advocacy support; development of personal safety planning; advice to support assist victims recognise the signs of abusive relationships, how to help remain safe and prevent re-victimisation.
- This includes specialist IDVA provision on funded projects, eg LGBT+ IDVA role which is a Greater Manchester-wide service which Bury residents can have access to.
- As well as direct physical and emotional support, this provision also links into wider support offers, eg Achieve substance misuse services to support those who may have additional support needs surrounding drugs and alcohol; Citizens Advice in relation to financial resilience.
- 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.
- Talk, Listen, Change – offer behaviour-change programmes for perpetrators, as well as family mediation
- The commissioned provider have bi-lingual support staff and can often organise staff from our other services to speak with survivors in other languages not covered by the Bury staff team (as immediate measures in addition to utilising services such as Language Line)
- Children and Young People’s Support Worker supports children in services using bespoke support plans, play therapy, groups and activities, liaising with professionals, parenting support
- Domestic Abuse drop-ins at GP surgeries.
- Support from the Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit for customers who have no recourse to public funds.

Key to supporting safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse is the ability to source safe, sustainable long term accommodation. As such **Bury’s Housing Allocation Policy** makes specific reference to domestic abuse in relation to priority banding and the opportunity for provision through direct lets.

Specifically Bury’s Housing Allocation Policy states:

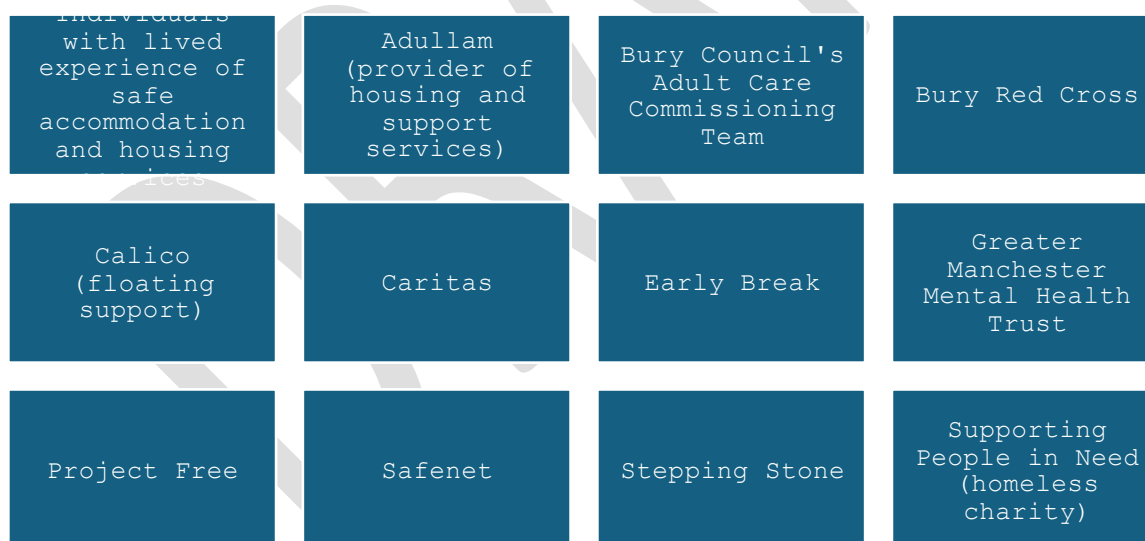
- In relation to banding: Homeless and in priority need - the Council will assess whether an applicant is homeless and in priority need under the homelessness provisions in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. Within Band 1 for

urgent housing need this includes life threatening circumstances are where there is serious risk of harm from remaining in the present accommodation - this **includes victims of domestic violence**

- Circumstances appropriate to direct lets: There are times when the Choice Based Letting System is unsuitable to meet the needs of certain applicants. To address this situation, the Council reserves the right of direct letting. Circumstances where direct lets could apply include: **the safeguarding or protection of applicants and existing tenants for reason of domestic violence, harassment** or hate crime or where the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) or National Witness Mobility scheme has recommended that an applicant should not bid for fear of being identified

Source: <https://www.bury.gov.uk/housing/housing-services/find-a-home/housing-allocation-policy>

In shaping this strategy insight has been sourced and collated from organic and structured conversations including through engagement from lived experience of victim/survivors; insight from engagement on the new CSP strategy; multi-agency workshops with Bury Homelessness Partnership; data discussions at Bury Domestic Abuse Partnership; and contract monitoring meetings with existing providers. In addition to statutory Domestic Abuse Partnership agencies this has included representatives from:



The insight gathered is summaries below:

What works well currently:

- It was acknowledged Bury had moved from a position of having no commissioned provision to a number of units having been stood up and partners welcomed the opportunity to shape future plans.
- Growing partnership-working and open communication practices among agencies. Many consistently provide ample opportunities for interactions between agencies and opportunities to meet with other services face-to-face.

It was felt that services are well-acquainted with the needs of vulnerable individuals, with strong signposting into the appropriate support.

- Particular emphasis was placed on the strong and effective collaboration between Bury Council's homelessness services and the provider of Domestic Abuse services. This partnership ensures that individuals presenting as homeless due to domestic abuse have access to a specialist at any time, ensuring they receive the necessary support promptly.
- Representatives of the homeless partnership felt that it was positive that the refuges accept some No Recourse to Public Funds referrals.
- Partners felt that it was positive that there had been an increase in variety of offers of accommodation and expressed satisfaction that a high percentage of presentations are being accommodated effectively.
- There was also positive feedback regarding ongoing dialogue with residents of safe accommodation to ensure these voices were amplified in shaping revisions to operating activity and informing future decision-making processes.

Opportunities to work better:

- Insight outlined that there is a growing complexity in many cases and therefore opportunities to be explored to further integrate broader appropriate support, particularly in the areas of drugs, offending and mental health support. It was noted that such individuals/families are not always suitable for shared supported accommodation and require more specialised support as the customers transition through services.
- To formalise a specific sanctuary scheme in Bury, with a triage role to increase consistency and collaborate with multiple partners to create a comprehensive support package for anyone wishing to engage with the scheme, enabling more individuals to remain in their own homes.
- To explore the opportunities for emergency one-night accommodation, particularly in cases where individuals being supported into longer term provision. Suggestions were made to adopt a safe house approach, similar to the 'A Bed Every Night' (ABEN) initiative, and to explore whether a scheme could be developed for local families to act as potential 'hosts' of safe spaces (in the style of emergency foster placements).
- Opportunities for greater flexibility in approaches were sighted, to allow more a great breadth of offers, to support both tailored circumstances but also support provision for move-on, eg from refuge to dispersed accommodation, to own tenancy outside of safe accommodation provision.
- In terms of specific accommodation needs, there was a reported shortfall in provisions for older people and support those facing language barriers. This reflected a broader desire to continue to increase the flexibility of such provision and to wrap appropriate specialist provision in. This included the option to increase the availability of move-on options to facilitate smoother transitions for service users.
- In terms of lived experience, it was noted that there could be more support for victim/survivors to understand the housing process. Taking a trauma-informed approach, with consideration of victim/survivors' emotions, is key to ensuring that those who use the services feel well-supported throughout the whole process. While signposting was generally strong, some colleagues noted that

there needs to be a broader understanding of what is available and which services are most appropriate for individuals.

Wider reflections:

- Discussion took place as to opportunities to ensure place based support, in line with Bury's neighbourhood model and the emerging Greater Manchester Live Well approach. For Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation there is a need to balance access to local support and opportunities to connect into integrated place based support and community assets whilst recognising for individual cases the location of safe accommodation is determined through the relative proximity to perpetrators.
- Overall, it was acknowledged that balancing the reduction of demand with maintaining high-quality services is a complex challenge and not one unique to Bury
- It was acknowledged that there are a lot of private rented properties, but these are not always accessible to individuals fleeing domestic abuse in circumstances where financial constraints coupled with housing benefits not covering the cost of the rents resulting in a financial barrier to entry and whether there was scope for work to consider a rent bond scheme or alternative financial provision.
- Whilst there are examples of good partnership working, there is always more that can be done, eg further support from broader agencies coming into safe accommodation settings to offer group work or advice sessions.

Latest insight - data

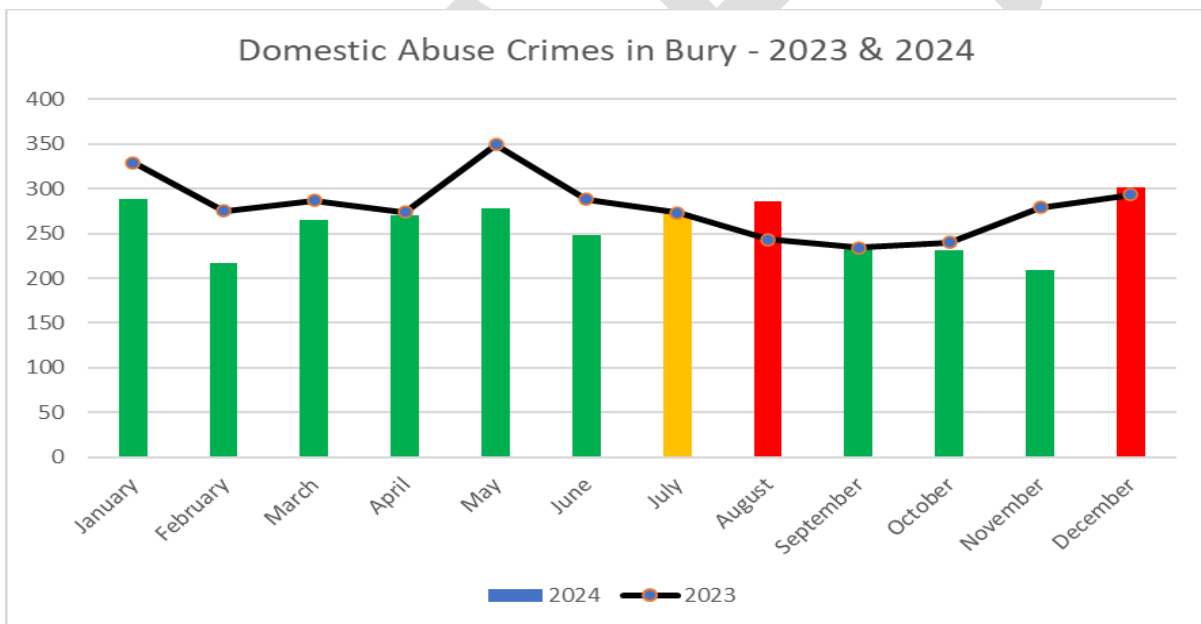
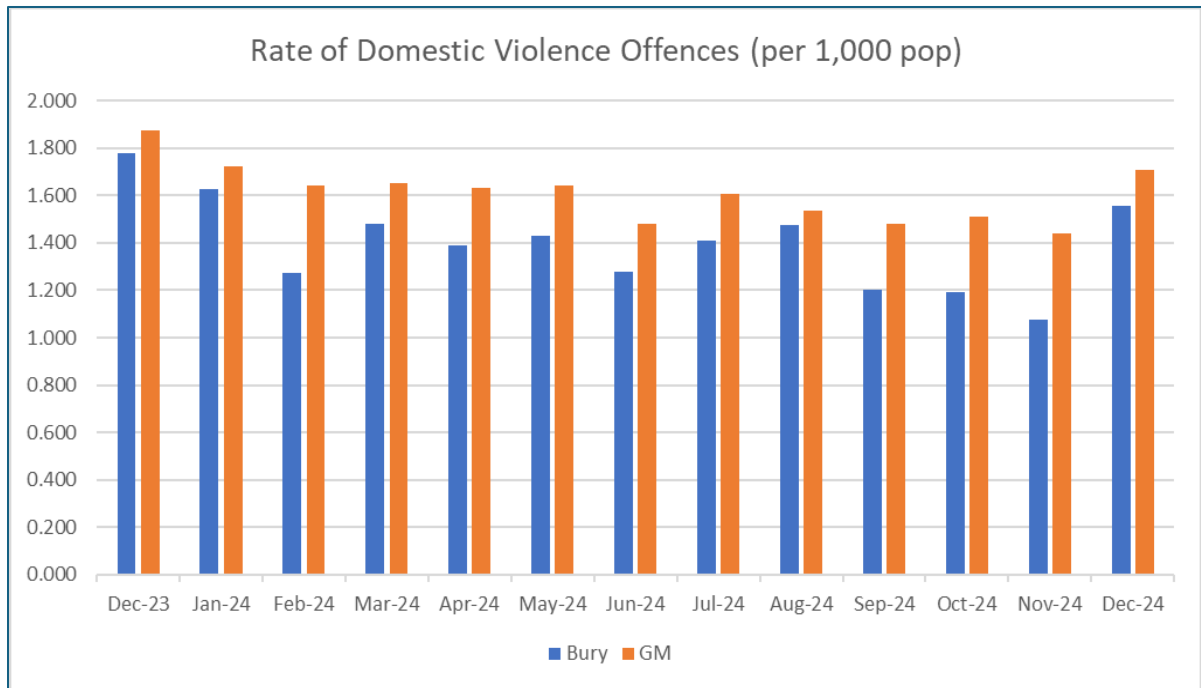
In order to inform future safe accommodation provision the collating of insight also includes a local intelligence picture of the demand for DA services within the Borough of Bury. This has been informed utilising data including that which is routinely presented to the Bury Domestic Abuse Partnership Board in addition to wider data sources including Bury Council's Homelessness and Housing Option Services; commissioned services; [Crime Survey England & Wales \(2024\)](#), [ONS \(2024\)](#), and [Women's Aid National Audit \(2024\)](#).

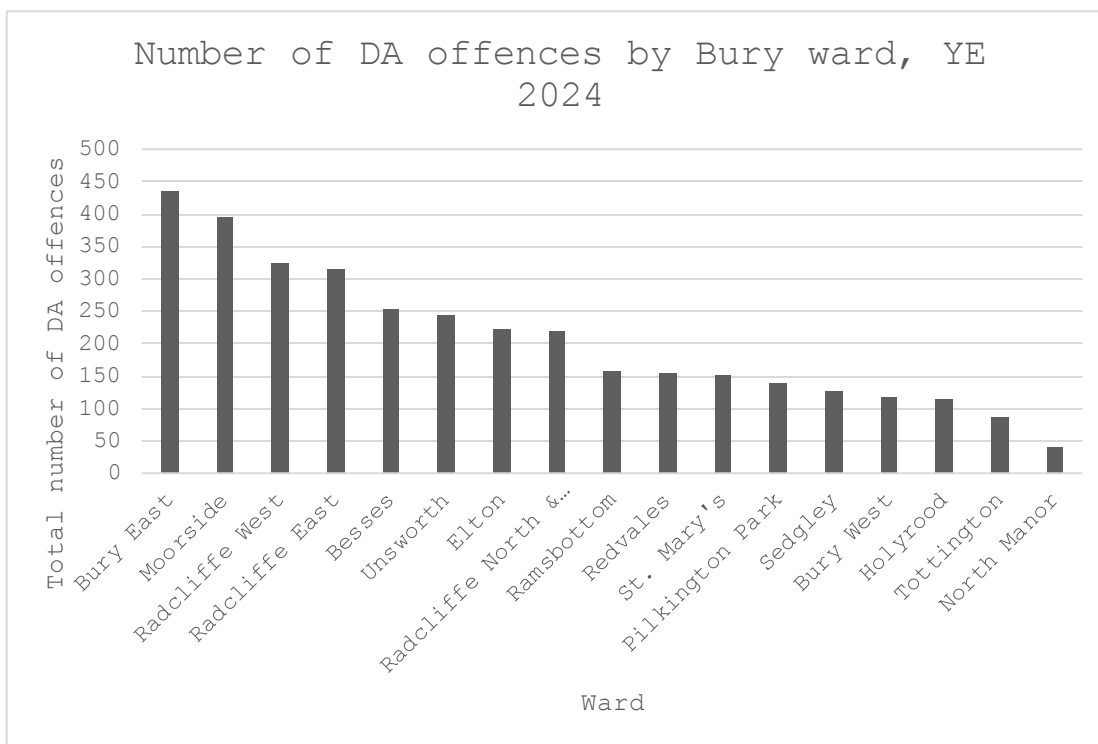
In the year ending (YE) March 2024, the prevalence of domestic abuse nationally was as follows ([ONS, 2024](#)):

- 2.3 million people aged 16 and over experienced DA in the YE March 2024. This is about 4.8% of the population aged 16 and over. The data shows no statistically different change to the previous year, but a gradual decrease when comparing to the last 10 years.
- There are a higher number of people who experience abuse from a partner or an ex-partner compared to a family member nationally; though filial abuse has been a feature of recent local domestic homicide reviews..
- 15.8% of all offences recorded by the police were crimes relating to domestic abuse. Bury follows a very similar pattern, where around 15.6% of offences had a domestic abuse flag (note – data in Bury is from 01/09/23-31/08/24)
- 72.5% of all victims identified as women.

In the same period within Bury, we saw 3,498 reports of Domestic Abuse to the police. Bury has one of the lowest rates in the region for domestic abuse prevalence and overall in 2024 the rates were lower than that of 2023. Domestic Abuse impacts every ward in the Borough though the distribution is not equal, with the highest number of reports from the Bury East ward in central Bury (437 reports) [noting this includes the town centre and police station where some reports will be logged to] and the lowest number of reports from the North Manor ward in Bury North (40 reports).

The data in Bury does show a slight variation in annual DA prevalence rates, with the highest peaks around November-January (see image 2). A fairly similar temporal pattern can be seen in the number of cases discussed at MARAC across the annum, though with higher peaks in August-September 2023 and January-February 2024.





MARAC Cases					
Year-Month	Number of Cases Discussed	Number of Repeat Cases	Number of Children in Household	Number of Cases With Children in Household	Repeat Cases (%)
Oct-23	32	15	37	15	46.9%
Nov-23	34	12	32	15	35.3%
Dec-23	38	8	29	17	21.1%
Jan-24	76	25	64	35	32.9%
Feb-24	40	10	50	20	25.0%
Mar-24	31	15	23	15	48.4%
Apr-24	45	20	51	23	44.4%
May-24	33	10	27	13	30.3%
Jun-24	30	10	30	15	33.3%
Jul-24	66	25	55	28	37.9%
Aug-24	48	16	57	27	33.3%
Sep-24	52	17	67	34	32.7%

Targeted work through the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is taking place on the highest intensity repeat cases and locations under the direction of the Detective Chief Inspector for vulnerability at GMP Bury.

In understand the high risk domestic abuse cases as discussed at MARAC, to understand the nature of domestic abuse in the Borough, and therefore potential nature of demand for safe accommodation provision, the table below takes some key characteristics as a percentage of the overall MARAC caseload:

	Oct-Dec 23	Jan-March 24	Apr-Jun 24	July-Sept 24
MARAC cases with children in the household	45	48	47	54
Victims who identify as Global Majority	14	23	16	11
Victims who identify as LGBTQI+	1	2	0	0
Male victims	5	5	6	4
Victims aged 65+	0	3	3	3

The table demonstrates the need for flexibility in accommodation provision, recognising a mix between support required for families and for individuals (ie one-bed to multiple bed provision); that the support should be flexible and tailored to support different cultural and demographic (including age) needs; and that male victim provision is to be considered.

IDVA demand data

Data on the nature of those being supported through Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) in the Borough has also been reviewed.

- Age: Most prominent age profile of survivors being supported is 20-39 (38%) followed by 30-39 (29%) There has been an increase in the 50-59 age bracket in early 2024 and 70+ within the last twelve months (up to almost 4%)

Admissions by age:	Jul-Sept 23	Oct-Dec 23	Jan-March 24	Apr-Jun 24	July-Sep 24	Oct-Dec 24
16-19	2.94%	8.74%	5.56%	3.77%	2.29%	1.94%
20-29	33.33%	25.20%	25%	29.25%	35.11%	37.86%
30-39	30.39%	36.22%	35.19%	33.02%	33.59%	29.13%
40-49	21.57%	17.30%	16.67%	15.09%	18.32%	20.39%
50-59	6.86%	9.45%	11.11%	11.32%	3.5%	5.83%
60-69	3.92%	3.15%	1.85%	1.89%	3.82%	0%
70+	0.98%	0.00%	3.70%	3.77%	3.82%	3.88%

- Gender: 88% of admissions to service identify as female and this has been consistent over the past twelve months.

- There has been a decrease in individuals identifying as transgender in the IDVA caseload, from nearly 4% in 2023 to no individuals in October-December 2024.
- The average percentage of survivors who identify as a member of the global majority over the past 18 months is 14%
- Just under one quarter of individuals working with an IDVA record themselves as having a disability.

There are a number of clients who access Bury's IDVA services with additional support needs. As can be noted from the below figures, the highest support need for those accessing the IDVA service is around Mental Health, which is circa 5 times higher than the next highest (Alcohol). In addition, it is important to note that around 21% of all clients have more than one support need. As such, it is important to take into account the importance of providing services which have staff equipped with knowledge to support individuals who may have overlapping or co-occurring support needs, and appropriate connectivity into integrated support.

Admissions – support needs	Oct-Dec 23	Jan-March 24	Apr-Jun 24	July-Sep 24	Oct-Dec 24
Alcohol	15.73%	14.29%	10.31%	11.11%	12.5%
Drug	6.74%	10.48%	8.25%	10%	9.68%
Mental Health	51.69%	52.38%	53.61%	48.89%	49.46%
Offending	5.62%	5.71%	2.06%	4.44%	4.3%
Physical Health	13.48%	9.52%	6.19%	8.89%	11.83%
Pregnant	5.62%	3.81%	7.22%	7.78%	6.45%
Clients with more than 1 support need	22.55%	22.83%	22.58%	22.64%	17.48%

As of the end of February 2025, there were 227 current applications on the housing register where there is a connection to Domestic Abuse, Whilst not all individuals above are immediately fleeing their own homes and seeking safe accommodation provision, it is important that Bury's approach to safe accommodation supports the prevention of the need to move and seek alternative accommodation; the support to keep people safe in their own homes such as through sanctuary schemes - particularly given the intense pressure across priority 1 banding for housing allocations.

Current safe accommodation provision has received 73 referrals in the 12 months between October 2023 and October 2024, and the table below details the nature of admissions into safe accommodation support over the past twelve months.

	2023/24 Q4	2024/25 Q1	2024/25 Q2	2024/ 25 Q3
Total referrals	17	14	14	11
Refuge	12	11	9	8
Second stage	5	3	5	3

Total admissions	15	7	11	10
Refuge	10	4	6	7
Second stage	5	3	5	3
Total move-ons	8	5	7	13
Refuge	4	5	7	8
Second stage	4	0	9	5
Average length of stay – Refuge	Data being checked	5.99 months	7.09 months	7 months
Average length of stay – Second stage	3.9 months	10.0 months	6.7 months	3.83 months
Admissions where family size of 2 or more children	3	0	2	0

Of individuals supported directly through commissioned safe accommodation provision:

- The most common age group for individuals being accommodated is 20-29 years
- 16% of residents reported having a disability
- 9% of residents reported as LGBT
- 37% included children. The most common age for children 0-5 years, there were a small percentage of families with 2 or more children present. Current provision is extremely limited in being able to accommodate families where there are 3 or more children.
- Global majority residents including representation from those who identify as Pakistani (10%) and African (8%).
- 42% of individuals in safe accommodation have some level of mental wellbeing support needs, with 8% having substance use related support needs.
- 4% of admissions have no recourse to public funds

Of those not able to be supported with direct accommodation provision following a referral, this has principally due to:

- Lack of available bedspace at the time of referral (58%)
- Specific specialist provision being required beyond domestic abuse [predominantly relating to substance use or complexity of mental health support required] therefore accommodation sought through alternative specialist routes.(47%)
- Individuals declining offered accommodation, eg refuge. (3%)
- Convictions or behaviours exhibited at safe accommodation previously (2%)

Next steps for Safe Accommodation in Bury

This strategy forms part of the wider work of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, and wider Community Safety Partnership to tackle domestic violence and abuse – including to prevent and intervene earlier to support a reduction in prevalence of such abuse and therefore requirement for such provision; but for where it does occur to ensure inclusive, quality and appropriate safe accommodation support is available to all victims. Ultimately, our ambition is that every victim/survivor – whether a child or an adult - feels that they have access to appropriate and stable accommodation as well as timely support when they need it.

Prevention and earlier early intervention

As with the primary priority of the Bury Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, this strategy prioritises victims/survivors being supported to identify and be supported to tackle risks of violence; with options to remain safe at home. This includes work across the community safety system to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviours (with consequential actions, eg potential removal from properties) and champion necessary behaviour change.

Increasing awareness and confidence in reporting; in partnership identification of abuse and addressing root causes of violence are required as part of a multi-faceted approach, to get cases reported and appropriate support provided sooner to prevent escalation and the need for crisis intervention. Therefore support needs to be trauma-informed through local services supporting with identification of abuse, particularly through place based public services and housing providers who can play a key role in supporting victim/survivors stay safe in their own home.

Navigating support and increasing awareness and understanding of options available locally has been outlined as inputs from those with lived experience to support individuals who may be having to deal with multiple pressures and access points for support. Whilst some barriers to individuals seeking and accessing support are universal, others are more prominent or specific for certain communities.

Actions:

- Through Bury Community Safety Partnership and Bury Safeguarding Partnership (Learning and Development subgroup) to continue to deliver, and seek to expand, awareness raising campaigns on the signs of domestic abuse; reporting and local support. This is to be targeted to communities (of place, identity and experience) as directed through Domestic Abuse Partnership Board data
- Specific training input into Bury Council Housing Services; associated Tenants & Residents Associations and Registered Provider Framework within Bury
- Develop a training offer for key institutions related to private ownership such as estate agents and conveyancing solicitors
- Develop a housing community of practice subgroup of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board to share best practice, develop consistent approaches to, and evaluate current responses to routine enquiry; trauma informed

practice; procedures to keep people safe in their own homes; and perpetrator management approaches.

- For Bury Council Housing Services, in conjunction with registered providers, to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation.
- Develop a dedicated Bury Sanctuary Scheme, strengthening and increasing consistency on previous target hardening approaches, to enable survivors presenting at housing needs assessments or under consideration at DA risk governance meetings (eg MARAC) to remain in existing accommodation safely. This is to include liaising with voluntary and community organisations on flexible support including personal safety and property protection measures.
- Explore the potential to expand on advice, information and guidance opportunities for survivors to have access to specialist debt/ financial advice to support recovery from economic abuse and impacts on housing, including the opportunities for funding of rent bonds to protect against homelessness presentation or barriers to move on.
- Review the impact of Domestic Abuse Protection Orders and associated positive requirements on accommodation requests.

A blended accommodation model to tailor support

Domestic Abuse can happen to anyone and there is not a universal experience or set of circumstances for households requiring safe accommodation support. This disparate need can be best met by an increasingly flexible approach to provision which can be tailored to circumstance. The current accommodation, which is largely refuge-based, provides strong wraparound support for those who use it, but can be limiting to those who have needs which cannot be supported through the model. Whilst refuge provision is suitable for some people such structures are less able to be flexed to provide support to different circumstances, where as a more dispersed model can be used differently for each case. For example a male victim would not be able to be supported in a six-bed refuge, yet a dispersed unit could be used by a male victim on one occasion, then a female on the next occasion and potentially a family on the next. As such a blended approach means that more provision is appropriate for a greater proportion of cases, to provide both immediate and move-on opportunities for support. Where there have been cases where referrals have not been able to be accommodated this has included there not being sufficient capacity of a flexible nature that could have flexed to support a given particular case. Emergency and temporary safe accommodation is a means to safeguard an individual/ family before either returning home or to a new home of safety and as such having opportunities to move-on are required. This can include step-down facilities from refuge with less intensive support as an intermediate level.

Core components of blended approach are to include:

Core and Cluster Accommodation:

One key element of a blended approach is that of a 'core and cluster' model, which has previously been trialled in various councils across the UK as a model to support various accommodation needs. The core and cluster model typically

consists of a 'cluster' of separate, self-contained residences or units that are linked to a 'core' communal area accommodating onsite support. The benefits of such an approach provide flexible, family friendly spaces that promote wellbeing with benefits including

- greater privacy, safety and independence
- opportunities for quiet rooms for cultural practice or tailored support
- dedicated spaces for children of all ages
- increased connection between internal living spaces and green spaces
- greater ability to provide flexibility for families of varying sizes

Dispersed accommodation provides another component of the desired blended approach, with a mix of sizes to cater for single individuals through to larger families. This also allows for provision across different neighbourhoods as part of a broader ecosystem of support.

Whilst dispersed and core & cluster approach provide a lot of flexibility, it is recognised that this approach is not the most suitable for everyone. Some victims will need or desire greater levels of support, and a **refuge** approach can facilitate opportunities for peer-to-peer support, which can be important for some survivors.

Emergency accommodation plays a vital role in providing immediate safety and support for victims of DA and is essential in removing the victim from a potentially dangerous situation and reduce the potential for further harm. As part of the blended offer, it is proposed that there will be a number of units available for '**safe house**' style emergency temporary provision on a one/two night basis pending securing more longer terms provision through wider safe accommodation.

The blended approach extends to increasing integration amongst support service provision – see the following priority.

Actions:

- Delivery of procurement activity to commission revised safe accommodation capacity, focusing on a core & cluster model alongside specifying dispersed accommodation as a preferred model of provision.
- Ensure commissioning for safe accommodation support includes resettlement workers to ensure longer term support
- Explore whether any feasibility to utilise housing stock differently to provide safe accommodation provisions within the Borough.
- Ensure that all DA victims are registered for, and are actively supported to secure alternative housing, as required.
- Explore whether some of the accommodation previously used as refuge spaces can be made into emergency accommodation, which would have the added benefit of having strong security measures already in place to protect the victims.
- Work collaboratively with neighbouring districts in Greater Manchester to identify opportunities for co-commissioning of specialist provision for cases where there may not be consistent demand for dedicated provision but whether opportunity to access provision from a broader pool of support, building on the GM male refuge provision.

Integrating 'safe accommodation' – DA, mental wellbeing, substance use

Bury's LET's Do It! approach and the revised Bury Community Safety Partnership's refreshed strategy focus on collaborative approaches, with co-ordinated and increasingly integrated support provision. Bury's Family Safeguarding model is an example of this where domestic abuse support (to both victims and behaviour change work with perpetrators) is part of a 'Team Around' approach embedded with support on substance use, social care and family wellbeing.

Individuals who experience domestic abuse can be affected by a wide range of impacts, including effects to mental or physical health, finances, social isolation EXPAND (Women's Aid, 2024; Victim Support, 2024).. For children who experience domestic abuse, there can be serious harm in development, including the possibility of suffering from psychological and physical problems and the increased risk of engaging with drug and alcohol abuse or becoming victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse (Bo, L., and Yating, P., 2023).

For Safe Accommodation the priority is to align and increasingly integrate support provision – from teams receiving training together and key worker models across multi-disciplinary teams to utilising accommodation support in more flexible ways dependent upon the different life circumstances of individuals where domestic abuse is a part of, but not only factor of a person's life.

The data from MARAC, IDVA caseloads and those experiencing safe accommodation, along the insight received from survivors and professionals points to the prevalence of substance use and mental wellbeing considerations that are major presenting factors in the life of many people seeking safe accommodation. In some cases these factors contribute to the need for such accommodation and they can be a barrier to breaking the cycle of violence. In cases they can also be a barrier to accessing existing provision, given the specialist or tailored nature of provision which is required.

There are opportunities through integrating triage approaches to commissioning intentions to more collaboratively address complex need provision and co-occurring experiences. This opens up the potential availability of existing accommodation commissioned in the Bury system as part of the Neighbourhood Support Housing Services framework, increasing system capacity to support local DA victims in a different way to previously.

This priority links to the blended approach priority given that disperse accommodation provides a flexible way to support multiple lived experiences, delivering independence in tenancy sustainment whilst retaining a primary focus breaking the cycle of DA.

Actions:

- Explicitly reference and connect the Neighbourhood Support Housing Services Outcomes Framework into domestic abuse related safe accommodation commissioning

- Work with newly in post Director of Housing on increased connectivity with broader 'safe accommodation' provision in terms of joint commissioning opportunities
- Explore opportunities for an integrated triage function as an evolution of the Central Access Point allocations for existing Neighbourhood Support Housing offer, to broaden the scope of available accommodation options. This would also support with co-ordinating move-on management.
- Review learning opportunities from the roll out of the Bury Family Safeguarding model on practices including motivational interviewing to increase 'team around' strengths-based support.
- Explore opportunities to co-locate professionals across disciplines, eg domestic abuse support workers within housing settings; substance use workers within safe accommodation settings
- Embed Greater Manchester Live Well principles into Safe Accommodation support.
- Increase consistency and richness of data collection at housing options 'front door' including the use of mandatory fields on Locator system; to be included on DAPB and CSP dashboard. Similarly to ensuring housing provider data consistently captures domestic abuse through tenancy sustainment records.

Increase access through further collaboration and co-design

Building on a strong foundation, and in keeping with Bury's LETS approach, it is important that support to stay safe at home; access emergency accommodation if required; and return to a place of safety is open to – and informed – by all individuals and communities, regardless of background or nature of domestic abuse experienced.

This strategy notes differences in demographics across MARAC presentations; IDVA cohorts; overall population levels and safe accommodation populations.

An increased ability to flex and tailor provision though adaptable offers will mean that there is a further shift from a 'one size fits all' model. This respects local demographics and recognises the importance of intersectionality between protected characteristics through 'by and for' approach.

Whilst there is demographic data captured self-reported ethnicity, one key piece of information that is not consistently captured is the number of victims who do not speak English as their first language. Supporting Domestic Abuse victims with an interpreter (including British Sign Language) if needed is important as it can provide an opportunity for victims to provide details which may be lost if they are not confident in speaking English fluently.

Actions:

- Building on the Domestic Violence in Later Life training; liaise with Bury Older People's Network to ensure access to support, and safe accommodation provision, best meets the needs of older victim/survivors and support opportunities for local housing providers to review their approaches in light of this.
- Joint-learning sessions and access to mutual learning on housing law, immigration law, economic abuse, coercive control, multiple disadvantage, cultural awareness.
- Work with Bury Blind Society and associated communities of experience to assess, and co-design any necessary improvements, to support provision for blind; partially sighted; deaf and hard of hearing victims.
- Embed learning and opportunities for future collaboration on projects supported through Standing Together funding to increase awareness and access to domestic abuse provision across different communities, including Bury People First.
- Seek opportunities within Bury through the Homelessness Partnership co-production approach and with regional colleagues through the GMCA, GMP and NHS Greater Manchester for collaboration of 'by and for' bespoke offers, including engagement with GM Equality Panels.
- Further engage representatives of Bury Faith Forum and local faith leads on opportunities to ensure religious and cultural support provision, and awareness of such support, is increased.
- To continue to work collaboratively with regional colleagues on the Greater Manchester Domestic Abuse Steering Group to explore opportunities for joint commissions of provision and prevention campaigns.

Governance

The delivery of this strategy will be overseen through the Bury Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (DAPB), which in turn reports through to the Bury Community Safety Partnership. The Community Safety Partnership reports annually to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and given domestic violence is a central part to one of the CSP's core priorities, information in relation to Safe Accommodation will be included within this.

Whilst this is a three year strategy, there will be an annual review through the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board to consider tweaks in line with changes in demand and any updates to national guidance.

Safe Accommodation has been embedded as a standing item on the DAPB having already been specified within the Board's Terms of Reference.

Updates will be routinely provided into the Bury Homelessness Partnership and opportunities will be explored to maximise linkage into broader accommodation

relation partnership discussions beyond domestic abuse as part of developing further integrated approaches.

In addition routine updates will be tabled at the portfolio meetings of the Cabinet Members for Communities & Inclusion, and Housing.

The following set of measures are proposed to monitor progress against the strategy.

- Percentage decrease in risk level (as per DASH) for survivors accessing support within safe accommodation
- Percentage increase of housing providers who are DAHA accredited
- Percentage increase in referrals to DA services from housing settings
- Percentage of sanctuary support as part of homelessness prevention
- Percentage increase of staff reporting increase confidence in awareness and appropriate intervention
- Per cent increase in survivors who report they were able to access the right support at the right time
- Percentage of survivors accessing provision by protected characteristic more consistently reported
- Per cent increase provision to survivors (i.e. spaces available)
- Per cent reduction in declined referrals to safe accommodation due to lack of appropriate available provision
- Per cent increase in number of survivors who retain security of tenure as a result of seeking safety
- Per cent increase in survivors successfully maintaining settled accommodation

Appendix – Glossary

ABEN – A Bed Every Night

CPS – Crown Prosecution Service

CSEW – Crime Survey for England and Wales

DA – Domestic Abuse

DAPB – Domestic Abuse Partnership Board

DV – Domestic Violence

GM – Greater Manchester

IDVA – Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

MARAC – Multi-agency risk assessment conference

NRPF – No Recourse to Public Funds

VCFSE – Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise