

City of York and North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy

Vision Statement

Partner agencies across York and North Yorkshire recognise the negative impact that domestic abuse has on individuals, families, children and communities, and all are committed to providing effective and consistent support and interventions to meet the needs.

Aim

Provide relevant, safe accommodation and accommodation-based domestic abuse support for victims, including children, across York and North Yorkshire, and those that come from outside the area.

Objectives

Build on current partnership arrangements to ensure an effective multi-agency domestic abuse local partnership board is in place, for York and North Yorkshire. This board will provide strategic oversight to both Tier One local authorities (York and North Yorkshire) as they fulfil the duties of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

- Undertake a needs assessment for accommodation-based domestic abuse support in their area for all victims including children, who reside in relevant safe accommodation including those that come from outside of their area
- Prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their area, having regard to the needs assessment
- Discharge the recommendations of the strategy through robust commissioning/ de-commissioning decisions
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy
- Report back annually to central government.

Tier Two authorities (borough and district councils) **must**, so far as reasonably practicable, cooperate with Tier One authorities in exercising their functions. This should include (but is not limited to):

- Providing advice, guidance, and knowledge on the local area to support in the completion of a local needs assessment
- Contribute to the development of a local strategy based on the needs assessment
- Work in line with the agreed and published local strategy, particularly where commissioning responsibility has been delegated to Tier Two authorities
- Passing on relevant data to Tier One authorities for monitoring, evaluation and reporting purposes.

Policy

Respond to the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) and associated guidance for Local Authorities on the provision of Safe Accommodation, with due consideration of other legislation and guidance including the Equality Act (2021), Human Rights Act (1998), Children's Act (2004), Housing Act (1996) and Homelessness Act (2002). Any subsequent legislation and guidance that may be published.

Strategy Principles

The principles of the strategy are to successfully deliver the vision and aims of the strategy, outlined above, through the formulation of a detailed action plan. The action plan will be delivered through the multi-agency groups, with accountability through the governance structures in both CYC and NYCC.

- **Authentic voice of victims/ survivors and their children to inform our partnership approaches.** Exploring how feedback can be heard consistently and effectively.
- **Effective pathways- supporting those with ‘additional needs’.** Barriers can exist for those with ‘additional needs’ (e.g. substance misuse, mental health needs, no recourse to public funds) in accessing relevant safe accommodation and support. Partnership arrangements and structures need to ensure no one is ‘lost’ within our systems
- **It is not ‘safe accommodation’- if ‘support’ is not in place.** Our approach is not just about bricks and mortar. Relevant, effective support must be provided whilst in safe accommodation.
- **Clear, consistent approaches must be in place across York and North Yorkshire.** All referrals for safe accommodation and support to come through the Hub. Enabling the **right advice and support** being offered at the **right time**.
- **Meeting the needs of individuals, families and communities.** Within our action plan we must be clear on how we support a range of groups, including male victims, victim fleeing illegal cultural harms, BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) victims and victims from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
- **Understanding our need and demand for safe accommodation.** Our understanding of need and demand needs to come from a range of local partners, including housing. From the findings of the needs assessment, robust systems will be developed to ensure we have accurate recording and reporting.
- **Ensuring we have effective partnership arrangements (Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board).** Enhancing our current arrangements including chairing, membership and effective linkages with other partnerships.

Accountability and Delivery

Through working in close partnership, each Local Authority is individually accountable for financial probity and the delivery of outcomes and impact of this strategy via the Partnership Board to central government. The statutory mechanism for reporting is outlined in Section 29 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.