

London Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025-28

Support for victims/survivors of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation

March 2025

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Glossary

By and for	Specialist ‘by and for’ services are run by and for the communities they serve. ¹
Domestic Abuse Act 2021 ²	In April 2021, the Domestic Abuse Act received Royal Assent. Part 4 ³ of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (the 2021 Act) includes new duties on tier-one local authorities in England, concerning the provision of support for victims and their children living in relevant safe accommodation.
Domestic abuse safe accommodation (DASA)	MHCLG ⁴ guidance sets out the types of accommodation where support may be provided, under Part 4 of the 2021 Act. Victims may live in various forms of relevant safe accommodation. Privately owned and managed temporary accommodation that is not separate or self-contained, and that has a shared toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities (such as bed-and-breakfast accommodation), is not considered relevant safe accommodation.
DASA-based support	Part 4 of the 2021 Act places duties on tier-one local authorities to ensure victims of domestic abuse have access to the right accommodation-based support. For example, government guidance sets out 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. ⁵

¹ Women’s Aid, [The Domestic Abuse Report 2024: The Annual Audit](#), February 2024

² Legislation.gov.uk, [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

³ Legislation.gov.uk, [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

⁴ MHCLG, [Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services](#), October 2021

⁵ MHCLG, [Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services](#), October 2021

DASA system	A multi-agency network of organisations that are key to delivering DASA and support. This includes (but is not limited to) the violence against women and girls (VAWG) ⁶ sector; London boroughs; the health sector; criminal justice partners; organisations representing victims/survivors and their children; and housing providers.
GLA ⁷	The Greater London Authority is the tier-one authority in London.
MHCLG	The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, formerly known as the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). This central government department is responsible for the Part 4 funding, legislation and guidance at national level.
Partnership Board	Domestic Abuse Partnership Board ⁸
Police and Crime Commissioners	The Mayor of London is the Police and Crime Commissioner for London. ⁹
MOPAC ¹⁰	Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime
Sanctuary scheme ¹¹	An initiative that aims to enable victims/survivors at risk of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes, and reduce repeat victimisation by providing enhanced security measures (sanctuary) and support.
VAWG ¹²	Violence against women and girls
VAWG sector	Specialist organisations and agencies that work to tackle violence against women and girls. ¹³ This includes supporting victims/survivors of domestic abuse.
VCS	Voluntary and community sector ¹⁴

⁶ Home Office, [Violence against women and girls national statement of expectations \(accessible\)](#), updated 27 July 2022

⁷ GLA, [How we work for London](#)

⁸ London Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, [Membership and terms of reference](#), November 2021

⁹ MPS, [Governance](#)

¹⁰ GLA, [MOPAC](#)

¹¹ DAHA, [Sanctuary Scheme Toolkit](#)

¹² United Nations, [Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women](#)

¹³ Home Office, [Violence against women and girls national statement of expectations \(accessible\)](#), updated 27 July 2022

¹⁴ Community Action Network, [What is the voluntary and community sector?](#)

Whole Housing Approach¹⁵

The Whole Housing Approach is an established framework for addressing the housing and safety needs of victim/survivors in a local area. It brings together, under one umbrella, all the main housing tenure types alongside the housing options and support initiatives needed to help people experiencing domestic abuse to either maintain or access safe and stable housing. (For local authorities, this can be an adaptable model with components implemented individually based on the local areas' needs and priorities.)

¹⁵ DAHA, [What is the Whole Housing Approach?](#)

Foreword

Domestic abuse devastates the lives of thousands of survivors every year, and I remain determined to do everything in my power to tackle it. As Mayor, and as a proud feminist, I have invested £233m in addressing all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG). Part of our ambition is for every victim and survivor to have access to high-quality tailored support, as well as safe accommodation. This is crucial for those who can't safely remain in their own home, to help them recover from their trauma and look ahead to a more hopeful future.

In 2021, we published our first Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation (DASA) strategy for London.¹⁶ That same year, successful lobbying brought new powers and additional funding to the Domestic Abuse Act.¹⁷ Since then, over 23,500 domestic abuse survivors and their children have received support in safe accommodation in London, many from specialist VAWG organisations rooted in our communities. Through our DASA Homes Programme,¹⁸ we will make available a new supply of specialist homes for domestic abuse survivors. Further grant funding¹⁹ has enabled much-needed improvements in the quality of existing safe accommodation. And we continue to provide London's social housing tenants, affected by domestic abuse, with a pathway to relocate across the city, whilst maintaining stable and affordable housing tenancies.

All this has been achieved in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and a national cost-of-living crisis that has disproportionately impacted both those affected by abuse and inequality, and the organisations supporting them. Yet there is much more work to do. Delivering safe accommodation-based support is no easy task; and the national housing crisis, felt acutely across the capital, presents significant challenges to providing the right help at the right time.

Over the coming years, we will continue to invest in new services and support for survivors in safe accommodation, including funding longer-term homes, to give those fleeing violence the stability needed to rebuild their lives. Our priorities for the next three years include maintaining a focus on providing more physically and psychologically safe spaces for survivors – spaces that are accessible and reflect the diversity of Londoners. We will tackle persistent systemic challenges to both accessing and delivering services. And a

¹⁶ GLA, [Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy](#), December 2021

¹⁷ Legislation.gov.uk, [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

¹⁸ GLA, [Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Homes Programme – Prospectus and Guidance for London](#), February 2024

¹⁹ The London Community Foundation, [Safe Accommodation – PIE](#)

refreshed commissioning approach will provide inclusive funding mechanisms that enable robust, sustainable and accessible provision to flourish.

Through our delivery partners and my Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, we will strengthen strategic collaboration between a diverse range of agencies and organisations to ensure well-resourced, clear and coordinated support for survivors from crisis to recovery. Learning lessons from delivery, building our evidence base and growing the system of partners will be part of this vital work. I am calling on all partners to join me in this effort.

We know pressures on local authority budgets continue to grow, and that the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 does not go far enough. So, alongside the vital support delivered by City Hall and our valued partners across London, we will work with the government and make the case for longer-term, sustainable funding that is sufficient to meet the needs of all survivors, including those with unknown and insecure immigration status.

Providing more good-quality support to survivors of domestic abuse in safe accommodation across our city will support the new government's national mission on safety – at the heart of which lies a commitment to strengthen support for all victims of crime, and tackle the scourge of VAWG.

The support provided in safe accommodation is already saving and changing lives. Through this refreshed strategy, we will further deliver high-quality support for thousands more survivors and their children across our city.

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London

Executive summary

The GLA, as the tier-one authority in London, has duties under Part 4 of the 2021 Act to support victims/survivors of domestic abuse and their children in relevant safe accommodation. The duties under this act include producing a strategy; commissioning services; and convening a partnership board. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG's) guidance²⁰ sets out the full scope of support that can be provided in relevant safe accommodation under the Part 4 duty. This refreshed strategy for 2025-28 follows on from the Mayor's publication of his first DASA strategy in 2021.

This strategy is informed by an updated pan-London needs assessment, which has been published alongside it; the two should be read in conjunction. To develop this strategy refresh, engagement was undertaken with victims/survivors; agencies involved in tackling domestic abuse; and organisations delivering support. This document sets out the Mayor's priorities for DASA provision in London, with an outline of his role and the role of partners. The Mayor's vision is that all victims/survivors of domestic abuse, including children, can access and be supported by safe accommodation-based services, tailored to their needs. This ambition applies to safe accommodation services across the board, not solely those commissioned under the Part 4 duties. Five refreshed objectives are set out to achieve his vision. These are, in summary, to ensure:

- a clear and coordinated network of support in safe accommodation for all victims/survivors
- accessible and inclusive services that meet the diverse needs of all victims/survivors
- services and accommodation that are physically and psychologically safe, and of high quality; and use up-to-date and appropriate practice
- a DASA system (made up of various organisations such as the VAWG²¹ and housing sectors, and local authorities) that works across specialties and geographies, and is centred on victim/survivor outcomes
- a sustainable and robust sector, funded to best meet victims'/survivors' needs.

This strategy includes a summary of the findings from the latest needs assessment, and highlights of the Mayor's DASA progress to date. A chapter outlining how the duty will be

²⁰ MHCLG, [Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services](#), October 2021

²¹ Home Office, [Violence against women and girls national statement of expectations \(accessible\)](#), updated 27 July 2022

further delivered in 2025-28 sets out refreshed strategic priorities, to be progressed through a delivery plan in 2025-28. The strategy also outlines a refreshed commissioning approach from March 2025 onwards. It is proposed that this will deliver, in phases, a grants programme for specialist services, followed by the recommissioning of further services in close consultation with delivery partners. Priority activities to support the delivery of the Mayor's five objectives have been updated and grouped in a table, identifying who should support and deliver each one. A final chapter points to relevant strategies, government guidance and nationally recognised quality standards. These are for all partners to consider in their work to deliver improved DASA services.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the scope of the Mayor's powers

Part 4 of the 2021 Act created new duties to support victims/survivors of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation in London. These include:

- assessing the need for domestic abuse support in safe accommodation across London
- preparing and publishing a strategy for the provision of this support
- giving effect to the strategy – that is, commissioning the provision of support to meet the identified needs
- monitoring and evaluating the success of the strategy
- convening a Partnership Board to advise on the exercise of the above duties.

The duty comes with revenue funding from MHCLG of circa £20m a year. The initial funding allocation for London for 2025-26 is circa £26.8m, up from the previous year (around £21.6m). While the strategy refers, at points, to wider work that the Mayor has delivered in relation to domestic abuse, and to ambitions beyond the 2021 Act's scope, its focus and priority is on the specific responsibilities set out in the 2021 Act that the Mayor is empowered and resourced to deliver.²² The scope of Part 4 of the 2021 Act is specific and limited to the provision of support to meet the needs of victims/survivors within safe accommodation.

The Part 4 duty and associated funding does not provide for the delivery of accommodation itself. There is no power or funding for the delivery of any capital projects, bedspaces or costs related to rent or leases associated with accommodation for survivors and their children. The Mayor's Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Homes Programme,²³ launched in March 2024, provides capital funding separate and additional to revenue funding through the Part 4 duty. This is one way in which the Mayor has

²² There are areas of guidance and legislation, beyond the scope of the duty, that inform the approach of support for victims/survivors of domestic abuse. These should be considered alongside the duty. The statutory framework around homelessness and changes to priority need are addressed in other parts of the 2021 Act. The Mayor's wider strategies – primarily London's Housing Strategy, the PCP, and the VAWG Strategy – are also relevant to his work on DASA.

²³ GLA, [Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Homes Programme – Prospectus and Guidance for London](#), February 2024

undertaken independent innovation outside the duty, which itself places no requirement for boroughs to provide buildings or units.

Part 4 funding is solely to deliver support for survivors and their children who reside in 'relevant safe accommodation'. Further, it does not provide for other types of support for victims/survivors (e.g., prevention and other support outside of safe accommodation). It has some additional, specific limitations around support within some forms of accommodation, such as bed-and-breakfast accommodation. MHCLG categorises and defines relevant forms of safe accommodation in their national guidance, alongside the types of support that can be offered in relevant safe accommodation under the Part 4 duty. MHCLG's statutory guidance ('Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in safe accommodation services') can be read online.²⁴

Tier-two local authorities (in London, these are the local borough councils) have a 'duty to cooperate' with requests from tier-one authorities (in London, the GLA) in the exercise of their Part 4 duties.²⁵ They continue to receive direct new burdens funding from MHCLG for this purpose. The Part 4 duty does not give the Mayor, or the tier-one authority, a mandate to enforce local activity in relation to the duty more widely.

²⁴ MHCLG, [Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services](#), October 2021

²⁵ MHCLG, [Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services](#), October 2021

The Mayor's progress since 2021

Key achievements

Since 2021, the Mayor has commissioned services that have enhanced and complemented those already funded and commissioned. Over £54m worth of new support across London has already been commissioned through a range of services, supporting more than 23,500 victims/survivors.

These services meet gaps in provision and emerging needs of victims/survivors. Mayoral-commissioned services offer a wide range of support to victims/survivors including (but not limited to) housing-related support, advocacy, counselling and specialist support for children. Support for victims/survivors is also provided on broader issues, such as safeguarding, access to benefits, employment and developing new life skills. This support is reported by victims/survivors as essential in allowing them to move away from abuse and become more independent. Victims/survivors also reported that the emotional support they received helped their confidence and empowered them to rebuild their lives.

One victim/survivor supported by a DASA-funded service reported within the 2024 needs assessment that:

“Being able to meet with [staff member] once a week has made me feel that someone is on my side, that someone believes me and will offer real tangible support ... Being able to receive support has been life-changing. I have never had this before and I feel less alone.”

The Mayor's pioneering approach has supported grassroots organisations and specialist 'by and for' providers, alongside larger voluntary-sector organisations and London boroughs. This has maximised services that reach minoritised and marginalised groups, including those experiencing racism and other forms of discrimination. Key achievements include delivering 81 new and enhanced services in 2022-24, through an inclusive framework. This work includes the following:

- over 50 per cent of these new and enhanced services provide specialist services for victims/survivors from a minoritised group – leading England on providing proportionate specialist provision for Black and minoritised survivors²⁶

²⁶ DLUHC, [Annual progress report from the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation National Expert Steering Group 2022 to 2023](#), February 2024

- over a third of funding has been distributed to grassroots ‘led by and for’ organisations
- the first provision of emergency accommodation for male victims/survivors of domestic abuse in London
- the UK’s first trans and non-binary-led ‘by and for’ refuge provision.

Further to this best practice being modelled in London, the National Expert Steering Group on safe accommodation provision, chaired by MHCLG, has recommended in its 2024 Annual Report²⁷ that local authorities across England review their commissioning processes to ensure they champion smaller, specialist providers. A national working group has formed to spread key principles taken within the Mayor’s commissioning across England. In London, the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) has progressed regular collaboration with a network of tier-one authorities across England to share good practice, including a continued focus on engaging with the government on their national monitoring and delivery of the duty.

For further reading, MHCLG also provides full data tables²⁸ on the breakdown of how all victims/survivors are supported in safe accommodation by region, alongside further national summary data, including comparison data²⁹ on the national duty and its performance. Further information on the delivery mechanisms and funding of support undertaken in 2021-24 can be found on the City Hall website.³⁰

Beyond provision

Conferring Part 4 funding to the GLA has enabled the Mayor to combine it with wider housing funding streams. Capital funding of up to £8.5m from the Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26 has been paired with up to £1.1m revenue funding from the Part 4 duty to launch the DASA Homes Programme.³¹ This provides the funding to create new and improved physically and psychologically safe accommodation – especially for under-served groups.³² This has encouraged partnership working and joint bids from across the VAWG and housing sector.

Through housing mobility schemes, the Mayor has ensured social housing tenants affected by domestic abuse can relocate, whilst maintaining their tenancy rights. This means victims/survivors accessing a social tenancy in a safer borough for their

²⁷ DLUHC, [Annual progress report from the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation National Expert Steering Group 2022 to 2023](#), February 2024

²⁸ [Support in domestic abuse safe accommodation tables](#)

²⁹ MHCLG, [Support in Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation](#), October 2024

³⁰ GLA, [Domestic abuse safe accommodation and support](#)

³¹ GLA, [Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Homes Programme – Prospectus and Guidance for London](#), February 2024

³² GLA, [London Housing Strategy](#), May 2018

circumstances, through schemes that work at a pan-London level to secure collaboration between housing providers to facilitate these moves.

Learning from 2021-24

Alongside the successes of the first phase of DASA delivery, as would be expected, there were a range of challenges. The 2024 needs assessment explores these in detail and should be read in conjunction with this strategy.

The volume of victims/survivors supported in safe accommodation since 2021 through the duty is a landmark achievement. However, we are keen to identify additional benefits of the programme; and to share these with partners. This is a key priority for 2025-28, as it allows us better monitor progress and identify gaps that show where we can more effectively work with partners. This is especially critical where victims'/survivors' needs identified in the needs assessment remain underserved and where building on partnerships across London will require a redoubling of our efforts in 2025-28.

A commitment to address the 2024 needs assessment recommendations is set out in this strategy. Further to this, a delivery plan overseen by a refreshed Partnership Board will drive forward and track the progress of all the commitments made in this strategy in the next three years. Learnings from across funding and delivery in 2021-24, including on the programme's funding Framework and the Pan-London Housing Reciprocal, will be taken forward in the next phase. Ways to improve City Hall's data capture and use will also be a key focus of a delivery plan in 2025-28.

Case study 1: DASA service

One DASA-funded service, Latin American Women's Aid (LAWA), runs Europe's only refuges by and for Latin American women and children. LAWA offers holistic and intersectional services, providing victims/survivors support to recover from abuse and live empowered lives. While this service is run by and for Latin American and Black and minoritised women, the service welcomes women from any cultural context, ethnicity, social class or religion, and is LGBTQI+ inclusive.

LAWA³³ is part of the OYA membership consortium of organisations, led by and for members of the Black and minoritised communities, working to end VAWG by delivering frontline, capacity-building and sustainability-support services across London. Collectively, the consortium manages 123 refuge bedspaces. LAWA is the consortium's lead partner for the DASA programme, working closely alongside the Ashiana Network,³⁴ Asha Projects³⁵

³³ LAWA, [Women against homelessness and abuse](#)

³⁴ [Ashiana Network](#)

³⁵ [Asha Projects — FOR HER](#)

and London Black Women's Project.³⁶ Through LAWA's services, victims/survivors of domestic abuse can reach safety through specialist safe accommodation and comprehensive support plans. This includes access to specialist advice on issues such as domestic abuse awareness and safety planning; housing and accommodation advice and advocacy; immigration; family law and welfare benefits advice; careers and employment; skills development; and resettlement within local communities.

Children are supported by family support workers, and weekly activity sessions are delivered within the refuge spaces. There is a focus on recovery of wellbeing and rebuilding relationships between children and their parent to address the impact of violence, abuse and trauma. Adult and child victims/survivors are offered free, tailored counselling in their own languages. This ensures culturally appropriate therapeutic support that can improve overall health and overall wellbeing, alongside the practical advice and support offered in safe accommodation.

Case study 2: Safe Accommodation Fund

The Safe Accommodation Fund was developed by the Mayor to ensure that survivors of domestic abuse and their children can access physically and psychologically safe spaces to recover from abuse. Psychologically informed services are designed and delivered in a way that considers the emotional and psychological needs of the individuals using and working in them.

The Safe Accommodation Fund was open to applicants who focused on improving the physical environment and social spaces of existing safe accommodation in London. This includes spaces that:

- recognise the impact of the environment on wellbeing and behaviour – such as noise, light, comfort, temperature, fabrics, colours and aesthetics
- are safe and inviting for victims/survivors, where the internal building is in a good state of repair, looks cared for and is fit for purpose
- have fixtures and fittings that meet the needs of victims/survivors their children.

This programme was established to recognise that the physical and psychological quality of safe accommodation has an impact on the recovery of victims/survivors and their

³⁶ London Black Women's Project, [Supporting women and girls who have experienced domestic or sexual violence, and abuse](#)

children. Lack of high-quality safe accommodation provision can be a barrier for survivors leaving an abusive relationship, and can be a reason to return to the perpetrator.

Under this programme, Havering Women's Aid received £98,575 over one year towards the costs of refurbishing and redecorating seven flats within one of their refuges. The works included renovating living spaces and the communal area; and upgrading facilities within the flats, such as installing more efficient boilers. These significant improvements enhanced the residents' comfort, and contributed to reducing energy consumption and promoting sustainability.

Havering Women's Aid reported that the grant has led to a noticeable improvement in the environment, with a clear boost in staff morale. Staff were proud and confident when showing new families to their rooms. Before, rooms looked tired and worn out – now they look light, fresh and modern. Staff have reflected that, although showing someone into the refuge who has left their own home is always going to be difficult, with new furnishings and decoration staff no longer felt uncomfortable when showing the facilities. Visitors were also impressed by the standard of living provided. Other agencies are keen to encourage victims/survivors to access this refuge, as they feel that the space is modern, clean and homely.

Domestic abuse in London: A summary of demand and need from the 2024 London needs assessment

The 2024 London needs assessment is published alongside this strategy and should be read in conjunction with it. The updated needs assessment illustrates the demand for support across London, and the increased complexity of victims'/survivors' needs since the previous assessment.³⁷ It highlights the scale of challenges for victims/survivors, and for all providers working across the DASA landscape in 2025-28.

Demand for safe accommodation in London

While London's rates of domestic abuse crime, recorded by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), remain lower than most comparable forces, the assessment found that they rose by 8.1 per cent between 2019 and 2023.³⁸ In terms of overall volume, London has significantly higher levels of domestic abuse than most comparable forces, but this is proportionate to the population of the capital.³⁹

Police-recorded crime provides only a partial picture of reported and recorded domestic abuse in London. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) report, Domestic Abuse during the COVID-19 Pandemic (2020),⁴⁰ gives related reasons for the national trend of more police-recorded crimes concerning domestic abuse. These are that some of this increase may be driven, in part, by police improvements in offence-recording practices, and an increase in domestic abuse-related crimes coming to the attention of the police. The shift could also indicate greater willingness of victims to come forward and report domestic abuse.

Service providers also report that the volume and degree of need for both housing and DASA-based support have increased in recent years. MHCLG's Support in Safe Accommodation monitoring data from 2022-23⁴¹ shows that London experiences high pressure to meet demand for all available types of safe accommodation. In London, there

³⁷ [Support for survivors of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation: a needs assessment for London](#), September 2021

³⁸ The rate is measured by domestic abuse crimes per 1,000 people.

³⁹ ONS data reflects similar national trends of increasing recorded domestic abuse-related crimes ([Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales](#)). Across England and Wales, the number of domestic abuse-related crimes recorded by police was 14.4 per cent higher than the year ending March 2020.

⁴⁰ ONS, [Domestic abuse during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#), November 2020

⁴¹ DLUHC, [Support in domestic abuse safe accommodation: financial year 2022 to 2023](#), December 2023

were six referrals for each available bedspace of any type.⁴² (In the South East, there were three such referrals, and in the North West there were two).

Accommodation and services commissioned by MOPAC and the GLA do not entirely meet demand. This is primarily due to capacity constraints and services being unable to meet the individual needs of all victims/survivors. This is illustrated further through the DASA programme's data collection. The Mayor's services reported 11,472 referrals in 2022-23, 80 per cent of which resulted in support. Of those households that were unsuccessful in their referral, 29 per cent were due to service capacity constraints; 26 per cent were because the victims/survivors had no recourse to public funds; and 17 per cent were because the victims/survivors had acute mental health support needs that could not be adequately met within the refuge provision available.

Increasingly acute demand for housing amongst survivors

The needs assessment found that, since 2020-21, the number of households in London owed a prevention or relief duty from homelessness as a result of domestic abuse has increased by 15 per cent. Over the past three years, the London-wide increase in households seeking homelessness relief has outpaced the increase in those seeking homelessness prevention. This suggests that the needs of those requesting housing support due to domestic abuse are increasingly acute by the time they come to the attention of local authorities. Demand for housing support among survivors that are rough sleeping has also risen since the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴³

⁴² DLUHC, [Support in domestic abuse safe accommodation: financial year 2022 to 2023](#), December 2023

⁴³ MHCLG, [Homelessness statistics](#), updated August 2024

Characteristics of victims/survivors seeking support

Gender

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) found that in the year ending March 2022, an estimated 1.7m women and 699,000 men experienced domestic abuse.⁴⁴ In London, the 2024 needs assessment found that women are overwhelmingly more likely to require and receive support from domestic abuse services. Those identifying as female accounted for 80 per cent of main housing applicants owed a duty and safe accommodation support; and 97 per cent of victims/survivors accessing domestic abuse services, as recorded by Women's Aid On Track⁴⁵ data.

Nearly half of all women supported by Women's Aid in 2022-23 in London had children. 47 per cent of women placed in refuges in 2022-23 had children, which is a decrease from 56 per cent in 2019-20. The needs assessment also acknowledged that the needs of children are not systematically captured; and qualitatively identified the challenges around supporting some women with children in safe accommodation (e.g., accommodating older male children and multiple children). The needs assessment also found that 43 per cent of victims/survivors seeking housing support from their local authority when they are at risk of homelessness (or are already homeless) because of domestic abuse were single female parents. Couples with children (3 per cent) and single male parents (2 per cent) comprised a further 5 per cent.

Domestic abuse happens to both female and male victims/survivors.⁴⁶ Although the needs assessment found that wider support services in London have increasingly offered support to men (up from 21 per cent of services in 2016 to 28 per cent in 2023), it also found a continued gap in understanding around the need for male victims/survivors and the provision of services. Of the male victims/survivors captured in the 2024 needs assessment, a substantial proportion are rough sleeping. The London 2023 Women's Rough Sleeping Census⁴⁷ also reflects further that women's experiences of rough sleeping tend to be hidden; transient and intermittent; and less likely to be counted.

⁴⁴ ONS, [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview](#)

⁴⁵ Women's Aid, [On Track](#)

⁴⁶ Respect, [Toolkit for work with male victims of domestic abuse](#), 2019

⁴⁷ Solace Women's Aid, [London Women's Rough Sleeping Census 2023](#), May 2024

Age

The CSEW for the year ending March 2023 showed that a significantly higher proportion of people aged 16-19 experienced any domestic abuse, compared with those aged 45 to 54, and those aged 60 and over. For those aged 75 and over, the percentage of victims was significantly lower than all other age groups (1.4 per cent).⁴⁸

The London needs assessment found that victims/survivors are disproportionately likely to be between their mid-20s and mid-30s, compared to the general London population. Victims/survivors between their mid-30s and mid-40s also have a high level of need compared to the general London population, mirroring the age distribution of those seeking homeless duties.

In the needs assessment, 1,043 victims/survivors supported by Mayoral-commissioned services in London in 2022-23 were under 25. It also found that in 2022-23, 88 women (20 per cent) not placed in refuges through Women's Aid On Track were under 18, suggesting a gap in provision.

There is a gap in knowledge and provision across London for older victims/survivors, with those aged 65 and over underrepresented in the data. A 2020 report by Age UK,⁴⁹ at national level, estimates around 180,000 women and 98,000 men aged 60 to 74 were victim/survivors of domestic abuse in England and Wales in 2018-19. Of the 10,600 victims/survivors in London that received support via Mayoral-commissioned services in 2022-23, 72 victims/survivors over the age of 65 were supported by Mayoral-commissioned services (less than 1 per cent).

Sexual orientation and gender identity

The needs assessment identified that 11 per cent of victims/survivors supported through Mayoral-commissioned services were LGBTQI+. Those identifying as LGBTQI+ accounted for 4 per cent of victims/survivors who, according to records, were referred for support through Women's Aid On Track services. The needs assessment cited that LGBTQI+ people are at higher risk of experiencing homelessness, poor mental health, and substance use issues. The ways these issues intersect and are experienced by LGBTQI+ victims/survivors will be unique to their community.

While the needs assessment quantitative data indicates no specific gaps in need for LGBTQI+ victims/survivors, the London Queer Housing Coalition (2024) identifies that queer community housing organisations support over 2250 people in London each year.⁵⁰ Galop (2023)⁵¹ research also indicates that nationally, around six in 10 (61 per cent)

⁴⁸ ONS, [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2023](#)

⁴⁹ Age UK, [No Age Limit](#)

⁵⁰ The London Queer Housing Coalition, [The LQHC Mayoral Manifesto](#)

⁵¹ Galop, ["An isolated place": LGBT+ domestic abuse survivors' access to support](#)

LGBTQI+ survivors do not seek support from services following abuse, therefore need should not be assumed to be met. Practitioners in the 2024 needs assessment also noted a high level of unmet demand, and added that support should reflect the different contexts in which individual LGBTQI+ victims/survivors experience abuse. LGBTQI+ 'by and for' providers in the needs assessment added qualitatively that their service users tend to be younger, and are predominantly male.

While MOPAC has commissioned refuge accommodation⁵² for trans and non-binary victims/survivors, practitioners also reported that there are gaps in specific provision for trans and non-binary people. More widely, the London Queer Housing Coalition Manifesto (2024) notes that, in the 2021 Census 0.9 per cent of Londoners reported that they have a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth; this is estimated to be at least 80,100 people. Galop (2023)⁵³ research indicated that trans victims/survivors reported high levels of concern about being mistreated by services, or that services may not understand their identities.

Ethnicity

London is the most ethnically diverse region in England and Wales, with 46.2 per cent of Londoners identifying through the 2021 Census as Asian, Black, mixed or 'other'.⁵⁴ Black and minoritised groups of victims/survivors also make up just under half of those recorded by the needs assessment as requiring safe accommodation.

In the needs assessment, of 12,632 victims/survivors recorded as accessing domestic abuse services by Women's Aid On Track data system in 2022-23, 53 per cent were from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. The 2024 needs assessment did not identify significant gaps in the proportion of provision for any one Black or minoritised group of victims/survivors; however, it acknowledged a lack of disaggregated data to fully identify the scope and scale of any specific gaps.

The wider evidence base also shows that Black and minoritised individuals are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse, compared to their White counterparts.⁵⁵ Black and minoritised victims/survivors also face additional barriers at all stages to seeking support and accessing safe accommodation. Therefore, the need and demand for services from Black and minoritised victims/survivors is likely to be higher than reported; it should not be assumed that demand is proportionately met.

⁵² [Star Support | LGBTIQ+ Domestic Abuse Refuge](#)

⁵³ Galop, ["An isolated place": LGBT+ domestic abuse survivors' access to support](#)

⁵⁴ Gov.uk, [Regional ethnic diversity](#), December 2022

⁵⁵ Women's Aid, [Reframing the links: Black and minoritised women, domestic abuse and mental health](#), 2021

Insecure immigration status

London holds the largest proportion of non-UK passport holders (one in five).⁵⁶ There is considerable known demand for support for victims/survivors with an unknown or insecure immigration status, with 4 per cent of all victims/survivors recorded through Women's Aid On Track defined as having no recourse to public funds. According to the needs assessment's Women's Aid data, the proportion of refuge vacancies available to women defined as having no recourse to public funds has slightly increased to 9 per cent in 2022-23, from 3 per cent in 2016-17. However, it was also found that, where safe accommodation-based support services were unable to meet the needs of victims/survivors, in 26 per cent of cases this was because the victims/survivors had no recourse to public funds.

Disability

Of those supported by the Mayor's DASA services, 16 per cent identified as disabled. The needs assessment found that, for disabled victims/survivors, there remain several barriers preventing access to safe accommodation support. It found that underreporting may also be a factor for disabled victims/survivors if their disabilities are not declared or not recorded – for example, 'hidden' disabilities.

The qualitative data indicates that disabled victims/survivors as defined by the Equality Act 2010 may have specific needs; but according to practitioners, these are not fully met and more specialist commissioning should be considered. For example, qualitatively, practitioners reported that mainstream refuge provision can be physically inaccessible to some disabled victims/survivors; and that staff may not have the relevant skills and expertise to support individuals' needs. Additionally, 4 per cent of women not placed in refuges through Women's Aid had a physical disability – this also indicates unmet needs.

The needs assessment found that demand for mental health support is increasing. Where services were unable to support victims/survivors with their needs, 17 per cent of cases were due to the mental health support required (definitions of mental health captured in the needs assessment are wide-ranging). In 2022-23, among victims/survivors rough sleeping in London, 67 per cent had a mental health need; in the same year 40 per cent of victims/survivors requesting support through On Track services had mental health support needs. The proportion of women who have been placed in refuges through Women's Aid, and have a mental health need, has increased by 48 per cent from 2019.

Religion or belief

In the 2024 needs assessment, providers identified qualitatively how different power and family dynamics, religious beliefs, or social stigma within a wide range of communities can

⁵⁶ ONS, [International migration, England and Wales: Census 2021](#), November 2022

act as a barrier to accessing safe accommodation-based services. Practitioners identified that specialist provision that addresses these barriers with tailored support is valued.

Multiple, intersecting disadvantages

Lankelly Chase⁵⁷ estimates there are 336,000 individuals in England that face intersecting homelessness, mental ill health, substance misuse and violence/abuse. 17,000 people experience interrelated homelessness, substance misuse, mental ill health and violence/abuse at any one time and 70 per cent of these are women.

The needs assessment for London reports an increasing demand for intensive, specialist and longer-lasting support for victims/survivors experiencing multiple and intersecting inequalities.⁵⁸ This may include poor mental and physical health; substance use; experiencing different types of violence and abuse; and involvement with the criminal justice system. These experiences create compounding barriers to accessing and receiving support in 'mainstream' safe accommodation.

In addition to this data, the needs assessment identified that in 2022-23, 4 per cent of victims/survivors supported through Mayoral-commissioned services had a drug support need; and that four households were recorded as unable to be supported by Mayoral-commissioned services due to drug support needs, indicating a gap in appropriate provision. However, the lack of data means it is unclear to what extent there has been an increase across London regarding this specifically.

⁵⁷ Lankelly Chase, [Gender Matters](#), February 2020

⁵⁸ Making Every Adult Matter, [Gender Matters](#), February 2020

The Mayor's vision and five objectives

The Mayor's vision is that all victims/survivors of domestic abuse, including children, can access and be supported by safe accommodation-based services, tailored to their needs. This will ensure survivors' physical and psychological safety and recovery from the impact of domestic abuse; and enable them to rebuild and move on with their lives. This vision is underpinned by the following objectives.

A clear and coordinated network of support in safe accommodation for all victims/survivors

This includes delivery of a clear and coordinated pan-London network of support through all stages of a survivor's journey: from early intervention, during crisis, to safety, stability and independence. It also includes supporting victims/survivors to safely remain in their own homes, or to return if and when it is safe to do so; and ensuring there is a sufficient supply of appropriate crisis, move-on, second-stage and resettlement accommodation.

Accessible and inclusive services that meet the diverse needs of all victims/survivors

All service providers involved in the delivery of DASA should work on principles of inclusion to serve individual needs, including those that are related to protected characteristics. Services should meet the cultural, language and religious needs of victims/survivors; and serve those facing multiple disadvantages, and non-UK nationals with insecure or unknown immigration status.

Services and accommodation that are physically and psychologically safe, and of high quality; and use up-to-date and appropriate practice

Safe spaces will ensure victims/survivors and their children can recover safely from abuse supported by services rooted in rights-based, trauma-informed and gender-informed approaches. Accommodation should: be designed to meet the needs of victims/survivors; be self-contained (where appropriate); and reflect victims'/survivors' needs in terms of choice, independence and dignity. Funding should focus on bringing existing provision to high and current standards, and developing new, practice-leading provision.

A DASA system that works across specialties and geographies, centred on victims'/survivors' outcomes

Victims/survivors must not be subject to a postcode lottery when it comes to accessing safe accommodation and receiving high-quality support in their locality, or any part of

London that they might move to for their safety. Partnership working across agencies and across borough boundaries is essential to this objective, as it is central to how support is funded, delivered and accessed. Partnership and multi-agency working involves organisations that are funded through the Part 4 duty, as well as those that are not. This means engaging a wide range of partners to invest in creative and joined-up ways of working that focus on achieving outcomes for victims/survivors. Widespread, effective partnership working is key to ensuring that, across the capital, victims/survivors have the same high quality of provision available to them, and support for their needs across localities.

A sustainable and robust sector, funded to best meet victims'/survivors' needs

City Hall will take a phased approach to commissioning in 2025-28 that takes a flexible, evidence-led approach to meeting victims'/survivors' needs. More widely, the approach will consider the value provided by all parts of the DASA system. This system includes smaller and/or specialist VAWG providers, and 'by and for' providers, alongside London boroughs, registered providers of social housing and other partners. Commissioning and funding approaches will be designed to benefit under-served victims/survivors; and will seek to bolster workforce development and resilience within the VAWG sector specifically. Funding will support the VAWG sector – and those across the DASA system – to develop overall capacity and sustainability, with the aim of supporting the rich diversity of organisations in the sector.

How the Mayor will deliver the duty in 2025-28

This section sets out activity that will be delivered at a London level by City Hall, working with delivery partners. It draws on learning from the first few years of the programme; the needs assessment; and feedback from stakeholders including delivery partners and victims/survivors. The Mayor's vision and objectives guide the work of DASA over this strategy term, which will be overseen through a delivery plan led by the Partnership Board in 2028-28. This helps to ensure that the Mayor's vision and priority activity, as set out in the strategy, is delivered in an effective, transparent and inclusive way that provides value for money for Londoners.

Alignment with wider strategies

Providing quality support to victims/survivors of domestic abuse in safe accommodation across London, in the coming years, will play a key role in meeting the government's wider mission on safety – of which strengthening support for all victims and tackling VAWG is a critical part.⁵⁹ The London-wide approach to delivering this duty also helps to maximise its alignment with the impact of wider Mayoral strategies, funding and powers.

Through his Housing Strategy,⁶⁰ the Mayor is already working to address housing challenges that may also pose barriers to victims/survivors in London. The Mayor's VAWG Strategy⁶¹ takes a public health⁶² approach to tackling VAWG, which this strategy aligns with. The Police and Crime Plan (PCP) tackles key challenges in reducing violence and exploitation, supporting victims, improving the justice system, and increasing trust and confidence in the MPS. It is currently being refreshed, and will continue to play a vital part in reducing the prevalence and impact of domestic abuse in 2025-28.

This DASA strategy supports the aims and objectives of these wider strategies, to help ensure that the holistic and diverse needs of all Londoners can be met. For example, alignment with the VAWG strategy's preventative approach in the context of safe accommodation support, can look like adopting a Whole Housing Approach.⁶³ This aims to coordinate and create earlier identification and intervention for domestic abuse across local systems. Further key VAWG strategy principles are also mirrored – such as an emphasis on partnership working, and on support for the growth of a skilled and resilient VAWG workforce to deliver on the Mayor's aims.

⁵⁹ The Labour Party, [Take back our streets](#)

⁶⁰ GLA, [London Housing Strategy](#), May 2018

⁶¹ GLA, [The Mayor's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022-25](#), June 2022

⁶² GLA, [Making London's communities safer through public health](#), November 2022

⁶³ DAHA, [Whole Housing Approach: Guidance & resources](#)

The Mayor will publish his refreshed PCP in March 2025, followed by a refreshed VAWG strategy in spring 2025. The consultation findings from these will inform and support DASA activity in 2025-28.

Partnership working by City Hall

Preventative, crisis, move-on, second-stage and resettlement support are all critical in meeting victims'/survivors' needs. The Mayor's vision, objectives and funding continue to reflect this. Critically, delivering lasting outcomes for victims/survivors means tackling persistent systemic challenges for London that are also reflected across the national DASA landscape.⁶⁴ The Mayor, the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development, and the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime will convene and communicate with leaders across the landscape of housing and VAWG provision, and with wider partners (such as those representing registered housing providers,⁶⁵ and health partners) to foster engagement and collaboration.

The Mayor has long argued that a regional approach to delivering DASA is crucial. City Hall holds relationships across the delivery partners involved in the victim/survivor journey, and can harness these to align delivery strategically across London – working to address the postcode lottery that victims/survivors currently experience when accessing DASA services. The Mayor will continue to use his reach and powers to convene organisations via the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, which brings together agencies that are key to effective DASA delivery. This includes London boroughs; the health sector; criminal justice partners; organisations representing victims/survivors and their children; and housing providers. This approach creates the opportunity to address complex needs and issues on a London-wide level, where it may be more difficult to do so locally.

City Hall will work with the Partnership Board to build on learnings from 2021-24; improve how the impact of the duty's funding is measured across London; and deepen our understanding of victims'/survivors' needs. This will include promoting practice that works; exploring how to respond to victim/survivor groups that may be under-served across the city; and exploring where regional and pan-London interventions could have the most impact for victims/survivors.

This strategy sets out the Mayor's intention to review and refresh his Domestic Abuse Partnership Board in a way that will further support partners to align activities across their respective agencies – and, in this way, to maximise collaboration, delivery and outcomes for London in this space. Wider engagement activity will also be more explicitly part of the delivery plan's progress measures in 2025-28. Alongside the work of the Mayor and his deputies, this includes refreshing and expanding our engagement in a targeted way at

⁶⁴ Domestic Abuse Commissioner, [A Patchwork of Provision: How to meet the needs of victims and survivors across England and Wales](#), February 2023

⁶⁵ National Housing Federation, [Domestic abuse](#)

operational level, with a range of registered housing providers, health partners and others that are fundamental to improving victim/survivor outcomes.

The Mayor's strategy will also continue to adapt and respond to changing national policy in 2025-28. A national evaluation of the duty is being undertaken by MHCLG,⁶⁶ from which learnings will be taken forward. The government's new Victims and Prisoners Act⁶⁷ will also place a joint statutory duty on all Police and Crime Commissioners, Integrated Care Boards and local authorities to work together when commissioning victim's support – including domestic abuse – so that they can be strategically coordinated and targeted where victims/survivors need them.

⁶⁶ DLUHC, [Annual progress report from the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation National Expert Steering Group 2022 to 2023](#), February 2024

⁶⁷ Legislation.gov.uk, [Victims and Prisoners Act 2024](#)

Commissioning approach for 2025-28

The current DASA funding framework is due to expire on 31 March 2025; City Hall will refresh the commissioning approach and funding mechanisms for March 2025 onwards. This will require taking a phased approach to commissioning processes, to enable continued stability to providers delivering safe accommodation-based support. Adopting a phased approach allows for considered strategic engagement with partners throughout 2025, to inform multiple mechanisms of new commissioning that meet the needs of victims/survivors.

Informed by further strategic engagement and our Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, this phased approach will begin with a grants programme for specialist provision, launching in spring 2025. Further in-depth strategic engagement will be undertaken from March 2025 onwards, to collaboratively develop commissioning mechanisms for new services that will launch in 2027-28.

Working with central government in 2025-28

The Part 4 duty could be developed further by working in partnership with the government, which is responsible for: setting the parameters for the duty; and providing funding and guidance for tier-one authorities in England. The Mayor recognises that short-term funding cycles affect services' ability to demonstrate transformative impact; and that this is felt acutely by smaller organisations. He will raise MHCLG's awareness of this. The duty should also be widened to benefit all victims/survivors, including those in temporary accommodation, and those with unknown and insecure immigration status. The statutory guidance⁶⁸ for the Part 4 duty already states that tier-one authorities have a duty to:

“ensure sufficient appropriate support is available within relevant safe accommodation to meet the needs of all victims such as... migrant [victims/survivors], including [victims/survivors] having insecure immigration status”.⁶⁹

However, the Mayor recognises that there is work to be done in partnership with the government to ensure that the messaging and language around this is clear for providers and stakeholders. The Mayor is committed to working with partners to ensure that victims/survivors – including migrant victims, those from minority ethnic backgrounds, and other minoritised groups – can access help without fear, with safe and informal spaces for those who need to seek support.

It is also a reality that across the country, and in London, many victims/survivors are placed in temporary accommodation to respond to their immediate housing need. This is why the Mayor has long urged central government to include, within the scope of the Part 4 duty, all accommodation secured by local authorities for victims/survivors made homeless by domestic abuse – and will continue to do so. This is not to advocate for the use of temporary accommodation for victims/survivors of domestic abuse. This commitment is a pragmatic one, that seeks to ensure that all victims/survivors who need it can receive appropriate support, while mechanisms and safeguards against misuse of any expansion of the current duty's scope remain critical.

The Mayor's continued commitment to delivering more safe accommodation for all victims/survivors presses forward over 2025-28 and beyond. He will work constructively

⁶⁸ MHCLG, [Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services](#), October 2021

⁶⁹ MHCLG, [Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services](#) – section B.6: Supporting all victims, October 2021

with the government to secure longer-term, sustainable funding that is sufficient in scale; and to ensure that the scope of the duty works for all Londoners.

Working together in 2025-28

Delivery challenges across the landscape of DASA provision remain, and there is much work to do to support victims/survivors in London more effectively across all involved systems and partners. This strategy cannot be effectively delivered by the GLA, MOPAC and the Partnership Board alone. The Mayor is calling on all partners to work collaboratively to deliver the duty – including the full range of public-sector partners across health, children’s services and the criminal justice system. Alongside the work of City Hall, regional and local collaboration is critical, particularly where there are increased victim/survivor needs and gaps in delivery that are surfaced by the updated needs assessment.

Local insight and the strength of the public sector across London

London’s boroughs harbour energy, commitment and passion in their support for victims/survivors. Despite seismic challenges in recent years, the evidence⁷⁰ shows that investment by boroughs through this duty’s additional funding is already making a difference. It is doing so by using strategic and partnership levers; and targeting new and enhanced service delivery.⁷¹

Boroughs and their local partners hold key strategic levers through which VAWG expertise can be channelled. They have insight and reach within their localities.⁷² The starting points, challenges and opportunities for improving safe accommodation-based support will be unique to each local authority system. Housing partners and others, such as children’s services and health partners, often first encounter victims/survivors when they are in urgent crisis, or seeking help and advice. Their responses are vital to preventing the escalation of further need and risk relating to domestic abuse. Responding to underserved groups and maximising lasting impact will require all key agencies and organisations to play their part. This can be through a range of approaches – whether investing in work to stabilise flows of need, strengthening existing delivery or undertaking new innovations. Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation and a Whole Housing Approach remain key mechanisms that all partners, including boroughs, should consider as a way to ensure that victims/survivors receive quality support as early as possible.⁷³

⁷⁰ Women’s Aid, [The Domestic Abuse Report 2024: The Annual Audit](#), February 2024

⁷¹ DLUHC, [Annual progress report from the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation National Expert Steering Group 2022 to 2023](#), February 2024

⁷² Local Government Association, [Toolkit: Partnership working with the voluntary and community sector](#), April 2023

⁷³ DAHA, [Accreditation for housing providers](#)

The VAWG sector, the wider VCS, and housing delivery partners

Providing effective DASA provision means listening closely to, and working with, the expertise of the VAWG sector; and protecting the value that specialist, grassroots and ‘by and for’ providers bring to supporting London’s diversity of victims/survivors. The VAWG sector, the wider VCS and housing partners (from large housing associations to small housing services providers) are all critical to ensuring the safety of victims/survivors.

The cumulative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic⁷⁴ and the cost-of-living crisis⁷⁵ has disproportionately impacted victims/survivors of domestic abuse and placed significant strain on organisations that support them.⁷⁶ The VAWG sector and other VCS organisations are seeking to meet the increasingly complex needs of victims/survivors.⁷⁷ In referring to complex needs, we are acknowledging that some victims/survivors experience multiple disadvantages, over and above being victims/survivors of domestic abuse. This can refer to those with disabilities, mental health problems and/or drug/alcohol dependency; and those facing homelessness.⁷⁸ At the same time, the housing sector is facing unprecedented demands and an increasingly challenging operating environment.

In 2025-28, providers can use the Mayor’s funding to foster resilience to a range of challenging delivery problems, strengthen their existing services; and build essential capacity and strategic infrastructure. We understand that, for many, building on sustainable and resilient existing service provision is as essential as launching new provision. Building on existing VAWG partnerships, and working constructively with statutory partners within wider multi-agency partnerships, will help to bring VAWG expertise to non-specialist service delivery. This can be key to closing gaps in DASA delivery across London, through survivor-led, trauma-informed, gender-responsive, intersectional and anti-racist approaches. Similarly, work with other specialists across housing and rough sleeping will bring benefits to ensuring a joined-up experience for victims/survivors, and maximise the impact of DASA delivery in London.

⁷⁴ Women’s Aid, [Shadow Pandemic – shining a light on domestic abuse during Covid](#), November 2021

⁷⁵ BBC News, [Domestic abuse groups get £15m for London’s ‘hidden crisis’](#), February 2024

⁷⁶ London Community Foundation, [Violence Against Women and Girls Cost of Living Fund](#)

⁷⁷ Women’s Aid, [10 Years of the London Refuges Data Collection Project](#), June 2024

⁷⁸ Home Office, [Violence against women and girls national statement of expectations \(accessible\)](#), updated 27 July 2022

Priority activity for City Hall in 2025-28

The table below sets out key activity that will be prioritised by City Hall against the five objectives.

Priority activity for the Mayor of London
<p>Objective 1 – A clear and coordinated network of support in safe accommodation for all victims/survivors</p> <p>Specific services</p> <p>The Mayor will provide funding that enables the improvement and expansion of early-intervention support and services for victims/survivors. The Mayor will also continue to explore how more preventative and early-intervention partnership-working initiatives for tackling VAWG,⁷⁹ can best support victims/survivors as part of the DASA pathway.</p> <p>Work will continue to fund new and improved accommodation by pairing capital funding from other Mayoral funds with DASA revenue funding. This will bring forward more high-quality housing for domestic abuse victims/survivors across the capital.</p> <p>Existing pathways that support victims/survivors to move from their current accommodation to a location that gives them more safety will continue. These housing mobility services will also be reviewed to establish any improvements or complementary services.</p> <p>The Mayor will assess the current provision of high-quality sanctuary schemes across London; and explore the need for further options such as sanctuary schemes in the private rented sector and for homeowners.⁸⁰</p> <p>Addressing unmet need</p> <p>The Mayor will address all of the recommendations (including on identified gaps) within the 2024 needs assessment, to effectively respond to the needs of victims/survivors and partners.</p>

⁷⁹ GLA, [Landmark summit sees London’s health partners adopt a public health approach to tackling VAWG](#), September 2024

⁸⁰ DAHA, [Whole Housing Toolkit](#)

Priority activity for the Mayor of London

The needs assessment outlines that unmet mental health and other more acute needs can create multiple disadvantages resulting in compounded barriers for some victims/survivors in accessing domestic abuse support. The Mayor will use his convening powers to bring together partners to focus on these unmet needs. He will bring in specialist partners to the DASA Partnership Board to ensure they are part of the consultation around new DASA commissioning. He will also encourage multi-agency partnership bids by facilitating conversations between boroughs, health providers and specialists, for example around mental health and substance misuse, to help to develop services that meet all victim/survivor needs.

The Mayor will also work with key partners at national and London-wide levels (such as the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and London Councils), to learn from the wider evidence base on children experiencing domestic abuse. The Mayor will work to integrate these national learnings combined with London DASA delivery, to date, into his commissioning processes. Work will also be undertaken with partners to review how they might improve data collection on children's experiences.

The Mayor will particularly focus on London's developing body of practice through his Partnership Board. He will also maximise the Board's reach by engaging in closer working relationships with voluntary, therapeutic and statutory organisations, that solely represent children, on further solutions for children residing in safe accommodation.

Objective 2 – Accessible and inclusive services that meet the needs of all victims/survivors

Making the scope of DASA more inclusive and comprehensive

The Mayor will work with the government to secure changes to DASA that will ensure the programme can deliver for all London's victims/survivors. This will include seeking a change in the rules to allow specialist support, under the Part 4 duties, for victims/survivors and their children placed in generic temporary accommodation. This will also include widening the duty's scope to recognise and support all victims/survivors in London, including those with unknown or insecure immigration status; and work with the Home Office on fast-tracking all domestic abuse cases.

Prioritising equalities and unmet needs

The Mayor will provide funding for services that are culturally specific and responsive to the needs of different communities. These must meet victims'/survivors' diverse needs; and benefit under-served, marginalised and minoritised victims/survivors. He will make

Priority activity for the Mayor of London

use of inclusive commissioning processes and requirements that recognise the value of smaller, specialist and 'by and for' providers.

This will be done by ensuring that all funding opportunities have clear equalities requirements of providers, rooted in the equalities impact assessment for the programme; and that funding prioritises the needs of under-served groups, so that barriers facing victims/survivors are reduced. It will also mean continued commitment to reducing barriers for smaller organisations to accessing funding – by both considering how funding opportunities can be made more accessible, and supporting smaller providers to improve their processes and systems to comply with funding requirements.

Objective 3 – Services and accommodation that are physically and psychologically safe, and of high quality; and use up-to-date and appropriate practice

Sharing practice

In addition to good practice on move-on accommodation, the Mayor will share learning, case studies and good practice guidance from his tailored funding programmes, and from the framework and continuation grants. Work to improve the mechanisms for delivery evaluation will be prioritised in 2025-28 to give greater transparency to spend and impact.

Funding for accommodation improvements

The Mayor will explore options for re-opening his Psychologically Informed Environment grant-funding programme to support the DASA system to improve the quality of existing safe accommodation.

Training for the wider DASA system

Frontline staff in a range of services can be supported in their delivery of high-quality support for victims/survivors. A cornerstone approach for upskilling within boroughs and housing associations is through DAHA accreditation. The Mayor strongly encourages all local authorities to undergo accreditation.⁸¹ The Mayor will seek to make Part 4 funding available for DAHA accreditation and other pathways, to help housing providers develop their expertise in domestic abuse – covering both their roles as housing providers and their provision of services, such as housing options.

⁸¹ DAHA, [Accreditation for housing providers](#)

Priority activity for the Mayor of London**Objective 4 – A DASA system that works across specialities and geographies, centred on victims'/survivors' outcomes****Tailoring delivery to London and gaps in provision**

The Mayor will provide funding that improves the capacity and infrastructure of London's safe-accommodation provision, primarily through DASA. Funding will be provided using the most appropriate mechanism – whether that is grant funding or commissioning a contracted service. It will be distributed to reduce gaps in provision that exist geographically, or by type of safe accommodation.

Whereas the 2024 needs assessment shows the gaps in provision by characteristic, the Mayor is conscious that there is no single source of data on the geography of services across London. Over the next three years, the Mayor will work with, and learn from, boroughs and a range of sector organisations to map services and build on existing data sets to pinpoint geographical gaps.

As the tier-one authority in London, the GLA will ensure regional and pan-London interventions support victims/survivors in ways that would not be possible at a local level; and to work closely with boroughs to do this in the most effective way. The Mayor will also use his role as a regional leader, within the scope of his powers, to improve the experience of survivors who need to access support. This could include, for example, supporting home and host boroughs to coordinate in the interests of victims/survivors as they seek safety across local authority boundaries.

Domestic Abuse Partnership Board arrangements will be reviewed and refreshed in 2025.

Specific work set out under a 2025-28 delivery plan, led by a refreshed Board, will include appropriate ways to convene around, and respond, to underrepresented needs as well as wider service and system-related challenges set out under these objectives. Progress updates against a 2025-28 delivery plan will be communicated by City Hall to partners.

Ensuring DASA can deliver for Londoners in the long-term

A long-term DASA settlement will improve resilience and the continuity of provision available to survivors. The Mayor will continue to work in close partnership with the government to ensure Part 4 funding is both sufficient in scale and sustainable in the long term.

Priority activity for the Mayor of London

Objective 5 – A sustainable and robust sector, funded to best meet victims'/survivors' needs

A new approach to commissioning

City Hall will take a flexible, evidence-based approach to commissioning. This will be driven by seeking the most effective mix of provision, that maximises impact, to drive outcomes for victims/survivors in London. A phased approach will drive a grants programme for specialist providers, opening in spring 2025. Further intensive consultation with delivery partners will take place on recommissioning, to inform further phases.

Through new funding mechanisms, there will be continued investment in the development of stable and resilient provision for under-served groups in London, through services that meet diverse needs and an inclusive mix of provision.

There will be a focus on ensuring that provision is available to all who need it, regardless of where in London they are; and that this provision reduces barriers to access, drives improvements in practice and centres on high-quality standards.

A supported and developing VAWG sector

Supporting the development and resilience of the VAWG workforce is a wider priority within the Mayor's VAWG strategy.⁸² For example, for the VAWG sector, specialist training and workforce development may build resilience and capacity which can in turn support recruitment and retention in DASA delivery. DASA funding opportunities, developed through consultation with VAWG providers in 2025-28, can be used to enhance VAWG workforce development to the ultimate benefit of victims/survivors in safe accommodation.

Developing the wider DASA system

The Mayor will support capacity building, to grow the DASA system in terms of its capability and robustness. This may include providing funding to support the organisational operations and governance of providers where needed.

Further engagement led by City Hall, through key strategic housing forums and networks, will encourage all housing partners to build further on their role in DASA activity.

⁸² GLA, [The Mayor's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022-25](#), June 2022

Priority activity for the Mayor of London

The Mayor will convene providers across housing, domestic abuse and health to strengthen working relationships. As part of this work, he will facilitate peer learning between partners, through reflective practice and social value contributions that are proportionate and equitable to organisational capacity.

Learning, impact and data

The Mayor will achieve continuous improvement in practice, by ensuring that learning from evaluations, pilots and service delivery are shared across delivery partners. This will also inform how funding is allocated going forward, to make sure it is having the most impact.

The Mayor will develop more robust data on need and the impact of DASA delivery. This will involve reviewing all existing indicators and measures; and considering how best to collect and manage data consistently going forward, and how to share data to support practice development.

The Mayor will explore ways to monitor the provision level of safe accommodation services in London, including any decommissioning, through periodic refreshes of the London DASA Needs Assessment. He will robustly monitor funded services to ensure they are delivering effectively; and that lessons are being learnt across the landscape of provision.

Further reading

This strategy should be read in conjunction with MHCLG's statutory guidance on safe accommodation⁸³ and the 2024 Pan-London DASA Needs Assessment. Further information on the Mayor's delivery of DASA provision can be found in:

- the list of commissioned services under the DASA programme⁸⁴
- the DASA Homes Programme.⁸⁵

The following national government resources may also be helpful to consider:

- MHCLG guidance on improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse⁸⁶
- MHCLG Homelessness Code of Guidance⁸⁷
- DfE's Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children⁸⁸
- DHSC guidance on integrated care strategies⁸⁹
- Ministry of Justice guidance on the Victims and Prisoners Bill.⁹⁰

The following nationally recognised quality standards may also be helpful to consider:

- DAHA guide to the Whole Housing Approach⁹¹
- Whole Housing Approach Toolkit on Sanctuary Schemes⁹²

⁸³ MHCLG, [Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services](#), October 2021

⁸⁴ GLA, [Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation and Support: Continuation and contractual awards](#), August 2023

⁸⁵ GLA, [Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Homes Programme – Prospectus and Guidance for London](#), February 2024

⁸⁶ MHCLG, [Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse](#), updated January 2022

⁸⁷ MHCLG, [Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities](#), updated June 2024

⁸⁸ DfE, [Working together to safeguard children](#), updated February 2024

⁸⁹ DHSC, [Guidance on the preparation of integrated care strategies](#), updated February 2024

⁹⁰ Legislation.gov.uk, [Victims and Prisoners Bill](#)

⁹¹ DAHA, [Whole Housing Approach](#)

⁹² DAHA, [Whole Housing Approach Toolkit on Sanctuary Schemes](#)

- DAHA Accreditation Framework⁹³
- Women's Aid National Quality Standards⁹⁴
- Imkaan Accredited Quality Standards⁹⁵
- Male Domestic Abuse Network Service Standards⁹⁶.

⁹³ DAHA, [Accreditation for housing providers](#)

⁹⁴ Women's Aid, [National Quality Standards](#)

⁹⁵ Imkaan, [Accredited Quality Standards](#)

⁹⁶ Male Domestic Abuse Network, [Quality Standards for Services Supporting Male Victims/Survivors of Domestic Abuse](#)

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