

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2762

Approval for additional spend on Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation programme 2025-26

Executive summary:

Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 includes a duty on Tier 1 authorities (in London, this is the GLA) to support survivors of domestic abuse, and their children, in refuges and other safe accommodation. Key elements of the duty are to produce a strategy; and to give effect to that strategy through commissioning decisions. Through Mayoral Decision (MD) 2902, the London Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation (DASA) Strategy was published in December 2021; and through MD2892, a commissioning approach was approved.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) allocates funding to the GLA yearly, to support the discharge of its duty. Through MD3321, approval to receive and spend the funding allocation from MHCLG for 2025-26 was delegated to the Executive Director of Housing and Land. The GLA is now in receipt of £26,868,976 of DASA funding from MHCLG for 2025-26.

MD3321 also approved expenditure of up to £6,416,268 to extend the funding for the DASA continuation grants into 2025-26. This ADD seeks approval to uplift the spend figure for the continuation grant extensions, from £6,416,268 to £6,476,041. This is to support the full cost of the grants. This figure is an uplift of £59,773, in approved spend, for the continuation grant extensions in 2025-26.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Housing and Land approves £59,773 uplift in spend on the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation continuation grants for 2025-26.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Natalie Daniels

Position: Assistant Director of Housing and Land

Signature:



Date:

23/06/2025

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (the 2021 Act) came into force on 1 October 2021. It confers a statutory duty on Tier 1 authorities (in London, the GLA) to support survivors of domestic abuse, and their children, in safe accommodation. The Domestic Abuse Support (Local Authority Strategies and Annual Reports) Regulations 2021 (the 2021 Regulations) also came into force on 1 October 2021.
- 1.2. The key functions required of Tier 1 authorities – as outlined in the 2021 Act, the 2021 Regulations and statutory guidance – include preparing, publishing and keeping under review a strategy for accommodation-based support for survivors of domestic abuse, and their children. They also require Tier 1 authorities to effect the strategy in carrying out their functions through commissioning and decommissioning decisions.
- 1.3. Mayoral Decision (MD) 2788 and MD2842 gave Mayoral approval to receive £20,688,230 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and to spend this funding (to cover administration and support), for 2021–22. After this, the following MDs were also approved:
 - MD2967 gave Mayoral approval to receive, and spend, £20,745,496 of MHCLG funding for 2022–23
 - MD3082 gave Mayoral approval to receive, and spend:
 - £21,160,496 for 2023–24
 - £21,559,735 for 2024–25
 - MD3321 gave Mayoral approval to receive, and spend, £26,868,976 for 2025–26.
- 1.4. Via these MDs, the Mayor also approved the GLA entering a shared-services arrangement with the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). Through this arrangement, MOPAC supports the GLA to undertake the activities associated with the new duty.
- 1.5. Under the duty, the Mayor funds 31 continuation grants; these are separate to his commissioned Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation (DASA) services. These are legacy grants, which were transferred to the GLA from MHCLG when the Domestic Abuse Part 4 Duty came to the GLA in 2021. The grants cover a mix of projects, including direct victims’ services; advocacy; refuge accommodation; and housing-related support to access accommodation and longer-term housing. The GLA has continued to fund these projects to support stability in the sector.
- 1.6. From April 2022 to March 2024, the continuation grants were extended annually at a total value of £16,585,032. However, the DASA landscape has changed since 2017; it was recognised that these services must be replaced to respond to these changes. For example, these grants were originally awarded by MHCLG as early as 2017, and had not had an inflationary uplift since then, despite the cost-of-living crisis.
- 1.7. Considering this, MD3321 secured approval to extend all continuation grants for one year into 2025–26, providing an inflationary uplift of 3.2 per cent to reflect changing demand and costs. The MD approved a spend of £6,416,268 (of which the inflationary uplift is £352,929.78).
- 1.8. The continuation grant spend figure in MD3321 was a provisional figure, which was evidenced by information the GLA and MOPAC held, at the time, about the grant-funded services.

- 1.9. Since MD3321 was published, the GLA's and MOPAC's understanding of the total spend envelope needed to support continuation grants has changed. From January 2025 to March 2025, grantees went through an expression of interest process to progress their grant extensions. This process identified that the updated costs of running the 31 continuation grant services for an additional year was higher than the provisional figure in MD3321.
- 1.10. The updated total costs in 2025-26 is £6,476,041. This is an increase of £59,773. The GLA will cover the spend on the continuation grants for 2025-26, including the proposed uplift of £59,773, from the annual MHCLG allocation of £26,868,976.
- 1.11. The continuation grants spend figure of £6,416,268 that was approved in MD3321 was provisional. Given that continuation grantees have now been through a robust expression of interest process, during which they re-examined their total service costs, we are confident that a spend figure of £6,476,041 is sufficient to support the grants for 2025-26. We do not expect any further uplift requests on the continuation grants within this financial year.
- 1.12. The GLA as entered contracts with continuation grantees up to the spend figure which was allowed within MD3321, to support service continuity.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

- 2.1 All procurements and grants in the DASA programme will implement policies and proposals in London's DASA Strategy (2025-28). All grant funding will align with those policies and proposals, whose objectives include:
- 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 those from the violence against women and girls (VAWG) 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.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as public authorities, the Mayor and the GLA are subject to a public-sector equality duty and must have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
 - foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. Protected characteristics under section 149 of the Equality Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage or civil partnership status.

3.3. Characteristics of victim/survivors of domestic abuse (national figures) are as follows:

- Gender: women are much more likely than men to be the victims of high-risk or severe domestic abuse. Three-quarters of domestic abuse homicide victims in London between 2005 and 2020 were women.
- Age: younger people are more likely to be subject to interpersonal violence. Most at high-risk victims are in their 20s or 30s. Those under 25 are the most likely to suffer interpersonal violence.
- Pregnancy: nearly one in three people who suffer from domestic abuse during their lifetime report that the first incidence of violence happened while they were pregnant.
- Disability: Deaf or disabled people are more than twice as likely to experience some form of domestic abuse (11.8 per cent) than non-disabled survivors (4.6 per cent). Amongst women, this figure is higher, with 14.7 per cent of victims of domestic abuse being Deaf or disabled.
- Separation: domestic abuse is highest amongst those who have separated, followed by those who are divorced or single.
- Drug and alcohol use: victims of abuse have a higher rate of drug and/or alcohol misuse (whether it starts before or after the abuse); at least 20 per cent of at high-risk victims of abuse report using drugs and/or alcohol.
- Mental health: 40 per cent of at-high-risk victims of abuse report mental health difficulties.

3.4. Given the above, the proposal in this paper (which seeks to support the extension of service provision) is likely to have positive impacts on several groups with protected characteristics – particularly women, and victims/survivors from marginalised and minoritised groups who are disproportionately impacted by domestic abuse. Specifically, the activities will ensure victim/survivors of domestic abuse maintain access to various pathways of support.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

4.1. The table below outlines the risks and issues:

Risk description	Rating	Mitigating action
There is a risk to the capacity of DASA pathways in London if this spend uplift is not agreed. Without the full funding figure that is required, the GLA and MOPAC will be unable to extend the contracts for all 31 services; and bedspaces for victim/survivors will be reduced. Additionally, some providers are currently delivering their services at risk, as they are not yet in contract with the GLA and MOPAC for their grant funding.	Red	The GLA has funding available to support this uplift request. If approval for the uplift is not secured, the GLA will work with grantees to re-examine their service budgets and identify where costs might safely be reduced, or where additional top-up funding might be available from other sources. Any interventions from the GLA would be focused on mitigating the loss of bedspaces in DASA services.
Continuation grant providers might raise concerns around rising costs, that have impacted the services delivered with their continuation	Amber	Providers have now been through an expression of interest process. During this, they have been asked to re-examine the cost of their funded service – considering the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and

grants. They might be unable to deliver services to the same capacity if rising service costs are not addressed.		increased national insurance contributions. Their updated costs have now been reviewed to ensure they are fair and reasonable. Any provider offered a continuation grant extension for 2025-26 will receive their agreed grant amount plus an inflation-related uplift. This will go some way in supporting them with increased service costs.
Uplifting the spend figure for the continuation grants in 2025-26 has an impact on the overall DASA budget for this financial year. Aside from the continuation grants, there are commissioned services, staffing and a range of other domestic abuse focused programmes to fund.	Green	The cost of extending the continuation grants, and paying for the uplifted spend figure, will be covered from the annual MHCLG allocation for this year. MHCLG has allocated the GLA £26,868,976 to spend across DASA in 2025-26. Our current spend forecasting demonstrates that we have sufficient headroom to support the uplift request for the continuation grants. Therefore, the uplift will not impact the available funding which needs to pay for commissioned services, staffing and additional DASA programme activity in 2025-26.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

4.2. The objectives of the proposals are in line with:

- the Mayor's DASA Strategy 2025-28
- the Mayor's London Housing Strategy, policy 7.2c
- MOPAC's Police and Crime Plan 2022-25 (tackling VAWG is one of three priority areas for action to protect people at especially high risk of crime)
- MOPAC's VAWG Strategy.

4.3. New versions of the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan, and the VAWG Strategy, are currently being developed.

Consultations and impact assessments

4.4. Both the [London Housing Strategy](#) and the [VAWG Strategy](#) were subject to public consultation and equalities impact assessments.

4.5. The development of the Mayor's current DASA strategy (2025-28) and Needs Assessment involved extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. This included those with whom the 2021 Act requires the GLA to consult on the draft strategy: the London DASA Partnership Board (Partnership Board) appointed by the GLA; and the London boroughs. A draft of the DASA strategy was published for consultation in October 2024. It was reviewed by the Partnership Board, London boroughs and wider VAWG sector stakeholders for their feedback.

4.6. There was also in-depth consultation and engagement during the development of the London DASA Needs Assessment (2024), which provides much of the data and information informing the proposals in the strategy.

Conflicts of interest

4.7. The officers involved in the drafting and clearance of this form have not identified any known conflicts of interest.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. Approval is sought for the Assistant Director of Housing and Land to approve a £59,773 uplift in spend on the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation (DASA) continuation grants for 2025-26. MD3321 approved £6,416,268 spend on DASA continuation grant and this MD seeks to uplift the total grants for 2025-26 to £6,476,041 (increase of £59,773). This grant including the uplift will be funded from MHCLG 2025-26 DASA funding received in April 2025.
- 5.2. DASA grants, funding and programmes are managed by the Specialist Housing Services unit within Housing and Land. This programme is part of Accommodation and Wider Support for Those Who Need It Most delivery plan.

6. Legal comments

Power to undertake the requested decisions.

- 6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions requested of the Assistant Director concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers; and fall within the GLA's statutory power to do such things considered to further or that are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to, the promotion of social development within Greater London. In formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers have complied with the GLA's related statutory duties to:
 - pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people.
 - consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the UK.
 - consult with appropriate bodies.
- 6.2. In taking the decisions requested, the Assistant Director must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation) and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Assistant Director should have regard to section 3 (above) of this report.

Grant funding

- 6.3. The decision, above, seeks approval of a £59,773 uplift in spend on the DASA continuation grants for 2025-26. Where the increase in spend leads to an increase in the grant funding provided to a grantee under a continuation grant, officers are reminded to put in place appropriate documentation to govern the change in the amount of the funding. Furthermore, when distributing the grant funding, officers are reminded to comply with the requirements of section 12 of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code and with the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

This work will be delivered according to the following timetable:

Activity	Timeline
Expression of Interest process for continuation grant extensions	January to March 2025
Grant agreements signed for a portion of continuation grants (up to the value of the figure approved in the MD)	Completed in April 2025
ADD for uplift to reach the Mayoral Delivery Board for approval	9 June 2025
Remaining continuation grant agreements are signed	June 2025
Grant-funded services continue delivery	April 2025 to 31 March 2026

Appendices and supporting papers:

None.

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will be published either within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 – Deferral

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under the FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to
confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Aleena Khushal has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 9 June 2025.

✓

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL SERVICES:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature:



Date:

09/06/2025