

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR MAYORAL DECISION – MD3338

Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy (2025-28)

Executive summary:

Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (the 2021 Act), which came into force on 1 October 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. Approval was given (via MD2902) to agree the content of, and publish, London's strategy for accommodation-based support for victims/survivors of domestic abuse and their children (Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation (DASA) Strategy) in December 2021.

The Mayor's 2021-24 DASA strategy has been reviewed for 2025-28, following an updated London-wide needs assessment. A consultation on an updated draft DASA Strategy took place in October 2024. The responses to the consultation were analysed and taken into account in the final version. Approval is now sought to agree the content of and publish the updated DASA strategy for 2025-28, alongside the updated needs assessment.

Decision:

That the Mayor:

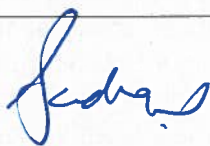
- approves the content of the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy for 2025-28, as set out in Appendix 3, for publication before April 2025
- approves the publication of the London Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2024, as set out in Appendix 1
- delegates authority to the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development, in consultation with the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime at the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, to approve non-material changes to the above-mentioned strategy ahead of publication.

Mayor of London

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Date:

12/3/25

PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE MAYOR

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, this is 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. [Statutory guidance](#) was published in 2021 and updated in July 2022.
- 1.2. The key functions required of Tier 1 authorities – as outlined in the 2021 Act, the [2021 Regulations](#) and the statutory guidance – include preparing, publishing and keeping under review a strategy for accommodation-based support for survivors of domestic abuse and their children. Tier 1 authorities are also required to give effect to the strategy in carrying out their functions through commissioning and decommissioning decisions.
- 1.3. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has allocated administration and support funding to the GLA, to support the discharge of its duty. The total allocation for 2025-26 is £26,868,976. The authority for receipt and expenditure of this allocation was delegated to the Executive Director of Housing and Land via MD3321.
- 1.4. The Mayor approved, via Mayoral Decisions (MDs) 2788 and 2842, the GLA entering into 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 Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation (DASA) duty. MOPAC's administrative costs – including staffing, legal input, and activities incurred under the shared-services agreement – are paid for via the annual allocation from MHCLG. MD2788 and MD2842 approved the transfer of funding from the GLA to MOPAC for this purpose.
- 1.5. Informed by the London needs assessment and consultation with stakeholders, a draft strategy for the provision of accommodation-based domestic abuse support in London was published for consultation on 5 November 2021 (approved via MD2892). The responses from this consultation were analysed, and a final version of the strategy was approved (via MD2902) and published on 23 December 2021 (the DASA strategy 2021).

Updated strategy

- 1.6. The Mayor's DASA strategy 2021 has been reviewed and updated for 2025-28, following an updated London-wide needs assessment conducted by Crest Advisory in March 2024 (Appendix 1).
- 1.7. The 2025-28 strategy reflects an updated view of DASA support, three years on from the 2021 Act, alongside an updated needs assessment.
- 1.8. To develop the draft 2025-28 document, extensive engagement was undertaken in Spring 2024 with victims/survivors; agencies involved in tackling domestic abuse; and organisations delivering support. The draft strategy underwent a nine-week consultation from 4 October until 10 December 2024; views and suggestions were collected from 35 online respondents and more than 60 workshop attendees. Feedback was also collected from members of the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (whose members are appointed by the GLA under section 58 of the 2021 Act), London boroughs and the Common Council of the City of London who are all statutory consultees.
- 1.9. The responses from the consultation have been analysed and set out in the consultation response report in Appendix 2. The consultation responses have been taken into account in the final version of the 2025-28 strategy, which is at Appendix 3. The consultation response report sets out the key

themes that arose from the response to the consultation. Respondents highlighted that some areas of the updated draft strategy are unchanged; the reasons for not making changes are set out in the report. However, some areas have seen changes, following careful consideration of the consultation feedback. The reasons for each change are set out in the consultation report. The key changes to policies and proposals are detailed in Appendix 4.

1.10. Highlights of the updated draft strategy for 2025-28 include the following:

- A summary of the latest needs assessment findings.
- Highlights of the implementation of the Mayor's DASA to date.
- Detail on how the duty will be further delivered in 2025-28 through a refreshed commissioning approach from March 2025 onwards. It is proposed that the new commissioning approach will deliver, in phases, a grants programme for specialist services, followed by the recommissioning of further services in close consultation with delivery partners.
- A streamlining of the 2021-24 strategy's objectives into five overarching objectives to deliver the Mayor's vision in 2025-28. A broader scope within the objectives builds from 2021's commitment to: ensuring that commissioning processes are strategic; envisaging a 'system' view; and furthering the development of a sustainable and robust sector.
- An updated chapter on the scope of the Mayor's powers and the statutory limits of the DASA duty, bringing into sharper focus the Mayor's role of commissioning services under the Part 4 funding received from MHCLG.
- A commitment to producing a delivery plan to robustly track progress against the Mayor's refreshed strategic aims in 2025-28.
- A reflection on the lessons learned in 2021-24.
- Updated references to wider related Mayoral strategies and to national legislative changes that have been introduced since 2021-24.
- A new glossary that sets out key definitions.

1.11. Approval is sought to publish the final version of the updated DASA strategy set out in Appendix 3 before April 2025, with delegation to the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development, in consultation with the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, to approve any non-material changes to the version ahead of publication (should they be needed). The updated needs assessment (Appendix 1) and the equalities impact assessment (EqIA) (Appendix 5) will be published alongside the strategy.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1. The objectives of the updated draft DASA strategy, and the commissioning that follows it, are as follows:

- 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 that 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 the way that 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. The GLA will phase commissioning in 2025-28, enabling 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 providers working in the area of violence against women and girls; 'by and for' providers; London borough councils; 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, aiming to support the diversity of organisations in the sector.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as public authorities, the Mayor and the GLA are subject to the public sector equality duty and must have 'due regard' to the need to:
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act
 - 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 marital or civil partnership status. Compliance with the duty may involve ensuring people with a protected characteristic are provided with all the opportunities that those without the characteristic would have.
- 3.3. Characteristics of 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 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 women who suffer from domestic abuse during their lifetime report that the first incidence of violence happened while they were pregnant.
- 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 high-risk victims of abuse report using drugs and/or alcohol.
- Mental health: 40 per cent of high-risk victims of abuse report mental health difficulties.

- 3.4. Given the above, the proposals in this paper are likely to have positive impacts on several groups with protected characteristics. Specifically, the work outlined above will focus on arrangements to facilitate improvements in accommodation and support for survivors of domestic abuse (who are more likely than the general population to be women and to have mental health support needs). The equalities implications will be kept under review throughout this programme of work including in relation to the commissioning of support.
- 3.5. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and will be published with the strategy (Appendix 5). This determines that the provision of enhanced and new accommodation-based support services for all victims/survivors of domestic abuse in London in 2025-28 is within scope of the Duty and the strategy. The EqIA notes that there are opportunities to promote equality, and mitigate inequalities, through the implementation of the 2025-28 activity proposed in the strategy. There is, in the strategy, a clear intention to provide support relevant to individuals who hold a diversity of protected characteristics. The strategy also explicitly expects commissioned providers of support to undertake policies/practices that promote equality, and to commit to anti-racist and intersectional practices.

4. Other considerations

Key risks and issues

4.1. Table of risks and issues

Risk description	Rating	Mitigating action
MHCLG's annual DASA funding allocation to the GLA might be lower than expected in future years (2026-27 and onwards). A reduction in the annual allocation will impact the GLA's and MOPAC's ability to fund commissioned services.	Green	The DASA programme is funded through MHCLG, as it is a statutory duty for the GLA to deliver. It is unlikely that the annual funding for this statutory duty will be stopped. The GLA and MOPAC will continue to work closely with MHCLG; and will highlight the positive impact of the DASA programme on domestic abuse support services across London, to support the evidence for ongoing allocations.

The cost-of-living crisis and changes to employers National Insurance rules are placing additional financial pressures on VAWG sector partners. This could impact on the delivery of domestic abuse support services in London.	Amber	GLA and MOPAC officers have considered the impact that the cost-of-living crisis has had on services this financial year. As a result, officers have taken steps to make inflation-related uplifts to DASA continuation grants payments for 2025-26. Officers are also building in provisions in future annual budgets to allow for inflation-related uplifts for new DASA-commissioned services, where possible.
Insufficient capacity in the market to deliver the services needed/being commissioned. This means outcomes for survivors will not be maximised; and the DASA annual allocation might not be spent in full in future years.	Green	MOPAC will be engaging with potential bidders and other stakeholders, to raise awareness of, and enable participation in the design of, any new commissioning approaches. In addition, the draft updated DASA strategy outlines the intention to deliver a more flexible commissioning model, with the option to deliver a grants programme. Having the opportunity to access grant funding will ensure that the widest possible range of smaller, specialist organisations (including 'by and for') can bid, and are not penalised by an evaluation approach that disproportionately weights cost to the detriment of experience and expertise.

Links to Mayoral strategies and priorities

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

- The Mayor's London Housing Strategy, policy 7.2c
- MOPAC's Police and Crime Plan (PCP) 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. 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.

Consultations and impact assessments

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

4.5. The draft updated DASA strategy (2025-28) was published for consultation on london.gov.uk from 4 October to 10 December 2024. MOPAC and the GLA emailed a wide range of stakeholders, inviting them to respond. They included those the 2021 Act specifies should be consulted on the draft strategy: the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board; senior leaders and operational delivery representatives of boroughs in London; and wider organisations from across domestic abuse services, including specialist 'by and for' providers.

4.6. MOPAC held two online workshops during the consultation period. At the first of these, 31 borough and housing sector representatives attended to provide feedback; the second drew 29 VAWG and wider voluntary and community provider representatives.

4.7. During the consultation period, 35 consultation responses were received: 25 via the online survey and 10 via email (containing freeform thoughts and views).

- 4.8. There was also in-depth consultation and engagement during the development of the 2024 needs assessment, which provided much of the data and information informing the proposals in the strategy. This included a workshop with the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board; interviews with four survivors of domestic abuse; a provider survey; a VAWG coordinator survey; two focus groups with key stakeholders; and 13 one-to-one meetings with key stakeholders.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.9. The officers involved in the drafting and clearance of this form have identified no known conflicts of interest.

5. Financial comments

- 5.1. The decision is seeking approval to agree and publish the content of the updated DASA strategy 2025-28, alongside the updated needs assessment, which is an update to the Mayor's 2021-24 DASA strategy.
- 5.2. The GLA's annual allocation for 2025-26 was £26,868,976 from MHCLG, to meet the commitments of delivering the DASA strategy 2025-28 (approved in MD3321). The GLA entered a shared-services arrangement with MOPAC, to undertake the activities associated with delivering the DASA duty.
- 5.3. The DASA strategy 2025-28 will be fully funded by the allocation of £26,868,976, for 2025-26.

6. Legal comments

- 6.1. Section 57(1)(b) of the 2021 Act provides that a relevant authority (which, in London, is the GLA) must prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of accommodation-based domestic abuse support in its area. Section 57(4) provides that, before publishing a strategy under this section, a relevant local authority must consult the domestic abuse local partnership board, local authorities in its area and other persons considered appropriate.
- 6.2. The 2021 Regulations, made under section 57(9) of the 2021 Act, provide that a relevant local authority that prepares and publishes a section 57 strategy must review said strategy within three years from the date of its first publication, and again within each subsequent three-year period thereafter. In so doing, the relevant local authority must review any effect of the strategy on the provision of other local authority support in its area.
- 6.3. The statutory guidance sets out the content of the draft strategy and who should be consulted on it.
- 6.4. Section 57(3) of the 2021 Act provides that a relevant local authority that publishes a strategy must, in carrying out its functions, give effect to the strategy.
- 6.5. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a general obligation on the GLA to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent:
- crime and disorder in its area (including antisocial and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment)
 - the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area
 - reoffending in its area.
- 6.6. In taking the decisions requested, the Mayor must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty as described above in section 3. The Mayor should have particular regard to section 3 of this report.

- 6.7. It is proposed that delegation is given to the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development, in consultation with the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime at MOPAC, to approve non-material changes to the above-mentioned strategy ahead of publication. Pursuant to section 38 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, any function exercisable by the Mayor on behalf of the GLA may also be exercised by any member of staff of the GLA, including the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development. Delegations are set out in the Mayoral Decision-Making in the Greater London Authority document.
- 6.8. Any funding granted must be provided in accordance with the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code; and officers must ensure that the GLA – the relevant authority subject to the obligations set out in the 2021 Act – is a party to the provision of any funding arrangement.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1. It is intended to publish the DASA strategy (2025-28) in the week commencing 17 March 2025.

Appendices and supporting papers:

- Appendix 1: 2024 DASA Needs Assessment
- Appendix 2: DASA strategy (2025-28) Consultation Report
- Appendix 3: DASA strategy (2025-28)
- Appendix 4: Table detailing changes to DASA strategy 2025-28, following consultation
- Appendix 5: DASA strategy (2025-28) Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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? YES

Until what date: 24 March 2025.

For what reason: To align with the publication of the strategy.

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:

Alexandra Broadhurst has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Sponsoring Director:

Tim Steer has reviewed the request and is satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

✓

Mayoral Adviser:

Tom Copley has been consulted about the proposal and agrees the recommendations.

✓

Advice:

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal.

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

This decision was agreed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 10 March 2025.

✓

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:

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

Signature:

Fay Hannan

Date:

10/03/2025

CHIEF OF STAFF:

I am satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Mayor.

Signature:

D. Bellamy

Date:

10/03/2025

