

Neighbourhood Services and Housing Scrutiny Commissions

Draft Leicester Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2022-2025

Date of Commission meeting: 9th December 2021

Lead Director: John Leach



Useful Information:

- Ward(s) affected: All
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1. Summary

Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the new duties on the local authority emerging from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and seek feedback on the draft domestic abuse safe accommodation strategy 2022-25.
- 1.2 The report outlines the current position of the local authority against the new regulations including:
 - New needs assessment
 - Establishment of the Leicester Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Board
 - New draft domestic abuse safe accommodation strategy.

New legislation

- 1.3 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021¹ received Royal Assent on 29th April 2021. A draft statutory guidance framework document² was published in January 2021 and revised in July 2021 following a period of consultation.
- 1.4 The Domestic Abuse Act aims to:
 - Raise awareness and understanding about domestic abuse
 - Provide protection for victims
 - Bring perpetrators to justice
 - Strengthen support by statutory agencies
- 1.5 Measures introduced under the Act include:
 - A statutory definition of domestic abuse:
“Behaviour of a person (‘A’) towards another person (‘B’) is domestic abuse if A and B are each aged 16 years or over, are ‘personally connected’ to each other, and the behaviour is abusive.”
 - Recognition of children who have been exposed to domestic abuse as victims.

¹ [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

² [\[Title\] \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

- Creation of the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner.
- New offences, including controlling or coercive behaviour, threats to disclose private sexual photographs/films, and non-fatal strangulation/suffocation.
- New powers: Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Orders (DAPN/DAPO).
- Protection for victims and witnesses in legal proceedings, including use of special measures and prohibition of cross-examination in person.
- Management of offenders, including polygraph testing for offenders released on licence.
- Additional local authority support.

Requirements under Part 4 – local authority support

- 1.6 Under Part 4 of the Act³, local authorities are required to prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of accommodation-based support for victims of domestic abuse in their area. The effectiveness of the strategy must then be monitored and evaluated.
- 1.7 A further requirement under Part 4 of the Act is for local authorities to establish a domestic abuse local partnership board. The purpose of the board is to provide advice to the local authority regarding the exercise of its functions relating to accommodation-based support and the provision of other local authority support in the area.
- 1.8 Membership of each domestic abuse local partnership board must include:
- Representative(s) of the relevant local authority
 - At least one person representing the interests of victims of domestic abuse
 - At least one person representing the interests of children of domestic abuse victims
 - At least one person representing the interests of charities and other voluntary organisations that work with victims of domestic abuse in the area
 - At least one person representing the interests of health care services in the area
 - At least one person representing the interests of policing or criminal justice in the area.

³ [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

Current position

- 1.9 Consideration has taken place regarding the options and connections required for the domestic abuse locality partnership board, to ensure it works for the city and the existing sub-regional partnership structure. Considerations regarding efficiency of representation and reporting governance have been a key part of preparations to respond regarding the new legislative changes reflected in this report. In September 2021 it was determined at City Mayor Briefing to convene a city-specific Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Board.
- 1.10 Officers have also drafted the domestic abuse needs assessment, reflecting the required information from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) template and bringing in data from the previous two needs assessments. This draft report has been shared with partners to add insight and check for accuracy and representation of the data. Public health colleagues within the authority have assisted with this task and many council services have contributed data.
- 1.11 The first meeting of the Leicester Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Board took place on 25th October 2021. Further meetings are arranged for December 2021, with quarterly meetings to be held thereafter. A delivery group has also been established.
- 1.12 Following the initial meeting of the new partnership board, consultation with partners regarding the draft domestic abuse safe accommodation strategy opened. Consultation closed on 30th November 2021.
- 1.13 Work to adjust the strategy document in line with partner feedback is ongoing and will continue until the final document is published on 5th January 2022. Feedback from this scrutiny meeting will also be incorporated by 17th December 2021.

2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny

The scrutiny commissions are invited to consider and comment on the draft domestic abuse safe accommodation strategy for Leicester.

3. Supporting Information

Planning the strategy

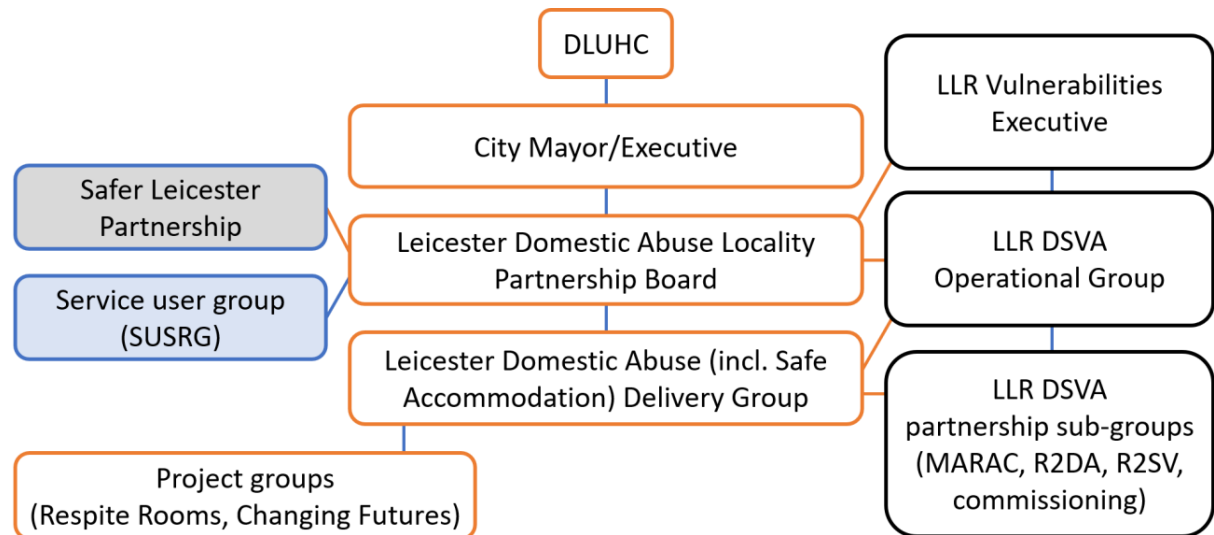
- 3.1 Planning and drafting the Leicester's domestic abuse safe accommodation strategy has involved:
- Completing a needs assessment of domestic abuse in Leicester, including review of existing documentation and provision, which has drafted recommendations for the partnership board;
 - Establishing the locality partnership board and responding to feedback from members, including their request for a delivery group;
 - Contact with Leicester's 14 'most similar group' of Community Safety Partnerships, including meetings to share learning and peer review other local authorities' safe accommodation strategies.
- 3.2 The draft strategy was published for the purposes of seeking partner feedback on 26th October 2021.

Priorities

- 3.3 The strategic objectives for 2022-25 identified in Leicester's domestic abuse safe accommodation strategy are:
- i. To establish the locality partnership board;
 - ii. To commission the appropriate services;
 - iii. To establish and sustain an effective performance management structure for delivery of the domestic abuse safe accommodation strategy.
- 3.4 The draft recommendations suggest four themed priority areas for the next three years:
- i. To establish the Leicester Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Board;
 - ii. To improve our understanding of need in the city, and barriers to meeting those needs;
 - iii. To develop and support the workforce responding to accommodation related support for victim-survivors of domestic abuse;
 - iv. To expand the accessibility and suitability of the safe accommodation available in Leicester.

Reporting and governance

3.5 Diagram of reporting structure, which shows how the Leicester Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Board relates to existing groups:



Timeline

3.6 Following consultation and feedback from scrutiny, the final strategy is due to be published on 5th January 2022.

3.7 Work to implement the strategy is ongoing.

4. Financial, Legal and Other Implications

4.1 Financial implications

The City Council received £857k in grant funding to meet the additional burdens associated with the Domestic Abuse Act in 2021/22. This incorporates the cost of supporting partnership arrangements, some of which are covered in this report. Linked to the Safe Accommodation strategy, a grant of £335k will be received to pilot the Respite Rooms project.

Stuart McAvoy, Principal Accountant, ext. 37 4004

4.2 Legal implications

Part 4, section 60 of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) states that Local Authorities must have regard to the Statutory guidance relating to the Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services (published 1st October 2021). Amongst other things the guidance requires Local Authorities to prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support for their local area having regard to the needs assessment. The Strategy must be published by the 5th January 2022 following a period of consultation with key stakeholders, including the Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Board.

In respect of incoming funding for the pilot project mentioned in this the Authority will need to ensure it complies with any specified conditions imposed together with an assessment against subsidy control of the incoming funds, though it is likely in the circumstances detailed in the body of the report that these funds will be used to fulfil a statutory duty/public task and therefore likely to fall outside of this regime. Legal advice and assistance should be sought.

Mannah Begum, Principal Solicitor (Commercial), ext. 37 1423

4.3 Climate Change implications

There are no climate emergency implications directly associated with this report. However, in wider terms the strategy looks at increasing availability of accommodation options. As housing is a significant source of carbon emissions locally, projects around provision of accommodation should consider opportunities to reduce emissions where possible. This could include ensuring that properties are energy efficient and well insulated, as relevant and appropriate to individual projects. This may also deliver co-benefits in terms of reduced bills and increased comfort levels for occupants.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, ext. 37 2284

4.4 Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a continuing Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in making decisions and carrying out their activities they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The draft domestic abuse safe accommodation strategy for Leicester should benefit people from across a range of protected characteristics by providing them with accommodation that fits their needs. It will help to ensure a vulnerable cohort of people are provided with suitable services and support, as well as having a clear statutory definition of domestic abuse.

Whilst the strategy is a strategic overarching document, key priorities for Leicester have been identified based around the gaps identified in the 2021 needs assessment, which will be further reviewed and developed during the early months of the strategy. Summary of unmet needs/gaps have been identified and these should be used to monitor delivery and track progress. Equality considerations should be embedded throughout these and it is recommended that Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are carried out as appropriate on identified key priorities/unmet needs/gaps, to ensure any impacts are identified and addressed, and mitigating actions put in place.

The equality impact assessment is an iterative process that should be revisited throughout the decision-making process and updated to reflect any feedback/changes due to consultation/engagement as appropriate

Sukhi Biring and Surinder Singh, Equalities Officers, ext. 37 4175/4148

4.5 Other implications

N/A.

5. Background Information and Other Papers:

None.

6. Summary of Appendices:

Appendix 1: Working Copy – Draft Leicester Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2022-25

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Presentation



Draft DA safe
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7. Is this a private report?

No.

DRAFT Leicester Domestic Abuse
Safe Accommodation Strategy
2022-25

[Keeping victims of Domestic Abuse
Safe *under Part 4 of the Domestic
Abuse Act 2021*]

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1. Introduction

1.1 Under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 ("the Act"), local authorities are required to prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of accommodation-based support for victims of domestic abuse in their area.

1.2 The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for the year ending March 2020 estimated that 20.7% of the population aged 18-74 years had experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16, and approximately 5 in 100 adults had experienced domestic abuse in the last year⁴ (7.3% of women and 3.6% of men⁵).

1.3 Based on these levels of prevalence and a mid-2020 population estimate for Leicester of 354,036, a level of local domestic abuse-related need can be deduced. It is estimated that in Leicester, since the age of 16:

- 35,529 females have been affected by domestic abuse
- 18,156 males have been affected by domestic abuse

1.4 The Act sets out the following statutory definition of domestic abuse:

- Behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") if:
 - A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
 - The behaviour is abusive.
- Behaviour is abusive if it consists of:
 - Physical or sexual abuse
 - Violent or threatening behaviour
 - Controlling or coercive behaviour
 - Economic abuse (behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B's ability to acquire, use or maintain money or property, or obtain goods or services)
 - Psychological, emotional, or other abuse
- It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.
- A's behaviour may be behaviour 'towards' B even if it consists of conduct directed at another person (such as B's child).

⁴ [Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/peopleandpopulation/healthandcare/articles/domesticabuseprevalenceandtrendsinenglandandwales/2020)

⁵ [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/peopleandpopulation/healthandcare/articles/domesticabusevictimcharacteristics/2020)

- Two people are considered to be 'personally connected' to each other if:
 - They are, or have been, married to each other
 - They are, or have been, civil partners
 - They have agreed to marry one another, whether or not the agreement has been terminated
 - They have entered into a civil partnership agreement, whether or not the agreement has been terminated
 - They are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship
 - They have, or have previously had, a parental relationship to the same child
 - They are relatives
- References to victims of domestic abuse include references to a child (someone under 18) who sees, hears, or experiences the effects of the abuse, and is related to A or B.

1.5 This strategy will guide the work of the Leicester Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Board ("the Board").

1.6 The Board will work to support, advise and work in partnership with Leicester City Council to ensure that victims of domestic abuse have access to adequate and appropriate support, and in particular safe accommodation, as defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Members of the Board will work together to improve outcomes for victims of domestic abuse, including their children, through a strategic approach.

1.7 The Board will include representatives of the following key partners:

- Leicester City Council
- Criminal justice services
- Victims of domestic abuse
- Children of domestic abuse
- Charities and other voluntary organisations that work with victims of domestic abuse in Leicester
- Healthcare services
- Housing services

2. Vision and Strategic Objectives

(A) Vision

- 2.1 This strategy will support and contribute to the vision and strategic objectives of the Leicester Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership.

‘To provide an effective Leicester locality partnership response to the requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

(B) Strategic Objectives

2.2 The Strategic Objectives of the Leicester Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Board are to:

- (i) Assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of, the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support in Leicester for all victims and their children who reside in relevant safe accommodation, including those who come from outside of their area.
- (ii) Prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their area having regard to the needs assessment.
- (iii) Give effect to the strategy (through commissioning/decommissioning decisions).
- (iv) Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.
- (v) Report back annually to central government.
- (vi) Have regard to the statutory guidance in exercising its functions under Part 4.

3. National and Local Drivers

3.1 Leicester's domestic abuse safe accommodation strategy intersects with the following key local documents:

- Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy

[Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2023 \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-strategy-2018-2023/)

Service users who are fleeing an abusive partner may become homeless or may otherwise be in need of safe accommodation.

- Tenancy strategy

[Draft Tenancy Strategy \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk/draft-tenancy-strategy/)

Some domestic abuse victims will be Leicester City Council tenants or live in council properties. Perpetrators of domestic abuse may also be council tenants who are in breach of their Conditions of Tenancy.

- Joint health and wellbeing strategy

[The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2024 \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk/the-joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2019-2024/)

Experiences of domestic abuse can impact on victims' physical and mental health and their ability to access healthcare services.

- Equality and diversity strategy

[corporate-equality-strategy-2018-2022.pdf \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk/corporate-equality-strategy-2018-2022.pdf)

Domestic abuse is generally understood to operate through power and control and have a 'cause and effect' type of relationship with inequality. An understanding of intersectionality is essential in responding appropriately.

- Early Help strategy

[Leicester Early Help strategy](https://leicester.gov.uk/leicester-early-help-strategy/)

Nationally, between 25-30% of children in the UK live in households with domestic abuse, and a third of all households in Leicester include dependent children⁶. Children who have been affected by domestic abuse of a parent are now recognised as victims.

⁶ Office of National Statistics – Mid-Year Population Estimates 2020

- Safer Leicester Partnership (SLP) plan

[Safer Leicester Partnership Plan](#)

Reducing the harm caused by domestic abuse forms part of the wider SLP vision to “Work together to reduce crime, disorder and vulnerability so that individuals and communities in Leicester feel safe and are safe in their homes, on the streets and in the places they go.”

- Alcohol harm reduction strategy

[Draft Leicester Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy 2021-2026](#)

Increased use of alcohol can increase the risk of harm when factoring in domestic abuse, in terms of severity and likelihood. Alcohol can also become a coping mechanism for managing the impact of domestic abuse and be a barrier to securing and sustaining safe accommodation.

- Knife crime and serious violence strategy

[Leicester Knife Crime and Serious Violence Strategy 2021-2023](#)

Domestic abuse may involve physical and/or sexual violence, including violence using weapons. Several Leicester domestic homicide reviews have been into deaths resulting from knife injuries. The current strategy therefore overlaps with the strategy to address knife crime and other serious violence in Leicester.

3.2 The local domestic abuse agenda also links into the following national strategies:

- Violence against women and girls (VAWG) strategy

[Tackling violence against women and girls strategy \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

This national strategy aims to promote understanding of violence against women and girls, to prioritise prevention of such violent offences by supporting victims and pursuing perpetrators, and to build a stronger cross-system approach.

- Victims Bill

[Victims of Abuse \(Support\) Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)

This Bill, which has been started in the House of Commons and is currently at second reading stage (October 2021), aims to establish a right to specialist sexual violence and abuse support services for victims of sexual, violent and domestic abuse.

- Domestic Abuse Act

[Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

This recent piece of legislation set out a statutory definition of domestic abuse; introduced the role of Domestic Abuse Commissioner; created additional powers for dealing with domestic abuse; placed new duties on local authorities with regard to supporting victims of domestic abuse, convening local partnership boards and reporting; provided additional protection for victims and witnesses in legal proceedings; created a number of new offences relating to abusive acts; and made a number of further provisions, including polygraph testing for offenders released on licence. A national strategy and comprehensive perpetrator strategy will be published.

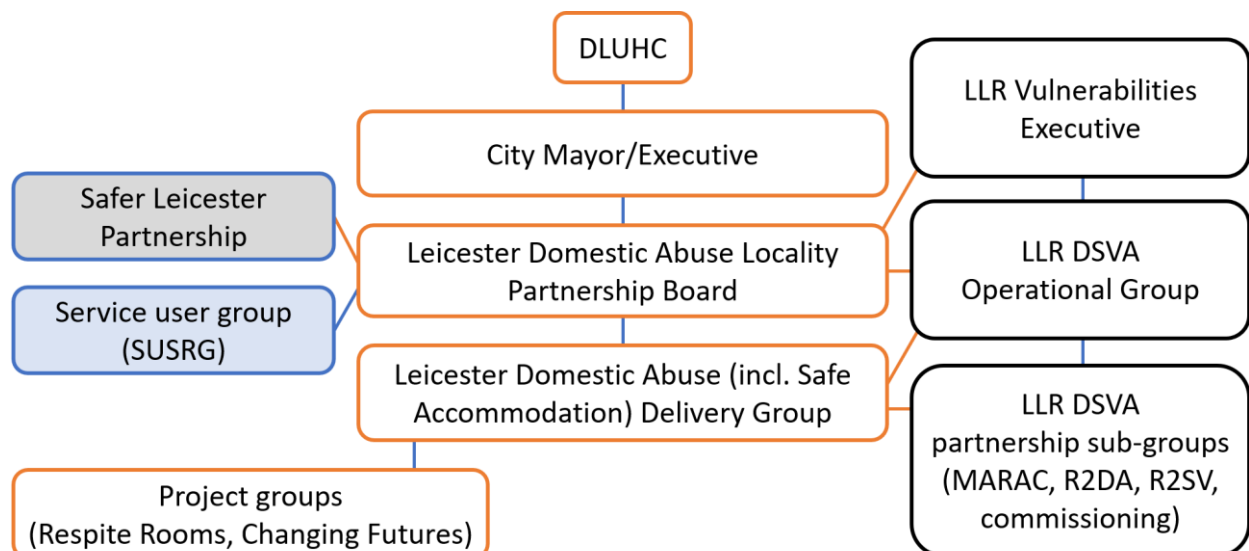
- Integrated health

[Integrated Care: Our Shared Commitment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

National and local health and care organisations have undertaken to deliver person-centred and coordinated care and support, communicating, and collaborating with other services in order to improve outcomes for service users and ensure they are receiving services that meet their needs.

4. Governance

- 4.1 In September 2021, the City Council made the decision to create a city specific Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Board to fulfil its specific accommodation related obligations under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 4.2 The Board will work together to support, advise, and work in partnership with Leicester City Council to ensure that victims of domestic abuse have access to adequate and appropriate support and in particular safe accommodation as defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 4.3 The Board will work together to improve outcomes for victims of domestic abuse, including their children, through a strategic approach that will also recognise the relationship with the wider Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland Sub-Region and broader domestic abuse agenda.
- 4.4 The Leicester Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Board will formally report in to Leicester City Council, who will retain overarching responsibility for ensuring that the obligations placed on the local authority are met.
- 4.5 Diagram of the local and sub-regional governance structure



4.6 Meetings of the Board will have sections for open and closed business, with the closed section addressing matters relating to commissioning and City Council administration.

4.7 A delivery group of key departments in the City Council, with partners, will support the work (required actions relating to the Strategy) of the Leicester Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Board.

4.8 The Board will link into other key partnership bodies:

- Children's Trust Board

[Family Information | Our vision \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#)

Part of the Leicester Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (LSCB), which also includes the Early Help Strategic Board, the strategy aims to provide early stage help to children in Leicester, enabling them to "support – strengthen – thrive".

- Health and Wellbeing Board

[Health and Wellbeing Board \(leicester.gov.uk\)](#)

Leicester's Health and Wellbeing Board works in partnership with local communities and healthcare providers to develop and deliver health and wellbeing strategies.

- Homelessness Charter

[Leicester's Homelessness Charter \(leicesterhomelessnesscharter.co.uk\)](#)

Leicester's Homelessness Charter aims to improve the way organisations and individuals work together to tackle homelessness in the city, and to harness the enthusiasm of those who want to get involved but don't know how.

4.9 Delivery plan

To ensure delivery of the Leicester Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy with a focus on Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 a delivery plan will be developed with partners. This will be supported by the Leicester Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Delivery Group that reports into the Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Board.

4.10 Data updates

Quarterly performance monitoring headline data specific to Leicester and from across the sub-region will be provided to the Locality Partnership Board.

4.11 Review of progress

An annual review of progress will be carried out and reported to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC).

4.12 Accountability

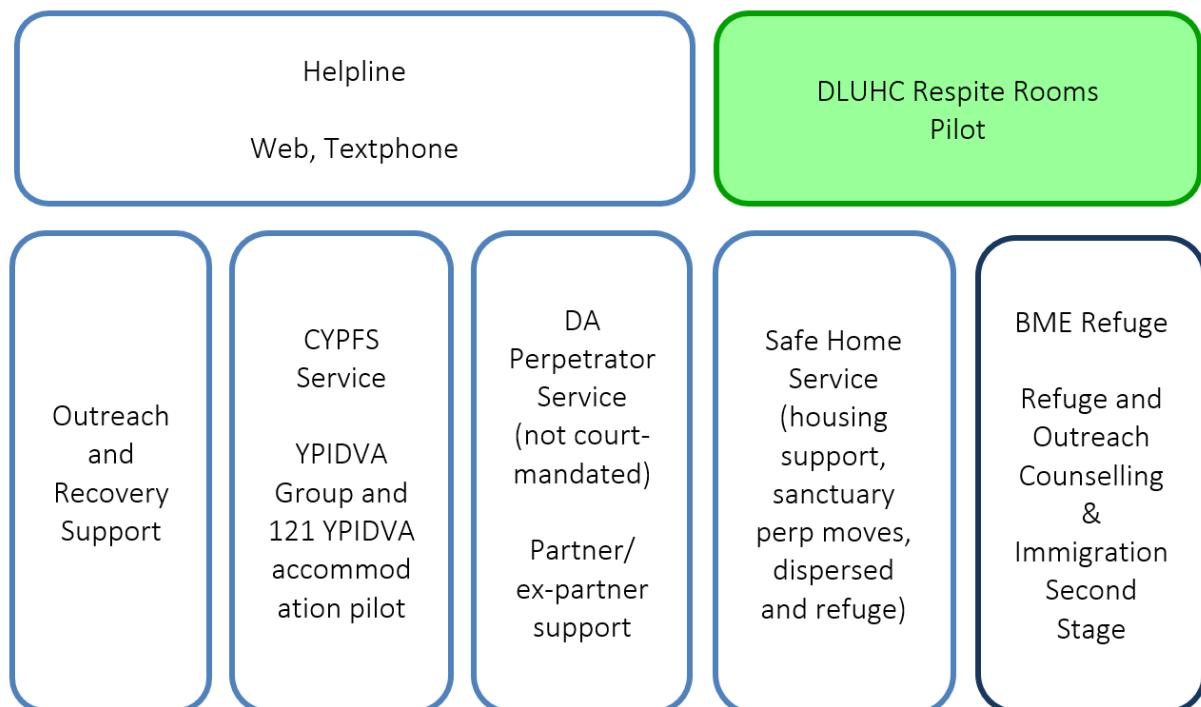
Overall accountability for the delivery of this strategy (once approved) will rest with the City Mayor Executive at Leicester City Council.

5. Needs Assessment

The Leicester Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2021 has commenced and contains a full overview of the data available regarding domestic abuse relating to victims, their families and those who are perpetrators. It builds on previous needs assessments for the locality published in 2019 and 2017 and references the Leicester Domestic Homicide Review Data Report 2020.

5.1 Diagram of current service model for domestic abuse specific commissioned services

United Against Violence and Abuse (UAVA) provide all of the provision coloured light blue in the diagram below, having done so since December 2015. UAVA is a consortium of Women's Aid Leicestershire Limited (WALL), Living Without Abuse (LWA) and Freeva. Panahghar Safehouse deliver the service coloured dark blue and have done so directly commissioned by city council since April 2021, previously direct through the DLUHC. The service in green below is a DLUHC funded pilot project running October 2021-September 2022. There is wider provision of Council housing and homelessness provision which also provides accommodation related support but which might not be classed currently as 'safe accommodation' within the remit outlined in the statutory guidance.



[Insert table of provision basics]

Prevalence

The Crime Survey for England and Wales⁷ (CSEW) population estimates of domestic abuse prevalence amongst adults since age 16, would equate to at least 18,000 men and 35,000 women in Leicester. The figure is likely to be far higher.

483 referrals were made to the city council commissioned services for victims at high risk of homicide or serious injury and 684 to outreach services, Leicester 2020-21. A further 179 referrals to high risk victims came through the hospital based high risk victim service.

Leicester police recorded 3,230 domestic abuse related incidents and 7,700 domestic abuse related offences during 2020-21.

There is a higher number of victim-survivors accessing services with no recourse to public funds (27%) in the City compared to the national Insights dataset (13%). This has consistently been higher than the national dataset over the last three years, with an average of 29% of service users having no recourse to funds, although the numbers of individual victims identified has remained stable.

Accommodation related need

The city council commissioned specialist domestic abuse 'Safe Home Service' recorded 789 referrals in 2020-21. This figure has risen each of the last three years.

The Hope Project⁸ recorded 264 referrals in 2020/21 from/of victims who had an accommodation related need plus another need such as immigration support, mental health, substance misuse. Mental health related need was more prevalent than substance use need.

Housing need amongst the victim population known to the city council commissioned specialist domestic abuse support and information service is showing a year on year increase and is higher than the national Insights dataset.

Mental health figures for Leicester show as higher than the national Insights dataset (57% compared to 44%) and is also showing an increase during 2020/21.

Housing need for adults with children appears to be increasing at a faster rate than previously. Insights data shows that housing need is the highest need

⁷ Year ending March 2020

⁸ DLUHC funded partnership project 2018-2021

among victims (73% in 2020-21), compared to mental health need (57%), financial need (14%) and alcohol need (4%).

Referrals to the sanctuary scheme delivered through the Safe Home Service have dropped over the last three years.

The most common reason the Safe Home Service were unable to accommodate a victim in Leicester was due to their support needs meaning they were not suitable for the available safe accommodation. The second most common reason was recorded as 'no current domestic abuse'. The third most common reason in 2020-21 was a lack of suitable safe accommodation.

In 2020-21 19% of accommodation directly provided through the Safe Home Service was not available due to cleaning or maintenance, exacerbated by the Covid pandemic.

Timely move on is only occurring in 50-60% of cases, meaning that victims are staying in refuges longer than they would wish and less emergency access refuge spaces are available for those needing safe accommodation.

In the last year Leicester City Council Housing Options supported 87 people affected by domestic abuse. This is a significant increase compared to previous years, although significantly less than those referrals made to the Safe Homes Service in Leicester. Of those accessing Housing Options with a domestic abuse related housing need in 2020-21.

Homelessness applications where domestic abuse was recorded increased to 248 in 2020-21. There has been a year on year increase for those with physical ill health and disability.

Police figures consistently show that around 74% of reports of domestic abuse offences are made by females. Females account for 95% of referrals to UAVA's Support and Information Service and for 71% of victims of domestic homicides in Leicester. Women also account for the highest proportion of repeat victims.

Data collected by UAVA support and information contract shows 3% of cases where the victim identified as LGBT. In 89% of cases service users identified as heterosexual, and in the remaining 8% of cases they did not disclose this information. The LGBT population in Leicester is around 5-7%.

Referrals to IDVA and Outreach show lower referrals from those of an Asian Indian background compared to the census population. This gap is less evident for other Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) populations. BME groups may be at risk of experiencing longer lengths of abuse compared to the White

British population, with an average length of abuse of 6.5 years compared to 5.0 years.

An interpreter was required in 11% of UAVA Support and Information cases during 2020-21. The languages an interpreter was most frequently required for included Gujarati, Polish, Punjabi, and Hindi.

Both UAVA and police data show gaps in identification for those aged over 54 years. Insights data also suggests that older victim-survivors are more likely to suffer longer terms of abuse. There are also indications that the younger age groups might be at risk of high levels of abuse and also less likely to sustain or access safe accommodation.

Data for Leicester IDVA and Outreach services for 2020-21 shows that approximately 43% of the population referred to the services identified as having a disability, compared with a census population of 25%. The average length of abuse for those with a disability is slightly longer than those without. Mental health impairment and physical disability accounted for a third of all disabilities disclosed.

Domestic abuse is the most common type of violence to be experienced on a repeated basis⁹. In 2020-21, 2,170 repeat victims were identified by police in Leicester, accounting for 28% of all victims of domestic abuse offences. The last year has seen increases in the number of repeat victims of domestic abuse, and some victims have suffered high numbers of repeat incidents (one with 25 instances reported).

Those aged 25-34 years accounted for the largest age group among the repeat victim population (42%), which is significantly higher than the census population for this age group in Leicester (16%). There is also a possible over-representation of BME victims in the repeat victim population compared to the overall domestic abuse victim profile.

In 2020-21, 61% of all adult victims accessing the support and information service provided by United Against Violence & Abuse (UAVA) had children¹⁰. During this period, there were 18 referrals to the support and information service for children (aged 13-18 years) who were recorded as a 'primary victim', and 746 children and young people (under 18 years) who were recorded as a 'secondary victim'.

During 2020-21, 7% of primary service users identified as being pregnant while accessing city support and information services. Pregnant service users were more likely to experience high severity physical abuse (53%) than non-

⁹ Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for year ending March 2018

¹⁰ Leicester Insights Data for 2020/21

pregnant service users (43%). The length of time service users had experienced abuse before accessing abuse was shorter during pregnancy: 24% of pregnant service users had experienced abuse for less than a year, compared to 9% of service users who were not pregnant¹¹.

In 2020-21, 23% of contacts with Children's Social Care recorded a domestic abuse factor. 31% of all children were of primary school age (6-11 years).

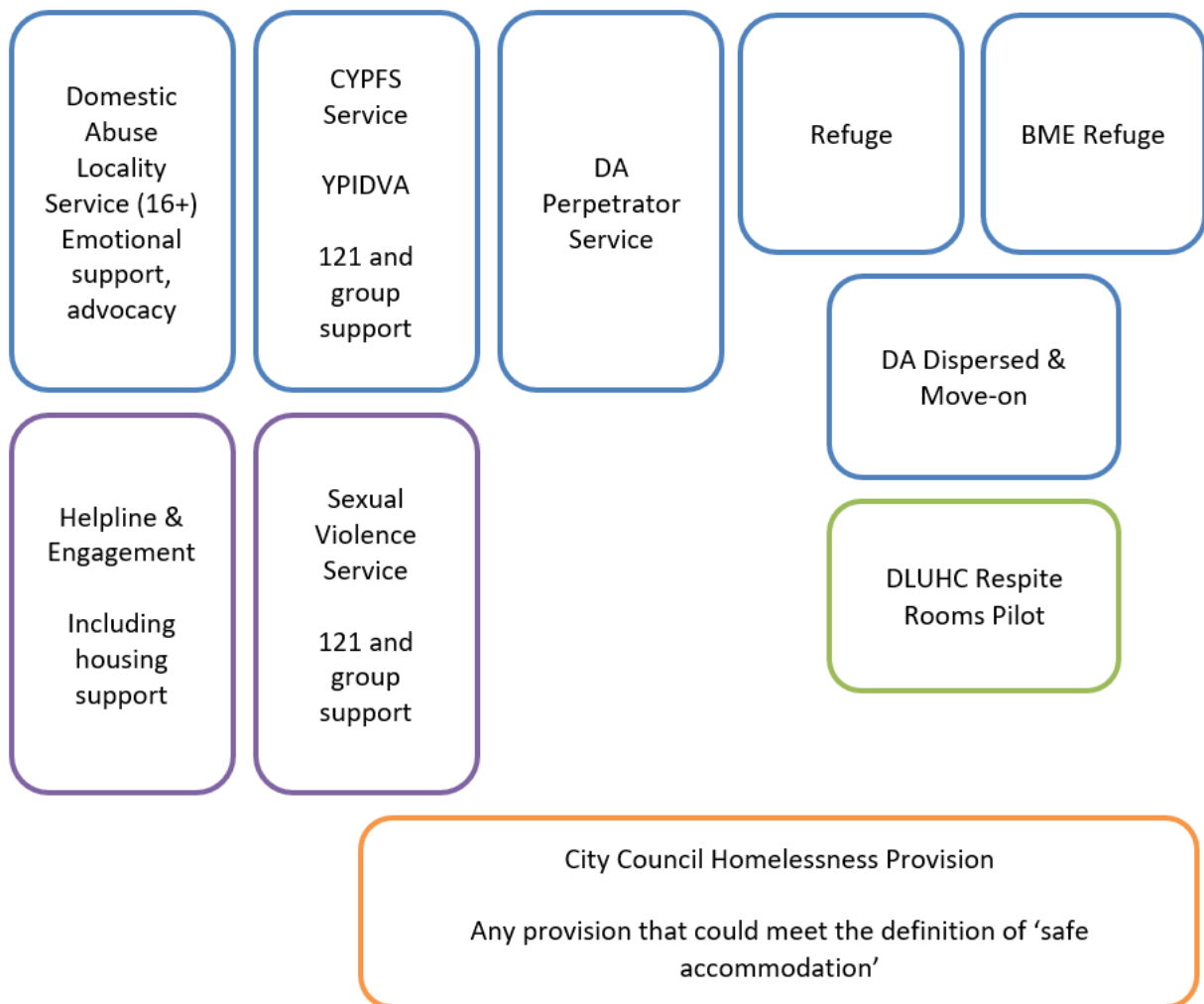
During 2020-21, 44% of adult social care enquiries had a domestic abuse factor. Adult Social Care enquiries from males with a domestic abuse related need have seen an increase year on year.

5.2 Diagram of future domestic abuse service model

New services have been procured to begin April 2022. This follows a joint commissioning exercise undertaken across the sub-region with the police and crime commissioner, Rutland county council and Leicestershire county council and builds on significant learning and consultation. These core foundation services are contracts lasting three years with a potential extension of a further 24 months.

¹¹ SafeLives report for UAVA – 12 months to January 2019

Domestic abuse service system from April 2022:



Key:

Blue = city council commissions 2022-25 (possible extension up to 24 months)

Purple = PCC commissions

6. Best Practice

6.1 The following assessment of existing provision in Leicester can be used to inform the safe accommodation strategy:

Safe Accommodation	Needs, gaps and priorities
Refuge provision	Data might indicate a need for more variety of locations so those not safe in one area of the city can flee to another to be safe
Specialist safe accommodation	Data might indicate a need for a specialist safe accommodation option for young people
Dispersed accommodation	Data on those not being placed might indicate a greater need for this type of accommodation
Sanctuary scheme properties	This is in place to some extent but not tracked or used widely outside of 'target hardening'
Second stage accommodation	This is not routinely commissioned at this point but has been included in the 2021-22 pilot with the BME specialist provider.
Other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation	Respite rooms is a pilot for 12 months.
Support Type	
Advocacy	delivered to those victims of domestic abuse with a housing need through in-house staffing and through other domestic abuse provision such as the helpline, outreach and recovery services. Referral across the service system into and from those in safe accommodation is not clearly evident at this point.
Prevention advice	As above.
Specialist support	There is specialist CYPFS and BME domestic abuse support provided. The picture is not currently clear about referrals and support provided from across the range of provision into those in safe accommodation.
Children's support	As above. There is a service provided, with a specific remit to support CYP within safe accommodation.

Housing related support	Core service within all accommodation related service specifications. Might be a need to expand dedicated provision in homelessness services [for those in safe accommodation] as this has worked well with the Safe Home Service.
Advice service	As above.
Counselling and therapy including group support and emotional support	Provision of services (outreach and emotional support) is contained within the current support and information service contract and the future domestic abuse locality service contract. There is also a pilot 2021 project for emotional support and trauma informed accommodation provision.

6.2 Mapping against components from Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse's "In Search of Excellence" report 2021:

Key questions	Recommendations	Baseline/RAG rating
CCR component: Survivor engagement and experience		
<p>1. Are a diverse range of survivor's voices heard within the partnership?</p> <p>2. Is survivor engagement safe and trauma informed?</p> <p>3. Is there a system and process for embedding the experience of survivors into the CCR?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All stages of service delivery should be informed by survivor experience and engagement, using co-production. • Attention should be paid to ensuring a diversity of survivor voices are heard. Specialist services can help with this. • Survivors should be consulted across a range of mediums. • Engage with local services e.g. women's centres, disability and migrant rights organisations and 'by and for' services. • The voices of children as survivors should be heard and reflected in survivor engagement processes. • All survivor engagement must be safe and trauma informed. Using the Survivor Voices Charter can support this. • Building financial and safeguarding arguments to support the need for survivor informed change is key. • A formal system to ensure the results of survivor engagement are embedded is key for an effective CCR. 	<p>GREEN</p> <p>Victim-survivors are represented in the partnership and measures are in place to ensure their voices are heard.</p> <p>Engagement is safe and trauma informed.</p> <p>There is a system for embedding experiences.</p>

CCR component: Intersectionality		
<p>1. Do all members of the partnership have an understanding of intersectionality and how it relates to the experiences of survivors?</p> <p>2. Is intersectionality a genuine strategic priority?</p> <p>3. Does your CCR include a wide range of communities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intersectionality should be treated as a true priority. This means being practical, flexible and learning to meet the specific needs of different local communities. Staff and volunteers at all levels should be given appropriate and comprehensive capacity building to ensure a better understanding of intersectionality. Engagement with 'by and for' and community groups can help to greater understand the local population, survivor's help seeking methods, and barriers to accessing support. 'By and for' agencies should be properly remunerated for their work. Working with communities in an intersectional way means empowering survivors so that they know where they can go to receive support, without them losing their existing networks. 	<p>AMBER</p> <p>Intersectionality is understood to differing levels across the partnership. The CCR includes a wide range of Leicester's diverse communities.</p>
CCR component: Shared vision and objectives		
<p>1. Is there a shared vision?</p> <p>2. Can partners name the objectives?</p> <p>3. Do they recognise the need to collaborate on equal terms?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a shared vision, with identified outcomes, which goes beyond go beyond deliverables and data, is in place. The vision will be a snapshot of the ambition of the partnership and is underpinned by the objectives of the CCR. Shared responsibility across the partnership, which takes into account differing dynamics between partners and which articulates clear contributions from each agency and organisation involved in the CCR, is essential. A shared theory of change should be in place – for all partners to be able to effectively engage with developing the vision, training may be needed to increase knowledge of the impact of DA, trauma informed practice and survivor engagement. 	<p>GREEN</p> <p>There is a shared vision and partners have a good understanding of the objectives, which are simply expressed. Partners recognise the need to collaborate on equal terms.</p>
CCR component: Structure and governance		
<p>1. Do all partners understand the governance structure?</p> <p>2. Does the governance structure allow for challenge from smaller agencies?</p> <p>3. How do you know the structure is effective?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DA/VAWG governance and the CCR should be reflected in all local governance structures and strategies. A Terms of Reference and Business Delivery Plan should be used to agree roles and responsibilities of partners. Having both strategic and operational authority and structures should be in place to make and enact decisions. There should be a bi-directional flow of information and influence between strategic and operational groups. Appropriate representation on both strategic and operational governance structures across partners, agencies and all relevant organisations is essential. Clear monitoring and evaluation frameworks should be in place to assess how effectively the CCR being delivered to meet local need and whether the roles and responsibilities and corresponding allocation of resources, enable this. 	<p>AMBER</p> <p>The governance structure is in the process of being updated to reflect the fact that the locality partnership board will be city only. It is expected that the revised structure will allow for challenge and will be effective, but this needs to be tested.</p>

CCR component: Strategy and leadership		
<p>1. Do the strategic objectives of the partnership and action plan include prevention and early intervention alongside high-risk responses?</p> <p>2. Are all statutory agencies aware of their responsibility to deliver multi-agency responses effectively as well as the specialist sector?</p> <p>3. Does your strategy incorporate an intersectional, gendered, survivor-led and trauma-informed approach?</p> <p>4. Do you have a VAWG/DA Strategic Coordinator to support strategy delivery?</p> <p>5. How is the learning from DHRs embedded in your local strategy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategy/strategic plan with SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound) strategic aims, agreed by all partners, should be in place. • Strategies that connect to the shared vision and objectives (section 3) of the CCR and the structure and governance of the CCR (section 4). • A strategy/strategic plan which is formulated with reference to the national policy landscape, but grounded in local context, knowledge and the intersecting experience of survivors is essential. • Ensure proper analysis of data sets which can evidence need and measure progress, alongside a living, breathing action plan which is also aligned to the learning and action plans resulting from local domestic homicide reviews, takes place. • A strategy that highlights and outlines the critical role and value of specialist services and the unique expertise they bring to the partnership is crucial. • A focus on early intervention and prevention, alongside high risk interventions in order to keep people safe, prevent DA from taking place, and provide cost savings opportunities. This means ensuring a strong focus in the strategy both on the role of the statutory sector which is where survivors at the early stages of their abuse are most likely to come into contact with services, and on specialist, expert services. 	<p>GREEN</p> <p>The strategic objectives and action plan include preventative as well as responsive work. Agencies are aware of their responsibilities. The approach is intersectional, gendered, survivor-led and trauma-informed. A process for learning from DHRs is embedded in the strategy.</p>
CCR component: Specialist services		
<p>1. Is there sustainable funding for specialist services?</p> <p>2. Are there gaps in service provision for survivors?</p> <p>3. Is the statutory sector playing its part in responding to survivors?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service commissioning should take into account the expertise of small specialist organisations and be sustainable to ensure resources are used most effectively. • Provision for women only support should be ensured. • Needs should be assessed on an ongoing basis in each area as part of the CCR. • All those who have a responsibility to survivors should act as advocates for these people, including with other agencies. • Existing resources need to be used in the most effective and joined up way e.g. through partnership working. • Funding should be protected and extended for DA services, including those prioritising prevention and early intervention. • Survivors who have no recourse to public funds must be supported appropriately. • Agencies need to work together to provide a range of seamless services to victims, working to overcome any gaps or potential gaps in service delivery. 	<p>GREEN</p> <p>Funding for specialist services is currently secure. There are some gaps in service provision which have been identified and work to address these is ongoing. The statutory sector is playing its part in responding to survivors.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with perpetrators, and training staff to do this work effectively, is important from both a reduction in DA and cost saving perspective. • Partnerships must address the needs of children as victims. • A range models of support and funding, such as sanctuary schemes, mobile advocacy, colocation work and flexible funding programmes, should be piloted and evaluated and where successful integrated across CCRs. • Local specialist services will be best commissioned, funded and delivered where there is real understanding of the diversity of local need and where specialist organisations are resourced appropriately. 	
CCR component: Representation		
<p>1. Are key agencies represented at the relevant level?</p> <p>2. Is strategic leadership supported by resources?</p> <p>3. Are 'by and for' agencies able to engage meaningfully?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Clinical Commissioning Group and Foundation Trust should map out the best person to participate via their domestic abuse and / or safeguarding lead. • Exclusion of voluntary sector agencies in CCR partnerships can be addressed by separating out commissioning decision making from the business of strategic meetings. • Partner dynamics should be mapped and managed to ensure that partners from the voluntary sector can be heard and included. • Strategic leads from different agencies should be held accountable in meetings, not just for attending but for agreed actions and contributions. • Clear terms of reference which map out partner representation should be in place. 	<p>GREEN</p> <p>Key agencies are represented. Strategic leadership is supported by resources. 'By and for' agencies are able to, and do, engage meaningfully.</p>
CCR component: Resources		
<p>1. Does the CCR grasp the scale and costs of the problem?</p> <p>2. Is DA embedded within each agency's own planning?</p> <p>3. Are strategic partners working to improve capacity within specialist services?</p> <p>4. Are commissioning practices undermining partnership working?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The added value brought by local, specialist services should form part of the overall funding and resourcing strategy. • Ensure partnerships take a broader view, recognising the wider effects of VAWG on society, public services and the economy. • Take time to make the business case for increased and more strategic resource allocation for DA and connected services. • Ensure partners and agencies are aware of the costs of not addressing DA or putting it into their strategic plans. • Commissioning cycles and processes should be longer and more collaborative to prevent competition and to enable partners to coordinate and integrate their work. 	<p>GREEN</p> <p>The scale and costs are well grasped by the CCR. DA is embedded within agency planning. Partners are working to improve capacity within specialist services and partnership work is not undermined by commissioning practices.</p>

CCR component: Coordination		
<p>1. Are partners aligned with the principle of a coordinated approach?</p> <p>2. Are partners committed to collaboration?</p> <p>3. Is the significance of the coordinator's role acknowledged and supported?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each CCR should recognise the importance of having a coordinator to bring agencies together. • Don't over rely on one person to coordinate everything; this won't work. Getting the balance right between having a coordinator and coordinating role but not overloading them or passing all responsibility to them, is important. • Ensure all partners are clear on their roles in the coordination process, as well as the wider work to address DA/VAWG. • Each CCR should give agencies and partners time and resources to address and mitigate for any coordination issues in order to improve joint working. 	<p>AMBER</p> <p>A coordinated approach is valued by partners but the structure is in the process of change. Partners are committed to collaboration and roles are acknowledged and supported.</p>
CCR component: Training		
<p>1. Is there a common understanding amongst staff of the dynamics of domestic abuse?</p> <p>2. Do colleagues at all levels have the skills and knowledge to identify and respond to domestic abuse?</p> <p>3. Is there a policy for service users and staff?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The partnership should discuss and decide key training messages regarding the nature, scope and impact of DA. • Managers and supervisors should be trained first. • Ensure trainers are well briefed on current local and operational issues for each agency. • Deliver multi-agency training where appropriate, to strengthen partnership links in this setting. • Utilise multiple opportunities to continually upskill staff. • Ensure training covers the expected standards for each service, is trauma-informed and intersectional, and has the survivor experience at the heart of it. • Use information given by participants in training sessions to provide detailed feedback about operational and systemic gaps that need to be addressed. Training should be continually revised and updated based on feedback. • Ensure that participants leave the training with a clear idea of what is expected of them, what is possible, and what is safe in their practice around domestic abuse issues. • Boost participants' confidence and competence through training that builds awareness and understanding of DA dynamics, a knowledge base about procedures, resources and legal requirements, and skills they can put to use. • Organisational processes must keep domestic abuse on the agenda e.g. is domestic abuse part of assessments, referral pathways, supervision sessions and staff meetings? 	<p>GREEN</p> <p>There is a common understanding among staff of the definition and dynamics of DA. Colleagues have the skills and knowledge to identify and respond to DA, and access to refresher training. Relevant policies are in place for service users and staff.</p>
CCR component: Data		
<p>1. Has the partnership mapped existing data?</p> <p>2. Do all partners contribute data that is collated for the whole partnership?</p> <p>3. Does the partnership have an</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map existing data collection within agencies and assess that alongside what data the wider partnership needs. • Agree a CCR wide definition of what success looks like, to ensure better data collection and effective use of resources. • Look to specialist services as experts in data collection and monitoring and evaluation within your CCR. • Ensure a dedicated member of staff exists who can collate data and monitor performance on behalf of the partnership. 	<p>GREEN</p> <p>Existing data has been mapped. All partners contribute data that is collated for the partnership. The partnership has agreed methods of</p>

agreed method of defining and measuring success?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure every partner is clear on what data they should be collecting, why and what it is used for, including enabling the partnership to show the value of the work it does. • Make sure that data is collated and analysed centrally in the CCR as well as by partner agencies and organisations. • Address concerns around confidentiality and competitiveness through training in GDPR and changes to commissioning processes to encourage collaboration. 	defining and measuring success.
CCR component: Policies and processes		
<p>1. Does the partnership have policies and protocols to work with other strategic boards effectively?</p> <p>2. Are policies and procedures evidence based and survivor informed?</p> <p>3. Do all partners have a clear understanding of information sharing?</p>	<p>The following should be in place across partner agencies and organisations, and for the CCR partnership itself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding policies & processes • Risk assessments • Assessment Conferences • Domestic abuse policy for staff • Governance policy – see section 4 on structure and governance. • Communication policy – this policy and accompanying procedures will define how messages (and information on data) will be agreed and published internally and externally, • Domestic Homicide Reviews – see section on DHRs. An effective CCR will have a clear process and procedures agreed for commissioning, delivering, and implementing learnings for any DHR they are involved in. 	<p>AMBER</p> <p>The partnership has appropriate policies/ protocols but will need to adjust to recent changes in structure. Policies/procedures are evidence based and survivor informed. Partners understand information sharing.</p>
CCR component: Domestic Homicide Reviews		
<p>1. Are DHRs embedded within the CCR?</p> <p>2. Does your area have processes in place to communicate lessons learned and ensure accountability?</p> <p>3. Are there structures in place to measure the impact of action plans?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to engage family and friends in the DHR process should be considered, constructive, supportive and timely. • DHR panels should include a DA specialist and specialist community agencies. This will better reflect communities' specific needs and experience and be able to better ensure intersectional and trauma-informed analysis in the report. • Panel composition and equity should be ensured throughout, including during report writing. • DHRs should not be rushed. • Local areas should have a system in place to ensure action-plans are completed; goals should be SMART. • DHR panel chairs should be victim-led, and able to facilitate panel discussions to identify meaningful lessons. 	<p>GREEN</p> <p>DHRs are embedded within the CCR. Processes are in place to communicate lessons learned. There are structures in place to measure the impact of action plans.</p>

7. Key Priorities for Leicester

7.1 Work to be done will revolve around gaps identified in the 2021 needs assessment. This will be reviewed and developed significantly over the early months of the strategy.

7.2 Summary of unmet need/gaps

- New strategy and structure – work will need to be done to embed and embed correct representation
- Increased safe accommodation options
- Specialist Black and Minority/Minoritized Ethnic Community provision
- Specialist young people provision/support
- Under-reporting (areas/risk populations) particularly in housing management and homelessness figures
- Decline in MARAC cases and MARAC referrals against recommended volume
- Lack of use of sanctuary schemes
- Delay in move-on from safe accommodation
- Lack of single-sex temporary accommodation outside of refuge/respice rooms
- Possible disproportionality in repeat victim populations
- Delays in accessing support
- Barriers to securing occupation orders/ staying in own home safely
- Young people accessing/ sustaining safe accommodation
- Not all safe accommodation currently meets WAFE/Imkaan quality markers (commissioned services do)

7.3 Strategic Priorities

Strategic Objectives	Summary of unmet need/gaps	Priorities 2022-25	Indicators of success
Prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of accommodation based domestic abuse support in Leicester	New strategy and structure – work will need to be done to embed and support active representation	Establish the Leicester Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Board	Formulation of new Locality Partnership Board and sign off Leicester Domestic Abuse Strategy
Commissioning relevant services to meet local need	<p>Under-reporting (areas/risk populations) particularly in housing management and homelessness figures</p> <p>Decline in MARAC cases and MARAC referrals against recommended volume</p> <p>Lack of use of sanctuary schemes</p> <p>Lack of move-on from safe accommodation</p> <p>Lack of single-sex temporary accommodation outside of refuge/respice rooms</p> <p>Disproportionality in repeat victim populations</p> <p>Delays in accessing support</p> <p>Barriers to securing occupation orders/</p>	<p>Expand the accessibility and suitability of the safe accommodation and accommodation related support available in Leicester</p> <p>Develop and support the workforce delivering safe accommodation and accommodation related support in Leicester</p>	<p>Improved identification of forced marriage and “honour”-based abuse</p> <p>Service access reflects the local population</p> <p>Average length of abuse reduces</p> <p>Mental health support/trauma informed supported accommodation offer</p> <p>Needs identified can be evidenced as met</p> <p>There is a reduction in the number of victims who could not be safely accommodated</p> <p>Increase in the number of victims safely accommodated</p>

	<p>staying in own home safely</p> <p>Young people accessing/ sustaining safe accommodation</p> <p>Not all safe accommodation currently meets WAFE/Imkaan quality markers (commissioned services do)</p>		Learning from the Respite Rooms project
Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy	Review the data performance sheet in light of the new safe accommodation strategy	Improve understanding of the need in the city and barriers to meeting those needs	<p>Numbers of victims in and sustaining safe accommodation increases</p> <p>Understanding of barriers to securing and sustaining safe accommodation increases.</p>

7.4 The delivery plan as discussed at 4.9 will measure progress in the above areas. Priorities will be reviewed over the first 3-6 months of the strategy and commissioning intentions shaped in line with the findings.

8. Annual Review Document

8.1 An annual review document, giving an update on progress as the strategy is implemented, will be produced, and published on the Leicester City Council website.