

November 13, 2025

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Leicester

Briefing

Lead Member: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin

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Useful information

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1. Summary

- 1.1. This paper updates the reader on local domestic abuse need, the types of service currently available locally, the approach in Leicester and plans to continue to better meet local need.
- 1.2. A new statutory definition of domestic abuse was introduced in 2021 by the Domestic Abuse Act¹. The definition remains focused on those aged 16 and above yet specifically registers that children related to those impacted or abusing are to be considered as victims where they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse. Sexual violence largely concerns any unwanted sexual activity or act without consent.
- 1.3. Significant numbers of children and adults in Leicester are known to be affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence, and these numbers are thought to be an under representation of all who will have been affected. The Crime Survey for England and Wales recorded that only 19% of those who had experienced partner abuse in the last 12 months had reported to police (ONS 2023). The National Police Chiefs Council stated in 2024 that “Not only is VAWG growing, but we are also seeing ever more complicated types of offending which causes significant harm to victims and society as a whole. One in every six murders related to domestic abuse in 22/23, with suspected victim suicides following domestic abuse rising year-on-year.”
- 1.4. The average length of abuse reported by local victim-survivors accessing specialist support in Leicester² 2021-24 was 4 years. The abuse profile reported to specialist services is slightly higher than the national³ data set for the more severe levels of abuse. Victims are likely to report having a disability, and there is high demand for domestic abuse safe accommodation in Leicester.
- 1.5. In Leicester a domestic abuse locality partnership board oversees delivery of the local safe accommodation strategy and all domestic abuse act part four duties supported by a delivery group. Membership reflects the requirements of the Act.
- 1.6. Leicester has a range of commissioned safe accommodation and related support services, and several services that are not commissioned by the local authority. The city council works collaboratively with Leicestershire and Rutland, and the Police and Crime Commissioner to improve outcomes for those affected by domestic abuse and reduce the harm caused.
- 1.7. Since the new duties began, the partnership has developed and increased the number of second stage units available, introduced a commission for dispersed accommodation and increased the number of women, men and children supported

¹ [Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance](#)

² Completing Insights monitoring

³ Insights monitoring system from Safe Lives

in safe accommodation overall (see *Appendix One and Two for a glossary of types of accommodation and terms*). There has been a reduction in the numbers accommodated from out of area and the partnership has learnt from three pilot projects (housing link workers, young people's safe accommodation service and the respite rooms initiative). A new homelessness domestic abuse co-ordinator is now in post, part funded through the Act, and specialist counselling, resettlement, immigration and children's workers are in post working across different sites.

- 1.8. The 2021-24 domestic abuse needs assessment (*Appendix Four Executive Summary*) is a retrospective detailed examination of the offer over the past 3 years. It will continue to help inform the next safe accommodation strategy and future commissioning of safe accommodation related services. Workforce development and communication will remain an important thread as we seek to further develop the pathways, accommodation and support available, aiming to reach people earlier, reduce harm to children and adults, and support recovery and wellbeing.

2. Recommended actions

- 2.1 Committee members are recommended to note the role and responsibilities of the Leicester Domestic Abuse Locality Partnership Board and support it to deliver its functions.
- 2.2 Committee members are recommended to note and support continued departmental and cross-departmental work to improve domestic abuse data, to evidence the appropriate identification and response to domestic abuse for adults and children and better understand impact and value for money.
- 2.3 Committee members are recommended to note the range of specialist services available for those affected by domestic abuse in Leicester, encourage their use, and promote feedback opportunities to support further improvements.

3. Stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 Engagement activity is threaded throughout the domestic abuse locality partnership board structure. This includes:
- routine engagement with those in receipt of services, and staff delivering the services,
 - representation at Board level, and
 - commitment to co-production to inform commissioning, communication and development activity.
- 3.2. The domestic abuse needs assessments are informed by engagement data and further shaped by collaborative work to determine the key statements. This involved a significant number of partnership members in different positions across organisations.
- 3.3. Members of the public can always feedback on local services by completing a Microsoft Office forms survey or by contacting the domestic and sexual violence team via email or telephone, with full details on the council web page. Those affected by domestic abuse can take part in engagement events held in person and on-line. There is a

'Scrutiny and Reference' group of people, with lived experience of domestic abuse, supported by the domestic and sexual violence team.

4. Background

4.1. Definitions of domestic abuse and sexual violence

4.1.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 set a new statutory definition of domestic abuse⁴ in Part One. The definition sets out the types of relationship and behaviour included. Behaviour is "domestic abuse" if both people 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 any of the following—

- (a) physical or sexual abuse;
- (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
- (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
- (d) economic abuse;
- (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.

"Personally connected" is defined as –

- (a) they are, or have been, married to each other;
- (b) they are, or have been, civil partners of each other;
- (c) they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- (d) they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- (e) they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
- (f) they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child;
- (g) they are relatives.

4.1.2 Children as victims of domestic abuse are specifically referenced in the Domestic Abuse Act. Any reference in the Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who—

- (a) sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse, and
- (b) is related to the person using abuse or the person experiencing abuse.

4.1.3 There is no current statutory definition of "sexual violence" in the United Kingdom (UK). The Sexual Offences Act 2003 defines several sexual offences including rape, sexual assault and assault by penetration. There are commonalities in agency definitions of "Sexual violence". England and Wales Rape Crisis define it as 'any kind of sexual activity or act (including online) that was unwanted or involved one or more of the following:

- pressure
- manipulation
- bullying
- intimidation
- threats
- deception
- force

⁴ [Statutory definition of domestic abuse factsheet - GOV.UK](#)

In other words, any kind of sexual activity or act that took place without consent⁵.

4.1.4 Sexual violence is commonly experienced within domestic abuse, and a significant proportion of sexual offences recorded by the police involve an intimate partner.

4.2. Local Picture

4.2.1 One of the most common methods for estimating local prevalence of domestic abuse is to apply the proportions disclosed in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) self-completion module⁶. This is acknowledged as a likely underestimate. The questions relate to abuse experienced in the last 12 months and since the age of 16.

4.2.2 In Leicester, this would reflect at least 59,663 adults having experienced since the age of 16. The calculation does not consider children as victims, or our younger population, and it is the 16-19 and 20-24 age bands that report the highest levels of experience.

4.2.3. 12,699 calls were recorded by the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland domestic abuse and sexual violence helpline (commissioned by the police and crime commissioner) 2024-25.

4.2.4. 24% of all contacts recorded by Children's Social Care note a domestic abuse factor, averaging 428 a month.

4.2.5. Leicestershire Police recorded 3,020 domestic abuse incidents and 6,784 domestic abuse related offences in 2024-25. Domestic abuse related offences reflect around 30% of the violent crime in Leicester. The city has opened 24 domestic homicide reviews since 2012.

4.2.6. 432 referrals of people resident in Leicester were received by the LLR sexual violence service across 2024-25. 60%⁷ of these referrals were made direct to the service by Police on behalf of victim-survivors. 26% of domestic abuse victim-survivors report sexual abuse within their abuse profile, 9% of which were reports of high severity sexual abuse⁸.

4.2.7. Data analysis developments form part of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy [Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Partnership VAWG Strategy - 2024-2026](#). Sexual violence data also forms part of local work on the [Serious Violence Duty](#) – see Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2023-28 (available using link above for the Duty).

4.2.8. The Leicester Community Safety Partnership has a range of key strategic priorities including violent crime which is significantly relevant for domestic abuse and sexual

⁵ [What is sexual violence? | Rape Crisis England & Wales](#)

⁶ For further discussion and explanation of this approach see [The Measurement of Domestic Abuse – Redeveloping the Crime Survey for England and Wales | Journal of Family Violence](#) and [Domestic abuse in later life: A secondary analysis of the Crime Survey for England and Wales - Hannah Bows, Merili Pullerits, Iain Brennan, 2025](#)

⁷ Source: Insights 2024-25 Sexual Violence Dashboard Leicester

⁸ Source: Insights 2024-25 Domestic Abuse Adults Dashboard Leicester

violence. Domestic abuse is named as a crosscutting theme throughout all the priorities to ensure its ways considered. [Leicester Community Safety Partnership plan](#).

4.3. Insight

- 4.3.1. The average length of abuse reported by local victim-survivors accessing specialist support in Leicester⁹ 2021-24 was 4 years. The abuse profile reported to specialist services is slightly higher than the national¹⁰ data set, for the more severe levels of abuse. Police data indicates that higher levels¹¹ of repeat victimisation, involving multiple incidents in a 12-month period, was more likely for those aged 25-34, female and White British (data from 2023-24). Those not able to access refuge accommodation between 2022-23 were more likely than those accommodated to have a physical disability. The age of those most likely to be accommodated in refuge was 25-34 (2021-24), which is slightly older than that reflected in the CSEW (16-19), potentially highlighting some barriers to this age group.
- 4.3.2. The CSEW notes that people of mixed ethnicity are amongst the most likely to experience (not necessarily report) domestic abuse. People of this ethnic group are reflected in local commissioned service data at slightly higher proportions than reflected in the census, as with those of Pakistani and White British ethnicity. The locally commissioned domestic abuse services are reaching victim-survivors largely reflective of the local community and in line with national prevalence data. Not being safe in the area and having no recourse to public funds were the most common barriers to securing accommodation. (2023-24).
- 4.3.3. Both Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) data – which is specific to victims of domestic abuse at high risk of homicide or serious injury – and commissioned service data shows a higher level of disabled victim-survivors than (1) the most similar police force area and (2) the national Insights dataset. The city MARAC data also shows higher levels of victims aged 16 and 17. There is some indication in the needs assessment data that those with a higher level of need are more likely to be aged 45-54 and English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British.
- 4.3.4. The Leicester domestic abuse needs assessments contain further detail on local need and outcomes.

4.4. Vision and Governance

- 4.4.1. The requirement for a domestic abuse locality partnership board was set out in the domestic abuse act 2021. The Leicester safe accommodation strategy 2022-25, also a statutory requirement, sets out a vision for a strong local partnership that understands local need and barriers to safe accommodation, and works to make improvements as part of a co-ordinated community response to domestic abuse.
- 4.4.2. The domestic abuse locality partnership board is supported by a delivery group, both meeting quarterly to review risks and progress. The work plan has relevance for housing, homelessness, health and well-being, serious violence, safeguarding, violence against women and girls, the community safety plan and the police and crime plan.

⁹ Completing Insights monitoring

¹⁰ Insights monitoring system from Safe Lives

¹¹ 6+ within 12 months

- 4.4.3. Victim voice, an attendance tracker, the delivery plan and a key performance indicator dashboard are tools used to monitor performance.
- 4.4.4. Annually on, or before, the 30 June an online return is required by the MHCLG to report on strategy and funding, as well as data.
- 4.4.5. The Leicester domestic abuse locality partnership board feeds into a LLR co-ordination group for domestic abuse and sexual violence, which in turn reports to the adult vulnerability and offending board, part of the strategic partnership board structure [Partnerships](#).

4.5. Resource and Services

- 4.5.1. The new statutory duties were accompanied by additional funding. The grant is to support delivery against Part Four of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, specifically the safe accommodation related duties. The government evaluation of the safe accommodation states: “access to support was improved by having a breadth of provision (both of support services and forms of safe accommodation), especially for those with additional needs or specific characteristics. Providing a range of options allowed for a better match between service provision and survivors' needs, with choice being a key factor in accessing support” (MHCLG 2025¹²).
- 4.5.2. Mark Morrin of ResPublica notes that “The problems of ‘failure demand’ are endemic across our public services. The inability to effectively help victims of domestic abuse, at the first presentation of need, can lead to repeated and additional interventions involving healthcare and police services, as well as the wider criminal justice system. This is more expensive, more resource intensive and more wasteful. Ultimately the human and emotional cost of not investing in domestic abuse can be fatal for victims and devastating for their families.” (Women’s Aid 2023 Investing to Save). The report calculates that:

“for every pound invested in domestic abuse support services we will see a saving to the public purse of at least £9.”¹³

- 4.5.3. One of the most common needs cited by victim-survivors accessing specialist domestic abuse support from the VCS, is housing. The volume reporting housing related need is far higher than the number referred/referring themselves for refuge accommodation (which is one type of safe accommodation).
- 4.5.4. The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, also known as “the Istanbul Convention”, requires parties to develop laws, policies and support services to end violence against women and domestic violence. The Council of Europe have set a level of 10 spaces of refuge accommodation for every 10,000 population. Therefore, a city the size of Leicester would be expected to have at least 37 refuge units. As a city we exceed that number.

¹² [Evaluation of the Domestic Abuse Duty for Support in Safe Accommodation](#)

¹³ [Respublica_web.pdf](#)

- 4.5.5. Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) have worked together with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) on commissioning domestic abuse and sexual violence related services since 2015. The current LLR domestic abuse and sexual violence 'service system', which has been the main entry point to domestic abuse related support (of the helpline and engagement service), is supplemented by a range of community and safe accommodation related support services.
- 4.5.6. Domestic abuse locality (community) services were commissioned in 2021 to the same specification across (1) Leicester and (2) Leicestershire & Rutland. As part of this system, the OPCC commissioned the elements of the system that worked across LLR, giving space for the local authorities to commission additional provision in line with their unique needs assessments. A sexual violence support service operates across LLR as does a domestic abuse perpetrator intervention programme (voluntary referral). A training offer was embedded within the service system, with set numbers of days training commitment within each contract, to support the development of the wider local workforce. Multiple services with the city council have, and continue to, benefit from this training programme.
- 4.5.7. In Leicester, there are specialist safe accommodation (refuge and second stage, and immigration support) services provided by a Black and Minoritised Ethnic (BME¹⁴) Community specialist, 'by and for' organisation. There are also safe accommodation support services specific to counselling, resettlement, children and immigration.
- 4.5.8. Leicester also benefits from a range of VCS services which are not commissioned by the local authority. These include refuge accommodation provided by Action Homeless, Zinithya Trust and Women's Aid Leicestershire.
- 4.5.9. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner's mapping report of domestic abuse services across England and Wales: 'A Patchwork of Provision' found that "67% Black and minoritised ethnic (BME) survivors want to access specialist 'by and for' support delivered by their community" because "specialist 'by and for' organisations are better able to understand the context and complexity of abuse they face and build the trust critical to effectively assess risk and provide the right support. These organisations are also able to understand the intersecting layers of discrimination faced by victims and survivors from marginalised communities. This is reflected in the outcomes of these survivors, with those who access 'by and for' support feeling safer compared to those who have accessed other types of support or have not accessed any support."¹⁵
- 4.5.10. Southall Black Sisters 2024 Investing in Safety report states a net public savings average of £18,024 per woman helped over a three-year period, for local public services.
- 4.5.11. The cost to families and friends cannot be quantified, but the Home Office estimate the financial cost to society and the public purse of a single domestic homicide is

¹⁴ Term change from 'minority' to reflect the global majority/power dynamic that can create systemic barriers and specific issues that can create disparity. It is not used to signify homogeneity of experience. Individual ethnic group data is used in the needs assessment where it was available.

¹⁵ [by-and-for-costings-paper-UPLOAD-FEB-25.pdf](#)

£2.9m.¹⁶ The average cost of domestic homicide review is £10,000 and rising (LGA survey report 2024).

4.5.12. The non-statutory guidance on Family Hubs Service Expectations¹⁷ (Feb 2025 DoE and DHSC) sets out minimum domestic abuse support expectations. These include awareness of the definition and local specialist support for victims and perpetrators and the ability to connect people to those services.

Table 1: Progress in safe accommodation support provision 2021-2024
*(*refer to Appendix One for glossary of definitions for types of accommodation noted)*

Safe Accommodation Type	Needs, gaps, and priorities (as at 2021)	Position March 2025
Refuge provision	Data indicates a need for more locations so those not safe in one area of the city can flee to another to be safe.	New locations added in 2022.
Specialist safe accommodation	Data indicates a need for a specialist safe accommodation option for young people.	YPIDVA pilot collated learning.
Dispersed accommodation	Data indicates need for this type of accommodation (not currently commissioned).	4 units were successfully commissioned in 2024. An additional 3 units were commissioned in 2025.
Sanctuary scheme properties	Available but outcomes not tracked outside of fitting target hardening measures (not commissioned at tier one level)	OPCC funding ended March 2024. Monitoring is now in place and work underway to secure funding for a city service.
Second stage accommodation	Not commissioned.	9 units.
Other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation	Respite rooms pilot scheme funding had been secured from central government.	Respite rooms funding ended. Homelessness service is working on recording processed for the cohort that meet the definition.
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.	Continued and strengthened through the practitioner network, enhanced promotion of housing response to domestic abuse training and insights from the housing link worker pilot.
Prevention advice	Viewed as core to all services commissioned.	As was.

¹⁶ [dac_dardom_summary_V3.pdf](#) referencing Home Office 2019 report 'the economic and social costs of domestic abuse'

¹⁷ [Family Hubs and Start for Life programme: local authority guide 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

Specialist support	Specialist CYPFS and BME domestic abuse support is provided through tailored contracts.	Specialist BME, immigration and resettlement support.
Children's support	There is a service provided, with a specific remit to support CYP within safe accommodation.	Expanded with a specific post for general refuge and dispersed accommodation.
Housing related support	Core service within all accommodation related service specifications. Need to expand dedicated provision in homelessness services [for those in safe accommodation] as this has worked well with the Safe Home Service.	Expanded with a specific co-ordinator post (part funded by the Part Four grant) in the homelessness service and learning from the young persons pilot and the housing link worker pilot.
Advice service	Viewed as core to all services commissioned.	Enhanced through immigration support.
Counselling and therapy including group support and emotional support	Emotional support remit and trauma informed practice is included within the existing contracts.	Specific counselling options funded for those in general refuge and dispersed. Access to group and emotional support in the community continues through commissioned and non-commissioned provision.

4.6. Opportunities and challenges

- 4.6.1. All local domestic abuse commissioned services are accredited by national bodies, covering support for domestic abuse victims and some specialisms such as sexual violence and male victims.
- 4.6.2. Information from a range of sources indicates that pathways remain an area for ongoing monitoring and improvement. This includes some duplication and disengagement/decline of service. Long term sustainable safety and recovery for adults and children is challenging to achieve, as mentioned earlier in this report, with repeat victimisation common. The commissioned services are reaching a population that reflects what would be expected, from both the local census and the CSEW, with positive outcome evidenced and strong social value.
- 4.6.3. Within local authority services significant domestic abuse related demand is evident, with the higher numbers recorded by children's social care and homelessness. There is less available evidence of proportionate reach/identification, impact and outcomes for those affected by domestic abuse known to city council internal services. There is feedback from victim-survivors that highlights very positive practice and some frustrations. Identification levels appear low amongst housing management and ASC populations.
- 4.6.4. The number and type of safe accommodation units available in Leicester has grown since the Act was introduced, however challenges remain in move on, connected to the housing crisis, and managing voids (spaces vacant and ready to let) in the available accommodation. Examples have been shared of people stating that they would prefer to stay in hotel accommodation than move into refuge

accommodation. Bed and breakfast accommodation is not deemed safe accommodation. New communications materials have been developed in 2025 to help inform people of their choices and combat some of the myths that surround refuge accommodation. The PCC stopped funding target hardening in March 2024. This has removed a universal Sanctuary offer for victim-survivors. Housing management complete such measures for local authority tenants but cannot, at the moment, easily provide the data on the number of domestic abuse victim-survivors benefitting.

- 4.6.5. Some challenges have been highlighted regarding pathways to and from mental health support and domestic abuse specialist support, with anecdotal evidence presented of victim-survivors being referred by their GP (sometimes as signposted by domestic abuse services) to talking therapy provision, who then assess them as not suitable due to their experience of domestic abuse and/or sexual violence, referring onward to domestic abuse specialist services and of referrals from second tier mental health provision directly into domestic abuse safe accommodation that might not be suitable. Mental health related need is one of the highest needs for local victim-survivors.

4.7. Progress

- 4.7.1. Progress against the local domestic abuse safe accommodation strategy is monitored quarterly through a range of 15 key performance indicators (KPIs) and a delivery plan. The KPIs focus on safe accommodation data and reflect the partnership roles. An annual impact report is produced to capture some of the wider work streams.
- 4.7.2. In the last 12 months, a Power BI performance dashboard has been developed to help with engagement, understanding and analysis. This is useful as the data set is relatively new, significantly fluctuates in many areas, and multiple factors influence the numbers.
- 4.7.3. Additional dispersed units have been agreed and a range of new communications developed to combat myths that might prevent victim-survivors from accessing safe accommodation. The provider of the BME refuge and second stage accommodation services were awarded a commendation from [Imkaan](#), a national accreditation body specific to domestic abuse and the 2025 domestic abuse needs assessment was completed. Engagement activity from the domestic and sexual violence team evidenced input from 105 individuals 2024-25 and this work has been themed to enhance the understanding of local need. A practitioners' network has been developed to improve collaboration and communication, and the community champions network has been re-launched.
- 4.7.4. Community focused contracts support some of the largest numbers of adults and children with housing related need (including those who have received target hardening measures alongside the provision of specialist support considered as the 'Sanctuary¹⁸' population) and pilots have been tested with co-locations and for specific populations (for example the young person's safe accommodation pilot).

4.8 Planned actions

¹⁸ A type of safe accommodation defined in the regulations where victims do not leave their homes.

- 4.8.1. The latest partnership domestic abuse needs assessment was signed off in June 2025. As part of this work members of the partnership considered the data over a series of workshops to connect their understanding of local practice, barriers and impact with the data collated. This created a set of statements that can now be used to develop the next strategy and a new delivery plan. *(An executive summary is attached as Appendix Four)*
- 4.8.2. Engagement and quality assurance work continues and is being used to build the picture of what we need to protect and improve, and what we are best placed to commission through use of the grant and the remaining local authority core budget for domestic abuse commissioning (which is not restricted to safe accommodation and revenue spend). The community focus and sanctuary offer remains important to have the most impact on the largest number of adults and children and to seek to prevent such crises where people are forced to leave their home due to domestic abuse and the longer-term health impact such abuse can have. A discretionary support fund, and local Sanctuary provision is currently being explored alongside a longer-term commissioning strategy for refuge, safe accommodation and community support. Capital programme funds are being used in 2025 to complete a feasibility study on the best value options for securing the safe accommodation units required to meet local need.
- 4.8.3. The importance of a skilled and supported workforce continues to come through victim-survivor feedback and learning from domestic abuse related death reviews. The attitudes, skills and behaviours victim-survivors want from the workforce will inform the principles of the future strategy.
- 4.8.4. Communication work will continue. We know that much domestic abuse is not spoken about, is not identified and takes place over years, with those suffering feeling alone and scared. There are populations that seem to have consistently lower levels of reporting, and we are likely to continue to work to raise the profile and seek to identify and address any additional barriers to support in these areas.

5. Financial, legal, and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

Funding of £1,113,507 was received in 2025/26 as Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Grant. This funding has been made available to Children's Services for the provision of domestic abuse services as outlined in this report. This grant is planned to be fully spent. This report does not add create any new costs and no additional funding is being requested. Rather it is an update on the provision of domestic abuse services in Leicester.

Mohammed Irfan – Head of Finance
09 October 2025

5.2 Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this briefing.

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

There are limited climate emergency implications directly associated with this report, however the council has a vital role to play in addressing carbon emissions relating to housing and the delivery of its services, and those of its partners, including through its procurement and commissioning activities.

Housing is one of the largest sources of carbon emissions in Leicester, responsible for 33% of the city's carbon footprint. Addressing these emissions is vital to meeting our net zero ambition, particularly where the council has a higher level of influence and control through its role in housing provision. Therefore, any carbon emissions from commissioning and delivery of housing services should be considered and could include requiring and encouraging consideration of opportunities to provide safe accommodation that is energy efficient and low carbon. This should also help to ensure that housing reaches a high standard, increasing comfort levels for occupants and reducing energy costs.

Carbon emissions from commissioning and delivery of services should be managed through use of the council's sustainable procurement guidelines within tendering exercises, by requiring and encouraging consideration of opportunities for reducing emissions. This could include areas such as the use of low carbon and energy efficient buildings to deliver services, use of sustainable travel options and reduced consumption and waste of equipment and materials, as relevant and appropriate to the service.

Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext 372246
22 September 2025

5.4 Equalities Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, 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.

This report updates the Committee on the current landscape of domestic abuse in Leicester, outlining local needs, available services, and future strategies to enhance support. It highlights the diverse range of services accessible to individuals affected by domestic abuse in the city, while also acknowledging the importance of addressing how domestic abuse disproportionately impacts certain communities and individuals due to intersecting equality issues such as gender, race, disability, and sexual orientation.

It provides an overview of the domestic abuse landscape in Leicester, highlighting both achievements in reaching diverse groups and ongoing challenges in addressing specific needs and ensuring equitable access to support. Domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of their protected characteristics. However, individuals with certain protected characteristics may experience domestic abuse differently, be disproportionately affected, or face additional barriers to accessing support. It is important to understand the specific reasons why different groups may be hesitant to report or seek help. Communication and engagement should be accessible and services need to be delivered in a way that is sensitive and effective for diverse groups of people, ensuring that support is not only available, but also accessible and appropriate for those who need it.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

6. Background information and other papers:

7. Summary of appendices:

Leicester Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment 2025 Executive Summary

[Domestic abuse safe accommodation strategy](#)

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a “key decision”?

No

10. If a key decision, please explain reason

Summary of appendices:

- Appendix One - Safe Accommodation Definitions (below)
- Appendix Two – Glossary (below)
- Appendix Three – Assets (below)
- Appendix Four - Leicester Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment Executive Summary 2025

1. Appendix One: Safe Accommodation Definition Table¹⁹

Refuge accommodation
A refuge offers single gender or single sex accommodation and domestic abuse support which is tied to that accommodation. The address will not be publicly available. Victims, including their children, will have access to a planned programme of therapeutic and practical support from staff. Accommodation may be in shared or self-contained housing, but in both cases the service will enable peer support from other refuge residents.
Specialist safe accommodation
Specialist safe accommodation offering single gender or single sex accommodation, alongside dedicated domestic abuse support which is tailored to also support those who share particular protected characteristic(s) and/or who share one or more vulnerabilities requiring additional support. Accommodation may be in shared or self-contained housing, and the address will not be publicly available. This includes 'By and For' services where victims are able to see themselves reflected in the staffing, management and governance structures. 'By and For' services are designed and led by those that share the same protected characteristic(s) as the victims they aim to serve. For example, a specialist domestic abuse organisation that is led by Black and minoritised women and children, for Black and minoritised women and children.
Dispersed accommodation
<p>i. Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse), self-contained accommodation with a similar level of specialist domestic abuse support as provided within a refuge but which may be more suitable for victims who are unable to stay in a refuge with communal spaces, and/or where peer support from other residents may not be appropriate, due to complex support needs, or where older teenage sons cannot be accommodated in a women only refuge, for example. Where two or more units share any part of the accommodation, including shared hallways or access routes, provision should be single gender or single sex.</p> <p>ii. Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse), self-contained 'semi-independent' accommodation which is not within a refuge but with support for victims who may not require the intensive support offered through refuge, but are still at risk of abuse from their perpetrator/s. Where two or more units share any part of the accommodation, including shared hallways or access routes, provision should be single gender or single sex.</p>
Sanctuary Schemes
Sanctuary Schemes properties with local authority or private registered providers of social housing installed Sanctuary Schemes which provide enhanced physical security measures to a home or the perimeter of the home. A Sanctuary Scheme is a survivor centred initiative which aims to make it possible for victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice, and where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation. This is done by providing additional security – 'installing a sanctuary' – to the victims' property or perimeter.
Second stage accommodation

¹⁹ [Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivery-of-support-to-victims-of-domestic-abuse-in-domestic-abuse-safe-accommodation-services)

Accommodation temporarily provided to victims, including their children, who are moving on from other forms of relevant accommodation and/or who no longer need the intensive level of support provided in a refuge, but would still benefit from a lower level of domestic abuse specific support for a period before they move to fully independent and settled accommodation. Where second stage accommodation is in shared housing it should be single gender or single sex. There is no expectation that every victim will require this. Many victims are ready to move straight to a settled new home from refuge. However, second stage accommodation (sometimes known as 'move-on') may be helpful in some cases.

Other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation

A safe place (single gendered or single sex, secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse) with domestic abuse support tied to the accommodation to enable victims to make informed decisions when leaving a perpetrator and seeking safe accommodation. For example, short term, 2-3 weeks accommodation providing victims with the space and safety to consider and make informed decisions about the options available to them.

3. Appendix Two: Glossary of Common Terms and Acronyms

Abbreviation or phrase	Meaning
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour. This is defined as conduct that has caused – or is likely to cause – harassment, alarm, or distress to any person.
ASC	Adult Social Care is an area of work, generally within the local authority, which aims to help people stay independent, safe, and well so they can live their lives the way they want to.
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic, or Black and Minoritised Ethnicity. This is a term sometimes used by government departments, public bodies, the media, and others when referring to ethnicity groups which might be at risk of not being served as well by generically/universally delivered services even though they represent a global majority. A similar term used is BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic).
CAP	Central Access Point. A Leicestershire Partnership Trust service providing 24/7 mental health support for people in Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland.
CAPVA	Child Against Parent Violence and Abuse. This is a term to describe where a child or young person engages in repeated abusive behaviour towards a parent or adult carer.
CCR	Co-ordinated Community Response. A CCR brings together services including health, housing, social care, education, and criminal justice. along with communities, to ensure local systems keep survivors safe, hold abusers to account, and prevent domestic abuse. A CCR enables a whole system response to a whole person.
CSC	Children's Social Care. This is an area of work within a local authority. It is a service that assesses and protects children who are at risk of harm or whose safety is in danger. This can lead to statutory support for children, young people and families who need additional help and assistance, including where there are safeguarding concerns, and a child or young person requires protection.
CSEW	Crime Survey for England & Wales. This data set covers all types of crimes that are reported to, or recorded by, the police. There are also self-completion surveys which can include broader information on non-reported incidents including a range of domestic abuse behaviours.
CYPFS	Children Young Person and Family Service. This is a local authority contracted service delivered by Living Without Abuse 2022-2026 offering specialised local support for children and young people (0-19) affected by domestic abuse or sexual violence, and their caregivers/parents. Access to one-to-one support, group programmes and parenting support.
DAC	The Domestic Abuse Commissioner. This position was established through the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 as an independent voice to raise awareness, stand with victims and survivors and hold local and national government to account on their response to domestic abuse.
DALS	Domestic Abuse Locality Service. This is a contracted service in place 2022-2026. The local authority commissioned contract provides for specialist support for victim-survivors of domestic abuse aged 16+. Practical and emotional support is offered through 1-1 support and group work, and this includes a rolling Freedom Programme group.
DASH	Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honor Based Violence Dash risk assessment resources for professionals - SafeLives This is a tailored victim-focussed risk assessment process for domestic abuse, to assess risk of homicide or serious injury.
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review. The term might be replaced in 2025 by DARDR Domestic homicide review legislation consultation: government response - GOV.UK A DHR or DARDR is a multi-agency response to identify learning from deaths thought related to domestic abuse.
DLUHC	Dept of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Government department which sets policy on supporting local government; communities and neighbourhoods; regeneration; housing; planning, building etc (now known as MHCLG).
DVDS	The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (also known as Clare's Law). This scheme covers two different pathways to request/know a person's history of abusive behaviour, for those who may be at risk from such behaviour. It is intended to reduce intimate partner violence and abuse.
DVPN	DV Protection Notice. This is an emergency non-molestation and eviction notice which can be issued by the police to a perpetrator in certain circumstances. Because the DVPN is a police-issued notice, it is effective from the time of issue, thereby giving the victim the immediate support they require in such a situation. Within 48 hours of the DVPN being served on the perpetrator, an application by police to a magistrates' court for a DVPO must be heard.

DVPO	DV Protection Order. A civil Court Order requested by the police (might be extended to other parties in the future) that protects victims of domestic abuse by excluding the perpetrator from the address for a period.
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving the removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons, as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO).
FreeVa	Free from Violence and Abuse. Domestic abuse and sexual violence charity in Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland.
FSW	Family Support Worker is a term sometimes used within a local authority setting or by VCS organisations. A local authority FSW offers both practical and emotional assistance on a short- or long-term basis to families experiencing hardship, either at home or in the community.
HALT	Homicide Abuse Learning Together. This is a research network aiming to address important gaps in existing knowledge of domestic homicide and to influence policy and practice to prevent domestic homicide.
HBA	Honour based abuse. Sometimes referred to as 'So-called honour-based abuse' to acknowledge that the use of violence against another to control their behaviour is not honourable. This is a term used where the risk of abuse is linked to, and often raised by, perceptions of community or family shame being 'caused by' the person at risk of domestic abuse.
HDEC	Homelessness Declaration. This is a key part of the local authority process of responding to homelessness.
HES	Helpline and Engagement Service. This is a PCC contracted service 2022-26 for domestic abuse and sexual violence information and support including onward referral to locality provision. Practitioners, third parties, those concerned about their own behaviour and victim-survivors can access this service.
HLW	Housing Link Worker. A pilot service which ran from December 2023 – March 2025 in Leicester, working across domestic abuse specialist support, housing management and homelessness services to improve access to safe accommodation.
ICB	Integrated Care Board (previously CCG). The ICB is made up of NHS organisations responsible for planning health services for their local population.
IDVA	Independent Domestic Violence Advisor. This is a specific role that was developed in domestic abuse work to hold a focus on effectively supporting those at high risk of homicide or serious injury in a co-ordinated and prompt manner, including court support. There are now a range of training courses and accrediting bodies. Some organisations will use the term and not only focus on those at high risk. The IDVA will provide emotional and practical support to victims-survivors, co-ordinate support, and safety planning, and represents the victims' voice at multi-agency meetings or through advocacy.
Insights	This is an anonymous monitoring system specific to domestic abuse that covers needs and outcomes. It is used by domestic abuse agencies across the UK.
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence. This term is used to describe behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm. As domestic abuse can be both familial and intimate partner based, this term is used to be specific to the type of relationship the abuse is occurring within.
ISVA	Independent Sexual Violence Advisor. ISVAs are specially trained workers who can provide support in relation to any sexual abuse an individual may have experienced; this can be recently or something that happened in the past. They can provide support through the criminal justice process.
KPI	Key Performance Indicator. These tend to be headline data sets that can give an indication of direction of travel against desired objectives, monitored on a frequent basis (generally monthly or quarterly).
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning +
LLR	Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland
LPT	Leicestershire Partnership Trust. A local health provider, the Trust provides mental health, learning disability and community health services across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
LWA	Living Without Abuse is a Domestic abuse and sexual violence charity in Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland.
MARAC	Multi- agency risk Assessment Conference. This is a response to improve safety for those at the highest risk of homicide or serious injury. The local MARAC meets daily Monday to Friday to discuss referred cases and action plan to improve safety.

MDVAC	Migrant Victim Domestic Abuse Concession. Formerly known as the Destitution Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC),
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. A government department which sets policy on supporting local government; communities and neighbourhoods; regeneration; housing; planning, building etc (formerly DLUHC).
NFA	No Further Action or No Fixed Abode (no permanent residence).
NRM	Nation Referral Mechanism. A multi- agency approach that identifies and supports victims of modern slavery and human trafficking.
NRPF	No Recourse to Public Funds. When a person is unable to access government funding due to their immigration status
OASIS	This is a case management system that is used by some domestic abuse organisations. It is produced by a company called IT Works
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OPCC	Office of Police and the Police Crime Commissioner
Panahghar	Specialist support provider for women from Black and Minoritised Ethnicity Communities (BME). Providing free dedicated BME multilingual support, advice and advocacy and access to safe refuge for victim-survivors, and their families, of domestic abuse, sexual abuse or gendered abuse in Leicester and Coventry.
PCSC Act	Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022
PEEL	Police, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Legitimacy report. An annual assessment of police forces in England and Wales, undertaken by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).
Power BI	This is a data platform used locally as a way of managing and displaying data
PSS	Partner Support Services. These are part of Respect accredited perpetrator services for those wishing to change their behaviour.
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This is a medical condition that someone may develop after experiencing distressing and traumatic events.
S11	Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 imposes a general duty on Local Authorities to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children who are 'in need' and to promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs. Children Act 1989 . Local procedures can be found at Leicester and the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Partnerships Procedures Manual
S42	Care Act 2014 Section 42. An adult Safeguarding Enquiry (Care Act s42) is the duty of local authority adult social care in relation to an adult with care and support needs who is unable to protect themselves from the abuse or neglect or the risk of it. Care Act 2014
Sentinel	This is a case management system that is currently used by police and some local authorities to record ASB cases that require a multi-agency approach.
SPO	Stalking Protection Order. A Stalking Protection Order is a civil order, the aim of which is to protect victims of stalking. It must be applied for by the police and is free of charge for the victim. The breach of an SPO is a criminal offence
SRG	The Scrutiny and Reference Group. This is a lived experience forum of local domestic abuse and sexual violence victim-survivors in Leicester.
STADA	Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse. A national charity bringing communities together to end domestic abuse.
UHL	University Hospital Leicester. Created in April 2000 with the merger of the Leicester General Hospital, Glenfield Hospital and Leicester Royal Infirmary.
VAWG	Violence against Women and Girls. VAWG is any form of violence disproportionately perpetrated by men and boys against women and girls. It acknowledges the links to women's inequality and includes sexual violence, domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and honour-based abuse, exploitation and abuse of women and girls in online spaces. It is not restricted to only abuse of women and girls.
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
VRN	Violence Reduction Network. The government set up several Violence Reduction Units across the UK in 2019 as part of a preventative approach based. See Violence Reduction Units 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK for some background information. They are multi-agency and informed by local data. For local info see Home Violence Reduction Network
WALL	Women's Aid Leicestershire Limited. A domestic abuse and sexual violence charity in Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland.

YPIDVA	Young Person's Independent Domestic Violence Advisor. This is a domestic abuse specialist who provides emotional and practical support to victims-survivors under the age of 18 years, through risk assessment and safety planning, to reduce the risk posed by the perpetrator(s).
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4. Appendix Three: Local DSVa Assets Map 2024

Criminal Justice Agencies	Health Services	DSVA Specific Voluntary and Community Sector
OPCC - IDVAs, ISVAs, HES	NHS England - SARC adult	Women's Aid Leicestershire Limited
OPCC - DA Perpetrator Programme	NHS England - SARC child	Panahghar Safehouse
OPCC - DA Perp. Disposal Scheme (CARA)	ICB - lead GP	Living Without Abuse
OPCC - Project 360 (assertive outreach)	ICB - Women's Health Hubs	Freeva
OPCC - Victim First	ICB - MARAC contribution	
OPCC - MARAC contribution	ICB - Specialist Midwifery Team	
Police - MARAC contribution	LPT - Safeguarding Team	
CPS – RASSO unit	LPT - Homeless Mental Health Service (externally funded)	
Police - DAIU	UHL - Safeguarding Team	
Police - Threat Assessment Unit	ICB - Joy web resource	
Police - Adult Safeguarding Hub		
OPCC - sexual violence service		
Leicester City Council	Individual	Crossover Voluntary and Community Sector
Commissioned - homelessness services	Friends and Family	Zinthiya Trust
Commissioned - safe accommodation - 47 units	Employer, Education Provider, DWP	New Dawn New Day
Commissioned - public health offer including mental health programme, substance use programme, oral hygiene, stop smoking, 0-19 offer	Local businesses, transport	Shama Women's Centre
Commissioned - community DA services DALs and CYPFS	Places of Worship	Turning Point
Internal - Youth Service offer	Community Venues	Action Homeless
Internal - ASC offer		PA Housing
Internal - CSC and EH offer		East Midlands Housing
Grant - Changing Futures		Wesley Hall
Internal - housing offer including tenancy support	Partnerships	
Internal - Neighbourhood Services	Health and Wellbeing Board	
Internal - Community Safety	Mental Health Partnership Board	
Internal - MST and FFT	Community Safety Partnership	
My Choice website		
MARAC contribution		