

Sanctuary Scheme Toolkit

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Standing Together has coordinated the Sanctuary Scheme on behalf of Hammersmith & Fulham Council since 2012. Prior to that, Standing Together worked in partnership with the Council and the local domestic abuse service Advance Advocacy Project to monitor the effectiveness of the scheme since it was first offered in 2007.

Purpose of the toolkit

This toolkit is a guide for commissioners, operational managers, domestic abuse practitioners and/or coordinators, security installers and any other stakeholders involved in funding and delivering a local Sanctuary Scheme. It offers practical guidance and resources to assist local areas and service providers to assess the quality of an existing scheme or establish a new scheme where none currently exist.

Background

Some local areas will have a long-standing Sanctuary Scheme that is working well, others may have a scheme that is not operating at its optimum, or there may be no scheme in place at all. There is also a huge variation in how existing schemes across the country are delivered, the agencies that are involved, how success is measured and how much financial resource is invested.

This toolkit builds upon the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG, previously DCLG) 2010 guidance '*Sanctuary Schemes for Households at Risk of Domestic Violence Practice Guide for Agencies Developing and Delivering Sanctuary Schemes*'. It incorporates learning from the Sanctuary Schemes operating in the Whole Housing Approach pilot sites (Stockton-on-Tees, Cambridgeshire and three London boroughs – Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham). As part of the Whole Housing Approach project, working groups brought together local delivery partners to review their respective delivery models and operational processes and to share good practice and ideas for improvement.

The Gaia Centre, a specialist domestic abuse service run by Refuge, delivers the scheme on behalf of Lambeth Council and offered it as an example of a potential delivery model.

The author of the 2010 MHCLG guidance, Joanne Bretherton, Research Fellow at the Centre for Housing Policy at York University, offered her expertise to help identify important considerations for victim/survivor safety.

Mark Dowse, a Designing Out Crime Officer for the Metropolitan Police Service who developed the first Sanctuary Scheme model at Harrow Police Station in 1998 and has written the Secured by Design 'The Sanctuary Scheme Installation Manual: a place of safety for those at risk', has also offered his expertise on the quality of security measures and installation of Sanctuary Schemes and on the role of the police.

The Sanctuary Scheme Quality Check is included as an accompanying resource and is the start of an endeavour to produce quality standards for the Sanctuary Scheme. Introducing a common set of standards will promote consistency in how local areas deliver Sanctuary Schemes and will ensure that victim/survivor safety and quality security works are prioritised. This toolkit and the Quality Check aims to complement the Government's proposed duty for local authorities to provide 'domestic abuse accommodation-based' services, which includes the provision of the Sanctuary Scheme.ⁱ

What is a Sanctuary Scheme?

A **Sanctuary Scheme** is *'a multi-agency victim/survivor centred initiative which aims to enable households at risk of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes and reduce repeat victimisation through the provision of enhanced security measures (Sanctuary) and support.'*ⁱⁱ

A **Sanctuary** is *'a property where security measures have been installed in order that households at risk of domestic violence are able to remain safely in their own accommodation if they choose to do so'*ⁱⁱⁱ

It may also include a **Sanctuary Safe Room**, which is defined as *'replacing a door to a main room, often the bedroom, with a solid core door. The Sanctuary Safe Room door is reversed to open outwards; the frame is reinforced, additional locks and bolts, substantial hinges and a door viewer are fitted. This provides a safe room where household members can call and wait safely for the police.'*^{iv} Fire safety measures are also provided.

The Sanctuary Scheme includes a range of security measures that exist on a continuum from the installation of additional locks added to the perimeter of a property to the offer of the full range of security measures available, including having a Sanctuary Room fitted inside the property. The security measures offered should be reasonable, practical, necessary and appropriate according to the safety needs of victim/survivors and the conditions of the property.

As a minimum, the security measures applied must be to recognised British Standards and must comply with means of escape from fire requirements.

The Police and Fire and Rescue Service have outlined their recommended minimum security and fire safety measures for Sanctuary Schemes in the Secured by Design Sanctuary Scheme Installation Manual. The British Standard security measures recommended in the SBD Manual have been tested to resist a given amount of force, delaying entry in the first instance and where a Sanctuary Safe Room is installed, buying the victim/survivor time to get into it.

The security measures offered should be reasonable, practical, necessary and appropriate according to the safety needs of the victim/survivor and the conditions of the property.

Purpose of the Sanctuary Scheme

The Sanctuary Scheme can be installed in an existing accommodation to enable a victim/survivor to remain in their current home. It can also be installed in a new property where a victim/survivor has relocated for safety reasons. The key objectives of the Sanctuary Scheme are:

1. Enabling safety

The Sanctuary Scheme is only appropriate when the perpetrator is no longer living in the property. The addition of security measures aims to increase physical safety of victim/survivors by preventing or delaying perpetrators from gaining access to the property and/or the Sanctuary Safe Room. It also intends to increase the victim/survivor's perceived safety, by virtue of its presence.

Quotes from victim/survivors who have the Sanctuary Scheme installed in the Whole Housing Approach pilot sites:

‘Having the works carried out has made me feel so much safer. I am no longer on alert. I feel comfortable in my own home’

‘I feel I can actually sleep at night. I am very happy with the work that was completed’

The Sanctuary Scheme may be run by, or in conjunction with, a local specialist domestic abuse service; however, if this is not the case an offer of support by a local specialist domestic abuse service should be made as a matter of course. Sanctuary measures should form part – not the whole – of a wider safety planning support package. Uptake of the specialist domestic abuse support should be the choice of victim/survivor and not a requirement for accessing the scheme.

2. Preventing homelessness and maintaining stable housing

The Sanctuary Scheme is a means of preventing homelessness in that without its installation, the victim/survivor would become homeless.^v The scheme also gives victims/survivors a choice to remain in their property, which is within their right to do so. Preventing homelessness reduces the financial costs associated with having to relocate, both for the victim/survivor and local authorities when compared to the cost of having to relocate households.^{vi} The most recent government survey in 2008-09 examined the use of Sanctuary provision for homelessness prevention and showed that 3,820 households at risk of domestic violence were able to remain in their own home as a result of Sanctuary measures. Nationally, this represented 7% of the total number of households owed a main duty under the housing legislation.^{vii}

The Homeless Reduction Act (2017) introduced new duties on local authority homelessness services to prevent homelessness and provide support. Therefore, victims/survivors approaching local authorities for housing assistance due to domestic abuse should be offered the option of the Sanctuary Scheme. In addition to the Sanctuary Scheme, victims/survivors may also be entitled to further assistance under homelessness legislation. This may include a placement in temporary accommodation while they consider their options or while they wait for Sanctuary Scheme measures to be installed.

As it is a housing option with cost savings relating to homelessness prevention, local authorities should be responsible for funding Sanctuary Schemes. However, they may not necessarily be delivering the scheme and may delegate responsibility to another local organisation, ideally involving a local domestic abuse service.

Outline of the model

Principles of the Sanctuary Scheme

The following principles underpin the delivery of a Sanctuary Scheme service:

- **Safe and suitable** – it is a victim/survivor-led initiative that prioritises the safety needs of all members in the household. A suitability assessment is carried out to enable decisions to be made about safe allocation of the scheme. Delivery partners meet sector and industry standards for domestic abuse and security installation work.
- **Effective** – It is a multi-agency initiative, delivered by domestic abuse-informed agencies and professionals, offered as part of a wider safety and support package. There is a minimum set of security and fire safety measures, which qualifies the scheme as a Sanctuary Scheme. Ideally this is in line with the police and fire and rescue service preferred security and fire measures (see the SBD Sanctuary Scheme Installation Manual). At a minimum, security measures used must meet British Standards. Victim/survivors are happy with the service and identify feeling safer as a result of having the Sanctuary Scheme installed.
- **Accessible** – it is available across all tenure types (social, private ownership and private rented) and risk levels (standard, medium and high), has multiple access points (not just the local authority or the police) and is independent, meaning that it does not require engagement with other services (i.e. reporting a crime to the police/uptake of a referral to the local specialist domestic abuse service (although in some instances they may be delivering the Sanctuary Scheme)).
- **Efficient** – the delivery model, referral pathways, processes and resources adopted promote the quickest response possible. Victim/survivors ideally have a single point of contact throughout the service. Resources are allocated so that they reach the maximum number of victims/survivors.

The Sanctuary Scheme Quality Check is a tool for applying the principles outlined above. It offers local areas a benchmark for assessing processes and the performance of an existing scheme and can act as guidance for setting up a new scheme.

What makes a Sanctuary Scheme a Sanctuary Scheme?

While there is no typical Sanctuary installation, a Sanctuary Scheme should include a range of security measures (not simply a lock change) that reinforce the perimeter of the property (including all easily accessible doors and windows as a standard) and in some instances where the need arises, the interior of the property through the installation of a Sanctuary Room.

Any works specified must be reasonable and proportionate to the type of property being target hardened and must not be cost prohibitive preventing works taking place. Ideally, the security products should be tested and accredited to withstand attack and meet the police's preferred standards.

The following gives examples of security and fire safety measures that should be included as part of a Sanctuary Scheme package.

- Security measures to easily accessible external doors including mortice locks, Euro profile cylinder lock, hinge bolts, anti-shatter glazing film, letterbox blanking plates and door panels.
- Security measures to easily accessible windows including key operated window locks and anti-shatter glazing film.
- Where there is a risk of arson, a Home Safety Check should ideally be completed by the Fire and Rescue Service to check fire safety measures and help the victim/survivor prepare an emergency escape plan, including a bedtime key routine.
- The fire safety measures include a letterbox blanking plate or internal fire-proof letterbox. Where a Sanctuary Safe Room is installed, a fire safety pack should be provided, which includes an intumescent fire and smoke seal along the top and sides of the Sanctuary Safe Room door, smoke alarms, a water extinguisher, a dry powder extinguisher, fire blanket, break-glass hammer and a torch.

Additional measures may be offered such as telephone inter-com, alarmed padlocks, hasp and staple gate locks, cactus strips, dusk till dawn lighting, personal safety alarms, outbuilding alarms for sheds/ garages out buildings, driveway alerts and in some instances, CCTV.

A Sanctuary Safe Room should be installed when there is a high level of threat from the perpetrator. This is typically created by replacing a door to a main room, often the bedroom, with a solid core door. The door is reversed to open outwards; the frame is reinforced, additional locks and bolts, substantial hinges and a door viewer are fitted. This provides a safe room where household members can call and wait safely for the emergency services. Fire safety measures are also provided.

Victims/survivors are encouraged to keep a charger for their mobile phone within the Sanctuary Safe Room. In some cases, they will be provided with a pay-as-you-go mobile phone, if needed. In some local schemes where the police are involved and depending on the level of risk, they may provide a fast response emergency call system.

How to decide if the scheme is suitable

An assessment of suitability is vital for the safe allocation of the scheme and needs to consider the following:

- Safety needs of victim/survivors,
- Who has rights to the property,
- Property type and condition.

Safety needs of victim/survivors

This includes checking that the perpetrator is no longer living in the property and assessing the current and future potential threat from the perpetrator and their whereabouts. Whilst the perpetrator is living in the property and refusing to leave, installations cannot be carried out, although advice should be given about legal remedies to remove the perpetrator from the address (i.e. injunction, exclusion order, seeking support from the landlord).

An evidence-based risk assessment tool, like the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence Risk Indicator Checklist (DASH RIC) can be used as part of gathering information about safety needs. It should not be the sole means for gathering information about suitability as there are safety considerations specific to the Sanctuary Scheme that are not asked about in most risk assessment tools. These include:

- Considering how the installation of the security works will impact on the health and wellbeing of the victim/survivor and whoever else is residing in the property. The ideal Sanctuary Scheme is one that the victim/survivor doesn't notice is there.
- Some schemes include the installation of retractable window grilles so a conversation about what measures are recommended should be had and how this will impact on the victim/survivor and other household members prior to works being installed. It must be noted that retractable window grilles can be pushed back and remain discreet until they are required. In which case they can be drawn together quickly and effectively to provide protection for that specific window. If the use of a retractable grille causes concern for the victim/survivor, an alternative solution could be internal secondary glazing. This may however delay the process and add a considerable extra cost.

- Asking in detail about any risks related to arson and fire safety.
- Exploring for risks of unintended imprisonment. Where children are involved, review the perpetrators access to them as children may unwittingly let them into the property. The property can then become a place the victim/survivor cannot escape due to the added security measures. This is especially important when installing a Sanctuary Safe Room.
- Reviewing safety needs when the victim/survivor is outside of their home, as the perpetrator will likely know where they live and continue their abuse after the scheme is installed. This should include checking if stalking is part of the abuse used to explore the risk of the perpetrator following the victim/survivor home and potentially gaining access to the property. Safety planning should be offered as part of the assessment of suitability as risks from the perpetrator are explored.

Who has rights to the property?

This includes checking the tenure type (social, private rented or privately owned) and who has rights to the property (i.e. is it a joint or sole tenancy/ownership) in order to establish permissions required for the works to happen, such as landlord permission.

See the Key Considerations section below for further considerations about property rights.

Property type and conditions

This includes a survey of the property and its location (for example, is it detached or part of a block of flats? Is it situated on the ground floor?). The surveyor should ask the victim/survivor about any concerns they have relating to the perpetrators previous and potential access to the property. This allows the surveyor to identify and recommend what security measures and level of Sanctuary Scheme needs to be installed to mitigate the risks identified.

See the Resources section for guidance on the components of suitability assessments.

Services required to deliver an effective scheme

The Sanctuary Scheme requires specialist knowledge of domestic abuse and security standards and devices. It should therefore bring together service providers with expertise in these two areas to deliver the scheme safely and appropriately. The following four points explain the different services that are required to deliver this most effectively:

1. Coordination of the scheme

This service/role brings together and maintains relationships between agencies involved in the delivery of the scheme including funders. It includes supporting the day to day operations, overseeing referrals, authorising works, helping with troubleshooting, monitoring and evaluating the scheme and overseeing the budget and annual spend. It can also support any fundraising activities to help sustain the scheme in the long term.

The Coordinator may also be responsible for coordinating other domestic abuse initiatives such as a flexible funding pot and/or a local reciprocal scheme, both of which have dedicated toolkits and can be accessed from the main WHA toolkit page.

The post holder should be trained and knowledgeable in domestic abuse and ideally be employed by a dedicated domestic abuse service. The service could co-locate within another service such as the local authority or a police department and could also offer advocacy support to victim/survivors.

2. Overall delivery of the scheme

This support is active in the day to day operation of the scheme. They are the main point of contact for victim/survivors and other delivery partners from the point of being referred into the scheme until the end of the service.

Responsibilities include checking and conducting an assessment of suitability with the victim/survivor relating to the risks posed by the perpetrator (i.e. their whereabouts, the nature and level of abuse) and offering safety planning support based on their specific circumstances. They may support the victim/survivor with finding emergency accommodation while works are being carried out.

They will also share information with the person carrying out the property survey and the security installer (who in some schemes will be the same provider/person). They usually seek landlord permission for security works to be installed if approval has not already been secured by the victim/survivor. They can also offer advocacy support if any issues arise from the property survey that highlights complications or requires further actions before works can safely be installed.

The post holder should ideally be employed by a specialist domestic abuse service and have experience of working with victim/survivors. This role could co-locate within another service such as the local authority housing department (see co-located housing advocacy section). Where a specialist domestic abuse service is not providing this service, referral pathways should be in place as part of a comprehensive domestic abuse-informed support and safety planning process.

3. Property Survey

The property survey assesses the type and condition of the property and is part of a suitability assessment. A security audit form is completed that records observations and notes capturing discussions had with the victim/survivor about risks posed by the perpetrator. A 'schedule of works' form is also completed, which includes the recommended security measures that should be installed.

The security measures recommended should be flexible and proportional to the degree of risk posed by the perpetrator, the type and condition of the property and importantly the needs and preferences of the victim/survivor including how the addition of such security measures will impact on their health and wellbeing.

Many victim/survivors including some delivery partners will not have expertise in security services and devices. It is part of the surveyor's role to explain what security measures are on offer and be guided by the information gathered at the point of referral. The surveyor's communication with the lead role responsible for delivering the scheme should be frequent and ongoing, relaying information from victim/survivors.

Some schemes offer joint visits with a specialist domestic abuse service so that this support can be offered at the same time. This arrangement is useful when victim/survivors identify that they don't feel safe being alone with the surveyor. It also helps to support the surveyor should there be any concerns that arise during the visit, enhancing the quality of the property assessment.

As the surveyor will be gathering information from victim/survivors about the perpetrators potential access to the property and discussing the security works available, they will need to be trained in domestic abuse awareness.

See the Resources section for a customisable template leaflet for victim/survivors that can help demystify the scheme and explain what security measures / packages are available (and what is not included).

Deciding who will carry out property surveys

Designing Out Crime Officers (DOCOs) are police officers who have received specialist training and accredited qualifications in crime prevention and designing out crime provided by the Police Crime Prevention Academy. Their role is to provide specialist advice and guidance regarding the built environment and crime, meaning that their remit is wider than

the Sanctuary Scheme. One of their main roles has been to carry out property surveys for the Sanctuary Scheme.

For example, at the time of publication, the Metropolitan Police DOCOs were involved as property surveyors in 13 out of 32 London Boroughs. All are serving police officers who have received domestic abuse awareness training.

DOCO's do not offer security installation services. However, they do have specialist knowledge of security products and standards that the security measures/devices installed need to meet. They are therefore well placed to recommend what schedule of works should occur.

Due to capacity issues in some areas, DOCOs may only be able to survey properties that are high risk, so local schemes will need to consider who conducts surveys when standard and medium risk is identified.

DOCOs work for the police service and therefore are duty bound to report crimes that come to their attention. Where a victim/survivor is referred into the scheme (which is not via the police) and does not want to report to the police, this conflicts with the principle that the scheme is a 'survivor-led' initiative that is not dependent on making a police report.

There are many reasons why victims/survivors will not want to report to the police and this choice should remain with them. The latest Crime Survey for England and Wales (ONS 2018) showed there was a significant decrease in the proportion of female victims of partner abuse reporting to the police in year ending March 2018 compared with the year ending March 2015, (the last time this was asked about in the survey).^{viii} The Women's Aids Annual Audit shows that less than half of women in specialist services reported to the police, including just over two fifths in refuge services and just over one quarter of women in community based services^{ix}.

The involvement of the police and how information is shared, handled and acted upon therefore needs careful consideration and discussion, ideally at the planning stage. Often the involvement of a specialist domestic abuse service can help act as a bridge and increase engagement with the police.

The police service involvement is not a requirement for the delivery of the scheme, however it can help to improve a coordinated community response.

The following alternatives can help avoid a third-party report from having to be made while still involving the role of a DOCO in the property survey. These options can also be considered where the police or a DOCO are not currently involved the delivery of the scheme:

- Recruiting a retired DOCO to carry out property surveys;

- Arranging for the company who are carrying out the property surveys to receive DOCO training;
- Exploring the option of the independent surveyor sending the local DOCO photos of doors, windows and the recommended schedule of works as part of quality checks;
- Inviting DOCOs to visit a small sample of properties where Sanctuary Scheme works have been installed if the victim/survivor consents.

Fire and Rescue Service

The involvement of the Fire and Rescue Service should be part of offering an enhanced service, particularly if the perpetrator has made threats of arson. Their role should be reflected in local partnership agreements. The assessment of domestic abuse and the property assessment need to consider fire safety and ensure that relevant security measures are provided accordingly.

The Fire and Rescue Service will carry out Home Safety Checks where the Sanctuary Scheme has been installed and can offer valuable information and education on how victim/survivors should prepare an emergency escape plan, including a bedtime key routine.

4. Installation of security works

This service provides and fits the hardware and security measures recommended in the survey. In some local schemes the installer is also the surveyor. They may travel in a marked van that is equipped with a standard level of security measures and can complete both the survey and installation on the same day, usually where there is a lower threat from the perpetrator and there are no concerns arising from the property survey.

Where there are two different services involved in surveying and installation, the model and operational processes need to account for how any disagreement about the surveyor's recommendation of work will be resolved and who has final decision-making powers, so as not to delay the process.

As the security installer is in direct contact with victim/survivors, they will need to be trained in domestic abuse awareness.

Enhanced measures such as a Sanctuary Safe Room can take more time to acquire so multiple visits may be required. This needs to be explained to the victim/survivor and may be a deciding factor as to whether they want to go ahead with the installation.

The security measures offered should be reasonable and cost effective in order to meet demand and make the scheme available to as many victim/survivors as possible. And victim/survivors should be made aware of the security measures available (and what is not included) to enable survivors to be consulted and manage expectations.

Choosing a security installer

There are a variety of security installer providers, giving local areas choice in who they work with. For a significant number of schemes, it is the local authority who install the security measures. The key requirements for selecting an installer are:

- They have completed a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check;
- They are certified by the Master Locksmith Association (MLA)
- If installing new doors and windows, they either:
 - ✓ are FENSA registered;
 - ✓ have achieved the BSI Kitemark for door and window installation; and/or
 - ✓ have achieved LPCB accreditation for door and window installation.
- They fit security devices that meet British Standards and Loss Prevention Standards (LPS), the latter which mainly applies to doors.
- The UK's National Accreditation Body (UKAS) accredits the certification of Private Security contractors; the certification of alarm and security system installers; and the certification of individuals working as security professionals. Security measures tested in their laboratories relating to doors, locks and windows are shown to withhold force for three minutes. These devices are tested to both British Standards and Loss Prevention Standards.
- They will be required to supply and fit fire safety measures as required by the Fire and Rescue Service.

Secured by Design

In 2015, Police Crime Prevention Initiatives (PCPI) produced the 'SBD Sanctuary Scheme Installation Manual', which sets out the technical specifications for the installation of the scheme, including a Sanctuary Safe Room, and offers detailed guidance on the standards of security measures, setting up a Sanctuary Safe Room and fire safety specifications. They also offer a Schedule of Work form with a list of all measures available.

PCPI developed the Secured by Design (SBD) scheme, which has seen huge reductions in crime since it started in 1989. They are owned by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and work alongside the UK police service and the Home Office to deliver a range of crime prevention and demand reduction initiatives. They work with security testing houses and manufacturers to ensure that products meet the police preferred security specifications.

PCPI have Designing Out Crime Officers (DOCOs) in all police areas that administer the Secured by Design Scheme; this includes providing advice for securing new and existing refuge accommodation where required. They have also recently implemented Sanctuary Scheme recommendations into some of the Greater London Authority's Move-On Programme properties.

Local authorities should work in partnership with local refuge service providers to access SBD services. Funding for any work required should be in addition to the Sanctuary Scheme budget for victim/survivors.

The Resources section at the end of this toolkit includes guidance on writing a partnership agreement.

Planning and delivery

Sanctuary delivery models

Delivering a Sanctuary Scheme service is most effective when it is delivered as multi-agency initiative. The lead agencies responsible for the Sanctuary Scheme are usually housing providers or specialist domestic abuse services, often working together in partnership. The following agencies are examples of the local services who are typically involved in the scheme. This list is not exhaustive:

- Local authorities (usually the housing department who are often the main funding source. May also involve their security team / repairs department for installation work),
- At least one local domestic abuse service,
- Local VAWG or domestic abuse partnership lead,
- Police (usually through the role of the DOCO),
- Fire and Rescue service,
- Independent security installer/service provider,
- Housing associations,
- Local charities or community interest companies established either specifically for, or with a dedicated department for the delivery of the Sanctuary Scheme.

There are a variety of delivery models in operation in England. This section includes three suggested models and it will be down to local areas to discuss and agree which one fits best. Those proposed in this toolkit are based on existing models identified through the Whole Housing Approach pilot project. This is by no means an exhaustive list of possible models and there will no doubt be others that reflect an effective way of operating.

Each of the following models outlines the key services listed above, including coordination of the service, delivery of the service, property surveys and security installation. Regardless of the model a local area adopts, consideration should be given to minimising the number of professionals that the victim/survivor comes into contact with.

Case studies have been provided that showcase the model in practice.

Option 1

A local domestic abuse service provides the coordination and oversees the delivery of the scheme. They may receive funding from a local authority who delegates responsibility to them. The domestic abuse service employs the roles required for all services, including the coordination and service delivery to victim/survivors (that could be the same worker) and the property survey and installation of the scheme.

The police and Fire and Rescue Service are not directly involved in the delivery of the scheme.

The benefits of a local specialist domestic abuse service leading on delivery include:

- Victim/survivors are automatically able to access expert domestic abuse support, including advice on the full range of options available to them, including advocacy and help with safety planning;

- Assessment of risk and safety needs will be completed by experienced and knowledgeable staff who are best placed to advise on suitability of the scheme in general;
- It offers an ideal single point of contact, which minimises the number of agencies that the victim/survivor has to interact with;
- Ongoing support relating to domestic abuse where this is needed can be provided by the same organisation. The victim/survivor can also access other parts of the service, which could include group work, counselling, children's provision etc;
- It may be easier to make future contact with victim/survivors as part of monitoring the effectiveness of the scheme, including feedback from victim/survivors if engagement has been maintained by the service.

Recommendations for getting started with this option:

- Identify a surveyor and security installer by working in partnership with a DOCO, who can advise on how best to meet industry standards.

A case study of the Gaia Centre's scheme is included the Case Study section below.

The following quotes are from two of their domestic abuse workers on how they perceive the scheme to be operating:

'The Sanctuary Scheme at Gaia is quick to access – victim/survivors can increase their safety very quickly. There is an interplay between risk assessing by DV specialists at Gaia and assessments done by the Sanctuary installer. The structure is simple and the working relationship is close. One benefit of this is that the installer visits the property (which Gaia staff do not). He assesses security and needs at the property and sometimes identifies additional needs which the Gaia worker may not otherwise have been aware of. There is also an agreement in place with Lambeth Council where we don't have to seek their consent before working on their properties, further streamlining the processes'.

‘Clients have reported being impressed with how quickly they get the work done and how approachable the installer is. One client recently told us that she feels much safer now she has a secure lock on her bedroom door. She feels less stressed knowing [the perpetrator] can’t just walk into her room’.

Option 2

An independent, not for profit organisation (other than a specialist domestic abuse service) coordinates the scheme, conducts property surveys and installs the security measures. They may also receive funding from a local authority who delegates responsibility to them.

A local specialist domestic abuse service conducts the first part of the suitability assessment to explore safety needs and risks from the perpetrator. They can also offer advice, information, advocacy and other support relating to domestic abuse needs.

The Police and Fire and Rescue Service are not directly involved in the delivery of the scheme.

The benefits of this model include:

- Where the lead service already surveys and installs security measures as part of its core business, they will already be aligned with industry standards and have expertise in delivering a quality security service;
- There are opportunities to exchange knowledge and skills between domestic abuse and security services.

Recommendations for getting started with this option:

- Referral pathways should be in place that clearly outline who completes all aspects of the suitability assessment and timeframes for doing so;
- Domestic abuse services attending joint visits should see the Mobile Advocacy toolkit for considerations on home visits.

A case study of Cambridgeshire’s Bobby Scheme and the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham’s Sanctuary Scheme is included in the Case Study section below.

The following quote is from a Mobile Advocate in Cambridgeshire. In Cambridgeshire, the referrer accompanies the Bobby Scheme security installer when the Security Scheme

'Our local Bobby had finished for the day and at the last minute the phone rang, the call was from a Mobile Advocate who explained to the Bobby that she had a client who required an urgent visit. Both the victim/survivor and mobile advocate had been notified that the offender/perpetrator was being released from prison the next day, leaving the victim/survivor in a state of distress and extremely vulnerable. The Bobby lived close to the area therefore he could be at the victim/survivor's property within half an hour. The Bobby met the mobile advocate within two hours of the appointment being made. The property was assessed and security measures installed, securing the home on the same day. This included securing the perimeter of the property, changing all of the locks and fitting window and door alarms. While the property was being assessed and security measures installed, the mobile advocate remained with the victim/survivor to offer safety planning and emotional support.

The victim/survivor reported feeling considerably safer to remain at home. The next day the perpetrator was released from prison and went straight to the address but was unable to gain entry due to additional security measures being installed on the front door'.

Option 3

The police are the main access point into the Sanctuary Scheme and oversee its delivery. The Community Safety Unit is usually the main point of contact for victim/survivors and will authorise works. DOCOs will usually carry out property surveys.

In this model, it is essential that the police have a referral pathway to the local domestic abuse service and offer this option to victim/survivors so that they have access to independent advocacy support. The domestic abuse service can in turn share information that inputs into the suitability assessment.

Benefits of this model include:

- The police have access to intelligence on the whereabouts of the perpetrator (if unknown) and can communicate this to the victim/survivor and use this to inform suitability assessments;
- They can offer additional personal safety advice;
- The involvement of the police as a key agency can improve coordinated working when they work in partnership with a local domestic abuse service to deliver the scheme.

Recommendations for getting started with this option:

- Pathways need to ensure that victim/survivors can access the scheme regardless of their risk level;

- Responding officers need training on the scheme in order to offer this appropriately;
- The more agencies involved often increases the number of professionals that victim/survivors are in contact in order to receive a service. In this model they may speak with the police, a domestic abuse service, a DOCO and the security installer. Consideration should be given at the planning stage for identifying a single point of contact (i.e. an advocate from the domestic abuse service) who then liaises with these organisations on the victim/survivor's behalf to set up appointments;
- To avoid confusion about the process, joint visits with the domestic abuse service or the single point of contact should be offered if multiple people are attending the property.

A case study of Stockton-On-Tees Sanctuary Scheme is included in the Case Study section below.

The following quote is from the Whole Housing Approach Project Officer in Stockton-On-Tees, after observing the scheme and reviewing its data:

'The Safe at Home scheme offers a fast response service from a partnership between two well established agencies within our borough, namely Cleveland Police and Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council. Referrals are made into the Sanctuary Scheme by police officers after responding to calls which identify a risk to the victim and the need for security installations to be fitted. Referrals also come from the local social services teams and specialist domestic abuse services to the Police. A DOCO from the Crime Prevention Unit will contact the victim/survivor and arrange a property inspection, offering personal safety advice at the time of visit.

The police log a third party incident crime report against the victim/survivor's home address; this heightens the response levels at the address for any future call outs.

During the visit to the property, a full property and perimeter inspection will be carried out and any request for security installations fitting the Sanctuary Scheme's criteria will be made by the DOCO. The referral is then sent, together with a list of works to be carried out to the local authority.

The receiving officer logs the call and arranges an appointment with the victim/survivor for the installation works to be carried out.

After the appointment is conducted, a follow up phone call is made several days later to ensure customer satisfaction in the works and any customer feedback is recorded at this time.

Examples of feedback received from victim/survivors that have had the Sanctuary Scheme installed:

'Feels much safer and is really pleased with the work to date'

'The work has really helped her mental health and she feels so much safer in her home.'

'Grateful and so pleased with all work'

'Very quick feels much safer' 'now like Fort Knox, lads were brilliant & professional'

'(These measures have made me) feel so much safer. The guys were so professional from the officer through to the contractors'

'Extremely happy with the work, the guys who came were professional and I now feel so much safer it has eased my anxiety levels'

'Feels so much safer and has made a difference'

'So grateful for the work'

'Life changing'

Funding the scheme

Funding for the scheme is often provided by the local authority housing department, community safety team and/or through public health budgets.

Securing funding can take time and often requires dedicated work, usually through coordination services and evidencing impact and value for money. Local Sanctuary Schemes may consider applying for charitable status to strengthen fundraising potential. Other potential sources of funding could include:

- Burglary prevention funds held by local authorities;
- PCCs;
- Parish councils;
- Legacy contributions (for instance, the Bobby Scheme sends out legacy letters);
- Community fundraising initiatives (for example, Waitrose tokens);
- Housing associations contribute per number of residences where works are installed;
- Fire and Rescue Service makes payment to install smoke detectors (see Cambridgeshire model). This also joins up working and combines resources.

Costing the Sanctuary Scheme

The costs for each Sanctuary Scheme installed will vary according to safety needs and property conditions. A standard Sanctuary can cost anywhere between £250 and £1200 and an enhanced Sanctuary with the inclusion of a Sanctuary Room tends to cost £4,000 on average.

This should be viewed in terms of costs saved to local authorities for preventing homelessness based on the costs associated with conducting a homelessness assessment and rehousing victim/survivors.

Sanctuary Scheme budgets should include costs associated with:

- Core services associated with the scheme including costs related to the coordination, service delivery, property survey and security installation;
- Costs associated with specialist domestic abuse support, if this is not already factored into above;
- Provision of both standard and enhanced security measures;
- Staff training and development;
- Transport costs;
- Victim/survivor consultations (for instance, paying for transport to a focus group or reimbursing victim/survivors for their time by providing them with vouchers);
- Funds needed to secure local refuge service premises where needed.

Key Considerations

Property rights

Where the property is privately rented accommodation, this often requires an understanding, sympathetic landlord willing to grant a lock change. In the instance that the victim/survivor has concerns that this could compromise their relationship with their landlord, the person processing the referral could offer to make contact and advocate the benefits of enhancing the security standard of the property.

Where there is a joint tenancy or joint ownership, steps can be taken to support the victim/survivor with making a court application for an Occupation Order or a landlord can take steps to evict the perpetrator in order to transfer the tenancy into the victim/survivor's name only, prior to security measures being installed by the Sanctuary Scheme.

Without a court order an abusive perpetrator who is a joint tenant or owner can have equal access to the property. This means that some security measures are restricted due to the perpetrator's legal rights to occupy the property. In this scenario, carrying out a lock change would not be possible as it would deprive the perpetrator of access to the property.

For social housing providers, it may be possible to negotiate a blanket licence agreement with large scale housing providers where a high number of their tenants are having Sanctuary Scheme works installed. The Sanctuary Scheme Coordinator could negotiate this with local housing providers as part of their role.

Referring agencies

The following partner agencies could be important access points for victim/survivors who are experiencing domestic abuse and are faced with homelessness. They should be notified about the Sanctuary Scheme and the referral process and kept up to date about any changes to the scheme:^x

- Local domestic abuse partnership;
- Local specialist domestic abuse services;
- Registered Social Landlords;
- Lettings and Estate Agents;
- Private Rented Landlord (PRS) Forums (national membership bodies such [NLA](#) and [RLA](#) and local associations);
- PRS local authority team;
- Arm's Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) and other Housing Management Organisation;
- Social Services (Adult and Children);
- Community Safety Partnerships;
- Police Crime Reduction Officers;
- Probation Services;
- Local MARAC Members and Coordinators. This should only be considered as an option where it is appropriate and safe to do so.

Consideration should be given to making links with other local services that support BME and LGBT+ communities; people with disabilities, mental ill health and/or who use substances; so as to increase access to victim/survivors who are in contact with these services and may not know what specialist domestic abuse support and options are available to them.

Pathways should also consider how male victim/survivors can access the scheme and be offered specialist support if the local domestic abuse service involved is a women-only service.

Enhanced security measures and devices

High-end security measures, like CCTV and smart devices, are often expensive and require ongoing maintenance so are typically not used by Sanctuary Schemes. CCTV and smart devices such as the video doorbells can be used both to deter the perpetrator and to provide evidence in court. However, any device that offers remote access must meet the BSI Internet of Things (IoT) Kitemark or other similar security standards following rigorous testing and assessment.

The Bobby Scheme in Cambridgeshire is trialling the Ring Doorbell which has the Secured by Design accreditation. The quality of images captured can provide court evidence. The victim/survivor will be required to have WiFi and a smart phone. The Bobby Scheme is trialling the use of these devices to victim/survivors identified as high risk of harm. Monitoring of the effectiveness of the product is being conducted. There is currently no requirement for the victim/survivor to return the device.

Special security measures may be provided to D/deaf victims/survivors. [Connevens](#) offers a range of alerting devices and products, some of which are portable, allowing victim/survivors to easily take them with them if they need to flee due to the perpetrator attempting to access their property.

Sign Health offer a specialist domestic abuse service called [DeafHope](#) that professionals can contact for further advice and information. It is the only service of its kind in the UK that is specifically for D/deaf victim/survivors.

DOCOs will take account of disabilities and seek the appropriate advice from either Occupational Therapy specialists or relevant agencies where required.

Notifying Police and Fire and Rescue Services

The 2010 government guidance recommended that Sanctuary Scheme addresses should be recorded on fire service computer systems to prioritise response time. The Fire and Rescue Service no longer flag this on their systems.

The police will sometimes put information on their system regarding addresses to inform officers to treat all calls to the address as urgent, but this is a limited resource that is reviewed on a regular basis and is not an ongoing process for most Sanctuary Schemes. Details of how this will be done should be outlined in the partnership agreement.

Points to consider if Sanctuary Scheme addresses are shared with the police:

- Victim/survivors should be told at the outset that the police are notified of households that have had the Sanctuary Scheme installed and that by sharing this information with the police, it will be treated as a third party report which in turn could lead to an investigation. Victim/survivors should be given the choice of taking up the scheme upon knowing this and not penalised if they decide not to pursue the scheme.
- It should be clearly indicated on the referral form whether the victim/survivor has given consent for their address to be shared with the police;
- Where a third-party report has to be made, victim/survivors should be notified at the outset before information is shared to help inform their decision making about whether the Sanctuary Scheme is the right option for them.

What happens when victim/survivors move?

Local authorities should decide what happens, post installation, when a victim/survivor wants or needs to move. Will the security measures go with them? Also what happens with the property itself?

Discussions in the planning stage should consider these questions and procedures included in the partnership agreement.

Case studies

Option 1

The Gaia Centre is an example of a specialist domestic abuse service that is the lead agency delivering the Sanctuary Scheme

The Gaia Centre, run by Refuge, works with victim/survivors of gender based violence, including domestic abuse, living in the London Borough of Lambeth. Lambeth Borough Council commissions the Gaia Centre services, including a Sanctuary Scheme to deliver coordination and advocacy services, which includes managing the day to day operation of the scheme and supporting referrals from the start of the service until the end. The scheme is available to victim/survivors of domestic abuse and other types of VAWG including sexual violence and exploitation (including prostitution and trafficking), so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and stalking.

In order to access the scheme victim/survivors or professionals in Lambeth can refer in to the Gaia Centre. The Centre assesses the risks to and the needs of all victim/survivors referred into the service and if it is identified that modifications available as part of the Sanctuary Scheme may be beneficial, then refers the victim/survivor internally to the Sanctuary Scheme as part of the support planning process. If another agency including any other specialist VAWG service is supporting a Lambeth based victim/survivor then they can refer directly into the Scheme, bypassing the main Gaia Service, if it is only Sanctuary that is needed.

A member of the Gaia team takes on the role of the Sanctuary lead and is responsible for coordinating the service. They complete a risk assessment, review the tenure type and who has rights to the property to determine suitability if the referral is from another agency. They then seek permission from the landlord on behalf of the victim/survivor if it is not a Lambeth Council property or owner occupied. Gaia also employs a local tradesperson who they have a long standing partnership with to assess the property and install security measures. The Sanctuary lead sends the referral to the security installer, who contacts the victim/survivor to arrange an appointment convenient to them. This to assess the property, offer security advice, and install security measures. The security installer attends, assesses the property and completes works. They then notify the Gaia Sanctuary lead when the job is complete or if any issues arise from the property assessment. The work is usually completed within 2-4 days from the point of referral.

Option 2

The Bobby Scheme in Cambridgeshire is an example of a general non-profit organisation leading on the delivery of the scheme

The Bobby Scheme was established in 2001 by the Cambridgeshire Police Shrievalty Trust, which is a registered charity formed in 1999 to improve community safety in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The Bobby Scheme's aim is to reduce crime and fear of crime in older, vulnerable and disabled people across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, thereby improving their quality of life and promoting increased independence and safety.

Since October 2011 the Bobby Scheme has been securing the homes of domestic abuse victims, helping them to feel safe and allowing them and their children to remain in their own homes rather than go into a refuge service.

Cambridgeshire County covers a large geographic area, including Cambridgeshire County Council with five district councils and Peterborough City Council. Cambridgeshire County Council funds the scheme through grant funds.

The Bobby Scheme receives referrals from housing providers, domestic abuse and sexual violence services, local authority departments and other charities, as well as from the police across the entire region. They employ a dedicated coordinator, who is trained in domestic abuse awareness and has responsibility for processing all referrals into the service. The Trust also employs two surveyors who are former police officers and whose role it is to assess the property and install the Sanctuary works.

Upon receiving a referral, the coordinator at the Bobby Scheme in Cambridgeshire contacts the referrer usually within 24 hours upon receiving and checks that the perpetrator is no longer living in the property, as well as the level of risk. Once the level of risk has been identified, they then book an appointment for a joint home visit with the local domestic abuse advocacy service.

During this visit the property is security assessed and appropriate safety devices are installed. This time also allows for the domestic abuse worker and the Bobby Scheme advisor to talk to the victim and gain their trust, leading to further support if necessary from other agencies etc. It also addresses an access barrier as many victims/survivors live rurally and do not live near any specialist domestic abuse support services.

The surveyor/installer travels around the five district counties and Peterborough in a marked van which is fully equipped with the security measures that make up the Sanctuary packages. This means that they are able to install the security works on the same day which helps reduce operational costs. In some cases, the surveyor will ensure that they do not park too close to the property.

The referral information is not shared with any other agency.

The London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham is an example of a not for profit organisation leading on the delivery of the scheme

The London borough of Hammersmith & Fulham has been offering and funding the Sanctuary Scheme as a housing option since 2006. In 2012, the local authority commissioned Standing Together, a local domestic abuse service to act as the Sanctuary Coordinator for the scheme (point of contact for delivery partners, coordinating review meetings, offering guidance on suitability, monitoring and reporting to funder).

Safer Partnership were commissioned to oversee the delivery of the scheme where they process referrals, attempt contact with survivors within 24 hours upon receiving the referral, book appointments, assess properties and install security measures. Their installers are trained in domestic abuse awareness.

The local specialist domestic abuse service is a key delivery partner and all victims/survivors referred to the scheme are offered the option of a referral either at the point of referral or by Safer Partnership if they are not engaged with the specialist service.

Safer Partnership conducts checks that referrals are suitable, requests further information from the referrer if needed and then arranges for a security installer visit to assess the property. If there are no issues, they then arrange another visit to install the security measures. It takes on average 11 days for the works to be installed in full.

The Sanctuary Coordinator then contacts consenting victims/survivors 3-6 months following installation to seek feedback on how this impacted their safety, health and wellbeing and ability to secure housing.

Option 3

Stockton-on-Tees Council is an example of a scheme that involves the police

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council has delivered a Sanctuary Scheme entitled Safe at Home since 2010. In Stockton-On-Tees, all agencies and individuals can make a referral to the Safe at Home Scheme; referrals are initially made through the local specialist domestic abuse services, police officers and social services department are then directed to the scheme via Cleveland Police Crime Prevention Unit. All referrals then receive an assessment visit from an officer from the Police Crime Preventions unit.

A third-party report of a crime is logged on police recording systems, highlighting the concern and any potential risk posed at the address.

A schedule of works to be completed is then forwarded to the Safe at Home team within Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council who arrange an appointment with the victim/survivor and install the security measures.

The scheme provides security target hardening equipment for people referred into the scheme when they have been a victim of crime or are regarded as likely to become a victim/survivor.

The Safe at Home Scheme aims to be an early intervention response to domestic abuse, to take pressure away from emergency support responses, advocacy services and refuge services, giving individuals affected by domestic abuse peace of mind and the ability stay in their own homes where safe to do so.

Resources

- Sanctuary Scheme Quality Check
- Template partnership agreement components
- Referral form template
- Suitability assessment components
- Examples of Sanctuary Scheme security packages offered
- Quarterly monitoring form
- Customer satisfaction survey
- Consent form customer satisfaction survey

Annex - Background to Sanctuary Schemes

Target hardening – the use of physical security measures to deter or prevent crime, or more usually, theft – had been used in multiple contexts before being applied to domestic abuse. Early initiatives, like the Safer Cities scheme that was launched in 1988, focused on preventing crime against vulnerable groups, like older people, through the installation of security measures.

The Sanctuary Scheme model was first developed in 1998 by the Crime Reduction Unit (CRU) at Harrow Police Station to tackle fear and isolation experienced by people who had experienced domestic abuse or hate crime. They initially ran the scheme with the support of the local Victim Support Scheme charity. In 2002 the CRU partnered with the London Borough of Harrow Housing Department to launch the ‘Sanctuary Project’. This was the first example of a Sanctuary Scheme that funded people at risk of hate crime and domestic abuse by giving them the choice to remain in their homes through the installation of physical security measures.^{xi}

The introduction of the Homelessness Act 2002, which placed a greater focus on homelessness prevention led to Sanctuary Schemes being adopted by local authorities as part of a wider suite of measures designed to prevent homelessness.^{xii}

Sanctuary Schemes were further enshrined as best practice in the Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 225, which was introduced in 2005 to assess the overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to help people experiencing domestic abuse. The BVPI contained eleven questions to enable local authorities to assess their response to domestic abuse, including one question asking *‘has the local authority developed, launched and promoted a ‘sanctuary’ type scheme to enable victims and their children to remain in their own home, where they choose to do so and where safety can be guaranteed?’*

In 2006, the Government announced a major new drive to help prevent victims of domestic abuse across all tenures from being forced out of their homes and becoming homeless as a result. MP Ruth Kelly stated that she wanted every local authority in the country to offer Sanctuary Schemes.

In 2010, the DCLG (now MHCLG) introduced guidance for local authorities on setting up sanctuary schemes.^{xiii} This guide replaced the earlier ‘Options for Setting up a Sanctuary Scheme’ (DCLG, 2006) and offered practical advice to all agencies involved in setting up and delivering a Sanctuary Scheme.

It was based on research conducted by the Centre for Housing Policy, working in association with the Centre for Criminal Justice, at the University of York, for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on ‘The Effectiveness of Schemes to Enable Households at Risk of Domestic Violence to remain in their own Homes’ (Jones et al., DCLG 2010).

The National Indicator Set (NIS) replaced BVPIs in April 2008 and reduced the domestic abuse indicators that local authorities had to report back to central government down to two, which no

longer included reporting back on the Sanctuary Scheme¹. On 14 October 2010, the government announced that the NIS would be replaced with a single list of data requirements for local government to give local areas control of their own delivery targets. This list does not include any questions on domestic abuse and local authorities are no longer required to report back to central government on domestic abuse provision and the effectiveness of what they're delivering.

There are currently no national figures on the number of Sanctuary Schemes operating in England. The most recent survey conducted in 2007 revealed that about half of England's councils were operating a Sanctuary Scheme at the time.^{xiv} It is likely this figure will have reduced as a result of the policy context, which no longer requires local governments to report back to central government on domestic abuse provision and as a result of the year-on-year reductions to local government budgets since 2010, which have reduced domestic abuse provision across the country.

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¹ The two domestic violence related indicators within the NIS. These are: NI32 – Percentage reduction in repeat victimisation for those domestic violence cases being managed by a MARAC. NI34 – Number of domestic homicide offences per population

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^{xi} Ibid, p.10.

^{xii} Ibid, p.37.

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