

# Guidance and recommendations for local authority commissioners of supported accommodation and Housing First services, that support perpetrators of domestic abuse

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Provided by the DAHA-led Perpetrators and Supported Housing Task and Finishing Group partners:

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA), DRIVE Partnership, Homeless Link, RISE Mutual, Single Homelessness Project, Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse and St Mungo's

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## The purpose of this guidance

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The purpose of this guidance is to make recommendations to local authority commissioners, responsible for commissioning supported accommodation and Housing First services that support perpetrators of domestic abuse. The recommendations focus specifically on the importance of the commissioning process in creating a suitable response to perpetrators of domestic abuse, and how this response should be monitored and developed as a contractual requirement for service providers.

This document is intended to be used alongside the '*Guidance and Recommendations for Supported Accommodation and Housing First Providers*', created through three Task and Finishing groups, focusing on mapping out what a perpetrator response in supported accommodation settings should look like. More information about the Task and Finishing groups can be found in the [corresponding document](#).

## The issue

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For supported accommodation settings accommodating perpetrators of domestic abuse, there is often no contractual obligation for the service provider to provide specialist intervention for the perpetrator, allowing them to support the perpetrators to be accountable for their abusive behaviours. The onus is then on the support provider to decide on their domestic abuse response, which often focuses on the survivor and how they can keep themselves safe, without addressing the perpetrator's behaviour as the cause of the issue.

Whilst professionals with expertise in the sector can make recommendations to service providers on how to support perpetrators, it will not always be possible for these recommendations to be actioned, without the endorsement of local authority commissioners, as these recommendations can come with additional cost and may change a services' priorities.



## The importance of a demonstrable response to domestic abuse

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Survivors and perpetrators of domestic abuse can be found across supported accommodation settings, and without formalised agreements in place at a contract management level, perpetrators will not always be held to account in supported accommodation and Housing First settings. It is crucial that a clear response to perpetrators is seen at the top level, through service specifications, service level agreements and contracts – to show accountability of service providers for their contribution to tackling domestic abuse.

Contract monitoring requirements should include demonstrable outcomes of work around addressing domestic abuse and multiple disadvantage, and budget requirements for specialist training should also be considered as part of funding bids.

Having a structured domestic abuse response should be considered an essential requirement for organisation supporting perpetrators of domestic abuse experiencing multiple disadvantage, just as a response to other issues, such as substance use would be.

# Recommendations

## 1. Recognise the unique needs of perpetrators and survivors experiencing homelessness and multiple disadvantage

- In bids for services that support perpetrators and survivors of domestic abuse, providers should evidence that they recognise the needs of perpetrators experiencing homelessness and multiple disadvantage, and how to effectively work with both **perpetrators and survivors of domestic abuse**<sup>1</sup>.
- Commissioners should look for evidence from service providers of examples of how they already or are planning to work with survivors and perpetrators experiencing homelessness and multiple disadvantage. This could be through examples of case studies, or KPI's from existing services they provide.
- Commissioners also need to recognise that running services for survivors of domestic abuse experiencing homelessness and multiple disadvantage is not evidence that a provider will be able to provide effective services for perpetrators. Bids that aim to work collaboratively with specialist perpetrator services are favourable to ensure specialist support for perpetrators is sourced.

## 2. Evidence of a DA policy, training provision and effective methods of information recording, sharing and multiagency safeguarding work

- It should be a requirement for all providers awarded funding to have a domestic abuse policy. This policy should outline their response to domestic abuse, including how they will hold perpetrators to account as well as ensure the safety of survivors.
- It should be a contractual requirement that all professionals interacting with service users who are potential perpetrators, have access to basic training on working with perpetrators. This training should be from a **RESPECT**<sup>2</sup> accredited/recommended specialist training provider. If we are expecting services to commit to upskilling their staff, to provide perpetrator support, there needs to be set budgets awarded in contracts to allow for staff training.
- Providers should evidence their ability to work within wider multiagency safeguarding platforms such as **MARAC**<sup>3</sup>, **MAPPA**<sup>4</sup> and **MATAC**<sup>5</sup>, potentially through having a designated lead for these meetings. Commissioners should ensure multiagency work is evidenced as part of data returns and is monitored throughout the duration of the contract.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.standingtogether.org.uk/working-effectively-with-perpetrators>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.respect.uk.net/pages/respect-accredited-services>

<sup>3</sup> <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/MARAC%20FAQs%20General%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-public-protection-arrangements-mappa-guidance>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.governmentevents.co.uk/working-together-to-combat-domestic-abuse-the-benefits-of-multi-agency-cooperation/>

Organisations may evidence their commitment to these recommendations, by becoming DAHA accredited, through [DAHA's accreditation for Homelessness and Supported Housing Providers](#). The purpose of this accreditation is to meaningfully address the housing, safety and support needs of all victim/survivors of domestic abuse in these services, particularly those with experiences of homelessness and multiple disadvantage, and hold perpetrators to account.

### 3. Consider accessibility of existing perpetrator support interventions for those experiencing homelessness and multiple disadvantage

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- Commissioners should consider what is currently available to perpetrators and whether these interventions are accessible to those experiencing homelessness and multiple disadvantage. Many existing perpetrator programmes are not accessible to this cohort of individuals as they require commitment to a long-term course and/or behavioural change work. Bids for funding need to explicitly state intention to work with those experiencing homelessness and multiple disadvantage, to address this barrier to accessing perpetrator services.
- Work with service leads and perpetrator specialists to respond to any gaps in provision for perpetrators experiencing homelessness and multiple disadvantages. This includes supporting to source further funding to introduce/enhance provision of services for this cohort. Where new services are being developed, commissioners should ensure to take a flexible and holistic approach to commissioning a service, to ensure the needs of perpetrators experiencing multiple disadvantage can be met.





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