

The Warwickshire Safe Accommodation Strategy

2025 - 2028



safe in...
warwickshire

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Foreword

He used to have paranoia and would say that the children and I were talking about him. He would call me constantly whilst I was on the school run, asking who was in the car with me. I would be on eggshells not knowing what to expect when I got home. He would make accusations saying, "You've been with other men", telling me names of men I had never heard of. If I spoke up for myself or answered back, he would get very angry. He became violent, throwing things at me, displaying aggressive behaviour, and slapping me in the face. He sometimes woke me in the night by punching me in the back and shouting abuse at me. This led to my drug and alcohol misuse as a coping strategy to numb the abuse. He also was abusing drugs and alcohol, and his behaviour would escalate.

I applied for a non-molestation order to keep him away, but he ignored this and kept returning to my property and calling me non-stop. I moved into temporary accommodation to try and remove myself from the situation, and I didn't speak to him for some time. I was still struggling with drug and alcohol misuse from the trauma. One day I had an excessive number of missed calls from him, and I eventually answered. He told me his cousin had a bag of baby clothes, so I drove over to collect them. He was there and got into my car and told me to drive so he could talk to me. I could tell he was under the influence and that made me nervous. I was stopped by the police, and he had a firearm in his possession. The children were with me and they were removed from my care and went to live with my sister. I then moved into temporary accommodation alone through the local authority, but this wasn't suitable as I was still struggling with addiction. I completed a Clare's Law¹ and reached out to the Warwickshire Domestic Violence and Abuse Service (delivered by Refuge), telling them I felt I couldn't move forward and needed more support. I was allocated a support worker and she suggested I move into Safe Accommodation.

I have now been in Safe Accommodation for a number of months, I have stopped using alcohol and drugs and completed courses on domestic abuse and mental wellbeing. I have been offered a property and am due to be reunited with my children, which is a brand-new opportunity to rebuild my life. I am so thankful for the support I received from the Warwickshire Domestic Violence and Abuse Service.

Warwickshire Domestic Abuse Survivor



Foreword

Cllr Crump and Cllr Bell

Domestic abuse is an insidious crime that leads to long-term damage to people and communities. Any abuse or violence is unacceptable, and we stand with all victim-survivors regardless of their identifying characteristics. Warwickshire County Council takes a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse in all forms and works closely with our partners to support those affected. We will continue to raise awareness of domestic abuse at every opportunity, to make it a visible crime.

Domestic abuse causes immeasurable harm to individuals, children, families and communities. It has a lasting impact on physical and mental health and can result in housing and financial insecurity, and damaged social networks. Tragically, it can sometimes lead to the loss of life.

In the year ending March 2023, the Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that 2.1 million people aged 16 years and over (1.4 million women and 751,000 men) experienced domestic abuse. In Warwickshire, there were 2,993 referrals between April 2023 and March 2024 to our commissioned domestic abuse provider.

It is a common myth that domestic abuse only involves physical violence. It can in fact take on many forms including coercive control, economic abuse, technological abuse, psychological and emotional abuse, physical and sexual abuse, harassment and stalking. Every single one of us can be alert to the signs of domestic abuse and help ensure that no victim feels alone.

Abusive relationships are complex. It takes a huge amount of strength and courage for a victim to leave, which is just the start of their journey to safety. Victim-survivors need us to understand that it may be difficult – and dangerous – for them to leave. The significant upheaval of leaving their every possession behind including their home to ensure their own, and their children's, safety must not be underestimated. The SafeLives insight data shows that one in four victims is living with the domestic abuse perpetrator. This is why around 52% of victims need support to secure new accommodation, or security devices to stay safe in their own home.

Since the implementation of the Safe Accommodation Duty, organisations in Warwickshire have made fantastic, collaborative, progress in improving the safe accommodation provision, accompanied by emotional and practical support for victim-survivors and their children. However, we are aware that more can be done to ensure that all victim-survivors have a safe place to go and support services that meet their needs.

With this in mind we are delighted to present to you the Warwickshire Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025 – 2028, which sets out our partnership approach to continuing our support for victim-survivors across Warwickshire. This strategy highlights a range of options to remain safe at home, or to access suitable alternative safe accommodation and support whilst meeting the requirements as set out in the Safe Accommodation Duty within the Domestic Abuse Act.

We extend our personal thanks to everyone who has contributed to developing this strategy and we want to particularly thank those Warwickshire victim-survivors who were brave enough to share their experiences and stories of domestic abuse.



Cllr Andy Crump
Chair of Safer
Warwickshire
Partnership Board



Cllr Margaret Bell
Portfolio Holder for Adult
Social Care and Health
(Warwickshire County
Council)

Executive Summary

The Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025 – 2028 outlines how Warwickshire will continue to implement the statutory duties associated with the Safe Accommodation Duty, as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. It reflects on the previous Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 – 2024, highlighting what Warwickshire has achieved in the past three years and describes how safe accommodation and support for domestic abuse (DA) victim-survivors will be provided across Warwickshire over the next three years.

The Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025 – 2028 will continue to focus on the five key objectives (as set out in the 2021 – 2024 strategy), these include:

- 1. Early intervention and prevention:** that victim-survivors (adults and children) are supported at an early stage and provided with options to remain safe at home to prevent homelessness. This includes holding perpetrators to account for their behaviour.
- 2. Accessible services:** that victim-survivors and professionals know how to access safe accommodation options, both within and outside of Warwickshire.
- 3. Appropriate safe accommodation:** that accommodation options and appropriate support is in place for all victim-survivors who need it.
- 4. Multi-agency delivery:** that victim-survivors needs will be met by effective, collaborative multi-agency support.
- 5. Support to return home or move on:** that victim-survivors are supported to return home safely and/or move into alternative permanent accommodation.

To support the strategy Warwickshire has undertaken consultation exercises to engage with victim-survivors and professionals working in local services. The objectives set out in the strategy were developed in partnership with a range of statutory, community and voluntary organisations across the county.

The strategy seeks to facilitate a coordinated and strategic response to delivering the Safe Accommodation Duty and will complement the existing work across the county to address community safety, health and wellbeing and the housing needs of those who experience DA in Warwickshire.

Why is the Safe Accommodation Strategy required?

1



National Context

This strategy has been produced by Warwickshire County Council, in collaboration with the Warwickshire Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Board partners and received support from the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board (SWPB) whose remit is to create safer communities through the reduction of crime and the promotion of safety. Throughout this strategy, the term Warwickshire Partnership is used to describe the organisations who are members of the VAWG Board.

- It is estimated that approximately 4 in 100 people aged 16 or over in England and Wales experienced DA in the year ending March 2023². This equates to 2.1 million people nationally and almost 20,000 residents of Warwickshire.
- The Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that adults aged 16 to 74 years with a disability were more likely to have experienced DA in 2022-2023 than those without a disability.
- DA can result in fatal outcomes, including homicide and death by suicide, with far-reaching and devastating consequences. On average 8 women a month are killed by a current or ex-partner in England and Wales³.
- Around 30% of DA begins during pregnancy and around 40 to 60% of women experiencing domestic abuse are abused during pregnancy⁴. This can cause emotional and mental health problems such as stress and anxiety, which can affect the development of the baby.
- It is estimated that each case of DA costs the taxpayer £34,015 on average with each domestic homicide estimated to cost £2.2 million due to the cost of harms, cost to health services and lost output⁵.
- It is estimated that nearly half a million victim-survivors of DA seek assistance from medical professionals every year.
- Victim-survivors of DA can experience depression, post-traumatic stress, anxiety disorders, sleep difficulties, eating disorders and suicide attempts. SafeLives insights found that between April 2022 and March 2023 46% of clients had a diagnosed mental health condition, the most common were depression (63%), anxiety (53%) and personality disorders (19%).
- Approximately 1 in 5 children have lived with an adult perpetrating DA⁶

- Evidence suggests children growing up with DA have a higher rate of mental health difficulties compared to those who don't, with potential implications for a child's life-long wellbeing.
- 52% of DA victim-survivors need support to help them stay in their own home or move to new accommodation⁷.
- 10% of those supported with housing (between 2016-2019) were moved out of their local authority area⁷.
- A 2019 Women's Aid Survivor Voice Survey reported that in the first-year post-separation, 59% of survey respondents had moved home at least once; 39% had moved twice or more and 20% had moved three times or more.
- DA has been estimated to create housing costs of £160 million per year⁹.
- Between April 2022 and March 2023, local authorities supported 50,670 individuals in safe accommodation – 21,170 of those were children¹⁰.
- SafeLives Insights data shows that 22% of those accessing support from a domestic abuse service were living with the perpetrator when they entered the service.

Warwickshire County Council itself has several areas of focus to improve the lives of victim-survivors and generally, those who work and live in Warwickshire. Specific to DA these areas of focus include:

- Create vibrant places with safe and inclusive communities.
- Support people to live healthy, happy, and independent lives and work with partners to reduce health inequalities.

Warwickshire's Vision:

Warwickshire is committed to supporting victim-survivors of DA to access appropriate safe accommodation and related support across the county. Our vision in Warwickshire is that all victim-survivors and their children:

- Are able to access safe accommodation that meets their needs.
- Are able to access support services that meet their needs.
- Are able to live safely, free from harm and supported, via target hardening, to stay in their home should they wish to.
- Do not face barriers when fleeing from DA and accessing safe accommodation provision.

Strategic Context

Warwickshire has a well-established Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Board¹¹, that subsumes the responsibilities of a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The VAWG Board's duties as the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board are as follows:

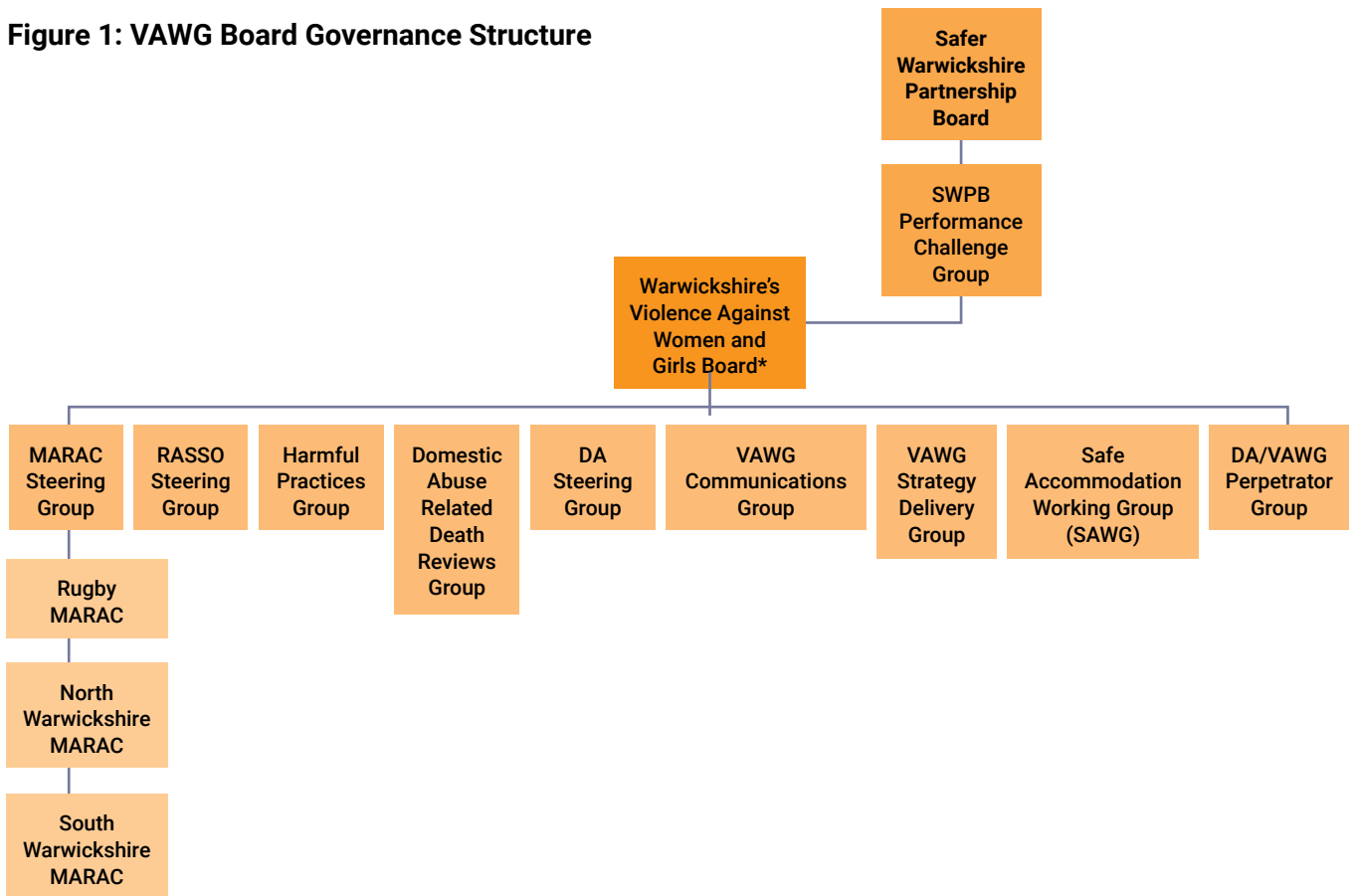
- **Assess the need and demand for accommodation-based support**
- **Develop and publish strategies for the provision of support**
- **Give effect to the strategies by making commissioning decisions**
- **Meet the support needs of victim-survivors and their children**
- **Monitor and evaluate local delivery**
- **Maintain compliance between Tier One and Tier Two local authorities**

The VAWG Board reports into the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board (SWPB), the executive-level body which oversees community safety work in Warwickshire.

The current governance structure for the VAWG Board is shown in figure 1.



Figure 1: VAWG Board Governance Structure



The VAWG Board's broader role is to provide strategic oversight and focus on solutions to address the following areas of violence

- **Domestic abuse (DA)**

- **Sexual violence (SV)**

- **Sexual exploitation (SE)**

- **Harmful Practices (including Forced Marriage (FM), 'Honour'-Based Violence (HBV), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and faith-based abuse).**

The Safe Accommodation and VAWG Strategic Delivery Group¹², which is a sub-group of the VAWG Board, will lead on the implementation of the Safe Accommodation Strategy, and will continue to:

This renewed Safe Accommodation Strategy will be reviewed annually utilising the findings from the annual needs assessment to ensure it is responsive to the emerging needs of victim-survivors of DA who are accessing services in Warwickshire.

A delivery plan will be developed to accompany the strategy and outline how the objectives set out in the strategy will be met. Both short-term and long-term actions will be detailed to enrich existing safe accommodation provision within Warwickshire. The delivery plan will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Safe Accommodation and VAWG Strategic Delivery Group, and updates will be provided to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).



Context

The Scope of the Safe Accommodation Strategy

The Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025 – 2028 outlines how Warwickshire will continue to implement the statutory duties relating to safe accommodation, as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. It will reflect on the past three years, since the implementation of the 2021 – 2024 strategy, highlighting the areas of achievement within Warwickshire and will outline the continued areas of focus for the next three years (2025 – 2028).

During 2023, Warwickshire’s VAWG Board published its Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy, which sets out Warwickshire’s three-year plan relating to the broader partnership response to DA and VAWG. The strategy focuses on four key priorities, which are Prioritisation, Supporting Victims, Pursuing Perpetrators and Reducing Re-offending, and Strengthening the System.

The Safe Accommodation Strategy will form part of a suite of county strategies that incorporate tackling DA in Warwickshire, including:

- **Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2023 – 2026**
- **Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024 - 2030**
- **Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2020 - 2025**
- **Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023**
- **Police and Crime Plan**
- **Local Community Safer Partnership Plans**
- **County Community Safety Agreement**

Effective integration of the Safe Accommodation Strategy further embeds Warwickshire’s approach to tackling DA, as follows:

Coordinated Multi-agency Response

To ensure the best outcomes for victim-survivors of domestic abuse, all agencies will continue to work collaboratively to effectively tackle DA and the barriers victim-survivors face when accessing safe accommodation options.

Victim-Survivor Voice

To enable us to ensure our safe accommodation provision is accessible to all victim-survivors it is vital that we continue to hear from victim-survivors, their communities, and professionals who advocate on their behalf. This will enable us to identify any areas of focus, barriers and priorities.

Our approach to tackling DA

Intersectionality

We will continue to monitor, address and review any gaps in safe accommodation provision, to support those with protected characteristics and those who are disproportionately affected by DA.

Continuous Learning and Development

Our approach will continue to be evidence-based and continuously reviewed using emerging intelligence and reviewing trends. We will continue to reflect on our practice including the findings from Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (formally known as Domestic Homicide Reviews – DHRs) and other Serious Case Reviews to identify good practice and any learnings related to safe accommodation support and provision.

What is Domestic Abuse?

DA causes significant harm to individuals, children, families, and communities, and its scale and impact is vast. Not only does DA have a lasting impact on physical and mental health, it can result in housing and financial insecurity.

It is estimated that there were 19,169 cases of DA in Warwickshire between 2023 - 2024. The Warwickshire Domestic Violence and Abuse (WDVA) Service received 798 referrals into the safe accommodation services between 2023 – 2024.

In addition, it is estimated that within a three-year period (April 2020 – March 2023) there were a total of 13,447 children under 18 who were impacted by a DA offence reported to Warwickshire Police.

This strategy adopts the government definition of DA that is outlined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021¹³. Under this Act, behaviour of a person towards another person is 'domestic abuse', if:

Both individuals are each aged 16 years of age or over and are 'personally connected'¹⁴ to each other:

- the behaviour is abusive.

Behaviour is 'abusive' when it consists of any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse.
- Violent or threatening behaviour.
- Controlling or coercive behaviour.
- Economic abuse.
- Psychological, emotional, or other abuse.



Victim-Survivor Voices

Integral to shaping the strategy has been hearing directly from victim-survivors. Warwickshire has undertaken engagement activities to enable victim-survivors from across the county to provide their feedback and thoughts on the existing DA support available and to assist us with identifying any barriers or areas for improvement. 55 victim-survivors responded to the survey, along with an additional 8 victim-survivors currently residing in safe accommodation in Warwickshire.

The findings are embedded within the strategy, and some of the views of victim-survivors are shown below:

<p><i>"I found myself without support after 8pm. Having to call a number, and having to tell someone the whole story over and over is trauma."</i></p>	<p><i>'I have been able to access support through Refuge, DACS counselling and other services, which has been very rewarding and helped me grow as a person and find myself.'</i></p>	<p><i>'There needs to be [somewhere] in Warwickshire... where victims can build a community for themselves and help rebuild their lives... [Domestic abuse] doesn't go away when you leave refuge accommodation and get your own home.'</i></p>
<p><i>"I did not know so much help was available. I thought I would have to wait until my daughter was much older before we could... An incident at the school meant school phoned social services and I am overwhelmed with all the help available..."</i></p>	<p><i>'Refuge have been absolutely brilliant helping me and my daughter... It's because of people like them and all this help that me and my daughter will have a totally different life, safe and free and happy...'</i></p>	<p><i>"I was left for 5 weeks waiting with no contact off anyone before I got a place. But as soon as they found one I was placed quickly".</i></p>
<p><i>"I have children with SEN and I did not want to take them out of the home... I could not move out of the house without causing more harm to the children and I found there was not much support staying put", and "My husband said if I left the home, I'd be abandoning the family home and it would be used against me", and "I felt stuck because of my children and their needs. I felt that I couldn't leave the family home but my husband refused to move out."</i></p>	<p><i>"That there is more support for women who are struggling to leave an abusive relationship. There are lots of reasons why a woman may wish to stay in the family home and those reasons are valid. There shouldn't be any judgement in that. There should be more support and help for a woman to figure out the ways forward."</i></p>	<p><i>'To effect meaningful change, we must prioritise education and training. Frontline professionals, including healthcare workers, social workers, educators, and law enforcement officers, should receive comprehensive training on recognising the signs of domestic abuse and responding with empathy and sensitivity.'</i></p>
<p><i>'Living in the refuge has let me feel safe and supported.'</i></p>	<p><i>"...I didn't realise there was support available for non-physical abuse."</i></p>	<p><i>"I am deaf, so cannot access help via phone as can't hear, can only use email or text and a lot of places did not offer this at time I was experiencing abuse. I didn't know what resources were available."</i></p>

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (the Act), which received Royal Assent in April 2021¹⁵, introduced a number of powers and tools that partner agencies can use to have a positive impact on victim-survivors and their children. The Act 2021 aims to:

- **Raise awareness and understanding about the impact of DA on victims and their families**
- **Improve the effectiveness of the justice system in providing protection of victims and bringing perpetrators to justice**
- **Strengthen the support for victims of abuse by statutory agencies**



The Safe Accommodation Duty

Part 4 of the Act established a new duty upon Tier One local authorities in England to provide support to victim-survivors of DA and their children in safe accommodation. This is referred to as the Safe Accommodation Duty. It also places a duty on each Tier One local authority in England to:

- **Appoint a local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board**
- **Assess the need for accommodation-based DA support in their area for all victims or their children, including those who come from outside the area**
- **Develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, having regard to the needs assessment**
- **Give effect to the strategy (through commissioning and de-commissioning decisions)**
- **Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy**
- **Report back to central government**
- **Require local authorities to have regard to the statutory guidance in exercising their functions**

The Act does not place a requirement on authorities to provide DA victim-survivors with accommodation.

The Act defines safe accommodation as: *“...solely dedicated to providing a safe place to stay for victims of domestic abuse, including expert support...”*

The following details the description of ‘relevant safe accommodation’ as specified by the Secretary of State in regulations:

Refuge accommodation

- A refuge offers single gender or single sex accommodation and DA 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 DA 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.

Dispersed accommodation

- Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of DA), self-contained accommodation with a similar level of specialist DA 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.

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 DA 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

- 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 DA 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 DA) with DA support tied to the accommodation to enable victims to make informed decisions when leaving a perpetrator and seeking safe accommodation. For example, short term (e.g. 2-3 weeks) accommodation providing victims with the space and safety to consider and make informed decisions about the options available to them.

Domestic Abuse Support In Safe Accommodation:

Safe Accommodation Duty Funding

MHCLG has committed to providing funding for the delivery of the Safe Accommodation Duty. Warwickshire County Council and the district and borough councils across Warwickshire have each received additional funding related to the implementation of the duty.

Detailed below are the funding allocations since 2021/22.

Table 1: MHCLG funding allocation to local authorities in Warwickshire

LOCAL AUTHORITY	FUNDING ALLOCATION 2021/22	FUNDING ALLOCATION 2022/23	FUNDING ALLOCATION 2023/24	FUNDING ALLOCATION 2024/25
Warwickshire County Council	£1,040,132	£1,043,011	£1,063,876	£1,083,948
North Warwickshire Borough Council	£34,867	£34,896	£36,792	£37,486
Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council	£31,944	£31,970	£33,708	£34,343
Rugby Borough Council	£34,240	£34,268	£36,131	£36,812
Warwick District Council	£34,498	£34,527	£36,403	£37,089
Stratford-on-Avon District Council	£34,416	£34,444	£36,316	£37,000
TOTAL	£1,210,097	£1,213,166	£1,243,226	£1,266,678

At the time of writing this Strategy future funding from MHCLG post-March 2025 has not been confirmed, but as this is a statutory duty, it should continue to be appropriately funded to ensure that victim-survivors are able to access support to meet their needs within safe accommodation.

Funding allocations should be confirmed at the next Spending Review.

Summary of Domestic Abuse in Warwickshire

Supported by the Warwickshire Partnership, Warwickshire County Council conducted a Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment, the findings of this are detailed below. It is worth noting that DA often goes under-reported, so it is difficult to ascertain the full scale of its prevalence in Warwickshire.

Using Office for National Statistics (ONS) data, we are able to estimate that there were

19,169 cases of domestic abuse in Warwickshire

between April 2022 – March 2023

We can estimate that there were around...

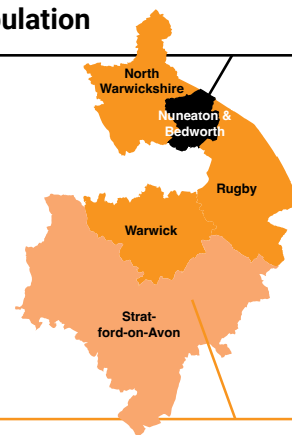


12,523
female cases



6,911
male cases

Nuneaton & Bedworth has a higher rate of DA offences with a rate of 16.0 per 1,000 population



In comparison Stratford-on-Avon has the lowest rate of 8.7 per 1,000 population

Within Warwickshire there have been...

15 Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews

that were adopted between March 2020 - December 2023

Between April 2022 – March 2023 there were...

6683

police-recorded DA offences and crimed incidents

compared to April 2021 - March 2022 (a 7.3% reduction).

It is worth noting that the changes in home office counting rules may have impacted the reduction in these figures

There has been an increase in the number of **children** accommodated in the Warwickshire refuges



Between April 2023 - March 2024:

91 children were admitted into the refuge accommodation

compared to **77** the previous year

Warwickshire had a total of

980 cases

referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

Compared to 848 for the same period in the previous year

The Warwickshire Safe Accommodation service received

798 referrals

the majority of referrals came from the district and borough housing departments with the second highest proportion being self-referrals

Warwickshire refuge service received

168 referrals

compared to 122 for the same period in the previous year. The majority of referrals into the Warwickshire refuge service were self-referrals

17% of referrals into the Warwickshire refuge service disclosed complex mental health needs and required more specialised support

District and borough councils recorded

604 households presenting as homeless

as a result of domestic abuse



157 referrals into the Warwickshire Sanctuary Scheme,

a total of 122 victim-survivors had their homes fitted with the scheme

93.9% of referrals

to the Warwickshire Safe Accommodation service identified as female



A 35% increase

in those who are active Change Grow Live (CGL) service users for substance misuse disclosing either current or historic domestic abuse

An average of

10.6% of all victim-survivors

accessing the WDVA service had disclosed substance misuse

Summary of Safe Accommodation needs:

Tier One local authorities are required to undertake an annual needs assessment as part of the duties set out in the Safe Accommodation Duty. The needs assessment is to determine the level of demand for accommodation within the county and the potential support needs required.

Part of the needs assessment is to analyse the demand for safe accommodation with a breakdown of each district and borough to enable Warwickshire to understand the areas where demand is highest.

Table two illustrates the number of households who presented to the district and boroughs as homeless as a result of DA.



Table 2: Number of households presenting as homeless

DISTRICT / BOROUGH	2022/23	2023/24
Warwick	194	179
Stratford	161	163
Nuneaton and Bedworth	145	116
Rugby	55	60
North Warwickshire	32	86
TOTAL	587	604

From table 2 above we are able to identify that there has been an increase in the number of presentations of homelessness due to DA. There has been a slight reduction in Nuneaton and Bedworth borough and Warwick district.

It is worth noting that due to the nature of DA, victim-survivors and their families, may be placed out of county to ensure their safety. The data captured will include those who may have presented to Warwickshire from out of county.

Between April 2023 - March 2024, the Warwickshire refuge accommodation service received **168 referrals**, of which **53%** disclosed they were from out of county.

Additional findings from the Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment found:

An increase in the number of victim-survivors presenting to services that are aged **45 years plus**



Most victim-survivors presenting to services are cis-gender females, there continues to be low referrals into the service from males

Most victim-survivors accessing services **identify as heterosexual** there continues to be low referrals into the service from those who identify as LGBT+.



62% of victim-survivors who responded to the Call for Evidence stated that they had been housed in temporary or emergency accommodation before they were able to secure a safe accommodation provision

Victim-survivors have **had varied experience of accessing safe accommodation provision within the county**

There continues to be victim-survivors presenting to services for safe accommodation provision **who are unable to be housed in a refuge provision due to complex needs** (Warwickshire currently does not have any refuges with 24-hour support)

Data shows that there has been an **increase in the number of those presenting to services who have disclosed a disability, between April 2022 - March 2023 118 victim-survivors disclosed a disability compared to 209 between April 2023 and March 2024**

The majority of children linked to a DA referral were **aged between 0-5 years old**



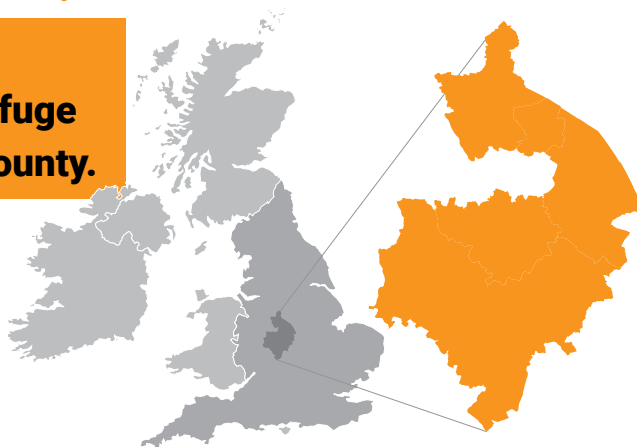
this continues to be a trend demonstrating how often young families are affected by DA

There needs to be **more feedback from victim-survivors on their experiences and needs** and better understanding of what victim-survivors' preferences are regarding safe accommodation services

Warwickshire's Safe Accommodation gaps

The majority of victim-survivors accommodated in Warwickshire's refuge provisions are from outside of the county.

Nationally, reciprocal agreements are in place so Warwickshire victim-survivors who need to be accommodated outside of the county due to safety reasons are able to access refuge provision



There is no safe accommodation provision for those who require 24-hour support to support those with complex needs



There is a lack of awareness amongst professionals of the new dispersed refuge accommodation provision and the gaps that this service addresses

Only 38% of professionals who responded to the Call for Evidence were aware of the scheme



There are a limited number of refuge accommodation spaces for victim-survivors with a physical disability

Warwickshire professionals highlighted barriers for victim-survivors being able to 'move-on' from temporary accommodation and / or refuge accommodation due to:



Impact of debt/ rent arrears



Victim-survivors having assets e.g., owning a property



Availability of housing stock

There is a **high number** of victim-survivors presenting to services with **mental health needs**



50% of those who responded to the Call for Evidence stated that they felt they needed more support with their mental health.



Demand for safe accommodation continues to outweigh supply, professionals citing the most common reasons for not being able to support victim-survivors as:

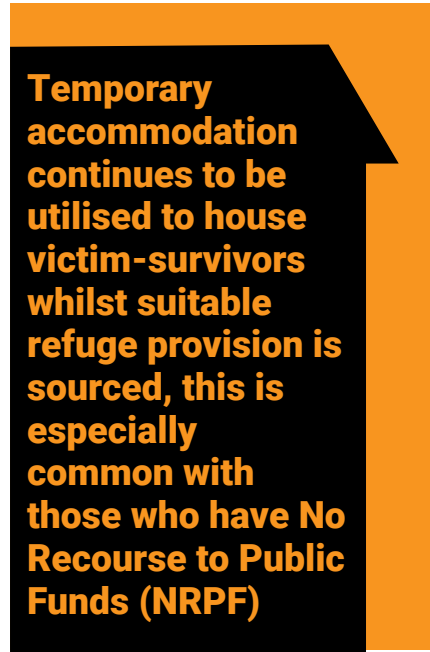
No Recourse to Public Funds, capacity or resource challenges and victim-survivors with additional or complex needs.



An increase in demand for safe accommodation refuge provision to accommodate for

larger families and those with sons over the age of 14

who are unable to access traditional refuge provision



Temporary accommodation continues to be utilised to house victim-survivors whilst suitable refuge provision is sourced, this is especially common with those who have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

There is a lack of awareness of the Sanctuary Scheme amongst professionals



48% of professionals who responded to the Call for Evidence were not aware of the Sanctuary Scheme

90% of professionals who responded to the Call for Evidence either agreed, somewhat agreed, or strongly agreed that the service or organisation they work for

received more referrals for safe accommodation provision than they could cater for



50% of WDVA service users found it difficult to secure refuge accommodation provision.

What will the Safe
Accommodation
Strategy achieve?

2



SafeLives Insights national data states that 30% of victim-survivors are in an intimate relationship with the perpetrator of abuse at the point of accessing services, with a further 8% of perpetrators being family members¹⁶. One in four victims will be living with the perpetrator, which can be a barrier when accessing help. Victim-survivors who are still living with the perpetrator are likely to experience abuse for an average of six years.

It is an even wider group whose accommodation is destabilised by abuse; whether or not they were living with the perpetrator, over half (52%) needed support to secure new accommodation or stay safe in their own home. Without receiving this support at the right time, victim-survivors of DA can easily become homeless¹⁷.

The Safe Accommodation Strategy will address this through the continued delivery of its five key objectives:

1. Early intervention and prevention: that victim-survivors (adults and children) are supported at an early stage and provided with options to remain safe at home to prevent homelessness. This includes holding perpetrators to account for their behaviour.

2. Accessible services: that victim-survivors and professionals know how to access safe accommodation options, both within and outside of Warwickshire.

3. Appropriate safe accommodation: that accommodation options and appropriate support is in place for all victim-survivors who need it.

4. Multi-agency delivery: that victim-survivors needs will be met by effective, collaborative multi-agency support.

5. Support to return home or move on: that victim-survivors are supported to return home safely and/or move into alternative permanent accommodation.

The Warwickshire partnership will continue to work collaboratively to ensure a multi-agency approach to tackling DA and will continue to work with partners and victim-survivors themselves to better understand the requirements of those fleeing DA and how to provide appropriate safe accommodation options.

Early intervention and prevention

that victim-survivors (adult and children) are supported at an early stage and provided with options to remain safe at home to prevent homelessness. Includes holding perpetrators to account for their behaviour.

What was Warwickshire already doing?

Warwickshire's comprehensive community-based DA service

– The Warwickshire's Domestic Violence and Abuse (WDVA) Service provides a wide range of support to all victim-survivors of DA aged 16 years and over. It supports those who wish to remain safe at their own home with:

- **A helpline / single point of contact for anyone who requires advice and support.**

- **1:1 support provided by Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs), outreach community workers, and Health Advocate Educators (HAEs).**

- **Community-based trauma informed group sessions and drop-in sessions across the county.**

- **Target hardening through the Sanctuary Scheme provision to ensure those remaining at home have adaptations to improve their home security.**

"I feel that many survivors worry that they will have to move far away from the area and support networks if they are to flee and in doing this would be isolated."

(Stakeholder response)

Supporting victim-survivors via strong partnership arrangements ensuring that information is shared effectively to protect victim-survivors and hold perpetrators to account

– Warwickshire Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings bring together professionals from various agencies, including police, probation, health, social care, IDVAs, and other specialists. The purpose of the meetings is to share information on the highest risk cases, to discuss options for increasing safety for the victim-survivor, and to put forward a co-ordinated action plan.

Warwickshire County Council's Childrens Service provide a variety of support services to families:

- The Caring Dads programme and Caring Dads facilitators work on a 1:1 basis with fathers by delivering Healthy Fathering sessions for those unable to attend group sessions.**

- The Healing Together programme and Feeling Safe work is offered to children and families.**

- The Tranquillity Group is a 10-week programme for women victim-survivors offered throughout the county.**

- A Risk Assessment Officer delivers regular domestic abuse awareness sessions and updates to Dedicated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) in schools.**

- Working closely with professionals from a variety of agencies to ensure victim-survivors have access to all support available.**

- Specialist DA social workers to support victim-survivors.**

The Warwickshire partnership use their powers to ensure perpetrators are held to account for their behaviour – To enable victim-survivors to remain safe in their own home, Warwickshire Police works alongside criminal justice agencies to support victim-survivors with a range of options, including: Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPO), Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPN), Non-Molestation Orders and the promotion of Clare's Law (Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme). Warwickshire also offers perpetrator behaviour change programmes via the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (DAPP) delivered by the Family Intervention Counselling Service (FICS). The DAPP is aimed to support those who want to change their abusive behaviour.

What has Warwickshire achieved since the Safe Accommodation Duty was implemented?

Warwickshire County

Council commissioned a new Children's Service

– Since the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, children are now seen as victims of DA in their own right, and Warwickshire County Council has commissioned a new Children's Service to provide additional support to children and young people who are victims of DA. The service provides support for children aged 4 to 17 years old through a variety of roles, including Children's Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (ChIDVAs) and Children's Support Workers, who support those within the community or in refuge accommodation provision. The service is delivered by the WDVA Service

Safe Accommodation Outreach Workers

– Warwickshire County Council has commissioned two dedicated outreach workers supporting victim-survivors with accessing safe accommodation either via the Sanctuary Scheme or refuge provision. These roles are dedicated to providing support to victim-survivors requiring safe accommodation, and are part of the WDVA Service.

Enhanced Sanctuary Scheme

– Warwickshire County Council has provided additional funding to the existing Sanctuary Scheme to enable us to

support more victim-survivors across the county to stay safe in their own homes.

Working closely with

Education – Partners work closely with education to ensure those working in educational settings have the relevant training and support to identify DA and understand the service offering and referral pathways.

Domestic Abuse Rape & serious sexual offences Team (DART)

– Warwickshire Police has specialist DART Teams whose focus is on high-risk DA, rape, and serious sexual offence cases. Warwickshire Police support victim-survivors with National Monitoring alarms, Stalking Prevention Orders, Non-Molestation Orders, physical alarms on doors and windows, and HARMS markers (where victim-survivor properties are marked with a risk to ensure emergency response).

Comprehensive multi-agency training programme

– Warwickshire County Council commissions a variety of specialist training courses for professionals to support with recognising signs of abuse, signposting, and ensuring prompt and appropriate referrals. Warwickshire has worked with specialist

organisations including Galop, Equation, and The Traveller Movement.

"I have children with SEN and I did not want to take them out of the home... I could not move out of the house without causing more harm to the children and I found there was not much support staying put"

(Victim-survivor response)



What opportunities will Warwickshire take to improve services further?

Warwickshire agencies to work together with education

– Warwickshire agencies will work collaboratively to provide training and awareness sessions for staff in education settings. Warwickshire agencies will support with education sessions for students around DA, the impact this has, and the support that is available across the county.

DART Teams – Warwickshire Police will continue to improve outcome rates for DA-related prosecutions for high-risk cases and work towards an increase in the number of Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) being issued by utilising the specialist DART teams in place.

Warwickshire partners will consider what further early intervention and prevention offer is required in the county

□ **Explore opportunities to work in partnership with educational providers to better identify and support children and families who are impacted by DA.**

□ **Work together with social care to provide support for families impacted by DA and to ensure early intervention and support is provided.**

□ **Work collaboratively with Children and Families teams to explore co-designing effective interventions for families in need of support.**

Warwickshire agencies will work together to protect the safety of survivors so that staying at home is a safe and realistic option for more people – Warwickshire will continue to utilise the Domestic Abuse Act duties and powers and will, increase awareness of options available to victim-survivors, including the Sanctuary Scheme offer, as well as encourage victim-survivors to report all incidents of DA.

Warwickshire partners to explore options around whether DA can be considered a breach of tenancy conditions – Warwickshire will work closely with district and boroughs to explore social landlords' breach of tenancy agreements; this will also require a multi-agency approach to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviour. Warwickshire will explore how other local authorities work with social landlords regarding breach of tenancy due to DA and review learnings.

Accessible services

that victim-survivors and professionals know how to access Safe Accommodation options, both within and outside Warwickshire.

What was Warwickshire already doing?

Warwickshire has a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for access to DA support and refuge provision – Any professional or victim-survivor in Warwickshire is able to call the WDVA Service to access support and refuge provision both within the county and outside of Warwickshire. The service is signed up to a national database, 'Routes to Support', which provides an overview of all refuge provision available nationally.

Warwickshire district and borough councils provide support to victim-survivors of DA who require housing – Victim-survivors of DA who present to the district and borough councils are prioritised for temporary accommodation whilst alternative accommodation options are sought. Referrals are made to the WDVA service for support, and where relevant, refuge accommodation provision.

Warwickshire residents are able to access refuge provision outside of the county either via the WDVA Service or via the National Domestic Abuse Helpline – Warwickshire victim-survivors are able to access refuge provision nationally through a reciprocal agreement that ensures those who need to flee the county for their and their families' safety are able to access provision outside of Warwickshire.



*"I did not know so much help was available."
(Victim-survivor response)*

What has Warwickshire achieved since the Safe Accommodation Duty was implemented?

DA housing officers –

Warwickshire has dedicated DA housing officers at each district and borough council to support victim-survivors with their housing needs.

Targeted Communication campaigns–

Warwickshire has a thorough communications campaign schedule which promotes all services available to raise awareness and ensure engagement with both victim-survivors and professionals. This has included the promotion of the new dispersed refuge accommodation provision.

Awareness raising training sessions –

The WDVA Service

provides year-round training sessions for all professionals to promote the service, including its refuge provision and referral pathways. Alongside this, there are regular briefing notes communicated with partners and internal colleagues on the service and any updates or changes.

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) training –

Warwickshire County Council has commissioned specialist training for housing officers at each district and borough council via the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance to enable officers to identify DA in housing and ensure the safety of victim-survivors who present to them.

“...I wouldn't know where to start to get help.”

(Victim-survivor response)



What opportunities will Warwickshire take to improve services further

Warwickshire will promote the range of safe accommodation options available - This will include dedicated communications campaigns promoting the new dispersed accommodation, the Sanctuary Scheme and support services available. Campaigns will be designed for both victim-survivors and professionals.

Warwickshire County Council will explore accreditation – Warwickshire commissioners will explore the option of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation scheme for all district and borough councils. Work will take place to understand the process and benefits of the accreditation scheme.

Victim-survivor engagement forums – Warwickshire partners will explore potential barriers to accessing safe accommodation provision with victim-survivors through a number of forums, enabling Warwickshire County Council to hear directly from those who have experienced DA.

Additional training and awareness raising sessions with professionals –

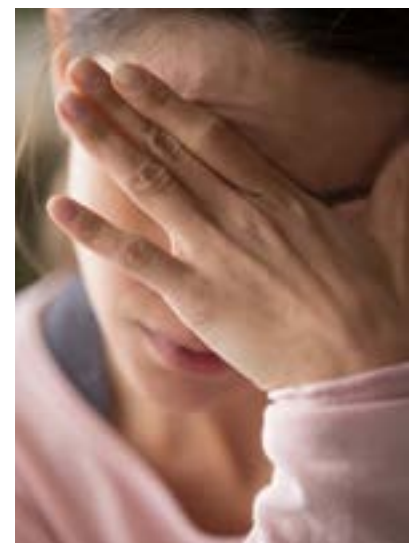
Warwickshire partners will review the current training programme to ensure there is adequate training for professionals regarding the safe accommodation provision across the county and ensure professionals are confident with the referral process.

Ensuring effective and thorough referral pathways

– A review will be undertaken following on from the Call to Evidence to review existing referral pathways and ensure professionals are aware of the process, that the process is effective, and to identify any improvements to be made.

“I am worried that there is not enough accommodation easily accessible within county.”

(Stakeholder response)



“I had no one to turn to and had to find my own shelter.”

(Victim-survivor response)

Appropriate Safe Accommodation

that accommodation options and appropriate support are in place for all victims-survivors who need it.

What was Warwickshire already doing?

Warwickshire's refuge accommodation provision – 24 units of refuge provision open to women and children who are either Warwickshire residents or those out of county as per the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The accommodation is a mixture of communal accommodation and self-contained units and includes support from DA professionals and re-settlement teams too.

Sanctuary Scheme provision – Warwickshire County Council commissions the Sanctuary Scheme to provide home security measures via target hardening. Any victim-survivor living in their own home in Warwickshire is able to access this service.

“More capacity and ability to support people with complex needs”

(Stakeholder response)

“too many victims not enough spaces available”

(Stakeholder response)



What has Warwickshire achieved since the Safe Accommodation Duty was implemented?

Domestic Abuse Counselling and Therapy Service –

Warwickshire County Council commissioned a new specialist counselling and therapy service which is available to both adults and children and young people residing in Warwickshire, who are victims of domestic abuse.

Dispersed refuge accommodation –

Warwickshire has commissioned a pilot scheme of dispersed refuge accommodation across the county. This scheme has addressed gaps that were identified in the existing refuge provision, including spaces suitable for male and LGBT+ victim-survivors, those with disabilities, larger families, those with sons over the age of 14, and those with pets. The dispersed refuge provision is a mixture of flats, 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom houses to enable Warwickshire to support a wide range of victim-survivors.

Improvements to existing refuge provision –

Warwickshire County Council worked with the WDVA service to make significant improvements to an existing refuge provision.

Purpose-built refuge

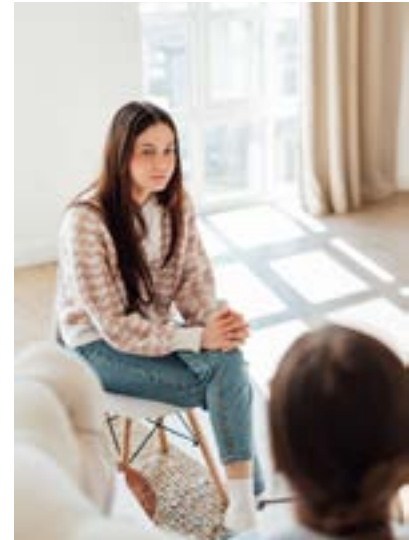
provision - Warwickshire County Council is working closely with partners to explore the option of developing a new purpose-built refuge provision in the county.

Safe Accommodation

standards – Warwickshire created and implemented Safe Accommodation standards for the refuge provision across the county. This ensures that victim-survivors will be accommodated in suitable refuge provision that enables them to begin to re-build their lives in a safe and secure setting.

Warwickshire increased support for children and young people

– Warwickshire has increased support and provision for children and young people who are victims of DA via the implementation of the Childrens Service, as well as an increase in refuge provision suitable for larger families and neuro-divergent children and young people who would benefit from being in an individual refuge accommodation setting.



“I was referred out of Warwickshire area even though I wanted to stay in Warwickshire. There was no availability.”

(Victim-survivor response)

What opportunities will Warwickshire take to improve services further

Warwickshire will ensure that the safe accommodation provision is promoted widely

– Working together with partners, the safe accommodation provision will be widely promoted through a variety of means to raise the awareness to all those in need. Warwickshire will work to promote the services to those from minoritised communities and those with protected characteristics.

Identify any further gaps in refuge provision via needs assessments and engaging with partners and victim-survivors

– Warwickshire commissioners will work closely with victim-survivors via forums to gain a better understanding of their needs. Annual needs assessments will be completed and reviewed alongside partners.

Warwickshire will work to ensure all victim-survivors are able to access refuge provision and support services

– Warwickshire partners will identify additional partners who can provide specialist support to minoritised and under-represented communities. Opportunities will be identified to ensure that victim-survivors from these communities are aware of all safe accommodation services in the county and do not face additional barriers to accessing them.

Warwickshire will identify all suitable safe accommodation options

– Warwickshire County Council will work closely with all districts and boroughs to complete a mapping exercise of all safe accommodation options in order to identify all suitable options, take into consideration any gaps in provision, and review whether the safe accommodation provision is equitable across the county.

Warwickshire will continue to expand the safe accommodation refuge provision

– Warwickshire will work to ensure all victim-survivors are able to access refuge provision and will focus on the continued expansion of the dispersed refuge accommodation provision. It will also continue to work closely with the WDVA Service to ensure equitable provision across the county and ensure provision addresses any gaps that have been identified.

Warwickshire to explore co-commissioning opportunities

– Warwickshire will work with neighbouring authorities to consider jointly commissioning services where appropriate, with a specific focus on safe accommodation provision and support services.

“...those at highest risk of self harm cannot access refuge as the service is not 24 hour and cannot keep them safe.”

(Stakeholder response)



“Not enough resources to help me and my family who were subjected to abuse even after I left the relationship...”

(Victim-survivor response)

Multi-agency delivery

that victim-survivors needs will be met by effective, collaborative multi-agency support.

What was Warwickshire already doing?

Warwickshire partners work together to ensure good multi-agency working – To ensure victim-survivors are fully supported and to reduce the risk of harm, Warwickshire partners work together. These include but are not limited to: the WDVA Service, Warwickshire Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Adult and Children’s Social Care, District and Borough Housing Teams, Schools, Probation, Mental Health Services, and Drug and Alcohol Services.

Warwickshire worked with specialist agencies to gain advice in supporting victim-survivors in relation to No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), ‘honour’-based violence, FGM, modern slavery, forced marriage, and faith-based abuse.

“More partnership working, and a better response to presenting survivors”.

(Stakeholder response)



What has Warwickshire achieved since the Safe Accommodation Duty was implemented?

Warwickshire implemented a new Power BI dashboard

– To support with safe accommodation data analysis, a new Power BI dashboard was created. Data is routinely collated from Warwickshire partners to allow for the identification of trends and any gaps in current safe accommodation provision.

Engagement with victim-survivors and professionals on their experiences –

Warwickshire undertook a Call for Evidence to support with the formation of this Strategy. Feedback was received from victim-survivors and professionals on their experiences of accessing services, the current safe accommodation provision and views on any areas for improvement.

Multi-agency awareness raising via communication campaigns –

Warwickshire has a dedicated communications group who oversee all communication and engagement activity; this has included specific communications around the safe accommodation provision and promotion of the new dispersed refuge accommodation scheme.

Implementation of the Safe Accommodation Working Group (SAWG)¹⁸ –

Warwickshire County Council implemented the SAWG to oversee the delivery of the Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 – 2024 and subsequent delivery plan. The group meets quarterly and includes representation from a wide variety of Warwickshire partners.

Multi-agency awareness raising –

Warwickshire County Council targeted specific sectors including hairdressers, salons, and gyms to deliver specific training around DA, such as how to spot signs of DA, how to make referrals into services, and how to respond to any disclosures of DA including an overview of the refuge accommodation provision.

Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board review –

Warwickshire's VAWG Board is the Local Partnership Board. A governance review was conducted to ensure that the Safe Accommodation Duty is being met effectively.

Warwickshire partners worked together to conduct deep-dive analysis –

Warwickshire partners worked collaboratively to conduct deep dive analysis to better understand needs, demand, and barriers, in addition to annual needs assessments. Deep dives have been conducted around male victim-survivors, familial abuse, and stalking. Analysis has been conducted on a locality basis, focusing on specific areas identified through data received from partners.

Annual needs assessments –

Warwickshire County Council and partners ensure that a detailed annual needs assessment is completed and submitted to MHCLG.

“...I had to seek help myself. The social services didn't pick up on the abuse or my mental health as a result of the abuse...”

(Victim-survivor response)

¹⁸Moving forward the SAWG will be known as the Safe Accommodation and VAWG Strategic Delivery Group and will oversee the delivery of both the Safe Accommodation Strategy 2025 – 2028 and the VAWG Strategy 2023 – 2026.

What opportunities will Warwickshire take to improve services further

Warwickshire to explore further co-location opportunities

– Warwickshire County Council will work closely with partners and the WDVA Service to identify further opportunities for co-location to support with improved multi-agency working and relationships.

Support implementation of the Pathfinder service

– Warwickshire Children and Family services will be implementing a new Pathfinder service. DA practitioners will work in specific localities as part of Family Help, where there is a need for enabling children, families, and young people to receive quick, specialist, and targeted support. This will minimise risk to both children and adults and prevent escalation. There will also be clear partnership working with multi-agency partners within Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams to ensure that children are safeguarded from significant harm where DA is an overriding concern.

Learning from best practice

– Warwickshire will continue to learn from best practices both regionally and nationally and consider any suitable options for implementation in the county.

Warwickshire partners to continually review all data to understand the scale of DA within Warwickshire, with a focus on victim-survivors requiring safe accommodation services

– Data is reviewed annually as part of the Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment and during quarterly DA Steering Group meetings, where data from partners is collated and analysed to identify any areas of concern, improvement and any areas for deep-dive analysis.

Victim-survivors with complex needs are supported

– Warwickshire County Council will work closely with partners in mental health services and substance misuse services to identify avenues of support to victim-survivors, who may face additional barriers to receiving support and refuge provision.

Working in partnership with Warwickshire Fire & Rescue to support victim-survivors housed in safe accommodation in the following ways:

- **Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service will provide a Safe & Well Check to the victim-survivors to provide advice about safety in and around the home.**

- **Within a refuge provision, Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service will ensure the safety of these premises by proactively providing, as far as reasonably practicable, advice and guidance to ensure the premises is safe and meets its statutory requirements. Where necessary, a Safe & Well check can also be provided to the victim-survivors to reduce risks created by person factors.**

“To effect meaningful change, we must prioritise education and training. Frontline professionals, including healthcare workers, social workers, educators, and law enforcement officers, should receive comprehensive training on recognising the signs of domestic abuse and responding with empathy and sensitivity.”

(Victim-survivor response)

Support to return home, or move on

that victim-survivors are supported to return home safely and / or move on into alternative permanent accommodation.

What was Warwickshire already doing?

Warwickshire's Domestic Violence and Abuse Service:

- **Refuge accommodation and re-settlement support - Ensuring victim-survivors can move on and re-settle within a community of their choice, through the provision of effective re-settlement support within the community.**
- **1:1 support based in the community to understand housing and legal options to move back home safely or access alternative accommodation.**
- **Warwickshire district and borough council housing teams respond to victim-survivors who present as homeless because of DA and provide temporary and permanent accommodation solutions.**



"I would prioritise increased support for the children and parents in our service to aid them in creating a routine and stability for the family..."

(Stakeholder response)

What has Warwickshire achieved since the Safe Accommodation Duty was implemented?

Improved links with district and boroughs – Warwickshire partners have improved relationships with district and borough Housing Teams, working closely with specialist DA housing officers. The WDVA Service works closely with each district and borough to support victim-survivors with their housing needs, including move-on accommodation.

Victim-survivors to return home safely – Warwickshire has increased the funding for the Sanctuary Scheme to enable more victim-survivors to return home safely with target hardening measures on their property.

Supporting victim-survivors with move on – Warwickshire County Council has provided a discretionary fund to the WDVA Service. The fund supports victim-survivors to move on from refuge provision with their housing needs.

Warwickshire partners to work together to ensure perpetrators are held to account – Warwickshire partners utilise their powers to ensure all perpetrators are held to account; this includes referrals into the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (DAPP) to support perpetrators to change their behaviours.

DA victim-survivors have priority need for housing – Victim-survivors of DA are automatically considered in priority need when presenting for housing needs.

“That there is more support for women who are struggling to leave an abusive relationship. There are lots of reasons why a woman may wish to stay in the family home and those reasons are valid... There should be more support and help for a woman to figure out the ways forward.”
(Victim-survivor response)

What opportunities will Warwickshire take to improve services further

Explore further specialist training for housing officers across the district and boroughs – Warwickshire will continue to explore specialist training for housing officers to further their knowledge on how to support victim-survivors with their housing requirements.

Supporting victim-survivors to access national schemes – Warwickshire County Council will work closely with partners to support victim-survivors to access national funds to support with move-on. Warwickshire will work with the WDVA Service to ensure that all victim-survivors and professionals are aware of relevant national schemes.

Warwickshire will explore move-on challenges faced by victim-survivors – Working closely with partners, we will explore common barriers that are faced by victim-survivors to move on from refuge provision, including rent arrears and those who have assets, such as their own home.

Warwickshire Police to utilise Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) – Warwickshire Police will continue to utilise and promote the use of DVPN's to remove perpetrators from addresses to allow victim-survivors to return to the home, obtain civil orders, and work with support agencies.

“My needs have been met apart from finding accommodation for long term”.

(Victim-survivor response)



How will the Safe
Accommodation
Strategy be delivered?

3



- 1. Warwickshire's Safe Accommodation and VAWG Strategic Delivery Group will develop and implement a delivery plan; this will be refreshed on an annual basis. The delivery plan will be reviewed quarterly by the Safe Accommodation and VAWG Strategic Delivery Group and updates provided to the VAWG Board.**
- 2. Identifying, developing, and undertaking joint commissioning and service development opportunities, as well as identifying and applying for funding opportunities where appropriate.**
- 3. Commissioning options will continue to be developed and delivered to address current gaps in service provision.**
- 4. The undertaking of regular consultation to ensure that the delivery plan reflects the on-going thoughts and concerns of professionals, the public, and victim-survivors.**
- 5. A continued expansion of safe accommodation provision across Warwickshire to address the gaps identified in the Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.**
- 6. Continual promotion of training for professionals across Warwickshire focusing on DA and the Safe Accommodation Duty.**
- 7. Warwickshire will continue to raise awareness of DA, safe accommodation provision, and the broader DA service provision available to residents of Warwickshire.**
- 8. Warwickshire will report to the VAWG Board, SWPB and MHCLG on an annual basis on the progress of delivering the Strategy.**
- 9. Warwickshire partners will continue to review DA trends by monitoring intelligence, data, and insight as well as working with specialist DA services to further develop and implement the commitments in this strategy.**

How will we know
we are making a
difference

4



A set of measures will be developed and agreed by Warwickshire to monitor the impact of the Safe Accommodation Strategy. These measures will be approved by the Safe Accommodation and VAWG Strategic Delivery Group. The objectives of the strategy will have been met when:

- 1. There is an increase in victim-survivors reporting incidents of DA to the Police and accessing the WDVA Service.**
- 2. All victim-survivors are able to access safe accommodation within Warwickshire, and there is a range of safe accommodation options to meet the varying needs of victim-survivors.**
- 3. Victim-survivors, including children and young people, are able to access support at the right time and feel safer.**
- 4. Repeat victimisation is reduced across Warwickshire.**
- 5. Professionals across Warwickshire are aware of the safe accommodation provision and ensure that this is used appropriately to support victim-survivors.**
- 6. We will utilise our communication campaigns to monitor the impact of the strategy; this includes:**
 - a. Engagement with social media (based on clicks, likes and shares of content)**
 - b. Visits to the Talk2Someone website and the Safe in Warwickshire website**
 - c. Referrals to provider services**
 - d. Column inches from newspaper articles**
 - e. Comments via Facebook Messenger (monitored daily by the News Team)**
 - f. Feedback to councillors during constituent visits**

Acknowledgements

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Warwickshire County Council would like to thank those victim-survivors who shared their stories and experiences with us. Many of these victim-survivors may be still recovering from the impact of the abuse that they have experienced, and their strength in being able to share their stories with us has enabled us to review the current safe accommodation service provision in Warwickshire and identify any areas of improvement so that we are able to support all victim-survivors to access safe accommodation and support that meet their needs.

We would like to thank the members of the Safe Accommodation and VAWG Strategic Delivery Group (formally known as the Safe Accommodation Working Group) and wider stakeholders for their support in the development of the Safe Accommodation Strategy.

We would also like to thank the commissioned DA service provider in Warwickshire, Refuge, for their continued work in supporting victim-survivors across Warwickshire

How to get help if you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, **ring or text 999**.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing or have any speech impairment, please dial **Minicom/Textphone 18001**.

If you're worried about a friend, family member, neighbour or colleague who you suspect is a domestic abuse victim, you can report your concerns anonymously to Crimestoppers online here: crimestoppers-uk.org/keeping-safe/personal-safety/domestic-abuse

We know this can be daunting, but the services below will support you every step of the way.



Refuge – Warwickshire Domestic Violence and Abuse Service

If you are experiencing domestic abuse in Warwickshire, Refuge's service can support you and your children to keep safe. Refuge is a county-wide service that provides support to women, men, and children experiencing domestic abuse in Warwickshire.

T: **0800 408 1552**

W: <https://refuge.org.uk/i-need-help-now/refuge-domestic-violence-service-warwickshire/>



Listening Ear – DiAmond Counselling and Therapy Service

Listening Ear's DiAmond Counselling and Therapy Service accepts referrals for all victim-survivors of domestic abuse who would like counselling and therapy sessions, including children and young people. The trauma-informed service is a free to access and confidential service, available for all victim-survivors who are engaging with Refuge (The Warwickshire Domestic Violence and Abuse Service). The service offers both face-to-face and virtual appointments – as determined by the victim-survivor – for up to 10 sessions, with aftercare group sessions also available.

T: **01514 886 648**

W: listening-ear.co.uk/diamond/warwickshire/



Domestic Abuse Counselling Service

The Domestic Abuse Counselling Service works to reduce domestic abuse by providing free therapeutic intervention, working one-to-one with victims of domestic abuse from a 'preventative perspective' providing therapy that educates – with the purpose of increasing safety and reducing the risk of repeat victimisation. DACS services are provided from safe, accessible locations across Warwickshire.

T: **02476 351 137**

W: dacs.service.org.uk/



Family Intervention Counselling Service

The Family Intervention Counselling Service (FICS) are a specialist counselling agency based in Warwickshire. They work with families and individuals who have experienced domestic abuse.

T: **01926 429628**

W: www.interventionservice.co.uk



Galop

Galop is a charity offering advice and support to LGBT+ people who have experienced violence or domestic abuse.

T: **0800 999 5428**

W: www.galop.org.uk/



ManKind

A confidential helpline is available for male victim-survivors of domestic violence and abuse across the UK, as well as their friends, family, neighbours, work colleagues, and employers.

T: **01823 334 244**

W: www.mankind.org.uk/



Safeline

Safeline is a specialist charity providing a range of services across Warwickshire to support all victim-survivors of rape and sexual abuse.

T: **01926 402498 (or text 07860 027573)**

W: www.safeline.org.uk/



RoSA

RoSA is an independent charity working throughout Warwickshire offering free confidential support for anyone who has experienced rape, sexual abuse, or sexual violence.

T: **01788 5511151**

W: www.rosasupport.org/



The Blue Sky Centre (Sexual Assault Referral Centre)

The Blue Sky Centre is a SARC where any victim of rape or sexual assault will receive medical care, police intervention (if they wish to report the crime), and various other support services.

T: **01926 507805**

W: blueskycentre.org.uk/



Rights of Women

Rights of Women aims to increase women's understanding of their legal rights and improve their access to justice. Rights of Women offers a range of services to enable women and their families to make informed, safe choices, including specialist legal advice lines, legal information, and training for professionals.

T: **020 7251 6577 (Family law helpline)**

W: rightsofwomen.org.uk/



Respect Phonenumber

Is your abusive behaviour costing you your relationship? Help is available.

T: **0808 802 4040**

W: respectphonenumber.org.uk/

A full range of support options are available at:

www.talk2someone.org.uk/

Acronyms

APVA

Adolescent to Parent/
Carer Violence and Abuse

BACP

British Association
of Counselling and
Psychotherapy

ChISVA

Children and Young
People's Independent
Sexual Violence Advocate

ChIDVA

Children and Young People's
Independent Domestic
Violence Advocate

CJS

Criminal Justice System

CPS

Crime Prosecution Service

CSA

Child Sexual Abuse

CSE

Child Sexual Exploitation

CSEW

Crime Survey for
England and Wales

CSP

Community Safety Partnership

DA

Domestic Abuse

DACS

Domestic Abuse
Counselling Service(s)

DAPN

Domestic Abuse
Protection Notice

DAPO

Domestic Abuse
Protection Order

DAPP

Domestic Abuse
Perpetrator Programme

DARA

Domestic Abuse Risk
Assessment

DARAC

Domestic Abuse Risk
Assessment for Children

DASH

Domestic Abuse, Stalking,
Harassment and 'Honour'-
Based Violence Assessment

DHR

Domestic Homicide Review

DSL

Designated Safeguarding Lead

DVA

Domestic Violence and Abuse

DVDS

Domestic Violence
Disclosure Scheme

FGM

Female Genital Mutilation

FM

Forced Marriage

HAE

Health Advocate Educator

HBV

'Honour'-Based Violence

ICB

Integrated Care Board

ICS

Integrated Care System

IDVA

Independent Domestic
Violence Advocate

IMSA

Independent Modern
Slavery Advocate

ISVA

Independent Sexual
Violence Advocate

LCJB

Local Criminal Justice Board

LGBT

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,
Transgender, Queer/
Questioning, and 'plus',
which represents other
sexual identities

MAPPA

Multi-Agency Public
Protection Arrangement(s)

MARAC

Multi-Agency Risk
Assessment Conference

MASH

Multi-Agency
Safeguarding Hub

MHCLG

Ministry of Housing,
Communities and

Local Government

MOB

Managing Offenders Board

NHSE

NHS England

NPCC

National Police Chiefs' Council

ONS

Office for National Statistics

OIC

Officer in Case

OPCC

Office of the Police and
Crime Commissioner

PCC

Police and Crime
Commissioner

PPDA

Police Perpetrated
Domestic Abuse

RASSO

Rape and Serious
Sexual Offences

SAAS

Sexual Assault and
Abuse Service(s)

SARC

Sexual Assault Referral Centre

SI

Structured Intervention

SPOC

Single Point of Contact

SWPB

Safer Warwickshire
Partnership Board

VAWG

Violence Against
Women and Girls

VKPP

Vulnerability Knowledge
and Practice Programme

VPP

Violence and Public Protection

VRR

Victims' Right to Review

WCC

Warwickshire County Council

WDVA

Warwickshire Domestic
Violence and Abuse Service

References

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¹Clare's Law, also known as the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) is a police policy giving people the right to know if their current or ex-partner has any previous history of violence or abuse.

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¹¹Warwickshire County Council and partners are currently reviewing the name of the VAWG Board.

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¹²Formally this was overseen by the Safe Accommodation Working Group (SAWG)

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¹³www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/section/1/enacted

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¹⁶<https://safelives.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Abuse-length-Insights-national-briefing-2018.pdf>

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