



Domestic Abuse Act

This briefing is to provide an update on the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, following the act receiving Royal Assent in April 2021.

Summary

This briefing summarises the key provisions that affect local authorities, in particular the implementation of Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act, which requires local authorities to provide support for survivors of abuse who are living in safe accommodation. In London, the GLA and MOPAC are implementing this duty, and MOPAC have developed a draft strategy describing how they will deliver this duty for the next year.

This draft strategy is now open for consultation and we are encouraging councillors to respond. Please note that the deadline for consultation responses is 21 November.

Background

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 contains a range of provisions to improve support for victims of Domestic Abuse and provide tools for tackling offenders. These provisions include:

- Creating a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, controlling or coercive, and economic abuse
- Establishing in law the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner and set out the Commissioner's functions and powers
- Placing a duty on local authorities in England to provide accommodation based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation
- Provide that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance
- Ensure that where a local authority, for reasons connected with domestic abuse, grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an assured shorthold tenancy) this must be a secure lifetime tenancy

A complete list of provisions [can be found here](#)

What is Part 4?

Part 4 of the Act creates a statutory duty for Tier 1 local authorities to deliver support services for victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation. Funding is allocated to support local authorities to deliver this duty and £20.6 million has been allocated to London for 2021/22.

Safe accommodation includes refuge accommodation, specialist accommodation, dispersed accommodation, sanctuary schemes and move on/second stage accommodation. Shared temporary accommodation such as Bed and Breakfasts are explicitly excluded.

Support services that can be funded as part of this duty include day to day management of safe accommodation, advocacy and advice services, specialist support such as substance misuse services, specialist services for particular groups such as BME and LGBT victims, counselling and therapy and specialist support services for children and young people.

MOPAC is managing the delivery of this duty through the development of a strategy for safe accommodation and will be commissioning services at a pan London level according to this strategy. Providers and boroughs have been consulted through workshops and through a partnership board. The new duty is an opportunity to increase provision of services for victims/survivors and their children, and fill identified gaps in service provision.

Author: Rachel Buttrick, Principal Policy and Projects Officer

[Click here to send a comment or query to the author](#)

Links:

[You can read more about the Draft Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy here](#)

[You can submit an online response here](#)

This member briefing has been circulated to:

Portfolio holders and those members who requested policy briefings in the following categories: Crime and Public Protection