

Name of Project: Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)
Lead partner: Standing Together Against Domestic Violence (STADV)
Borough: Islington

DAHA's mission is to transform the housing sectors response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards and an accreditation process. This case study provides an example of how one local authority has put their training into practice.

"T" is a survivor of domestic abuse whose experience was transformed by the support she received from **Islington Council**, who were both her housing manager and employer. After subjecting her to nearly a decade of abuse, T's ex-partner attacked her on International Women's Day and left her with life changing injuries.

Following emergency surgery and a week in hospital, T was supported into emergency accommodation by Islington Council and was placed in a hotel outside of London. The decision to put plenty of distance between herself and the perpetrator was one that she found therapeutic in her initial recovery.

She then worked with her Housing Manager at Islington Council to look at what her longer-term options were. She initially found it very hard to approach the council because she'd had lots of engagement with them before when she was in a relationship with her abusive ex-partner. She was fearful of being judged and worried about their response to her visible physical injuries. However, her Housing Manager was incredibly supportive, and wanted to do "anything and everything" to help her.

When her hotel stay came to an end, T was placed into temporary accommodation, but she quickly found it to be unsuitable and felt it started to trigger her experiences of abuse. She eventually decided to return to her home where the abuse took place – this was a difficult decision but one that her Housing Manager was supportive of.

Importantly, the Housing Manager kept T's choices about her own safety and wellbeing at the forefront throughout the process and respected her decision to turn housing options down if they weren't appropriate.

Name of Project: Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)
Lead partner: Standing Together Against Domestic Violence (STADV)
Borough: Islington

So, having explored the temporary accommodation route and finding it unsuitable, and deciding to return to her home, she started exploring a mutual exchange which would allow her to swap her home with a household in another council. She succeeded with obtaining a move within two months of looking.

One of T's reflections on the process is about the first response she got from her Housing Manager. She talks about this first contact as being the most important and that, if you get it wrong, it could be very detrimental to the survivor's wellbeing. T was lucky that she got the right response first time which enabled her to make decisions about her housing options that were safe and took her experience and needs into account.

T now uses her experience and expertise to improve the response to domestic abuse and VAWG. She feels that Islington Council have really brought her in and given her the space to challenge and push their VAWG and domestic abuse work forward, ensuring that lived experience remains at the centre of their work.

April 2022