



**LEICESTERSHIRE DOMESTIC ABUSE LOCAL PARTNERSHIP
BOARD**

29th SEPTEMBER 2023

DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT 2021 UPDATES

Introduction

1. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places several statutory duties on the County Council primarily to provide accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children.
2. This will be achieved through the requirement to undertake a needs assessment, publish a Domestic Abuse Strategy, and establish a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has allocated funding to each local authority to assist in discharging the duties.

Background

3. The Domestic Abuse Act received royal assent in April 2021. The Act places a duty on Tier one local authorities (the County Council) to provide accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation and provides clarity over governance and accountability, requiring tier two councils (district councils), to co-operate with the lead local authority.
4. The Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has allocated funding to each local authority for the delivery of the Safe Accommodation duty under the DA Act.
5. Tier one local authorities have received the following funding, whilst each district has received approximately £33,000 for each year.
 - i. DA duty 2021-2022 allocation: £1,127,205
 - ii. DA duty 2022-2023 allocation: £1,130,326
 - iii. DA duty 2023-2024 allocation: £1,152,936
 - iv. To receive DA duty 2024-2025 allocation: £1,174,689
6. The legislation requires the County Council to assess the need for accommodation-based Domestic Abuse support across Leicestershire for all

victims. The national domestic abuse charity Safelives assisted with this Needs Assessment. Data has been collated from numerous agencies and engagement with victims and survivors of DA has been ongoing to collate information about their experiences.

7. The Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment is a comprehensive tool that enables the capture of data covering a range of themes relating to safe accommodation. This Needs Assessment has been used to inform the development of a strategy for the provision of support in Leicestershire.
8. The County Council Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy went live on 6th January 2022.

The Leicestershire DA Reduction Strategy 2022-25 includes five priorities

- I. Early Intervention and Prevention
 - II. Targeted support
 - III. Reachable services
 - IV. Safe accommodation
 - V. Strong Partnerships
9. The priorities have been identified through engagement with stakeholders and partners, analysing known gaps in provision and the statutory duty. These priorities have been strengthened by the Safelives Needs Assessment and the consultation.
 10. The County Council funding is within the Children and Family Services directorate budget overseen by the Director of Children and Family Services and the DA Locality Partnership Board who will continue to monitor outcomes against the use of these funds.
 11. The table below demonstrates services that have commissioned from the year one DA Act funding.

<u>Support service</u>	<u>Service provider</u>	<u>Time period</u>	<u>Contract start dates/status</u>
Domestic Abuse Act Coordinator Sabrina_hussain@leics.gov.uk	Leicestershire County Council	2 years fixed term	In post
Commissioning officer	Leicestershire County Council	2 years fixed term	In post
Substance misuse specialist caroline.gadsby@turning-point.co.uk	Turning Point	2 years	Service start date: 13.06.2022
Gypsy Roma and Traveller specialist jduffy.leicestershiregate@gmail.com	Leicestershire Gate	2 years	Service start date: 01/08/2022
Specialist DA Support LGBT+ Victims zoe@leicesterlgbtcentre.org	Leicester LGBT service	2 years	Service start date: 01/07/2022
Community based support for male victims (Adam Project) Sophie.McGoff@wallaction.org.uk	Women's Aid Leicestershire	2 years	Service start date: 01/07/2022
Helpline support for male victims claire@freeva.org.uk	Freeva	2 years	Service start date: 01/09/2022
BAME advisor claire@freeva.org.uk	Freeva	2 years	Service start date: 01/06/2022
Counselling service for adults claire@freeva.org.uk	Freeva	2 years	Service start date: 01/06/2022
Counselling service for young people claire@freeva.org.uk	Freeva	1.5 years	Service start date: 01/10/22
Children's support service Sophie.McGoff@wallaction.org.uk	JADA+ via Women's Aid	1 year	Service start date: 31/05/2022
x2 Outreach workers debbie@lwa.org.uk	Living without Abuse	2 years	Service start date: 31/05/2022
County Family service: x2 family workers debbie@lwa.org.uk	Living without Abuse	2 years	Service start date: 31/05/2022

part time young person's IDVA debbie@lwa.org.uk	Living without Abuse	2 years	Service start date: 31/05/2022
Contribution to MARAC manager and Administrator costs lucy.batchelor@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk	MARAC	2 years	Year 1 money sent: 09/03/2022

Year 1 service offers

12. **Turning Point**: To provide a specialist service for those individuals who are subject to domestic abuse and in addition have substance misuse issues that would benefit from specialist interventions and support in relation to their substance misuse. The aim of the service is to provide safe, sensitive, and trauma-informed interventions in a timely manner in appropriate locations.
13. **Leicestershire GATE**: To support and capture the voice of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller victims of domestic abuse and to help them navigate their way out of violence and into a life without threat or intimidation.
14. **Leicestershire LGBT+ centre**: The service will provide specialist support for individual victims/survivors of domestic abuse who are from LGBTQ+ community.
Funding has been given for two posts. Both roles will work together to meet the needs of the service users.
- I. **Domestic Abuse Service Counsellor**: To provide counselling to all LGBTQ+ communities including straight allies, family members and friends.
 - II. **Domestic Abuse Support worker**: To provide support to domestic abuse victims and survivors, their friends, their families, and those working with a victim or survivor. The aim of the service is to provide safe, accessible, and appropriate services to combat social isolation, exclusion and discrimination that LGBTQ+ people face.
15. **Women's aid-ADAM project**: The service will provide confidential, emotional, and practical outreach support to male victims/survivors of domestic abuse. The service will also deliver training, raise awareness, develop active social media presence and marketing material.
16. **FREEVA Contracts**
- I. **Male helpline worker**: To provide specialist confidential helpline support to male victims and survivors of domestic abuse.
 - II. **BAME advisor**: The aim of the service is to provide emotional and practical community-based support to victims of domestic abuse who are from the BAME community.

- III. Adult Counsellor: This is a confidential counselling service for individuals who are or have been a victim of domestic abuse.
- IV. Young person's counsellor: To provide support/counselling to children & young people between the ages of 5 to 18.

17. **Women's aid: Journey Away from Domestic Abuse (JADA+) project**: To provide children/young people with the security to talk about their experience of domestic abuse and to receive the appropriate support.

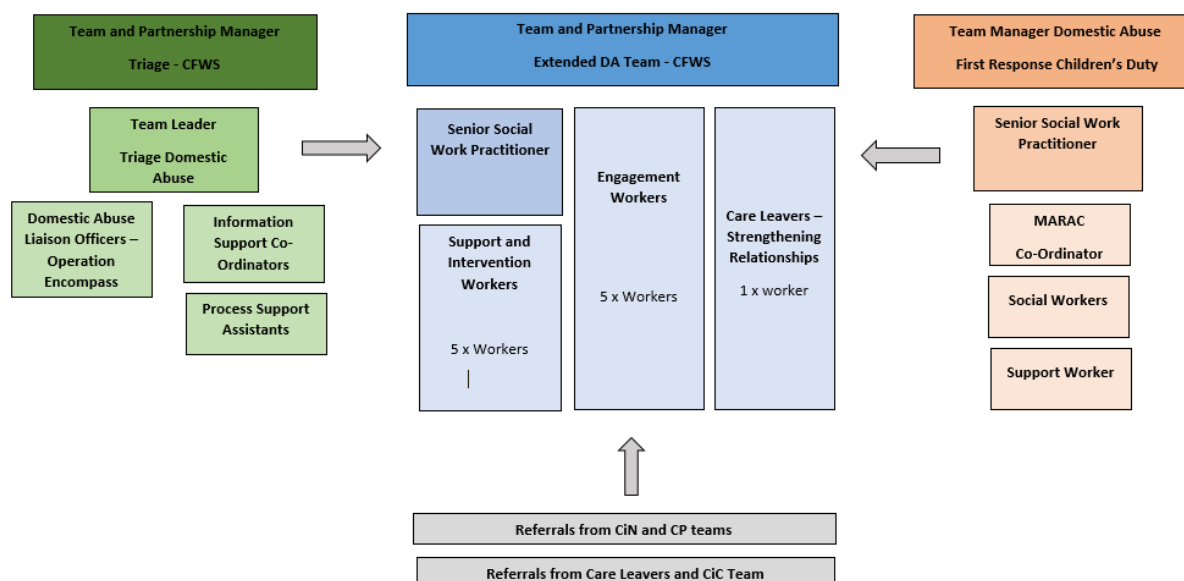
18. **Living Without Abuse (LWA) contracts**

- I. The contract will provide additional funding within the Outreach Service existing contract, to enable LWA to deliver Outreach support and Group Programme delivery to service users of domestic abuse. This will allow for x2 additional Outreach Workers to support the service by reducing waiting lists and waiting times for domestic abuse victims and survivors.
- II. X1 part time Young Persons IDVA: A pro-active Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service for young people, focusing on high/very high-risk victims of domestic abuse
- III. County Family Service: funding within the County Family Support Service existing contract, to enable LWA to build capacity, reduce current waiting lists and continue to provide support to service users. The aim of the service is to provide support the service of children and young people who have witnessed abuse in their family or have been/ are in abusive relationships of their own.

Year 2 Allocations

19. The DA Act funding from year 2 has been assigned to a Leicestershire County Council Domestic Abuse team. The aim of this team is to provide specialist, support, and assistance to victims of domestic abuse.

The structure of the team with workers currently in post is as follows:



20. The above structure shows the different workstreams of the Extended DA Team and how they link to other service areas within CFS. All posts are now filled within this team and no concerns raised.

Extended DA Team updates

21. Support and Intervention Workers: since the workstream began in January we have had contact with over 300 families linked to around 570 children. Prior to the role of these workers, many of these families would not have received a service from CFS at all and those who did are likely to have waited over a month for contact from a worker if referred for an Early Help worker of group offer. Of the families referred, we have only had around 6 families who we have not been able to establish any contact with at all, and for those not wanting ongoing specific support, there are as a minimum telephone conversation being had with these families, talking about details of the referral, advice around safety planning considerations and details shared about both CFWS and other support services available to them. For those wanting support, contact consists of up to 4 visits over a period of up to four weeks.

22. Domestic Abuse Liaison Officers: A combination of briefings and more detailed training sessions have been developed, which incorporate information about what DA is, what sorts of behaviours they may expect to see in children who are experiencing this within their homes and how they can best respond to these children and families. This includes feedback from a care experienced

young person as to what is most likely to be helpful for young people in these situations. At present, they have delivered briefings to representatives from over 80 schools and training sessions to over 500 staff members across 34 different schools. A further 24 schools have training booked for various dates between now and September.

23. The two workers have undertaken training with Barnardo's around Trauma Informed Practice and are now qualified to deliver their training programme, with plans in place to progress this offer of training to schools.

24. Contracts within the Domestic abuse team will be extended until November 2024.

Safe Accommodation

25. Our Safelives Needs Assessment has shown there is a huge shortage in safe accommodation units across Leicestershire. Therefore, we are undertaking a tender exercise to procure appropriate units. Having additional units allows victims of domestic abuse the opportunity to safely leave perpetrators. The types of accommodation will be broken down in Lots, this will give different providers the opportunity to bid for more than one Lot, depending on their specialism and to ensure that all our communities have housing which will be appropriate for them.

- Lot 1: Specialist units for BAME communities
- Lot 2: Units for Male victims
- Lot 3: Generic Units: to include- accessible accommodation for older victims/victims with disabilities and those with older children particularly boys.
- Lot 4: Family sized units: to include- those with pets

26. We launched Soft Market Testing to support our tender exercise. This gives potential providers and other stakeholders the opportunity to express their interests and feed in their views about the potential service model and service definitions. Responses have now been received from 7 providers who are pleased with the types of accommodation we hope to commission. We are currently working on finalising our service specifications. Based on our current timeline we aim for the safe accommodation service to start from 1st April 2024.

Flexible Fund

27. We are currently drawing up plans for this fund with District/Boroughs on how to best support victims and survivors of domestic abuse; this will include funding for Protective Orders - we are exploring the safest way to allow families who have been affected by domestic abuse to stay in their home by removing perpetrators through the appropriate orders, where safe to do so

as District housing colleagues have informed us that homelessness caused by DA has risen significantly and is very costly.

28. This fund will also include the facility to purchase household furniture. Plans are being developed on how to provide families affected by domestic abuse with a furniture fund to help rebuild their lives after relocating. We are in talks with District Councils around the delivery of this work and how we can manage this.

Comms for commissioned services

29. All providers are responsible for promoting their services, they have been asked to inform Leicestershire County Council once plans have been finalised for them to be promoted through our platforms. We are currently working on a pregnancy and maternity campaign which will run for over 6 months, we will be working with Public Health and the NHS to raise awareness. We will be doing social media, articles both internally and in Leicestershire matters and press releases to support this work.

Partnership working

30. We aim to have quarterly Domestic Abuse Network Events. The next one has been arranged for October 2023. Commissioned providers and relevant Leicestershire County Council staff attend these events. The progress of DA services is discussed along with any issues and ways collaborative working can be encouraged.
31. The DA Act Co-ordinator is in regular contact with the District Link Workers, and it shows there is better domestic abuse practice in areas.
32. A Domestic Abuse Act Working Group has been set up where District Managers, Partners and Leicestershire County Council staff attend. This is a great opportunity to discuss the DA Act 2021 in more detail and ways services can be improved.

Monitoring and Evaluation

33. Robust Monitoring and Evaluation processes have been established within all commissioning arrangements to inform future decision making across the system. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have requested information which has been incorporated to contracts.
34. All domestic abuse providers will be monitored against a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

35. Providers will be expected to evidence how they deliver and monitor outcome-based quality provision within the annual contract management meetings.
36. Providers will do all that is reasonably within their control to support the Council to achieve a positive year-on-year performance and to continuously improve their performance, as measured by:
- The Leicestershire County Council Needs Assessment/Strategy;
 - DLUHC annual reporting;
 - Voice of victims and survivors of domestic abuse.
37. If there are any performance issues raised by colleagues, the Council may, according to need and risk, conduct an unannounced visit to your provision or request a formal meeting.

Commissioned services updates

38. Turning Point-this service has supported a total of 83 service users.
39. Women's Aid-JADA + service has supported 61 children with direct, one to one support. There has been a total of 758 face to face contacts with service users. Waiting list times have reduced dramatically. Prior to the funding the average wait time for support was between 12 and 18 months. Since funding the wait time for a family has been between four and eight weeks.
40. Freeva Contracts:
- Male caseworker: 99 male victims have been supported since the start of the project. The service has provided a quote from a male victim accessing support: 'I am alive today thanks to this support. Before the support I wanted to take my own life. My life has changed because I have been able to have this support'.
 - 273 BAME Victims supported since the start of the project.
 - Adult counsellor post: 57 Clients accessed support - 40 undertaking/completed counselling support.
 - Young Person's counsellor post: 27 Referrals to date. 12 service users are currently being supported.
41. Living without Abuse (LWA) have supported 150 children and young people, including 20 high risk young people. Within the Outreach service they have supported 68 adults.
42. Leicestershire Gate: Since funding this provider has supported 11 service users.
43. Leicester LGBT centre: this service has had 13 referrals since the contract started. Of these, 3 didn't engage in the service (either never responded to

contact attempts, or never attended appointments offered) 8 have been seen by a counsellor. 4 of these 8 remain in counselling with the service. 2 people are on a waiting list to be seen by a counsellor (these both were referred in April and May).

Last quarter data from Providers

Provider	Turning Point	Leicester LGBTQ+ Centre		Leics GATE	FREEVA				LWA		
In post	1/1 worker	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2 x P/T	3 x P/T
Roles	Specialist Dmestic Abuse recovery worker	DA counsellor	DA Support worker	DA family Support worker	Male victim of DA	BAME specialist advisor	Adult Counsellor	YP counsellor	YP IDVA	Family SW	Otreach Worker
Number of referrals in Quarter 1	21	1	0	21	32	96	32	8	10	52	133

DLUHC updates

44. Tier 1 local authorities are required to submit an annual report to the department setting out how they have met their duty. The last report was submitted on 30th June 2023.

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