



Domestic Abuse
Safe Accommodation Strategy
2021-2024



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Section 1: Purpose of creating a Safe Accommodation Strategy

Foreword

I am very pleased to present the joint North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council Safe Accommodation Strategy. This strategy captures how we will work together with our partners in order to meet the new statutory duties of the Domestic Abuse Act. It provides a robust framework to ensure that victims, survivors and their families are supported to access safe accommodation options and support, including those that wish to remain safely in their own homes.

We must recognise that domestic abuse affects the lives of over 2.3 million people every year, with 1 in 5 of this figure being children under 18. Across our own geography this equates to just under 12,000 incidents and crimes across each year and over 100 victims and their children accessing safe accommodation.

Carl Les

County Councillor

Leader of North Yorkshire County Council

Ensuring that victims, survivors and their children have access to safe accommodation is a priority for City of York Council, which stretches beyond the bricks and mortar to also ensure the necessary support is provided. The joint City of York Council and North Yorkshire County Council Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation strategy outlines how we continue to work with partners to meet our new duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, whilst also articulating the principles through which we aim to do this.

We have a responsibility to help put an end to domestic abuse and safe accommodation provides victims of domestic abuse and their families the opportunity to escape their abuser. Safe accommodation is one aspect of a range of support that we can provide to victims, enabling them to live safe and secure lives. Providing the right support, at the right time, will help victims to be safe and rebuild their lives.

Sharon Stoltz

Director of Public Health

City of York Council

Executive Summary

This Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 – 2024 outlines how North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and the City of York Council (CYC) will implement the statutory duties associated with the provision of safe accommodation, as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. It describes how safe accommodation and support for domestic abuse victims, survivors and their families will be provided over the next three years and outlines the seven principles that will be the focus of our joint delivery;

1. Authentic voice of victims/ survivors and their children to inform our partnership approaches.

Our whole family approach will reach out to victims and their families voicing their experiences to help shape future commissioning of services of both the governance and delivery of face to face support.



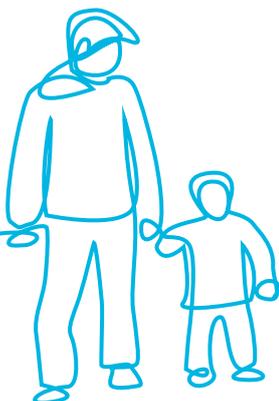
2. Effective pathways – supporting those with additional needs.

Barriers can exist for those with ‘additional needs’ (e.g. substance misuse, mental health needs, and no recourse to public funds) in accessing relevant safe accommodation and support. Partnership arrangements and structures will be expanded and, where needed, created to ensure no one is ‘lost’ within our systems.



3. It's not safe accommodation if support is not in place.

Our joint approach to safe accommodation across North Yorkshire and the City of York is not just about bricks and mortar. Relevant, effective support must be provided whilst in safe accommodation. This will ensure victims, survivors and their families will gain the skills and support to recover and thrive.



4. Clear, consistent approaches must be in place across York and North Yorkshire.

Our objective is to ensure we have an informed and knowledgeable workforce across all key agencies, including housing and third sector that understands and adopts best practice in relation to safe accommodation. A single front door to access safe accommodation will enable the right advice and support to be offered at the right time to those in crisis. When safety planning has been undertaken we will support those victims who wish to remain in their own homes to do so through our Sanctuary Scheme, providing continued help and assistance and equipment to enhance personal home security.



5. Meeting the needs of individuals, families and communities.

Within our action plan we will be clear on how we support all of our most vulnerable communities.



6. Understanding our need and demand for safe accommodation.

Our understanding of need and demand must come from a range of local partners, including housing. From the findings of the needs assessment and our work with the Whole Family Approach, we will create robust systems to capture key data to ensure we have accurate recording and reporting in order to shape our service delivery. Our findings will be used in conjunction with case studies and personal experiences of victims and their families affected by domestic abuse.



7. Ensuring we have effective partnership arrangements (Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board).

We will enhance our current arrangements, including chairing, membership and effective linkages with other partnerships in order to drive real change that is responsive and well informed to local needs and national evidence based best practice.



This strategy will shape and transform existing arrangements that are in place across North Yorkshire and York. It will deliver domestic abuse provisions and co-exist within children and families services and statutory partnership arrangements. The aim of this strategy is to enhance the outcomes of the whole family because we know that domestic abuse has far-reaching implications for all generations and the wider family network.

This strategy is produced jointly by NYCC and CYC and has received support from elected members from both authorities, North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership and Safer York Partnership. Within NYCC linkages with the housing strategy consultation have led to support from the County Homelessness Group and Chief Housing Officers Group. In addition, IDAS, the commissioned provider for domestic abuse safe accommodation based services across North Yorkshire and York have also been consulted on the development of the strategy.

As a joint partnership between the two councils, the implementation of the strategy will be driven by the Domestic Abuse Working Group, supported by a detailed delivery plan. The progress of the work carried out by this group will be overseen by the two Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Boards (North Yorkshire and York). Each year the strategy will be reviewed in line with local and national strategy and legislative change relating to domestic abuse and related matters, including Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG).

At the time of writing this strategy, local authorities across North Yorkshire are undergoing Local Government Reorganisation, involving the county council and 7 district councils, to create one unitary authority with effect from 1st April 2023. Alongside local authority responsibilities, the election of a new Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner impacts on the domestic abuse strategy.

Context

Scope of the NYCC and CYC Safe Accommodation Strategy

The Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 – 2024 outlines how NYCC and CYC will implement the statutory duties that relate to safe accommodation, included within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

The strategy will describe how NYCC and CYC will provide safe accommodation and support in 2021 through to 2024. Whilst this strategy will cover a 3 year period, it will be reviewed annually to take into account changes to the local need and the national landscape which may have a potential impact on local delivery of services. The voice of the victims and survivors of domestic abuse will be at the centre when reviewing this strategy and we will be responsive to their needs throughout all our decision-making.

What is Domestic Abuse?

The Domestic Abuse Act sets out a new definition of Domestic Abuse under PART 1. The simplified format is shown below:

Behaviour is classed as “domestic abuse” if:

- Both individuals are each over 16 years of age
- Both individuals are personally connected to each other and the behaviour is abusive.

Types of behaviour considered to be abusive under the definition:

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

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

For the purposes of this Act A's behaviour may be behaviour "towards" B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B's child).

What is the Safe Accommodation Duty?

The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) received Royal Assent in April 2021. Part 4 of the Act

established a new duty upon Tier 1 local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. This is referred to as the Safe Accommodation Duty. The Act sets out definitions of what is meant by the terms 'safe accommodation' and 'support'.

Refuge Accommodation

Refuge offers accommodation and intensive support which is tied to that accommodation. Victims, including their children, must be refuge residents to access expert emotional and practical support

Dispersed Accommodation

i) Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse), self-contained accommodation with the same level of specialist domestic abuse 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 due to complex support needs or for families with teenage sons for example.

ii) Safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse), self-contained 'semi-independent' accommodation which is not within a refuge but with support for victims who may not require the intensive support offered through refuge, and are still at risk of abuse from their perpetrator(s)

Sanctuary Schemes

Properties with local authority installed Sanctuary Schemes, or other similar schemes, which provide enhanced physical security measures within a home. A Sanctuary Scheme is a survivor centred initiative which aims to make it possible for victims of domestic abuse 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.

Move on or second stage accommodation

These are interchangeable terms for projects temporarily accommodating victims, including families who no longer need the intensive level of support provided in a refuge, but would still benefit from a lower level of domestic abuse specific support for a period before they move to fully independent and permanent accommodation. There is no expectation that every victim will require this. Many victims are ready to move straight to a permanent new home from refuge. However, move-on and / or second stage accommodation may be helpful in some cases.

Safe Havens

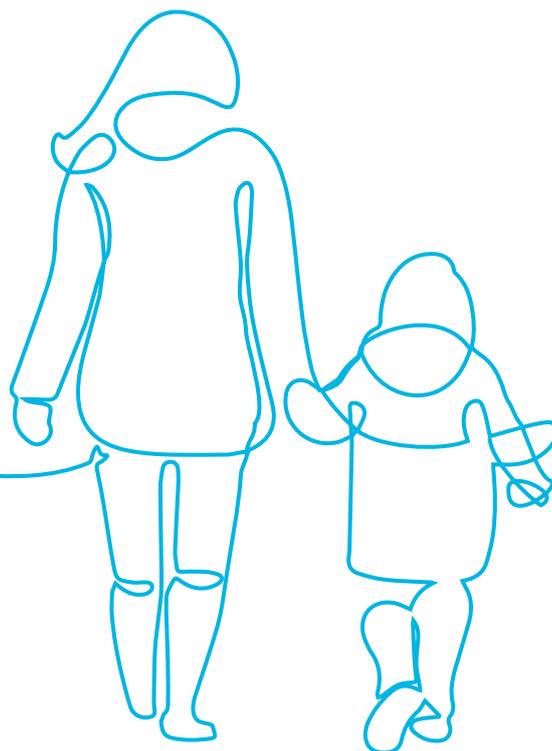
Temporary accommodation of 1-3 months hosted by families within the community with knowledge and experience of supporting vulnerable families and supported by Domestic Abuse community based services.

Specialist Safe Accommodation

Specialist refuges for Minority communities, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Questioning and other (LGBTQ+) communities, and disabled victims and their children. These may provide single gender accommodation with dedicated specialist support to victims who share a protected characteristic(s). This includes services that are led by those that also share the protected characteristic and/or have complex needs.

What defines support?

- **Overall management** of services within relevant accommodation – including, the management of staff, payroll, financial and day-to-day management of services and maintaining relationships with the local authority (such functions will often be undertaken by a Service Manager)
- **Support with the day-to-day running of the service**, for example scheduling times for counselling sessions, group activities (such functions may often be undertaken by administrative or office staff)
- **Advocacy support** – development of personal safety plans, liaison with other services (for example, GPs and Social Workers, welfare benefit providers)
- **Domestic abuse prevention advice** – support to assist victims to recognise the signs of abusive relationships, to help them remain safe (including online), and to prevent re-victimisation.
- **Housing-related support** – providing housing-related advice and support, for example, securing a permanent home, rights to existing accommodation and advice on how to live safely and independently.
- **Specialist support for victims;** Designed specifically for victims with relevant protected characteristics (also known as by and for), such as faith services, translators and interpreters within minority communities, refuges, immigration advice, interpreters for victims identifying as deaf and / or hard of hearing, and dedicated support for LGBTQ+ victims [not limited to]. Designed specifically for victims with unique and / or complex needs such as mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support, including sign posting accordingly.
- **Children’s support** – including play therapy and child advocacy.
- **Advice service** – financial and legal support, including accessing benefits, support into work and establishing independent financial arrangements; and,
- **Counselling and therapy** (including group support) for both adults and children, including emotional support.



Safe Accommodation Duty Funding

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), committed to providing a financial settlement for the delivery of the Safe Accommodation duty. NYCC AND CYC inclusive of the seven district and borough councils across North Yorkshire have each received additional funding for 2021/22. The amount is outlined in the table below, along with details of how much each district and borough council has been allocated.

Local Authority	Funding Allocation
City of York Council (Tier 1)	£334,506
North Yorkshire County Council (Tier 1)	£1,041,769
Craven District Council (Tier 2)	£32,614
Scarborough Borough Council (Tier 2)	£32,026
Selby District Council (Tier 2)	£32,831
Harrogate Borough Council (Tier 2)	£32,987
Hambleton District Council (Tier 2)	£32,685
Ryedale District Council (Tier 2)	£32,298
Richmondshire District Council (Tier 2)	£33,697

Summary of Domestic Abuse across North Yorkshire and the City of York

The geographical area of North Yorkshire and York stretches from Scarborough on the east coast to Bentham on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales and from the edge of Teesside to south of the M62. Currently across North Yorkshire and York there are one County Council, 7 District Councils and 1 Unitary Authority, namely;

- North Yorkshire County Council
- Craven District Council
- Hambleton District Council
- Harrogate Borough Council
- Richmondshire District Council
- Ryedale District Council
- Scarborough Borough Council
- Selby District Council
- City of York Council.

North Yorkshire is England's largest county and the third most sparsely populated. Just over 600,000 people are resident across 3,103 square miles.

Across North Yorkshire there is a mixture of urban areas, market towns and rurality. Ninety-eight% of the county is either sparsely (13%) or super sparsely (85%) populated with just over a third of the population living in these areas. The rurality brings challenges in providing services. North Yorkshire has an ageing population and many younger people leave the county following secondary and further education. People who are 65 years old and over make up 24.7% of the population. This compares to 18.4% in the population of England as a whole. North Yorkshire has a lower population of young people than the national average -25% under 25 compared to 29.8% nationally.

York is a unitary authority and has a population of 211,000. York consists of a mixture of urban areas and rural villages. York has a large student population with two universities within the City and 11.3% of residents are aged between 20 and 24, compared with around 6% nationally. Furthermore, residents aged over 65 account for 18.3% of residents, evidencing the diversity of health needs within the population.

Affordable housing is an issue in both the city and county as housing costs are relatively high compared to wages.

Following a decision from central government around Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), there will be a new single unitary council for North Yorkshire. This means one council delivering all local authority services, bringing together everything currently delivered by the county council, district and borough councils.

Key dates

- Elections for the new council take place in May 2022
- Start date for the new council is April 2023.

City of York Council, which is already a unitary council, will remain separate with no changes to services. The single unitary for North Yorkshire will work in close collaboration with City of York Council.

Within North Yorkshire and the City of York geography, domestic abuse accommodation services are operated by the Independent Domestic Abuse Service (IDAS) commissioned jointly by both authorities alongside the Office of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner. They are part of a national model called “Routes to Support” which provides a database of refuge provision available nationally (including specialist provision). This allows for victim-survivors and their families to be placed out of their county in order to be accommodated in line with their needs and to ensure their safety.

The summary of demand for domestic abuse services across North Yorkshire and York has been informed by a Strategic Local Needs Assessment. Under the Safe Accommodation Duty Tier One Local Authorities are required to undertake an annual needs assessment to determine the level of demand for accommodation and domestic abuse support needs within their local area. The Safe Accommodation Strategy will be reviewed annually throughout its duration in light of this requirement.

Our Local Needs Assessment found:

- There were 11942 domestic abuse incidents and crimes recorded across the County and City of York (year ending March 2020).
- 67% of these incidents and crimes were subsequently recorded as crimes.
- During the same period North Yorkshire Police recorded 1,661 domestic abuse related stalking and harassment offences.
- Those cases of domestic abuse that reached the threshold for a legal decision by the Crown Prosecution Service where a perpetrator was charged equates to 74%.
- Of those domestic abuse cases prosecuted, 80% resulted in conviction.
- The highest volume of domestic abuse crimes occurs in York, followed by Scarborough and Harrogate.

Local Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Arrangements – North Yorkshire and City of York

The number of units of Safe Accommodation across North Yorkshire and York is 42, consisting of refuge accommodation and dispersed units, in a blend of urban and rural localities. Dispersed accommodation is described as fully self-contained flats with support provided by our commissioned provider bespoke to the needs of the victim. The number of these units is increasing as our commissioned service provider seeks out opportunities across the County and City of York for more suitable contained and safe premises.

Safe Haven is an innovative approach taken by IDAS to develop accommodation options for victims and survivors with a host family for up to two months. IDAS will provide training to a host family volunteer, which is consolidated with supporting the victim/survivor in the community by specialist IDAS workers. This unique option is a further alternative solution to refuge and seeks to address some of the challenges around the geographical demands and costs associated with the urban and rural mix of North Yorkshire and York.



Demographic of victims and survivors entering accommodation

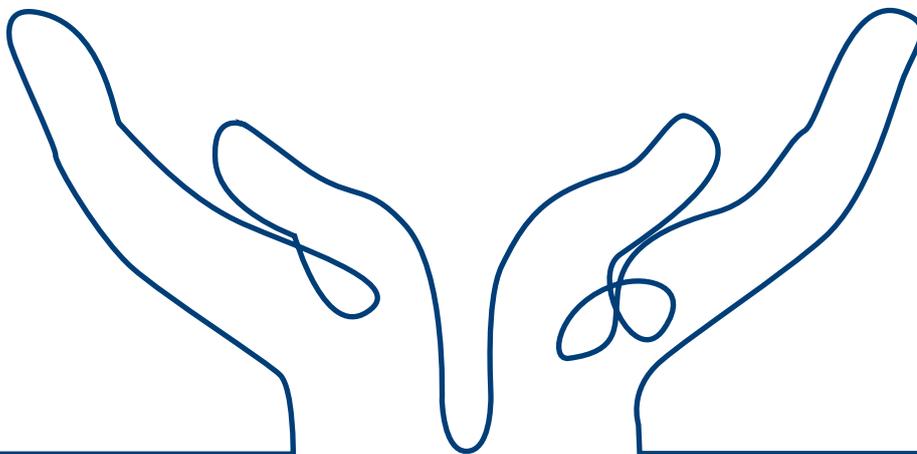
From our commissioned service provider IDAS we know that those victims and survivors entering safe accommodation are of the following demographic;

- In 2020/21 we know more than 120 female victims/survivors of domestic abuse accessed refuge accommodation.
- Most people seeking accommodation were between 25 and 34 years old.
- The majority of these had no dependent children.
- We know that many domestic abuse victims/survivors will move across the country, and therefore local authority boundaries, to escape abuse. Of those from outside the County who took up refuge accommodation in North Yorkshire and York:
 - o 19% were from a West Yorkshire Local Authority area.
 - o 25% were from a local authority area that does not closely border North Yorkshire or York.
- With the above in mind the significant majority of victims and survivors accessing refuge were self-described as white British.
- Only 65% of victims entering accommodation recorded their ethnicity.
- 41% of those whose ethnicity is recorded were from a non-UK or ethnic minority background.

Our unmet needs around safe accommodation

The recommendations from the needs assessment are as follows:

- Meeting the wider needs of victims, ensuring parity for all victims of domestic abuse when seeking help despite their own physical or mental health difficulties.
- Ensuring that accommodation needs are met for all and ensuring our multi-agency workforce is skilled to support all.
- Tracking the journey of victims accommodated outside of North Yorkshire and York to understand why they have fled and to determine whether this is because services locally do not meet their needs or whether the risk of remaining within a locality known to a perpetrator is too great.
- Meeting the accommodation needs for victims in both rural and urban locations.
- Achieving greater depth of data and a defined set of metrics across the area, to capture needs and inform service delivery, with particular reference to those with mental health and addiction and other complex health needs.
- Driving the single hub approach to safe accommodation access so that there is a fair and proportionate approach for all.
- Promoting best practice, utilising the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation and affiliation status. DAHA was endorsed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (now DHLUCG) as national best practice in respect of the Violence against Women and Girls National Strategy. DAHA encourages housing organisations to take a proactive approach to supporting survivors of domestic abuse through establishing a set of standards and accreditation process including training for professionals. This will ensure North Yorkshire and York housing partnerships will learn from evidence-based best practice and be confident that victims will receive tailored and professionally delivered support when seeking help.



Section 2: What will the NYCC & CYC Safe Accommodation Strategy deliver for victims and survivors of Domestic Abuse?

NYCC and CYC will ensure that victims and their families are at the forefront of our thinking when setting out our provision for safe accommodation and understanding the needs of our varied and diverse communities. This strategy will hold our partnership to account as an integral element of our wider Domestic Abuse Strategy. This will be refreshed and will complement our vision in order to safeguard the most vulnerable within society.

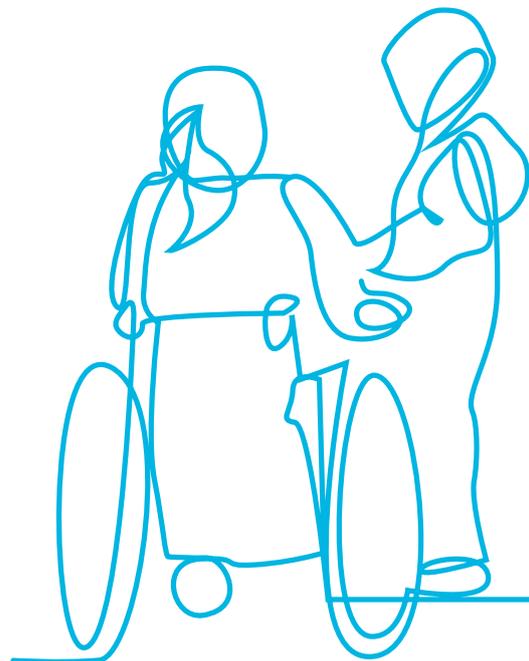
1. Authentic voice of victims, survivors to inform our partnership approaches.

Our whole-family approach will reach out to victims and their families. Their voice will shape how we commission services through to how we scrutinise delivery, to governance and face-to-face therapeutic recovery.

What is the NYCC and CYC partnership delivering?

- Our commissioning of services through IDAS is shaped by experiences of victims and case studies and forms part of our contract management and service improvement.
- Domestic Abuse Multi- Agency Scrutiny Panels, chaired by an independent domestic abuse specialist, undertake root and branch reviews of domestic abuse incidents and cases from first contact to closure. This establishes learning and improvement and the connectivity between agencies.

- Tactical Domestic Abuse meeting, structured and formed during COVID, prioritises the voice of the victim in all decision-making during the pandemic. This enabled North Yorkshire and York local authorities and partners to shape and promote services locally for our communities that were able to have a real and positive impact for victims.
- The multi-agency partnership has promoted social media campaigns that talk with real victims about hidden elements of domestic abuse, bringing the subject out into the open. This is supported by our Independent Domestic Abuse Service that is on hand to provide support and advice.



What opportunities will NYCC and CYC take to improve services further?

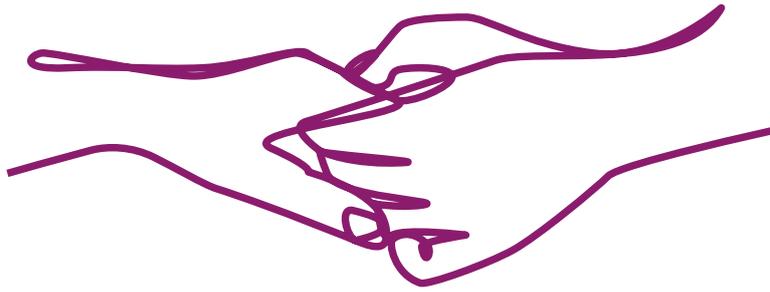
- NYCC and CYC will jointly create a role that will reach out to victims and their families. We will understand their experiences and what the needs of our communities are in respect of domestic abuse. This will be underpinned by academic research and what works within the region and national arena.
- We will engage with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office, through regional engagement and coordinator events to establish learning and best practice.
- We will refresh the wider joint Domestic Abuse Strategy to focus on the voice of the victim and their families and champion the need to reconnect with our communities. At the same time, we will take account of the work being developed through the Health and Wellbeing boards and Adult and Children Safeguarding Partnerships.
- We will seek out and engage with children and tailor our service to their needs. We will ask the Youth Commission to review our communication/language style online so that we are able to connect in the right way with young people.
- We will ensure our commissioned and statutory partners understand our vision and will jointly inform and upskill them to champion the voice of our most vulnerable.

2. Effective Pathways – Supporting those with additional needs.

Barriers can exist for those with additional needs (e.g. substance misuse, mental health needs, and no recourse to public funds) in accessing relevant safe accommodation and support partnership arrangements and structures will be expanded, and where needed, created, to ensure no one is lost within our systems.

What is NYCC and CYC partnership delivering?

- NYCC and CYC in conjunction with the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner commission IDAS to deliver support to those within Safe Accommodation and our community based service. This includes support within refuge and community for individuals with mental health and substance misuse needs.
- 1:1 support, group work and immediate risk assessment work, support and safety plans. This can include plans for leaving an abusive partner but also providing for those that wish to remain.
- Refuge accommodation gives parity for all seeking help and is subject to equality impact assessments.
- Male victims and those with complex needs are supported, utilising dispersed accommodation and floating support from IDAS trained staff in self-contained bespoke residential units.



What opportunities will NYCC and CYC take to improve services further?

- Through further needs assessments, we will map and understand demand around our hard-to-reach groups and train our professionals to engage and deliver bespoke support.
- As an effective multi-agency partnership, we will explore funding opportunities and additional support for those with complex needs and those hard-to-reach groups.
- Through effective partnership working we will champion support and drive real change for groups and ensure no one is lost within our service. We will join up discussion for hard-to-reach groups with our core domestic abuse meeting structures so that our focus is co-ordinated across the safeguarding landscape.
- Those accessing services that have complex needs or language barriers will not have to contact different housing associations to identify support or accommodation. We will ensure our IDAS Hub will be a single front door access point for both accommodation and support for all, whether English is their first language or not.

3. It's not Safe Accommodation if support is not in place.

Our joint approach to safe accommodation across North Yorkshire and the City of York is not just about bricks and mortar. Relevant, effective support must be provided in safe accommodation. This will ensure victims, survivors and their families will gain the skills and support to recover and thrive.

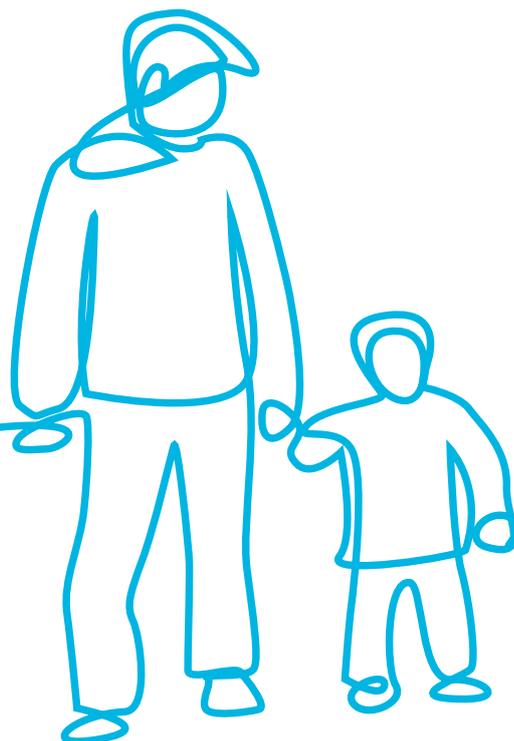
What is the NYCC and CYC partnership delivering?

- Our domestic abuse service provider for North Yorkshire and the City of York – IDAS – provide support within refuge and also within our wider community based offer. This includes:
 - 1 to 1 emotional and practical support including support through any police investigation and/or court proceedings.
 - Specialist support for any dependent children and young people living in the accommodation including 1 to 1, group and play sessions and educational activities.
 - Parenting support, advice and information including support to access local school placements.
 - Support with independent living skills to assist with move-on from the domestic abuse accommodation based support service.
 - Supported group work and peer support networks.
 - Resettlement support for a period of up to 3 months following move-on from the accommodation, including onward referrals and/or liaison with other support services as appropriate.

What opportunities will NYCC and CYC take to improve services further?

- NYCC and CYC are working under the umbrella of the Whole Family Approach (WFA) which looks holistically across the family inclusive of the individual victim. Therefore, focus will include children and young people affected by domestic abuse. Our multi-agency approach will;
- Increase awareness of signs and symptoms of the effects of domestic abuse on our children and young people.
- Expand support services for children and young people and awareness of those that may go on to become potential offenders.
- We will as a multi-agency partnership enhance our safeguarding of children by developing the work undertaken through Operation Encompass, working with Police and children safeguarding teams and schools.
- The whole family approach will develop clearer data around the specific needs of children and young people affected by domestic abuse

- We will provide the skills and empowerment to victims to remain in their own homes where they wish to do so. We will offer Sanctuary Schemes to target-harden homes. This will not simply be the hardware but also the support to fit equipment, minimising anxiety and keeping victims safe and secure in their own homes.
- We will ensure all our specialist support services providers have the appropriate training. Our operational staff will be trained to Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA)/Independent Sexual Violence advocates (ISVA) standards. These are specialist support workers accredited by “Safelives” to work with victims of domestic abuse at high risk of sexual risk of harm. These professionals will undertake risk assessments and safety planning alongside the provision of emotional support and empowerment to victims and survivors.



4. Clear, consistent approaches must be in place across York and North Yorkshire.

Our objective is to ensure we have an informed and knowledgeable workforce across all key agencies, including housing and third sector that understands and adopts best practice in relation to Safe Accommodation. A single front door to access safe accommodation will enable the right advice and support to be offered at the right time to those in crisis. We will support those wishing to remain in their own homes through our Sanctuary scheme, providing continued help and assistance not just equipment.

What is the NYCC and CYC partnership delivering?

- The Independent Domestic Abuse Service, which is commissioned by NYCC and CYC, operate a single point of contact Hub approach to accessing services.
- Any victim – survivor or professional can access refuge provision or support within or outside the county through our sign up to “Route to Support” database access.
- Access to safe accommodation services currently operates across a number of district councils and unitary authorities. Therefore, victims are able to access local services within their community.
- Broadacres a supplier of specialist domestic abuse housing provision has Domestic Abusing Housing Alliance accreditation (DAHA).
- Victims of domestic abuse routinely presenting to housing teams are prioritised for temporary and permanent accommodation across housing providers within North Yorkshire and York.

What opportunities will NYCC and CYC take to improve services further?

- North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council will promote and develop the single access hub entry into service approach across the entire County and City. Victims and survivors will no longer need to approach different housing associations or authorities in order to seek support.
- Through the local government review and streamlining of services, we will champion the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA). DAHA sets out the housing sector’s response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards and accreditation process. We will seek to become affiliated and accredited members of DAHA to provide reassurance to victims and their families that as a partnership we strive to provide the best outcome around specialist housing options.
- We will, when safe and appropriate, support victims and their families to remain in their own homes through promoting the Sanctuary scheme. This will include not just an offer of equipment but also the support to fit and understand how to use additional appliances or furnishings to target-harden residential homes.
- As a multi-agency partnership we will support accredited and recognised online and face-to-face training resources e.g Hard to Help web-site work undertaken by Foundation (perpetrator work) and support the wider professionals’ network that have contact with children and families to recognise best practice.



5. Meeting the needs of individuals, families and communities.

Within our actions, we will be clear on how we support a range of hard to reach communities. Including male victims, victims fleeing illegal cultural harms, Ethnic Minority victims and victims from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities.

What is the NYCC and CYC partnership delivering?

- North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council together engage with professionals and third sector organisations across the landscape of the County and City of York through events to enhance local learning and awareness. Domestic Abuse forums are a platform for engagement to raise awareness of hard-to-reach groups across urban and rural parts of North Yorkshire and York.

- NYCC's Head of Safer leads on the Inclusive Communities Joint Coordination Group and also sits as part of the strategic Domestic Abuse Joint Coordination Group chair. This brings together a representative voice for minority and hard-to-reach groups including oversight of the Independent Advisory Groups.
- Within the portfolio of community safety there is a community cohesion officer role that works closely with minority communities and helps to provide a clear picture of demand across the county of North Yorkshire.
- Within the City of York Council, public health specialists share the voices of voluntary community groups representing minority communities to ensure their voices are heard and shape council strategies.
- North Yorkshire and the City of York have an existing number of tactical housing options that support victims and survivors accessing suitable specialist accommodation from diverse backgrounds.



What opportunities will NYCC and CYC take to improve services further?

- In order to have a greater understanding of need, we will, as a joint partnership, develop our data across all safe accommodation provision through our Domestic Abuse Working Group action plan to understand the needs of our minority and hard-to-reach communities.
- We will listen to our communities and give them a voice in how we shape and deliver services and support. We will connect the various arrangements across North Yorkshire and City of York so that no-one is lost and everyone's voice will be heard.
- With our enhanced information and understanding of need we will commission services that reflect their voice and work with existing housing associations to fast-track victims of domestic abuse and those from vulnerable communities.
- We will identify what works regionally and nationally with authorities to ensure our communities benefit from the best specialist accommodation processes, for example the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA). By aligning ourselves to the highest standards and accreditation processes this will help to reassure victims and survivors that North Yorkshire and the City of York Council aim to provide the best housing support available.
- Our intention to support those hard-to-reach and complex groups will be explicit in what we will deliver and we will explore avenues for funding that become available to improve our support to victims and survivors.

6. Understanding our need and demand for safe accommodation.

Our understanding of need and demand must come from a range of local partners, including housing. From the findings of the needs assessment and our work with the Whole Family Approach we will create robust systems to capture key data. This will ensure we have accurate recording and reporting in order to shape our service delivery. Our findings will be used in conjunction with case studies and personal experiences of victims and their families.

What is the NYCC and CYC partnership delivering?

- North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council are currently supporting the Whole Family Approach which is underpinned by two key pieces of work. The first element looks at data supported by academic research which includes children's social care services and mapping information held within these teams to get a richer, more detailed understanding of needs of the whole family.
- North Yorkshire County Council and City of York have undertaken a detailed Needs Assessment which has made recommendations in service. We have a working group and action plan in place to tackle elements of service provision to meet current and future challenges.

What opportunities will NYCC and CYC take to improve services further?

- North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council will develop a single set of metrics for data with our partners and commissioned service providers. We will understand what our current and future predicted demand will be around domestic abuse safe accommodation within our communities, both urban and rural.
- We will work together as Local Authorities through our Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards to hear the voice of survivors and their families, problem solve and overcome challenges. We will work to deliver increased units of safe accommodation with our commissioned partners. We will work to ensure that the level of safe accommodation is appropriate to the needs of our population.

7. Ensure we have effective partnership arrangements (Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board).

We will enhance our current arrangements, including chairing, membership and effective linkages with other partnerships in order to drive real change that is responsive and well informed by local needs and national change, thereby shaping best practice.

What is the NYCC and CYC partnership delivering?

- North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council have joint working groups. Each sub-group provide updates and performance information to separate Community Safety Partnership boards for North Yorkshire and York authorities.
- The flowchart below provides an overview of our governance arrangements:





What opportunities will NYCC and CYC take to improve services further?

- As directed by the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council will have Local Partnership Boards, who will provide governance for strategy and actions.
- We will broaden our representation from professionals to capture the needs of complex individuals and raise our collective understanding awareness of this cohort so that service can be developed to meet the needs of our victims who have complex physical or mental health needs and substance misuse issues.
- North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council will create two Local Partnership Boards to capture the depth of needs of the City of York and the County of North Yorkshire. This will allow real focus on local communities, which is understood by local professionals.
- North Yorkshire County Council and City of York will deliver domestic abuse strategic business through an inclusive culture for all. Chairing arrangements will be led by executive or independent members to give a broad base of experience and detailed knowledge of working within domestic abuse that will make real change for victims and survivors

Section 3: How will the Safe Accommodation Strategy deliver for our most vulnerable?

- The North Yorkshire and York Domestic Abuse Working Group will develop and deliver the joint Safe Accommodation Strategy as part of their working group action plan. This live document will track our achievements against the Safe Accommodation Strategy and wider requirements of the domestic abuse legislation and our wider Domestic Abuse Strategy.
- Our joint Commissioning sub-group will create opportunities for safe accommodation through a deeper understanding of need to ensure those with complex mental health, substance misuse and physical needs and those from hard-to-reach backgrounds are catered for and given parity of support.
- North Yorkshire County Council and the City of York Council will refresh our overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy to capture the key requirements of the national violence against women and girls strategy and the Domestic Abuse Act. It will encapsulate the visions of both authorities and partners and, at its heart, will be shaped by the voice of victims/survivors and their children.
- We will, as a partnership, work with our commissioned partners to develop the single point of entry access into safe accommodation for victims and their families.
- Awareness raising and communications on the safe accommodation offer will be delivered to professionals across North Yorkshire and the City of York through a comprehensive communications strategy and multi-agency partnership events.
- We will, as joint authorities, raise awareness of the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation and the wider Domestic Abuse offer of support to residents of North Yorkshire and the City of York. We will do this through our Domestic Abuse Forums, Social Media platforms and our third sector and specialist mental health and drug and alcohol providers.
- North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council will monitor progress to deliver this strategy through our working group that will inform and be held to account by our two local partnership boards. These boards will feed into the North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership and Safer York Partnership.

Section 4: How will we know we are making a difference?

North Yorkshire County Council and the City of York Council will establish measures to monitor the impact of our Safe Accommodation Strategy through the following metrics:

- More victims and survivors reporting incidents of domestic abuse to professionals and accessing the suite of support from our domestic abuse service providers.
- Professionals delivering front line services to victims and survivors are confident and understand the services for safe accommodation that are available and are able to support the recognised pathways of support.
- North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council have the full range of safe accommodation options in place which are spread across the rurality and urban locations of our vast landscape so that victims can continue to live healthy and happy lives free from fear.
- The numbers of repeat victims experiencing domestic abuse related victimisation is reduced.
- We will support victims and survivors to remain in their own homes if this is their safe accommodation option. We will tailor that support to their needs ensuring the right support at the right time is delivered and continually reviewed.
- Victims and survivors reaching out to professionals experience a service which recognises their voice and experience and feel supported and listened to.
- NYCC and CYC have a comprehensive community based domestic abuse service that can support those with complex mental health, substance misuse and physical needs which is supported by specialist domestic abuse services and wider professionals.



Section 5: Acknowledgements

We would like to thank members of the Domestic Abuse Joint Coordination Group for their commitment and work alongside the Safe Accommodation Working Group in the development and consultation on this strategy and the wider stakeholder community.

With everyone's expertise, knowledge and understanding of our geographical challenges we have together developed a strategy for victims and survivors now and for the future.

Section 6: Sources of support

Emergency support

Device	Method
Mobile	Call 999 from a mobile – if prompted, press 55 to Make Yourself Heard and this will transfer your call to the police. Pressing 55 only works on mobiles and does not allow police to track your location.
Landline	Call 999 from a landline – if the operator can only hear background noise and cannot decide whether an emergency service is needed, you will be connected to a police call handler. If you replace the handset, the landline may remain connected for 45 seconds in case you pick up again. When 999 calls are made from landlines, information about your location should be automatically available to the call handlers to help provide a response.
Difficulty communicating verbally	If you are deaf or can't verbally communicate, you can register with the emergencySMS service. Text REGISTER to 999. You will get a text, which tells you what to do next. Do this when it is safe so you can text when you are in danger.

Locally

There is a locally commissioned specialist domestic abuse service as a first port of call rather than the national helpline as this service can provide a local response. It has been jointly commissioned by NYCC, City of York and the North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and provides support for victims of domestic abuse across North Yorkshire and City of York.

The commissioned support provider is IDAS and they hold the contracts for the following victims services:

- Domestic Abuse Community Based Service for Victims across North Yorkshire and City of York
- Domestic Abuse Accommodation based service for Victims across North Yorkshire and City of York

They have their own helpline covering North Yorkshire and Barnsley – 03000 110 110 and a host of information on their website which includes a live chat facility for both professionals and victims – IDAS

If you are a member of a trade union, such as Unison, your trade union will also be able to offer advice and support.

You can also speak to a GP, health visitor, nurse practitioner or midwife.

Nationally

Provider	Contact details
Citizen's Advice	https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/genderviolence/domestic-violence-and-abuse
Galop – LGBTQ+ can call Galop for emotional and practical support	0800 999 5428 advice@galop.org.uk help@galop.org.uk
Hestia – If you are an employer looking to respond effectively to a disclosure of domestic abuse from an employee, or looking for other advice and guidance around supporting employees affected by domestic abuse	https://www.hestia.org/pages/category/everyonesbusiness Everyone's Business Advice Line on 07770480437 or 0203 8793695 or via email Adviceline.EB@hestia.org between 10am-3pm Monday to Friday for support.
Karma Nirvana for forced marriage and honour crimes.	0800 5999 247 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)
ManKind ManKind support men suffering from domestic abuse from their current or former wife or partner (including same-sex partner).	0182 3334 244 (Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm) Confidential helpline available for male victims of domestic abuse and male victims of domestic violence across the UK.
Men's Advice Line for non-judgemental information and support for male victims of domestic abuse.	0808 8010 327 info@mensadvice.org.uk Webchat also available
National Domestic Abuse Helpline (24 hour, Freephone, run by Refuge) The staff will offer confidential, non-judgemental information and support	www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk 0808 2000 247
NHS	https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/getting-help-for-domestic-violence
NSPCC If you are worried about a child, even if you're unsure, contact the NSPCC helpline to speak to a counsellor.	Call on 0808 800 5000, email help@nspcc.org.uk or fill in the online form. https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/domestic-abuse
Respect Phonenumber – provides help for domestic violence perpetrators	Help For Domestic Violence Perpetrators Respect Phonenumber UK 0808 8024040
UK government	List of the main organisations you can speak to for support.

Provider	Contact details
UK government Forced Marriage Unit	fm@fcdo.gov.uk 020 7008 0151 (out of hours 020 7008 1500 - ask for the Global Response Centre) From overseas: +44 (0)20 7008 0151
<p>Women's Aid</p> <p>National charity working to end domestic abuse against women and children. They have been at the forefront of shaping and coordinating responses to domestic violence and abuse through practice for over 45 years. They empower survivors by keeping their voices at the heart of their work, working with and for women and children by listening to them and responding to their needs.</p>	<p>https://www.womensaid.org.uk</p> <p>List of useful links for websites and organisations providing relevant information and support</p> <p>Women can email helpline@womensaid.org.uk. Staff will respond to your email within 5 working days</p>