



## Executive Summary

5. This report sets out the background to the proposal to support the development of domestic abuse services at a local Tier 2 Authority level, in line with obligations on the County Council and Tier 2 Authorities under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
6. Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a duty on Hampshire County Council to provide accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation, and to improve the types of safe accommodation accessible to adults and children experiencing domestic abuse.
7. In April 2021, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) allocated £2,300,222 to the County Council with a further £2,306,590 allocated in 2022/23 to deliver the new statutory duty. In December 2022, confirmation was received that further allocations had been agreed of £2,352,731 for 2023/4 and £2,397,120 for 2024/5. In addition, all Tier 2 Authorities in Hampshire received circa £30,000 per annum in 2021/22 and 2022/23, and a similar allocation has been confirmed for 2023/24 and 2024/5.
8. The County Council's Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy (2021-2023) includes a commitment to deliver elements of the Whole Housing Approach (WHA). In addition, it identifies barriers to accessing service provision and gaps in service provision, particularly for victims with protected characteristics and/or victims from disadvantaged groups or who face multiple disadvantages.
9. The County Council recognises that Tier 2 Authorities will have their own strategic objectives around domestic abuse and they will have their own knowledge, expertise and local partnerships that will support the achievement of both the County Council's Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy and the Tier 2 Authorities' domestic abuse strategic objectives.
10. The proposed grant will enable activity, framed by the Whole Housing Approach, that will support the objectives of the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy. This could include:
  - Flexible Funding (direct payments to victims to support them to move away from domestic abuse).
  - An increase in the number and accessibility of dispersed accommodation units as an alternative to refuge accommodation.
  - Developing a Coordinated Community Response to address the needs of those under-served and under-represented populations (as identified in the Council's Domestic Abuse/Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment). This is a recognised approach adopted by the Hampshire Domestic Abuse

Partnership Board which seeks to bring services together to ensure local systems keep victims/survivors safe, hold abusers to account and prevent domestic abuse.

- Improving responses to the management of perpetrators.

11. This grant scheme would cover an initial two-year period from April 2023 until March 2025, with the potential to continue the scheme in line with additional funding anticipated from DLUHC.

12. This grant fund is to enable delivery of the second phase of our safe accommodation objectives. It follows the grant fund offer to Tier 2 Authorities to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation. The phase 1 fund was approved by the Executive Lead Member for a total of £226,470 in 2022/23.

### **Contextual information**

13. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 seeks to raise awareness and understanding about the devastating impact of domestic abuse on victims and their families, further improve the effectiveness of the justice system in providing protection for victims of domestic abuse and bringing perpetrators to justice, along with strengthening the support for victims of abuse by statutory agencies.

14. Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act places a duty on Hampshire County Council to provide accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.

15. The County Council has a duty under the Act to assess the need and demand for safe accommodation and accommodation-based support and to subsequently develop and publish strategies, giving effect to these strategies by making commissioning decisions.

16. In April 2021, the DLUHC allocated £2,300,222 to the County Council with a further £2,306,590 allocated in 2022/23 to deliver the new statutory duty. In December 2022, confirmation was received that further allocations had been agreed of £2,352,731 for 2023/4 and £2,397,120 for 2024/5. In addition, all Tier 2 Authorities in Hampshire received circa £30,000 per annum in 2021/22 and 2022/23, and a similar allocation has been confirmed for 2023/24 and 2024/5.

17. There is a comprehensive spend plan in place for the DLUHC funding and allocating funding to Tier 2 Authorities in line with the Safe Accommodation Strategy is part of this plan.

18. The Whole Housing Approach is a nationally recognised framework for addressing the housing and safety needs of victims/survivors of domestic abuse in a local area. It aims to improve the housing options and outcomes for people experiencing domestic abuse so that they can achieve stable housing, live safely and overcome their experiences of abuse. (See Appendix 1 for further detail of the Whole Housing Approach).
19. Tier 2 Authorities as the housing authorities are fundamental to the successful implementation of the Whole Housing Approach. The County Council has previously made grant funding available for the housing teams within Tier 2 Authorities to follow the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation process (which is one element of the Whole Housing Approach). DAHA Accreditation improves the housing sector's response to domestic abuse through the adoption of an established set of standards.
20. This second phase grant will allow Tier 2 Authorities as the housing authorities to deliver further elements of the Whole Housing Approach, including Flexible Funding, increase in dispersed accommodation as an alternative to refuge, developing a Coordinated Community Response, and improving responses to the management of perpetrators - all of which are part of the statutory Hampshire Safe Accommodation Strategy. It will also allow Tier 2 Authorities to develop housing options, support services and project-based work that improves the provision of domestic abuse support, particularly for victims with protected characteristics and/or who are facing multiple disadvantages. This could include but is not limited to working in partnership with local organisations that support the diverse and intersectional needs of victims/survivors and working with local 'by and for' services.
21. This grant fund would also facilitate delivery on the following ambitions of the Hampshire Public Health Strategy:
  - Use a coordinated system approach to preventing domestic abuse and protect and support those affected by it
  - Work in partnership to ensure inclusive, quality, affordable, and appropriate safe accommodation support is available to all victims/survivors of domestic abuse, including their children.

## **Finance**

22. The proposed grant scheme is dependent on funding from DLUHC. The intention is to support all Tier 2 authorities to improve their local provision by accessing funding over a period of two years in accordance with the profile below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Grant scheme total budget (£)</b>
1: 2023/24	300,000
2: 2024/25	300,000
Total	600,000

23. It is intended that the allocation for each Tier 2 Authority will be calculated on the basis of population in line with the DLUHC allocation.

24. The plan above budgets an equal amount for year 1 and 2 as Hampshire County Council will receive the allocation from DLUHC on an annual basis. Tier 2 Authorities can apply for an allocation and this allocation will be made when Terms and Conditions are met. Tier 2 Authorities who do not apply in the first year are not precluded from applying in the second year. If Tier 2 Authorities meet or exceed the requirements, they can be allocated additional grants subject to availability of remaining funds from the total amount.

25. The grant scheme is intended to cover any costs that support the delivery of the Whole Housing Approach and addresses the needs of domestic abuse victims/survivors with protected characteristics and/or who are facing multiple disadvantages. The County Council will request each Tier 2 Authority to submit a written application outlining how they will utilise the grant within the limits of the proposed criteria and budget.

## **Performance**

26. Grant allocations will be allocated with the following expectations around the Whole housing Approach:

- Helping to identify victims/survivors earlier as indicated by:
  - An increase in cases where domestic abuse has been experienced for shorter time periods.
  - A reduction in cases made homeless because of domestic abuse.
  - Increase in options (e.g. tenancy sustainment, flexible funding, sanctuary scheme) so that people experiencing domestic abuse can remain safely in their home when it is their choice to do so.
- Improved information sharing practices and joined up working with other local services involved in the coordinated community response to domestic abuse. This includes local specialist domestic abuse services as well as those signed up to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC).
- Improved service user experience as evidenced by feedback (irrespective of need and indicating flexible approach according to need)

- Increased Tier 2 Authority housing staff confidence to ask about and respond to domestic abuse, resulting in reported higher staff job satisfaction.
- Tier 2 Authority housing staff experiencing domestic abuse report feeling better supported.
- Cost savings relating to a reduction in domestic abuse related repairs, arrears, and evictions.
- Number of victims/survivors accessing flexible funds to support them to become stably housed. These will be dispersed directly to survivors or as a payment on their behalf to support them to become and remain safe e.g. to a landlord, rent, utilities, childcare provider, employment, children's needs, transportation.
- Longer term dispersed accommodation would be offered to people with multiple disadvantages and co-morbidities.
- Development of joint-working arrangements between police and probation and housing so that perpetrators can be rehoused and are held to account.

## **Consultation and Equalities**

27. The proposed increase in capacity and capability to the Tier 2 Authorities will result in support being more accessible to victims with diverse backgrounds and including those groups identified as currently underserved by services e.g. males (with/without children); LGBTQ+; those with a disability; multiple disadvantages, families with older adolescents; those from diverse ethnic backgrounds; older adults, and people who have limited access to support services due to rurality.
28. This proposal has been developed through work with the County's Tier 2 Authorities, with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance, other Local Authorities, housing providers and domestic abuse providers.

## **Conclusions**

29. It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Adult Services and Public Health approves the proposed grant scheme offer to Tier 2 Authorities to support them to deliver aspects of the Whole Housing Approach that best supports their local need and addresses the needs of victims/survivors with protected characteristics and/or who are facing multiple disadvantages, with the total offer of up to £600,000 for 2023/4 and 2024/5.
30. It is recommended that authority to approve the individual grant awards is delegated to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Executive Lead Member.

31. It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Adult Services and Public Health delegates authority to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Executive Lead Member, to approve continuation of the scheme and funding of grant awards beyond 2025, or ceasing of the scheme, taking into account anticipated funding received from DLUHC as outlined in this report.

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	Yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	Yes

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>	
<u>Title</u> Grants to Tier 2 Authorities utilising New Burdens Funding from the Department for Levelling up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) <a href="#">Decision Record.pdf (hants.gov.uk)</a>	<u>Date</u> 22 July 2022
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>	
<u>Title</u> Domestic Abuse Act Part 4 (Safe Accommodation) <a href="#">Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (legislation.gov.uk)</a>	<u>Date</u> <b>2021</b>

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	



## **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### **2. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

2.1 The proposed increase in capacity and capability of Tier 2 authorities through the implementation of elements of the Whole Housing Approach and other locally identified project and programmes will improve housing services' response to groups identified in the County's 2021 Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment as vulnerable and where there are gaps in service: males (with/without children); LGBTQ+; those with a disability; multiple disadvantages, families with older adolescents; those from diverse ethnic backgrounds; older adults, and people who have limited access to support services due to rurality.

## Appendix 1: Whole Housing Approach

The following diagram illustrates the model and its twelve components. The green circles represent different forms of accommodation including the three main tenure types (social, private rented and private ownership) and temporary accommodation settings (refuge services, supported accommodation). The white circles are the housing options and initiatives designed to support victim/survivors of domestic abuse and provide the choice of remaining in a property or relocating to new accommodation.

