

Nottinghamshire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-2024

Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1. Safe Accommodation (September 2021) **Chapter 2. High Risk Survivors** (March 2022) **Chapter 3. Children and Young People** (March 2022) **Chapter 4. Prevention** (June 2022) **Chapter 5. Health Services** (September 2022) **Chapter 6. Community Services** (December 2022) **Chapter 7. Criminal Justice and the Courts** (March 2023) (March 2023) **Chapter 8. Perpetrators**

Introduction

Foreword

Welcome to the Nottinghamshire Domestic Abuse Strategy and thank you to everyone who has helped with its development. This Strategy sets out Nottinghamshire County Council's approach to tackling Domestic Abuse. Domestic abuse is a complex and multifaceted problem affecting a wide range of people and requires comprehensive services and systems to tackle the issues effectively.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on Domestic Abuse (2019) highlighted the need and impact of domestic abuse on our population. In 2021 two major milestones have taken place with the enactment of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the development of the Violence against Women and Girls Strategy in July 2021. The new legislation and strategy are pivotal in the securing improved outcomes for the survivors of domestic abuse and their children. Local Authorities now have a statutory duty to provide safe accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse, along with new tools and powers for criminal justice agencies.

There is a huge amount of work already underway in Nottinghamshire on Domestic Abuse and we have a well-established partnership approach.

This strategy sets out Nottinghamshire's vision and approach to the prevention of domestic abuse and support for the survivors of domestic abuse.

Our Vision

Nottinghamshire is a place where survivors of domestic abuse receive the support they need to feel safe and rebuild their lives. Perpetrators are held to account for their actions by the police, criminal justice systems and wider services. Communities recognise and respond to domestic abuse early to prevent abuse from happening and support survivors and their families.

We look forward for your help and support in delivering this vision and strategy.

Councillor Boyd Elliott

Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee

Councillor Scott Carlton

Vice Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee

Public Health lead

1.What is Domestic Abuse?

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 sets out a new definition of domestic abuse which will be used throughout this strategy. The definition states that behaviour will be classed as domestic abuse if:

- Both individuals involved are aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- > The behaviour is abusive

Behaviour is 'abusive' if it consists of any of the following:

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

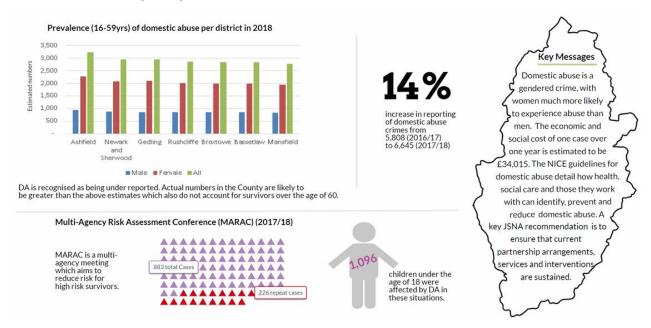
Irrespective of whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

The 2021 Act identifies that children of domestic abuse survivors who have seen, heard, or experienced the effect of that abuse are survivors.

2. What are the needs of our population?

Nottinghamshire County's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) on domestic abuse was published in 2019. The summary findings are shown within Figure 1. These findings highlight the gendered nature of domestic abuse with women much more likely to experience abuse than men. The prevalence and crime data highlight the level and increase in reporting however, we know that under reporting is a key feature of abuse so actual case figures are likely to be higher. The Multiagency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) data highlights the repeat victimisation involved in high risk cases along with the high number of children affected by domestic abuse.

Figure 1: Summary of information in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on Domestic Abuse (2019)



Source: Nottinghamshire insight website (2021)¹

The findings from this JSNA resulted in a series of recommendations (Table 1) many of which remain relevant to the continued response to domestic abuse and will be reflected throughout this strategy within relevant chapters. Each recommendation within the table has been updated to briefly outline updated responsibilities and progress.

Table 1: Recommendations from the Domestic Abuse JSNA 2019

	Recommendation	Status		
Partnership working				
1	Maintain the Nottinghamshire Domestic and Sexual Abuse Executive Group, ensuring broad representation, including the specialist Domestic and Sexual Abuse (DSA) voluntary sector; to ensure partners are working to an over-arching strategy with an action plan and analysis.	Domestic and Sexual Abuse Executive to be replaced by the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board and will maintain the partnership working ethos from this recommendation.		
2	To maintain a co-ordinated commissioning approach to Domestic Abuse across Nottinghamshire	To be delivered through Local Partnership Board and		
3	All agencies to develop and promote policy and procedures for work with survivors, children, and perpetrators, including workforce training and employee domestic violence policies	Support from the Local Partnership Board and commissioned domestic abuse training Provider.		
4	Agencies to acknowledge the importance of maintaining provision of refuge and other specialist services and	It is now a statutory duty for Local Authorities to provide safe accommodation		

¹ https://www.nottinghamshireinsight.org.uk/research-areas/jsna/adults-and-vulnerable-adults/domestic-abuse-2019/

	work with the Safer Nottinghamshire Board to address sustainability	support services and this will include maintaining existing provision.
5	Further ongoing engagement work with survivors to continually inform practice is valuable therefore it is suggested that the DSA Exec develop a Domestic Abuse Engagement Strategy.	It is now a statutory requirement to ensure that survivors are engaged within the Local Partnership Board and a service is being commissioned to deliver a survivor network to represent the voice of survivors.
6	Assess the implications of the Domestic Abuse Bill Completed published January 2019	
Preven		
7	Continue to support and promote campaigns to promote healthy relationships, gender equality and raise awareness of domestic abuse.	To be delivered through a Communications – Prevention and Awareness sub-group of the Local Partnership Board
8	Encourage more schools to take up specialist early intervention and prevention programmes for children and young people, building on mandatory healthy relationships and sex education (RSE) from September 2020.	To be delivered through a Children and Young people Sub-group of Local Partnership Board
9	Develop targeted interventions to support at risk survivors and young people that harm	To be delivered through a Communication, Prevention and Awareness sub-group
10	Programme to ensure a mixed economy of risk and needs based services and approaches, for example through Change that Lasts	Reviewed via the Local Partnership Board
Provisi	on	
11	Support and promote awareness of access to Women's Aid Nottinghamshire 24-hour Freephone Helpline and other local services	To be delivered via a Communications, Prevention, and awareness Sub-group
12	Ensure maintenance of, at least, essential specialist community-based Domestic Abuse services in line with NICE PH50 guidance, including for women, men, teenagers, and children.	Delivered via the Local Partnership Board and Commissioning organisations contract management processes.
13	Professionals and specialist services respond effectively: for example, professionals to be trained to identify Domestic Abuse, utilise the DASH RIC* to identify levels of risk and referral routes	
14	Improve identification and response across healthcare settings, including mental health (women, men, teenagers, and children) e.g. therapeutic counselling	Healthcare Services Sub- group of the Local Partnership Board
15	Access to specialist housing, refuge, and post-refuge support	Local Partnership Board – Safe Accommodation
16	Develop support for survivors of harassment & stalking	Responsibility sits with Violence Against Women

17	Increase capacity for support for children affected by domestic abuse, both in the community and in refuge	and Girls Strategy led by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. To be delivered through a Children and Young people Sub-group of Local Partnership Board
Protection		
18	Ensure decision making about undertaking of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR's) and the learning from DHR's is shared across Nottinghamshire through the development of a process that is both consistent and best value	Domestic Homicide Review Assurance, Learning and Implementation Group (DHR ALIG)** Community Safety Partnerships with Local Partnership Board
19	Identify effective and evidence-based ways of working with perpetrators, ensuring programmes are aligned with the RESPECT guidelines and running in parallel with specialist women's services.	Responsibility of Local Partnership Board – Perpetrator Subgroup

^{*}DASH RIC is a Domestic Abuse and Serious Harm Risk Assessment Form filled in by organisations that work with the survivor

^{**} Domestic Homicide Review Assurance, Learning and Implementation Group (DHR ALIG) looks at the systemwide and partner learning from the local DHRs.

3. What is our Strategic Approach?

To provide a comprehensive response and address all aspects of domestic abuse. Eight priority areas have been identified to cover the breadth of issues for survivors and their families and provide a community coordinated response. The priority areas are:

- > Safe accommodation
- Children and young people
- > High risk survivors
- Health services
- Prevention
- Community services
- Criminal justice and the Courts
- Perpetrators

The Domestic Abuse Strategy will evolve and address each priority as detailed in **Table 2.** Safe accommodation provides the first chapter and forms the basis of the initial part of the strategy. By March 2022 three sections will be completed, and full action plans developed. Partners will develop each section with stakeholders to update a needs assessment and develop and agree a multiagency action plan. Each chapter will be added to the strategy as it is completed. The completed strategy will begin to be sequentially refreshed in 2024 when each chapter is three years old.

The work in year two will take into consideration the proposed Victims Bill and the Police and Crime Plan 2021, which is being developed and led by the Police and Crime Commissioner. It will also consider the Violence against Women and Girls Strategy (which includes men and boys), Safeguarding and Supporting Families and Safeguarding Adults, Community Safety, Housing and Homelessness, and Modern Slavery agendas.

Table 2. Proposed Strategic Plan timeline

Year	Quarters	Priority area
2021/22	April – September 2021	Safe accommodation – completed as Chapter 1
2021/22	October – March 2022	High Risk Survivors
		Children and Young People
2022/23	April – September 2022	Health services
		Prevention
2022/23	July – December 2022	Community services
2022/23	April 2022 – March 2023	Criminal justice and the Courts
		Perpetrators

4. How will we deliver the strategy?

Nottinghamshire County Council will appoint the Nottinghamshire Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (LPB) to replace the Domestic and Sexual Violence Executive. The role of the Local Partnership Board will be to support, advise, and work in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council to ensure survivors of domestic abuse have access to adequate and appropriate support within safe accommodation services. The Board will link to Nottinghamshire Safeguarding children and adults' partnership and MARAC processes along with the wider Community Safety agenda, delivered by the Safer Notts Board (SNB).

A working group will be established for each of the 8 priority areas as detailed on page 5. These working groups will provide the LPB with advice related to the needs of the population, assess the current provision, demand for service and identify gaps. Recommendations from the working groups will be discussed with key stakeholders. Stakeholders will be asked to provide feedback on solutions and to prioritise areas of work. The feedback provided, along with the findings and recommendations from the needs assessment, will be used to determine priorities and formulate the commissioning and decommissioning plans. All commissioning plans will require approval from Nottinghamshire County Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee.

Chapter One: Safe Accommodation

1.1 Introduction

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a new statutory duty on "local authorities in England to provide support to survivors of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation" (Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2021).

The Act requires that each local authority must:

- Appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which must be consulted on the other functions listed below.
- Assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of, the need for domestic abuse support in their area for all survivors (and their children) who reside in relevant safe accommodation, including those who come from outside the area.
- Prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their area having regard to the need's assessment.
- ➤ Give effect to the strategy (through commissioning/de-commissioning decisions)
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy
- Report back annually to central government.

(Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2021).

Statutory guidance² published on 1 October 2021 outlined the Government's intentions of the right support to protect and assist all survivors of domestic abuse to make individuals and families safe.

The Government also recognises the critical importance of support for survivors and their children within relevant safe accommodation, as they rebuild their lives after the trauma of domestic abuse².

1.2 Definition of "Safe Accommodation"

The statutory guidance defines 'safe accommodation' as:

- Refuge Accommodation a service that provides accommodation and support only for a person experiencing domestic abuse. Refuges can be a range of shared, communal housing units; self-contained units; or dispersed housing.
- 2. **Specialist Safe Accommodation** Safe accommodation which provides dedicated support to survivors with protected characteristics.

² Statutory guidance: Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services 1 Oct 2021 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-support-within-safe-accommodation-domestic-abuse-safe-accommodation-services

- 3. **Dispersed accommodation** Self-contained units which provide the same level of specialist domestic abuse support provided in a refuge but is more suitable for survivors who are unable to stay in a refuge due to complex support needs.
- 4. Sanctuary Schemes A sanctuary scheme is a multi-agency programme which provides survivors of domestic abuse a range of security measures within their own homes to provide a safe place or 'sanctuary' for a person to live in. Security measures aim to help protect a survivor from a range of threats, from violent forced entry to arson. Examples of measures which may be fitted include reinforced doors, window alarms, intercom and video entry systems and fire-retardant letter boxes. These are individually assigned, based on needs and risk. Alongside security measures support is also offered by specialist domestic abuse services in terms of emotional support and practical support such as safety planning.
- Move-on and/or second stage accommodation Temporary accommodation for survivors and families who no longer need the intensive level of support provided in a refuge but would still benefit from a lower level of specialist support.
- 6. Other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation A safe place with support.

1.3 Types of Support

The statutory duty requires Local Authorities to provide support to survivors within safe accommodation. This support includes the following:

- ➤ 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 survivors to recognise the signs of abusive relationships, to help them remain safe (including online), and to prevent re-victimisation.

> Specialist support for survivors

- Designed specifically for survivors with relevant protected characteristics (including 'by and for'), such as faith services, translators and interpreters, immigration advice, interpreters for survivors identifying as deaf and / or hard of hearing, and dedicated support for LGBTQ+ survivors [not limited to].
- Designed specifically for survivors with additional and / or complex needs such as, mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support [not limited to], including sign posting accordingly.
- ➤ **Children's support** including play therapy and child advocacy.

- ➤ 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.
- ➤ Advice service including 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.

1.4 Funding

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) allocated Nottinghamshire County Council £1,540,091 to deliver the duty for 2021-2022. District/Borough authorities have been granted an additional £31,000 each to enable them to support the delivery of the duty.

1.5 Needs Assessment

A Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment was undertaken between January and April 2021 to assess the current provision, demand for service and identify gaps. The key findings of the needs assessment were:

- Insufficient refuge provision to meet demand and accessibility issues for the spaces which are available within Nottinghamshire
- > Sanctuary Schemes being unable to meet demand due to resourcing issues.
- No provision for refuge for male survivors in Nottinghamshire however, there is currently insufficient evidence of the level of demand
- No recourse to public funds can prevent survivors from accessing safe accommodation
- > The level of support provided for children and young people is insufficient.

Table 3 Recommendations arising from the Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment 2021

	Recommendation
1	Develop a governance and operational structures, with a survivor-centred approach, where all partners communicate, co-operate, and collaborate to provide safe accommodation and support to all survivors of domestic abuse. E.g. Work towards developing <i>The Whole Housing Approach</i>
2	Establish a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership board with attendance from all relevant parties involved in providing safe accommodation as set out within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
3	Develop a survivor-centred pathway, outlining what their journey through domestic abuse services should be, from their initial presentation to services and support provided, to their exit into permanent safe accommodation.

Consideration should be given to the feasibility of increasing the number of units available within Nottinghamshire across all types of safe accommodation. 5 Investigate the needs and geographic arrangements safe accommodation, consider the provision of safe accommodation options within or across districts. 6 Increase the support given to children and young people in all types of safe accommodation, to include Sanctuary Schemes. 7 Develop the Sanctuary Schemes in partnership with District and Borough Councils to ensure a consistent standard of service is delivered to meet the needs of survivors, enabling all survivors access to a well-resourced and quality provision. Publicise the Sanctuary Scheme providing clear referral processes and 8 quality standards. 9 Improving equity of access to refuges and other safe accommodation options in-light of barriers faced by certain groups and protected characteristics. This will include: Improving access for people with physical disabilities 9a 9b Ensuring survivors have easy access to healthcare and support for both their physical and mental health. This includes survivors who need carers. 9с Considering how access can be improved for black and minority ethnic survivors in accessing safe accommodation services. 9d Provision of language services to support survivors in accessing support. 9e Working with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender plus (LGBT+) community to understand the needs of survivors and how they can be supported in accessing safe accommodation services and support. 9f Exploring options of how to support providers to respond to the needs of women and their families with no recourse to public funds. 9g Working with Equation and other local partners to better understand the accommodation and support needs of male survivors of domestic abuse, to develop a suitable model for safe accommodation provision, with appropriate levels of support for male survivors and their children. 10 Consider how financial barriers to moving on from refuge accommodation can be overcome.

Review the data collection tool used by safe accommodation providers to ensure key information is captured to assist ongoing assessment and consistent reporting, providing clear guidance on how this data should be collected.
 Invest in digital services ensuring that all providers have a standardised method of collecting and analysing data. E.g. All refuge services using the 'On Track' system and other providers too if transferrable
 The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board should regularly assess both national and local data information to inform commissioning decisions.

1.6 Process

Recommendations from the Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment were discussed with key stakeholders at a workshop held on 18th May 2021. This gave wider stakeholders the opportunity to input into the needs assessment process and inform the commissioning plan. Attendees at the workshop were asked to provide feedback on solutions and to prioritise areas of work. The feedback provided from this session along with the findings and recommendations from the needs assessment have been used to determine priorities and formulate the commissioning plan, in partnership with District and Borough Council Housing leads.

1.7 Summary of priorities

The priorities for addressing the support needs of survivors in safe accommodation identified through the needs assessment and the subsequent consultation are:

- Maintain existing refuge provision and seek opportunities to increase safe accommodation provision
- Strengthen Sanctuary Scheme provision
- Remove barriers for moving in to and on from refuge
- Provision of appropriate safe accommodation for male survivors, those with protected characteristics and complex needs including mental health.
- > Establishment of effective governance structures with a strong survivor and provider voice
- Provide communication and training to strengthen the response to domestic abuse across the specialist sector and Housing providers

1.8 Approach

A comprehensive three-year Commissioning Plan has been developed to address the 13 recommendations highlighted from the needs assessment. The Commissioning Plan outlined in Table 4 was approved by Nottinghamshire County Council Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee in July 2021. Performance outcomes will be monitored by the Safe Accommodation subgroup, reporting to the Local Partnership

Board and the Performance group of the Safer Notts Board. The needs assessment will be refreshed in readiness of recommissioning in April 2024.

The approach taken is survivor focused and delivered via a strong collaborative engagement of all stakeholders. This approach will be replicated with the other priority areas to ensure systemwide improvements are made. It is recognised that there are gaps and limitations in each priority area and that these will need to overlap and work together over the timeline of the strategy. This will include considering the accommodation needs of perpetrators in the perpetrator subgroup.

1.9 Expected outcomes

By the end of 2023, partners should have an improved awareness of the support needs of survivors in different types of safe accommodation. They will be working together effectively to ensure survivors are accessing safe accommodation quickly with the wrap around support they need to rebuild their lives.

1.10 Next steps and contacts

As detailed in Table 2 sub-groups of the LPB will develop Chapters 2 and 3 of the strategy related to High Risk Survivors and Children and Young People.

Should you need any further information please contact:

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Table 4 Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Commissioning Plan 2021 - 2024

Dom	Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Commissioning Plan 2021 - 2024			
1.	Strategic leadership, Develo	ppment and System Change		
1.1	Strategic leadership, partnership maintenance and system change	 develop the Local Partnership Board, governance structures and functions Commission services and manage the duty budget Work in partnership with Tier 2 Authorities Responsibility for reporting back to Central Government and the Domestic Abuse Commissioners Office on activity and spend 		
		 Work towards the development of 'whole Housing Approach' model in Nottinghamshire Work with Housing Providers across the County to identify more properties for refuge/move on accommodation 		
1.2	Tier 2 Local Authority Co- ordination and data reporting	 Development of local safe accommodation pathways by working in partnership with tier 1 local authority and providers to include Sanctuary, flexible funding and working towards a 'Whole Housing Approach' in delivering safe accommodation for survivors. Provision of quality information and timely data for the Local Partnership Board to inform commissioning decisions. Reporting of required data for the Needs Assessment and monitoring and reporting to Central Government and Domestic Abuse Commissioners Office. 		
1.3	Co-production of services with survivors (including male survivors) and children	 Ensure survivors and children's voices are at the heart of decision making Development of survivor centred pathways Manage the survivor network 		
1.4a	Provide training and communications on the new Domestic Abuse Act and statutory duty	 To provide professionals with the skills to support survivors in accessing safe accommodation and support. To communicate to local communities the services available and points of access to reduce duplication, promote services, and dispel myths. 		

1.4b	Training across the domestic abuse sector workforce on trauma informed service delivery	Ensure support for survivors and their children is trauma informed	
2.	Service Provision		
2.1a	Domestic abuse refuge provision throughout 2021/22	 Fund wellbeing and support for women and their children living within the existing 40 refuge units across the County Practical and emotional support provided to women and children The development and delivery of consistent Data management and recording systems across the sector 	
2.1b	Re -commission domestic abuse refuge provision in Year 2 to include support in move on provision	 Increase the number of units available by up to 10 additional units. Provision of 'Move on' properties attached to each refuge for a phased approach to exiting refuge. Move on Accommodation support provision Provision of accessible safe accommodation options for survivors with physical disabilities. Comprehensive support for children and young people within safe accommodation Provision of pathways for safe accommodation for male survivors in line with the findings of the 'deep dive' on male survivor needs. 	
2.2	Domestic abuse Support Workers embedded with Tier 2 Authorities to improve the offer to survivors and their children in their own homes and/or when seeking safe accommodation	 Provide support to survivors accessing safe accommodation, including the provision for beneficiaries of Sanctuary Schemes Provide support to professionals within tier 2 authorities to ensure appropriate support is provided for survivors 	
2.3	Trauma informed therapeutic support pathways	Support refuge providers in working with survivors and children with complex mental health problems as a result of trauma.	
2.4	Development of Sanctuary schemes to deliver a quality and consistent service along with improved support	 Provide survivors with swift and effective safety measures to keep them safe in their existing home. Ensure ongoing support is provided to survivors and children remaining in their own homes to help them stay safe. 	

2.5	Removing barriers: Flexible funding to be made available to improve pathway efficiency	A A	Removing financial barriers for survivors who need to access safe accommodation such as transport to refuge, storage costs for belongings etc. Removing financial barriers for survivors ready to move on from refuge into independent, permanent accommodation. Clear governance process to be developed for flexible funding with full auditable spend at the end of each year.
2.6a	Deep dive on groups with protected characteristics	A A	Deep dive on women with protected characteristics accommodation requirements to understand how to overcome barriers and challenges in accessing services As a result of the findings from the deep dives in year one, develop evidence-based services to be delivered in years 2 and 3. To ensure the findings are used in coproduction and incorporated into the ongoing survivor voice.
2.6b	Deep dive on male survivors of domestic abuse	A A	Deep dive on male survivor's accommodation needs and the best ways to support men in accessing safe accommodation To understand the support services required to meet the needs of male survivors of Domestic Abuse. Inform pathway development and commissioning decisions for years 2 and 3. To ensure the findings are used in coproduction and incorporated into the ongoing survivor voice.
2.6c	Deep dive on mental health provision for domestic abuse survivors	>	To provide an in depth understanding of the mental health provision for domestic abuse survivors To assist in the development of effective survivor centred pathways for accessing mental health provision for domestic abuse survivors