

Tameside

Domestic

Abuse

Strategy

2021 - 2026



Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	5
1.1 Scope of the strategy	5
1.2 Definitions	5
Achieving equitable outcomes for victims of domestic abuse	7
Tameside current needs and outcomes	8
3.1 Health and wellbeing outcomes and socio-economic need	8
3.2 Prevalence of domestic abuse	9
3.3 The impact of the coronavirus pandemic	10
3.4 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021	11
Governance and Accountability	13
4.1 Local governance	13
4.2 Data	14
Our Ambition	15
5.1 Making Domestic Abuse Everybody's Business	15
5.2 Creating Safe Spaces for Disclosures	18
5.3 Meeting the Needs of Victims through Local Services	19
5.4 Helping Victim-Survivors Stay Safe at Home	20
5.5 Better Outcomes for Children Impacted by Domestic Abuse	21
5.6 Identifying Problem Behaviours Early	22
5.7 Holding Perpetrators Accountable	24
Support in Safe Accommodation	26
Appendix 1: Support in Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 – 2023	27
6.1 Better support victim survivors to stay in their own homes with support and safety measures in place	28
6.2 Improve outcomes for those who approach our homelessness service as victims of domestic abuse	29
6.3 Strengthen and diversify our offer for those who require specialist accommodation	30
References	32



Foreword

The passing of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has resulted in a significant enhancement in the duties and responsibilities for local authorities in identifying and tackling domestic abuse in their areas. This Domestic Abuse Strategy will align our approach with this new legislation. However, we wish to go further still.

We are committed not just to reacting to domestic abuse when it is presented to us, but to proactively work in partnership with local communities and organisations to identify warning signs and prevent abuse before it happens. In 5 years' time, we will settle for nothing less than a transformation in how domestic abuse in Tameside is understood, identified and challenged.

If our ambitions sound lofty, it is because they must be equal to the issues we face. We cannot shy away from the fact that Tameside's rate of domestic abuse is currently higher than all three of our statistical neighbours. Like most other areas of the country, this has been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic and repeated lockdowns.

In order to start bringing these rates of domestic abuse down and, more importantly, keep them down, this Strategy commits us to a number of clear and measureable priorities. These have been agreed on by local residents, victim-survivors and strategy leaders, and our progress will be underwritten by rigorous and public inspection undertaken on an annual basis.

We will **Make Domestic Abuse Everybody's Business** by running awareness campaigns - created by victim-survivors for victim-survivors – in our local community, and launching a Tameside Domestic Abuse Champions Network.

We will **Create Safe Spaces for Disclosures** by upskilling staff in public facing roles across the borough on domestic abuse, and embedding specialist domestic abuse professionals in a range of settings.

We will **Meet the Needs of Victims Through Local Services** by providing specialist domestic abuse provision in-borough, and identifying and meeting the wider needs of victims, such as financial, health and legal issues, through local services.

We will **Help Victim-Survivors Stay Safe at Home**, allowing them to maintain employment, education and their personal support networks.

We will **Secure Better Outcomes for Children Impacted by Domestic Abuse** through the provision of targeted services, scrutinising the outcomes we are achieving, and holding perpetrators of abuse accountable for their behaviour and the impact their abuse has on children.



We will **Identify Problem Behaviours Early** by providing holistic healthy relationship education, and offering early help and support for individuals that are demonstrating harmful behaviours.

We will **Hold Perpetrators Accountable** by having a multi-agency response to tackling domestic abuse perpetrators, and utilising legal options to hold perpetrators accountable and remove them from the property where possible to do so.

Making these ambitions a reality will only be possible if everybody in Tameside takes a collective and joined-up approach to making them happen. Whether it is the agencies and services with responsibility for crime prevention, health, social care and family support, or the individual residents and community groups with an ear to the ground in their area, we all must share the responsibility to engage with the complex and difficult reality of domestic abuse. We must also acknowledge that, while the majority of cases involve men on women, domestic abuse encompasses a wide variety of forms, perpetrators and victims.

The bottom line is this. No person should experience domestic abuse. No matter your gender, no matter your ethnicity, no matter your age, disability or sexuality. With your help and this Strategy, together we will take the first step to ending this scourge in Tameside.

Thank you.



Councillor Brenda Warrington
Executive Leader



Steven Pleasant
Chief Executive



Introduction

In Tameside, we are proud of our local domestic abuse offer and our multi-agency commitment to tackling domestic abuse. However, we know that we must do more to identify and support victims of domestic abuse in the borough, to improve the overall health and wellbeing outcomes of those impacted by domestic abuse.

We also know that to reduce the perpetration of abuse, we must improve our efforts to prevent domestic abuse from happening in the first place, identify risky behaviours early and hold perpetrators more accountable for their actions through social care, the criminal justice system and in our communities.

In developing this strategy, we have spoken to a wide range of professionals, the public, those working in the domestic abuse sector and we have conducted in-depth engagement work with local victim-survivors of domestic abuse. This strategy responds to the feedback provided through this process and gaps highlighted in our statutory domestic abuse needs assessment.

Thank you to all victim-survivors, AVA (Against Violence & Abuse) and local professionals for your honest feedback and input which has resulted in the new domestic abuse strategy.

1.1 Scope of the strategy

This strategy aims to improve outcomes for adults experiencing domestic abuse and children and young people experiencing, witnessing or exposed to domestic abuse.

This strategy also includes Tameside's approach to meet new statutory duties to provide support in safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and their children (Appendix 1).

1.2 Definitions

For the purposes of the strategy and wider domestic abuse work, we have adopted the new definition of Domestic Abuse, as defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This defines domestic abuse as:

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

In this definition, both parties have to be over the age of 16 and personally connected to each other and the behaviour can be a single incident or a course of conduct.



Domestic abuse does not only take place within intimate relationships and therefore domestic abuse can occur between two individuals who:

- Are or have been married
- Are or have been civil partners
- Have agreed to marry one another
- Have entered into a civil partnership agreement
- Are or have been in an intimate personal relationship
- A parental relationship in relation to the same child
- Are relatives

We also acknowledge the impact that domestic abuse has on children, regardless of whether they have witnessed the abuse. Therefore, we support the new definition of domestic abuse that includes children that are related to the victim or perpetrator, and recognise these children as victims in their own right.

In accordance with the Greater Manchester Gender Based Violence Strategy 2021, we also include Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence (HBV) in our definitions of domestic abuse.



Achieving equitable outcomes for victims of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone, from any background, regardless of sexual orientation, financial status or gender. However, we acknowledge that the majority of domestic abuse is perpetrated by men against their male or female partners and ex-partners. Male violence accounts for the majority of serious harm and deaths due to domestic violence nationally and accounts for the majority of high risk cases seen locally. The 2021 Gender Based Violence Strategy of the GMCA also recognises the gendered nature of domestic abuse.

In responding to domestic abuse in Tameside, we will ensure our services meet the needs of all victims and the needs of population groups across the following characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

This ensures we meet responsibilities instilled by the Public Sector Duty (s149) of the Equalities Act 2010.

Tameside current needs and outcomes



3.1 Health and wellbeing outcomes and socio-economic need

In Tameside, the health of our residents is worse than the English average. There are high rates of alcohol related harm, disproportionately high numbers of self-harm and self-injury and life expectancy is 9.5 years lower for men and 9 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of the borough than in the least deprived. Residents in Tameside live shorter lives, with worse outcomes than the national average.

The impact that domestic abuse has on the lives of survivors is often complex and long lasting and is linked to the types of inequalities described above. The wide-ranging adverse impacts experienced by survivors may result in lower healthy life expectancy and life expectancy, which are both lower than national and regional averages for males and females in Tameside. The prevalence of high health and wellbeing needs in the borough means that our domestic abuse strategy and services must have a strong multi-agency focus that ensures that victim-survivor needs are understood and met through public and third sector services.

The highest percentage of population growth is in the 65+ age cohort. This is likely to have an impact of the levels of demand for health, social care and housing in Tameside. We also know that domestic abuse can exist in relationships at any age; therefore, it is crucial our strategy supports older victims of abuse and those who may be more vulnerable to abuse due to dependence on a caregiver.

Children in Tameside are more likely to live in low income families (23.7%) than the England average (20.1%). This social and economic context in the borough alongside high rates of domestic abuse demonstrates the importance of a co-ordinated community led approach to domestic abuse. Although socio-economic status does not increase the likelihood of experiencing abuse, it can limit access to the services a victim-survivor may need to recover and limit options to escape and freedom – particularly for victims of financial abuse that may have coerced debt. Therefore, we recognise that our strategy must be informed by the socio-economic and health and wellbeing needs of the population.

3.2 Prevalence of domestic abuse

2.3 million Adults aged 16 – 74 years old experienced domestic abuse in England and Wales in 2019/2020 (ONS) – this represents 1.6 million women and 757,000 men. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, but women are more likely than men to be victims. Indeed, women are much more likely than men to be the victims of high risk or severe domestic abuse – according to SafeLives data, approximately 95% of those going to the Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) or accessing an independent domestic abuse advisor (IDVA) are women. The higher risk faced by female victims of domestic abuse is reflected in local Tameside data where 96% of MARAC cases are of women, who are victims of high-risk domestic abuse.

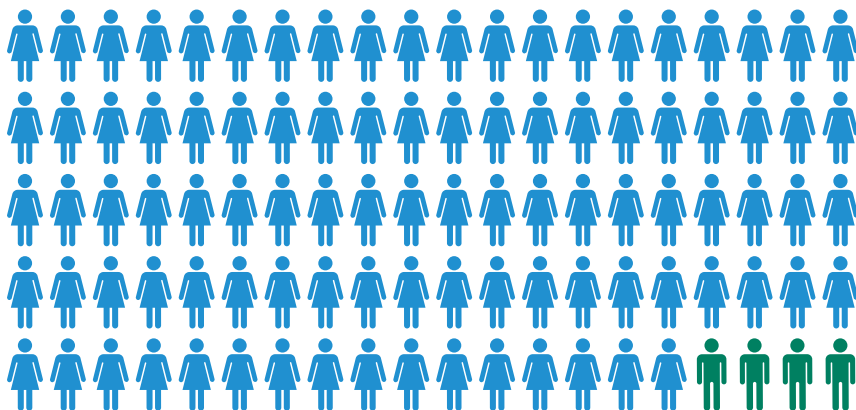


It was one of my friends [who helped me identify domestic abuse]. I'd thought things with my partner weren't right, and I spoke to a friend at work and she said I should speak to women's aid. There was loads of denial at first, I didn't think I could be that daft to be in that situation, I don't think of myself as a stupid person. I had a google – the big national ones came up, and then Bridges.



Survivor interview

96% of MARAC Tameside cases are of women, who are victims of high-risk domestic abuse.



Locally, the rates of domestic abuse that are reported to the police in Tameside are higher than all three of our closest statistical neighbours – and we know that these figures are likely an underrepresentation of actual victim-survivors in Tameside as many do not report their abuse.



Through the course of our needs assessment, we conducted a range of different surveys, interviews and focus groups with victims of domestic abuse in Tameside. Of those that completed the online survey:

- **90% had experienced emotional abuse**
- **72% had experienced jealous and controlling behaviours**
- **72% had experienced physical abuse**
- **38% had experienced financial control and abuse**
- **38% had experienced sexual abuse**

For these victim-survivors, a partner (72%) or a family member (28%) had perpetrated the abuse. We know that for some victim-survivors, their abuser is more than one person and can extend to the abuser's family members and even family friends.

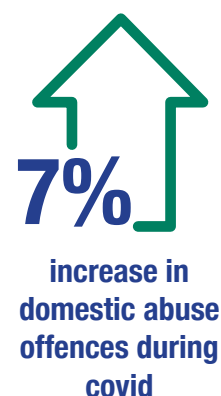
Individuals aged 16-74 experiencing domestic abuse in England and Wales 2019/20:



3.3 The impact of the coronavirus pandemic

We know that the coronavirus pandemic created additional barriers for victims to access support to domestic abuse services in the borough and this was reflected nationally. Across England and Wales there was a 7% increase in police recorded offences marked as domestic abuse, additionally there was a 65% increase in calls and contacts recorded by the National Domestic Abuse Helpline between April and June 2020, compared with the first three months of the year (pre-pandemic) (ONS, 2021).

In Tameside, we saw a reduction in domestic abuse related crimes in the months following the first lockdown, however, as society began to open up again over the summer months we saw a significant increase in DA related crimes being reported to the police. Alongside an increase in DA related crimes, our domestic abuse service supported existing service users for longer, to ensure their safety during the pandemic. As a result, additional resource was provided by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council to the commissioned provider, Bridges – to ensure that the service could continue to support victims of domestic abuse and their children.

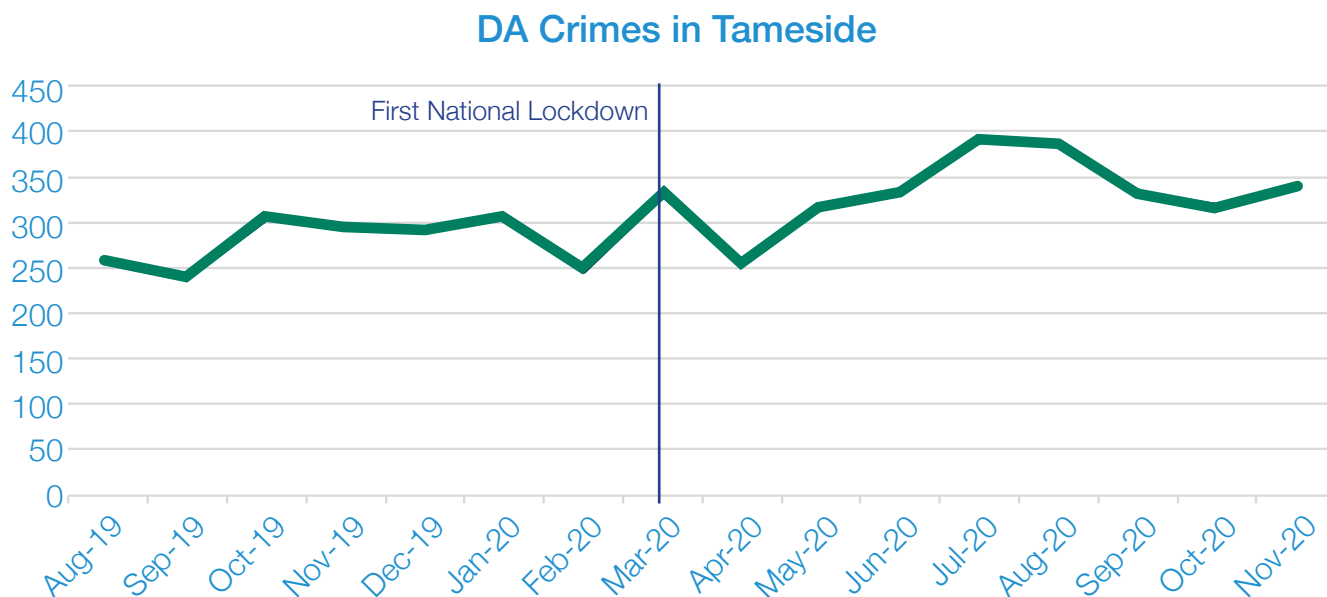


“ With the doctors because I couldn't go in for appointments anyway I didn't want to try and speak to them on the phone. Because I wasn't sure I didn't want to kick up a fuss. Because he [perpetrator] gaslighted me, and told me I'd heard it wrong I thought I might be overreacting or being too sensitive. It didn't feel right but because I'd been with him for ten years, how could I have got this so wrong. **”**

Survivor interview

Chart A: Domestic abuse crimes in Tameside August 2019 - December 2020.

Source: GMP, 2021



The pandemic has had a lasting impact and demonstrated the importance of having a flexible offer on domestic abuse, we will be taking learning from this period and it informs the contents of this domestic abuse strategy and related future commissioning.

3.4 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced a new set of duties and definitions. This included establishing a national Domestic Abuse Commissioner, a new definition of domestic abuse that emphasises that abuse is not just physical violence and duties for local authorities to provide support in safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse.

Criminal justice measures within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 include:

- Controlling or coercive behaviour offences have been extended to cover post-separation abuse
- The ‘revenge porn’ offence now includes the threat to disclose intimate images
- A new offence of non-fatal strangulation
- Clarification to the law to further deter claims of ‘rough sex gone wrong’
- A statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in criminal civil and family courts
- ‘Clare’s Law’ is now on a statutory footing
- Measures that enable survivors to make a barring order to prevent being repeatedly brought back to court by the perpetrator
- GPs and other health professionals are prohibited from charging a victim-survivor for a letter to support an application for legal aid
- Domestic abuse offenders can be subject to polygraph testing as a condition of their licence following their release from custody
- Extends the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to further violent and sexual offences
- A new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order

Local authority duties contained within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 include:

- To provide support to victim-survivors and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation
- To ensure victims of domestic abuse do not lose a secure lifetime or assured tenancy
- To ensure that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance
- To establish a Domestic Abuse Partnership Board

Other changes contained within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 include:

- Establishes the office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner
- A statutory definition of domestic abuse
- A statutory duty on the Secretary of State to publish a domestic abuse perpetrator strategy

This domestic abuse strategy also contains the strategy for ensuring we are meeting our new statutory duties (Appendix 1).

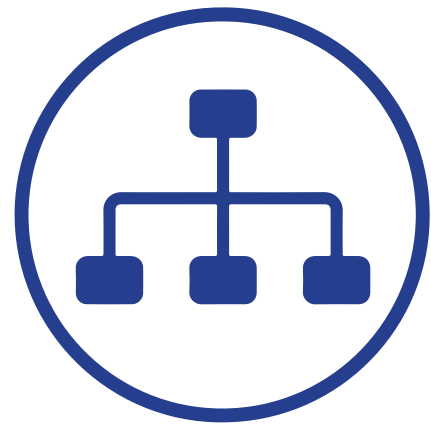


Governance and Accountability

4.1 Local governance

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places a requirement for local authorities to have local Domestic Abuse Partnership Boards (DAPB). In Tameside, our DAPB is chaired by the Director of Public Health. The meetings are held once every two months and membership includes representatives from:

- Elected Members
- Housing
- Domestic Abuse service providers
- Children's Services
- Adult Social Care
- Health
- Operations and Neighbourhoods
- Greater Manchester Police
- Victim-survivors of domestic abuse
- Population Health



The purpose of the DAPB is to:

- Set ambition for responding to domestic abuse in Tameside
- Provide advice and data to support Tameside to undertake a robust needs assessment as and when required
- Provide expert advice and data to support the development of a local domestic abuse strategy
- Support key stakeholders to make commissioning and decommissioning decisions (where appropriate)
- Scrutinise outcomes for victim-survivors of domestic abuse, including children
- Scrutinise outcomes relating to perpetrators of domestic abuse
- Monitor the implementation and efficacy of Tameside in providing Support within Safe Accommodation for victim-survivors and their children

4.1.a Embedding Victim-Survivor voice in our response to domestic abuse

We want to ensure that victim-survivors are included in decision-making processes and are able to hold local leaders accountable for this strategy. This is demonstrated through our commitment to a victim-survivor advisory group.

This group is expected to meet quarterly and will be co-facilitated by local domestic abuse services but the agenda and content of meetings will be victim-survivor led. There will also be an annual joint meeting of the advisory group and the DAPB, with the agenda co-designed by the Lived-experience advisory group.

4.2 Data

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires local authorities to report on progress on compliance with the new bill, as a consequence there is more data that requires analysis. In Tameside, we want to use this as an opportunity to rethink how we manage, analyse and interpret data relating to domestic abuse.

We are committed to:

- **Redeveloping Tameside’s Domestic abuse dashboard** to include data from health, social care, housing, criminal justice services and the third sector
- **Developing a domestic abuse dashboard for children and young people** to better understand how we are supporting young people impacted by domestic abuse in the borough
- **Developing new goals relating to this strategy, which will be used to monitor progress on a regular basis** in the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board
- To **publish progress data on an annual basis**, against the strategic goals outlined in this strategy



Our Ambition

In Tameside, we want our residents to live healthy, fulfilled lives that are free from domestic abuse. We recognise that in order to achieve these aims, we need to have clear, measurable strategic ambitions that the Tameside multi-agency partnership on Domestic Abuse can be held to account for progress on. We have consulted local residents, victim-survivors and strategic leaders and agreed the following priority ambitions on domestic abuse:

- **Making domestic abuse everybody's business**
- **Creating safe spaces for disclosures**
- **Meeting the needs of victims through local services**
- **Helping Victim-Survivors stay safe in their home**
- **Better outcomes for children impacted by domestic abuse**
- **Identifying problem behaviours early**
- **Holding perpetrators accountable**

All strategic ambition points will have measurable goals, which will be included in our performance monitoring and scrutinised annually.

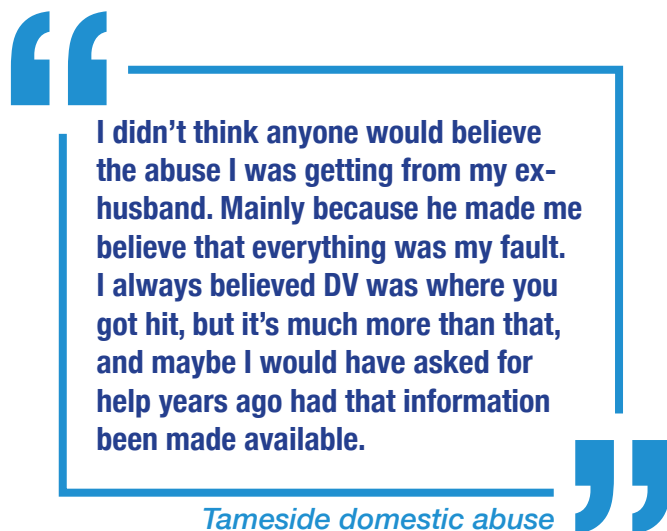
5.1 Making Domestic Abuse Everybody's Business

We want to raise the profile of domestic abuse in Tameside. In 5 years as a result of this strategy and its successful implementation, we want to see demonstrable change in the way that domestic abuse is understood and challenged in our communities. We will do this by raising awareness of what an abusive relationship is, promoting our local specialist services and upskilling frontline staff across the borough.

We will make domestic abuse everybody's business by:

5.1.a Running victim-survivor led awareness campaigns in our local community

Victim-survivors have told us the importance of campaigns and awareness raising to help raise the profile of domestic abuse in Tameside and help residents understand what domestic abuse is, how it presents and how to seek help. Through victim-survivor engagement during the needs assessment, we were told that the following campaigns would be beneficial:



I didn't think anyone would believe the abuse I was getting from my ex-husband. Mainly because he made me believe that everything was my fault. I always believed DV was where you got hit, but it's much more than that, and maybe I would have asked for help years ago had that information been made available.

*Tameside domestic abuse
victim-survivor interview*



- The impact of emotional abuse and coercive control
- The impact of domestic abuse on children
- Awareness raising that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse (regardless of age, disability, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and religion)
- Awareness raising that anyone can display harmful behaviours and use coercive control (regardless of age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability and religion).



Image: Tameside ‘take control’ campaign, developed with South Asian victim-survivors in the borough.

Tameside comprises of a range of diverse communities with differing needs, which require different messages in order to have an impact, raising awareness of domestic abuse. Those who have experienced domestic abuse are experts by experience; we want to involve those who use our services in the shaping of our campaigns. We will ensure the Lived Experience Advisory Group inputs into domestic abuse related campaigns and communications developed in the borough.



5.1.b Launching a Tameside Domestic Abuse Champions network

We recognise that many victim-survivors may not feel comfortable approaching the police or wider public services about the abuse they are experiencing. However, victim-survivors told us that they could access some services without fear of reprisals from their perpetrators, these included health services such as their GP, entertainment venues such as pubs and bars and personal grooming services such as hairdressers.

That is why in Tameside, we will launch a Domestic Abuse champions network across the borough in public and private services – that will create safe spaces for domestic abuse victims in different settings, from hairdressing salons to local pubs. As a multi-agency partnership we acknowledge that domestic abuse champions will need to be accessible for different types of victim-survivors, including those with learning disabilities, older people, male victims and those who may not speak English as a first language. We are committed to a developing a diverse range of domestic abuse champions across the community and in public services.



What is a domestic abuse champion?

A domestic abuse champion is someone that is trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse, understand the impact it has on the individual, family and wider society and reacts to support victim-survivors of domestic abuse.



5.2 Creating Safe Spaces for Disclosures

Evidence suggests that victim-survivors struggle to get adequate support for their abuse in a timely manner. On average, victims experience 50 incidents of abuse before getting effective help and 85% of victims sought help on average 5 times from professionals in the year before they got effective help to stop the abuse.

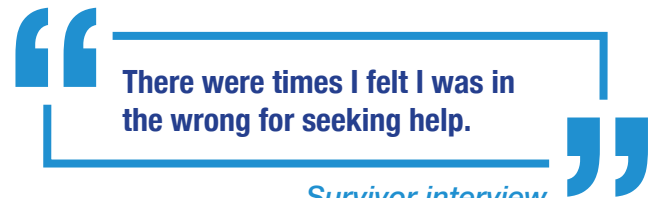


of domestic abuse before victims got effective help

In Tameside, we want to ensure that the first disclosure of abuse is handled correctly and that victim-survivors of abuse are supported to access specialist services that can support them to live their lives in safety and free from abuse.

We will create safe spaces for disclosures by:

5.2.a Upskilling staff in public facing roles across the borough on domestic abuse



When professionals in Tameside were asked who they would disclose domestic abuse to if they were experiencing it, 'my manager' was a close second to 'friends and family'. Therefore, we need to ensure that staff understand how to respond to domestic abuse not only for the wider public, but to ensure they are supporting their teams.

As a multi-agency partnership we commit to ensuring a good quality response to domestic abuse from those working in public services. We will do this by ensuring there is a clear training offer for professionals, appropriate to the role that they are doing.

We will measure the success of this offer through:

Feedback from professionals on the training offer

Feedback from victim-survivors on the response they receive from those in public facing roles in the borough

The number of referrals into specialist domestic abuse referrals from professionals following awareness raising and training

5.2.b Embedding specialist domestic abuse professionals in a range of settings

Our local domestic abuse needs assessment identified that we may be reaching victims of domestic abuse too late, when they are at the point of crisis. This is demonstrated in the high percentage of referrals into our domestic abuse service from the police. Ideally, the domestic abuse service would have more referrals from partner agencies and of course, self-referrals from victim-survivors themselves.

We will diversify our offer on domestic abuse to ensure that professionals have access to specialist advice when required. Evidence from pilots elsewhere in the UK have demonstrated that having a strong response on domestic abuse in health settings, for example, can result in better outcomes for victim-survivors of domestic abuse and identify those who have more complex needs and do not access mainstream domestic abuse services. We will commit to trialling new and innovative ways of working, being proactive with the resource we have available locally.



5.3 Meeting the Needs of Victims through Local Services

Domestic Abuse victim-survivors in Tameside told us that staying local to the area is extremely important to them. We also know that domestic abuse is not the only issue impacting many victim-survivors of abuse in Tameside, there are additional and multiple unmet needs. We want to ensure that services that we provide are able to meet the wider needs of victim-survivors, provided locally to them.



For me I really need the people close to me, I rely on them massively, they know me so well, and we go and grab a coffee if I'm having a bad day. Without that I don't think I would have been able to get through it. As good as the refuge were there were times you just need your friends. It was really hard, Covid made everything worse, but because it was local I had those little moments I knew when I took my kids to school I'd be able to see familiar faces who knew me and knew I was alright.



Survivor interview

We will meet the needs of victims through local services by:

5.3.a Providing specialist domestic abuse services in Tameside

The current approach to domestic abuse service delivery was highlighted as an area of good practice in the domestic abuse needs assessment. In particular, the holistic service model that supported victim-survivors to stay connected with the local area.

We believe that victim-survivors should not have to leave the borough to get specialist support, unless it is necessary for safety reasons. We are committed to providing local specialist domestic abuse provision, in-borough.

5.3.b Identifying and meeting the wider needs of victims through local services

Domestic abuse victim-survivors present with a variety of needs, we want to ensure that our professionals understand these needs and are able to respond with compassion and understanding. These needs can sometimes be a consequence of the domestic abuse.



Being local meant I could still work, for me that meant I had a bit of normality. Work were really supportive when I told them. It was a good thing for me. I was able to still be me, no one knows, I had a little wellness plan – flexibility for going off and talking to people, managers knew and I could to talk to them if I was having a bad day. If [the domestic abuse specialist provision] had been miles away I would have had no support, I'd have had nothing.



Survivor interview



These can include but are not limited to:

- Financial issues such as debts or rent arrears
- Substance misuse needs, such as substance dependency
- Mental health needs such as PTSD related to the abuse
- Physical health needs such as cosmetic dentistry
- Legal issues such as children’s social care involvement and family court



We are committed to ensuring that domestic abuse victims get their wider needs identified and then get the support that they require through services in Tameside.

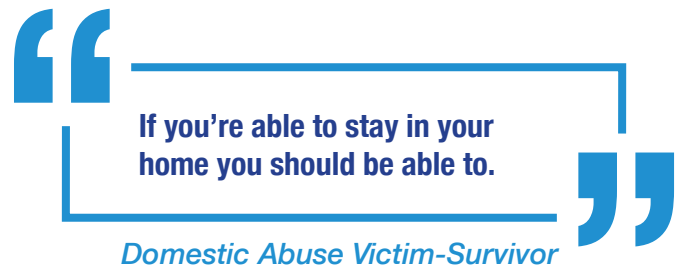
Additionally, if the victim-survivor of domestic abuse has care and support needs and is unable to protect themselves, a Section 42 enquiry under the Care Act 2014 will be taken to establish whether any action needs to be taken to prevent or stop abuse or neglect.

We can monitor progress on this ambition through:



5.4 Helping Victim-Survivors Stay Safe at Home

Locally, victim-survivors of domestic abuse have said that their number one priority is having a safe place to live, for both themselves and their children. We also know that if it is safe to stay in the property it results in less disruption to routine. This includes being able to maintain children’s education and victim-survivors employment, it also ensures that victim-survivors are able to draw on existing support networks of friends and family that live locally.



Our ambition in Tameside is that no victim-survivor that is able to live safely in his or her home has to leave because of a perpetrator of domestic abuse, as we acknowledge that this places the responsibility for safety on the victim-survivor and does not hold a perpetrator of abuse accountable for their behaviour. At the point of crisis and at the point of leaving a relationship most victim-survivors in Tameside told us that they wanted either the perpetrator to be removed from the property or for them to be supported to find a new home.

You can find more information on how we intend to help victim-survivors stay safe at home in the Safe Accommodation Strategy section of the report (Appendix 1).



5.5 Better Outcomes for Children Impacted by Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act recognises children as victims of domestic abuse if they “see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of abuse”. We recognise the impact that domestic abuse has on children and young people and we want to improve the outcomes for children living in households with domestic abuse perpetrators.

We recognise that domestic abuse is a key indicator for child abuse and neglect, with children experiencing domestic violence being three to four times more likely to experience physical violence and neglect. In Tameside, domestic abuse is a common factor for families who require children’s services support and statutory intervention, therefore domestic abuse is a key priority for the authority.



3x-4x

children experiencing abuse are three to four times more likely to experience physical violence and neglect

We want to achieve better outcomes for children impacted by abuse by:

5.5.a Providing targeted services for children impacted by domestic abuse

Children living in a household with domestic abuse are victims in their own right and are impacted by domestic abuse, even if they did not witness specific incidents. Tameside is committed to providing specialist children and young people domestic abuse offer. This offer will be provided to local children and young people appropriate to their age, level of need and the risk of the domestic abuse in the household.

Unfortunately, children and young people can also experience abuse in their own intimate relationships, some of which can be high risk. Our CHIDVA service provides specialist support to young people in abusive relationships, as well as children that are living in a household with high risk domestic abuse.

5.5.b Scrutinising the outcomes we are achieving for children impacted by domestic abuse

In order for us to improve outcomes for children impacted by domestic abuse, we need to have a better picture of the lives of those children and their experiences. We are committed to developing a domestic abuse dashboard for children. This will allow the domestic abuse partnership board to monitor the impact of domestic abuse interventions and trauma informed practice on children and young people in the borough. We are also committed to ensuring that the voices and experiences of child survivors of domestic abuse are included in the implementation and monitoring of this strategy.

“ Having a place to live, having financial support and being able to provide for children would help women from going back to bad relationships. ”

DMNW Victim-survivor

“ I know someone who was told if she told any service outside the family then the children would be taken away. ”

Victim-survivor of domestic abuse from South Asian community



5.5.c Holding perpetrators of abuse accountable for their behaviour and the impact their abuse has on children

In order to build sustainable change for families in Tameside, we want to ensure that people who are controlling, coercive or abusive are deterred from their activities through prosecutions or rehabilitation as a priority. Children's services are committed to working in partnership with agencies and services that support victim-survivors to support perpetrators of domestic abuse to engage in reflective behaviour and lifestyle programmes to enable rehabilitation and minimise reoffending.

Access to early prevention programmes for young people who are displaying harmful behaviours in their own intimate and family relationships will be made available at the earliest opportunity.

“ Because we don't see them as a victim we fall into the trap that the abused parent should be protecting them. But if the child was considered a victim of domestic abuse, how would we expect one victim to be responsible for protecting another victim. Society should be protecting both of the victims. ”

Professional quoted in VC Sowing the seeds report

5.6 Identifying Problem Behaviours Early

In order to improve outcomes for domestic abuse victim-survivors, we need to ensure that children and adults in the borough are able to identify the signs of an unhealthy relationship and understand what domestic abuse is. Once those behaviours have been identified, we want to support individuals to identify and change their behaviour, before it escalates into serious harm.

We will identify problem behaviours early by:

“ People don't understand what [domestic abuse] is, take it lightly and carry on until they have had enough. Sometimes they do know it is wrong but can't do anything about it but just carry on. ”

DMNW consultation

5.6.a Providing holistic healthy relationship education

In order to be able to identify problem behaviours early, it is crucial that that local residents of all ages are knowledgeable about domestic abuse and are able to spot the signs of an unhealthy relationship. Our commitment to unhealthy relationships education will be monitored through:

- Borough-wide domestic abuse awareness campaigns
- Having an up to date and easily accessible PSHE curriculum that includes a focus on healthy relationships
- Referrals into early help, children's services and specialist domestic abuse services from Education partners
- Access to parenting programmes, Freedom programme and reducing parental conflict interventions



5.6.b Providing early help and support for individuals that are demonstrating harmful behaviours

We want to identify problem behaviours early and offer interventions that will prevent the escalation of behaviour into domestic abuse. One way we will do this is through our parental conflict offer which targets early intervention where problem behaviours are starting to surface.

Additionally, we know that there can be shame associated with perpetrating domestic abuse and that this can prevent people from seeking help early on. We want to take learning from the Respect Make and Change pilot, and ensure that professionals are able to identify signs that the person they are working with may be perpetrating domestic abuse and then act on that information through appropriate channels. The Make a Change programme found that the most common places for perpetrators to try and access information and support around their behaviour was friends and families but also their GP when asking for mental health support.

Our commitment to upskilling the workforce around domestic abuse should improve the identification of domestic abuse for both victim-survivors and perpetrators of abuse. This combined with our commitment to healthy relationships education and awareness raising should improve our identification of problem behaviours in younger adults and children too, which is a key opportunity to do targeted work and prevent unhealthy behaviours from escalating into adulthood.

“

We had a case this week of a young girl who had been hit and punched by her boyfriend, both in primary school. Eleven years old. That's been picked up by us to do some immediate support around healthy relationships, but that brings it home I think.

”

*Early Help professional in
Tameside, focus group*



5.7 Holding Perpetrators Accountable

It is crucial that perpetrators of domestic abuse are held accountable for their actions, both through the criminal justice system and outside of it. Victim-survivors in Tameside have said that they felt that at times they had to deal with the consequences of the domestic abuse and that the perpetrator did not. Examples included:



I read a lot of plans that say ‘mum to attend the freedom programme or to attend a ‘blank’. I don’t see things saying a perpetrator needs to work on this...

*Children’s Social Care
worker in Tameside*



Being held accountable for the perpetrator to change their behaviour through social care assessments

Housing providers not acknowledging the domestic abuse and categorising incidents as anti-social behaviour which was noted against the victims’ tenancy

Significant debts accrued for victim-survivors of domestic abuse due to financial abuse and a lack of financial support available to them around this

We will hold perpetrators accountable for their actions by:

5.7.a Having a multi-agency response to tackling domestic abuse perpetrators

We commit to a multi-agency approach to tackling domestic abuse that includes working with partners across housing, health, social care and the criminal justice system to ensure that a perpetrator is held accountable for the consequences of domestic abuse.

We will do this through a co-ordinated community response which utilises:

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) to identify opportunities to address the behaviour of perpetrators as per SafeLives MARAC guidance

The knowledge and expertise of probation to identify high-risk perpetrators in the community

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to promote collaboration and information sharing around safeguarding concerns



5.7.b Utilising legal options to hold perpetrators accountable and remove them from the property where possible to do so

As a multi-agency partnership, we commit to supporting criminal justice professionals to utilise legal mechanisms including the new protection orders to keep victims safe in their homes.

We will be able to monitor the success of this by the number of:

DVPN/DVPOs issues in the borough

Individuals that leave the domestic abuse service remaining in the property

Individuals that leave the domestic abuse service in a new property without the perpetrator



Support in Safe Accommodation

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, places a duty on local authorities to provide support in safe accommodation for victim-survivors of domestic abuse and their children (part 4 of the Act). It also requires Tier 1 authorities such as Tameside to publish their strategy for delivering this duty, which this section of the Tameside domestic abuse strategy addresses. This section of the strategy may be updated over the lifespan of the overarching Tameside Domestic Abuse Strategy.



A big fear is that you have to move, it's a big national thing, I didn't want to relocate, and that's going to put women off getting that help. You have all those worries and fears before you get help.



Survivor interview

One of our strategic priorities is to keep victims safe at home, our ambition is that no victim of domestic abuse that wants to remain in their home, and is able to do so safely, should have to leave. However, we know that for some victims, they do not have this option and may require the support of our homelessness services or even specialist domestic abuse accommodation such as refuge.

We have a three-tiered response to our new duties to provide support in safe accommodation.



Support those who are able to remain in their own homes

How: Better support victim-survivors to stay in their own homes with support and safety measures in place

Support those who are homeless due to domestic abuse

How: Improve outcomes for those who approach our homelessness service as victims of domestic abuse

Support those who require specialist domestic abuse accommodation

How: Strengthen and diversify our offer for those who require specialist domestic abuse accommodation

The Tameside strategy to deliver our new duty to provide support in safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and their children will be refreshed and published every two years, therefore it will be published separate to this five year strategy and can be found in an Appendix (1) to this document.



Appendix 1

Support in Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 – 2023

In Tameside, we want our residents to live healthy, fulfilled lives that are free from domestic abuse. We recognise that in order to achieve these aims, we need to have clear, measurable strategic ambitions that the Tameside multi-agency partnership on Domestic Abuse can be held to account for progress on. We have consulted local residents, victim-survivors and strategic leaders and agreed the following priority ambitions on domestic abuse:

- **Making domestic abuse everybody's business**
- **Creating safe spaces for disclosures**
- **Meeting the needs of victims through local services**
- **Helping Victim-Survivors stay safe in their home**
- **Better outcomes for children impacted by domestic abuse**
- **Identifying problem behaviours early**
- **Holding perpetrators accountable**

Alongside these strategic ambitions, we have a new duty to provide Support within Safe Accommodation for victim-survivors of domestic abuse and their children, as per the requirement of the Domestic Abuse Act 201. The local authority was allocated £547,627 to discharge our duties under the act for 2021/22. Funding for future years has not been confirmed and will be announced with the Central Government Spending Review.

We know that on average 6 households present as homeless as a result of domestic abuse each week in Tameside. We want to do more to prevent these victim-survivors from having to flee in the first place and if they require it, that both child and adult victims of domestic abuse receive appropriate support within safe accommodation. Following engagement from victim-survivors, domestic abuse professionals and local leaders, we have developed a three-tiered response to our new duties to provide support in safe accommodation.



6 households
present as homeless as a
result of domestic abuse
each week in Tameside



Support those who are able to remain in their own homes

How: Better support victim-survivors to stay in their own homes with support and safety measures in place

Support those who are homeless due to domestic abuse

How: Improve outcomes for those who approach our homelessness service as victims of domestic abuse

Support those who require specialist domestic abuse accommodation

How: Strengthen and diversify our offer for those who require specialist domestic abuse accommodation



6.1 Better support victim survivors to stay in their own homes with support and safety measures in place

Home should be a place of safety and security for victim-survivors and their children, but we know that unfortunately for many that is not the case. Too many victim-survivors are faced with the choice of staying in their property and being fearful that the perpetrator may return or having to leave in order to feel safe. We want to ensure that those who are able to safely stay in their homes are supported to do so, and that they receive adequate specialist domestic abuse interventions and support once their homes have been made safe.

We will better support victim-survivors to stay in their own homes with support and safety measures in place by:

6.1.a Funding Sanctuary and target hardening schemes

Our ambition is that all victim-survivors that want to stay in their homes are able to do so with a co-ordinated, multi-agency response to increase the safety in the home. We commit to trialling new ways of creating safety at home, using Sanctuary schemes and target hardening devices to increase safety and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. This will be provided alongside a holistic support response from our specialist domestic abuse provider.

6.1.b Using Domestic Abuse Act funding to provide an Enhanced Sanctuary offer, with specialist domestic abuse support in the home

One of the strategic ambitions outlined in the Tameside Domestic Abuse Strategy is to meet the needs of victims through local services, as a local authority we are also striving for a neighbourhood's model of delivering public services. We want to ensure that once a domestic abuse victim has had Sanctuary applied to their home, to make their accommodations safe, that they are able to access the Enhanced Sanctuary Scheme offer, which provides a specialist and personalised domestic abuse service to victim-survivors and their children.

The enhanced Sanctuary Scheme offer will provide:

- 1-2-1 support for victim-survivors of domestic abuse
- An assessment of needs and referrals into wider services and third sector organisations
- Referral into dedicated specialist children's provision if required
- Safety planning activity with those living in the home



The ambition of this service is that:

- There is an increased feeling of safety for victim-survivors and those that live in the property
- There is a better understanding of victim-survivor needs
- There is improved access to services such as mental health, substance misuse, social care and financial support
- There are fewer property moves for victim-survivors of domestic abuse and their children
- Victim-survivors and their children are able to continue to utilise their local support networks and continue to access education and employment
- Prevention of homelessness

6.2 Improve outcomes for those who approach our homelessness service as victims of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is the largest cause of women's homelessness in the UK (rights of women), in Tameside, we receive on average 6 victims of domestic abuse presenting to our homelessness service each week.

The domestic abuse Act has resulted in a number of new duties for local authorities around homelessness and housing, we want to ensure that we have a culture of empathy and understanding among our staff in the homelessness service and that we are achieving good outcomes for victim-survivors of domestic abuse that go beyond our statutory requirements.

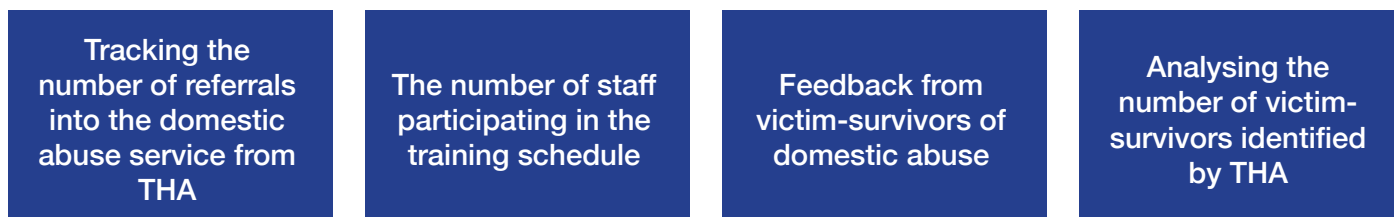
We will improve outcomes for those who approach our homelessness service as victims of domestic abuse through:

6.2.a Improved practice in responding to victim-survivors presenting to our homelessness service

We want to ensure that victims of domestic abuse are treated with professionalism and empathy when they present to our homelessness service and that staff understand their duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. To this end, TMBC Community Safety and Homelessness Service have devised a mandatory training schedule for frontline staff and management across the Tameside Housing Advice (THA) Service and TMBC staff for 2021-2023. The content of this training plan includes building on the service commitment to a trauma informed response, an increased awareness and understanding of domestic abuse and better understanding of how to identify and work with perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Additionally, the service is committed to personalised support with trauma informed responses. Building on this, we want to create 'safe spaces' for staff supporting domestic abuse victim-survivors – with the aim of creating a private, relaxing and comforting environment to enable disclosures in suitable settings.

We will monitor the efficacy of improving practice within the homelessness response by:



6.2.b Compliance with new duties around homelessness and housing

In addition to providing support in safe accommodation, the local authority is responsible for ensuring that victim-survivors who are made homeless but had a secure social tenancy are able to keep this status in their new properties. TMBC is committed to providing support at each stage of the victim-survivors journey through housing support services to ensure that victim-survivors maintain their secure tenancies.

We will monitor compliance with the new DA Act 2021 duties through:



6.3 Strengthen and diversify our offer for those who require specialist accommodation

We are committed to providing specialist safe accommodation for victim-survivors of domestic abuse. We want to build on the success of our existing offer by diversifying our offer for victim-survivors of domestic abuse that need to flee the home and require specialist support. We will do this through:

6.3.a Refuge provision provided by a specialist domestic abuse provider

We have a gender specific service for women victim-survivors of domestic abuse and their children, which is refuge provision. The first refuge in the UK opened in Chiswick, London in 1970 to provide a safe space for women and children that were fleeing domestic abuse.

Local victim-survivors have told us how much they value this service, which is based in Tameside and provides specialist domestic abuse safe accommodation based support. As part of our new duty to provide support in safe accommodation, Tameside is committed to providing a gender specific refuge service that is based locally in the borough.



We also recognise that as this is a gender specific service, male victims of abuse are not able to access this support. However, male victims of abuse do have access to the national network of refuge provision which is gender specific for male victims. Locally, we do not currently have a level of demand to justify a male refuge service be prioritised over other forms of safe accommodation, we will keep this under review. The next section in this report (6.3.b) outlines our Tameside based offer for male victim-survivors.

6.3.b A dispersed accommodation offer

For some victim-survivors, refuge is not an appropriate option. One of the areas of best practice that was highlighted through our statutory needs assessment was the localised offer that we had to support victims of domestic abuse in safe accommodation. We want to build on this success by developing a more diverse offer of safe accommodation in the borough.

We have analysed the reasons that victim-survivors of domestic abuse were not able to access our local refuge, the main reasons were:

- The victim-survivor could not be accommodated as they had more than 2 children or teenage sons
- The refuge is too close to where the perpetrator lives
- The perpetrator knew the location of the refuge
- The refuge was full
- The victim-survivor had a disability that required them to have an accessible room within the refuge but these were occupied

For many of these individuals, they were referred to safe accommodation schemes elsewhere in Greater Manchester or further afield, many times this was to ensure their safety. However, our ambition is that anyone who is able to live safely in Tameside, but requires specialist accommodation is able to do so. Therefore, we are committed to developing our dispersed accommodation offer for victim-survivors of domestic abuse.

We anticipate that this will better meet the needs of victim-survivors who:

- Have more than two children
- Are male
- Have a disability
- Have older teenage sons that live with them
- Those with more complex needs who may struggle to live in a communal living environment such as the refuge.

The dispersed accommodation offer will include a floating support service provided by a specialist domestic abuse service. The dispersed accommodation will have appropriate Sanctuary measures put in place to ensure the safety of the property for the victim-survivors that live there.



References

Public Health England, Tameside Fingertips data (2019) <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/static-reports/health-profiles/2019/E08000008.html?area-name=Tameside>

Respect, Make a Change Programme (webpage, accessed 2021) <https://www.respect.uk.net/pages/34-make-a-change>

Rights of Women, Domestic Violence, Housing and Homelessness (2012) [guide-to-domestic-violence-housing-and-homelessness.pdf](#) (rightsofwomen.org.uk)

SafeLives, How long do people live with domestic abuse, and when do they get help to stop it? (webpage, accessed 2021) <https://safelives.org.uk/policy-evidence/about-domestic-abuse/how-long-do-people-live-domestic-abuse-and-when-do-they-get>

SafeLives, Who are the victims of domestic abuse? (webpage, accessed 2021) <http://www.safelives.org.uk/policy-evidence/about-domestic-abuse/who-are-victims-domestic-abuse>

