

# Options for Setting up a Sanctuary Scheme

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On 5th May 2006 the responsibilities of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) transferred to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

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# Introduction

## Background

Partners working in the field have known for a long time that despite all of the good work being done, many victims of domestic violence felt isolated and often gripped by the fear of repeat incidents. This resulted in them having to move home on numerous occasions, and potentially becoming homeless and/or being removed from friends and family, support networks, schools and GPs.

Home security and personal safety advice was often given, however, there were no provisions in place for providing the victims with additional physical security measures to make the option of remaining safely in their accommodation a realistic one.

A Sanctuary Scheme can be a positive response by a local authority to prevent homelessness where someone is faced with domestic violence, **when** properly developed through a close working partnership of all key local agencies **and** where it is the option **chosen** by the victim. It should also be noted that, aside from the obvious safety aspects and social benefits associated with allowing a victim to stay in their own home, the cost of installing a sanctuary is likely to be **considerably less** than placing a victim and any children in temporary accommodation.

This short guidance note aims to help local authorities set up effective Sanctuary Schemes and to promote and share good practice. This guidance relates to Sanctuary Schemes in the context of homelessness prevention, however, it can be used for victims of other hate crimes. The security measures described here could also be useful for victims of domestic violence who are moving on from temporary accommodation and into more settled accommodation.

## Domestic Violence and Homelessness

Local authorities play a vital and central role in addressing domestic violence both through their own actions and through funding and co-ordinating the actions of partners. There are many reasons why local authorities need to address domestic violence. Local government has statutory responsibilities to work in partnership with other agencies to reduce crime and disorder. With domestic violence making up 17–25% (and more in high crime areas) of all recorded violent crime<sup>1</sup>, the impact is obvious.

What is less well documented is the impact that domestic violence has on local authority services such as housing, homelessness and social services. In 2005, more than 12,000 households were accepted by local housing authorities in England as being owed a main homelessness duty where the reason for homelessness was fleeing domestic violence. This represents 13% of the total number of homeless acceptances in England 2005.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Nicholas S, Povey D, Walker A and Kershaw C (2005) Crime in England and Wales 2004/5. Home Office Statistical Bulletin No 11/05. London: Home Office.

<sup>2</sup>Summary information collected through the quarterly P1E returns on local housing authorities' activities under homelessness legislation. Published by DCLG

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Homelessness can be caused by a wide range of factors. Some relate to the broader state of the economy and the housing market, others are personal to the individual or family, or reflect social and demographic change.

Under the homelessness legislation (Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996), local housing authorities must secure suitable accommodation for applicants who are eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and who fall within a priority need group. In 2002, the Government broadened the categories of applicant who have a priority need for accommodation to include people who are vulnerable<sup>3</sup> as a result of ceasing to occupy accommodation because of violence from another person, or threats of violence from another person which are likely to be carried out.

Where someone applies to a housing authority for accommodation (or assistance in obtaining accommodation) and the authority has reason to believe that they may be homeless or threatened with homelessness, the authority must make enquiries and decide whether they may be owed a duty under the homelessness legislation. And, if the authority has reason to believe that the person is homeless and has a priority need, they have an immediate duty to secure what suitable accommodation is available until they have completed their inquiries and decided whether a more substantive homelessness duty may be owed.

For many victims, escaping domestic violence will necessitate leaving their home, often as a last resort. If it is not safe for them to remain in their own home and they do not have alternative accommodation available to them, they will become homeless. Even where a victim decides to remain in their own home, perhaps in the short term, they may be statutorily homeless. For example, if they were at risk of violence and it would not be reasonable for them to continue to occupy their home. Under the homelessness legislation, it is not reasonable for a person to continue to occupy accommodation if it is probable that this will lead to domestic violence against them, or against

- (a) a person who normally resides with them as a member of their family
- (b) any person who might reasonably be expected to reside with them

For this purpose “domestic violence” in relation to a person means violence from a person with whom they are associated, or threats of violence from a person which are likely to be carried out.

## What is the Sanctuary Scheme?

The Sanctuary Scheme is a victim centred initiative and is an innovative approach to homelessness prevention. It is designed to enable victims of domestic violence to remain in their own accommodation, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice and where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation. If a victim feels compelled to move then the disruption to family and other support networks, education and employment can sometimes lead to homelessness.

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<sup>3</sup>The test for whether a person is vulnerable has been developed through case law and is stated in the Homelessness Code of guidance for Local Authorities as “whether, when homeless, the applicant would be less able to fend for him/herself than an ordinary homeless person so that he or she would suffer injury or detriment in circumstances where a less vulnerable person would be able to cope without harmful effects.”

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The main feature of the scheme is the creation of a ‘sanctuary room’, providing a safe room or sanctuary from where victims can call and wait for the arrival of the police. Additional security can also be provided, i.e. locks on windows and doors, gated security to the outside of a property, fire hammers, fire blankets and emergency lighting.

Important components of the Sanctuary Scheme model include:

- The scheme is available across all tenures.
- It should only be provided where it is the clear choice of the victim and where it is safe and appropriate for them to remain in their own accommodation.
- It should be clearly presented as only one of the range of options open to those at risk of homelessness due to domestic violence.
- It should be implemented in partnership with the police, the fire service and a specialist domestic violence service, with support provided throughout the process.
- As well as installing new or extra locks and lighting, a ‘secure sanctuary’ is provided by creating a safe room with reinforced doors and bolts.
- Arrangements are tailored to meet the needs and circumstances of the individuals involved.
- The scheme must be fully integrated with local risk assessment processes (see next section)

Every Sanctuary Scheme must be tailored to accommodate the needs and circumstances of the individuals involved. The security recommendations generally fall into two categories:

- **Sanctuary:** this is where a door to a main room, generally the main bedroom, is replaced with a solid core door, reversed to open outwards and the frame reinforced. Two Europrofile locks are fitted to the top and bottom of the door, operated with the same key with thumb turns on the inside, three large steel hinges, hinge bolts and a memo door viewer. This provides a safe room or ‘sanctuary’ from where victims can call and wait for the arrival of the police. Window locks, front and back door locks and fire safety equipment are also provided.
- **Sanctuary Plus:** this would normally have all of the above elements plus additional security features, i.e. in extreme cases grilles, extra ‘sanctuary’ doors to the front and rear of the property, ‘London’ and ‘Birmingham’ bars, etc (please see the Glossary for an explanation of these terms). Victims are provided with fire safety equipment, which includes intumescent (expanding) fire seals rebated into the sanctuary doors, smoke detectors, break glass hammers, emergency lights and fire blankets.

## Risk assessment

A Sanctuary Scheme is just one of a range of options that should be presented to those experiencing domestic violence who are at risk of homelessness – they will **not** be appropriate or safe in all instances.

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All interventions with victims of domestic violence should be based on a comprehensive risk assessment and be focused on safety. Sanctuary Schemes should be fully integrated with local risk assessment processes (for victims, perpetrators and children) and information sharing arrangements.

For every referral made a full risk assessment should be carried out by the Police Crime Reduction Unit. This may involve information obtained from several partner agencies. Practical advice may also need to be given to victims regarding personal safety outside the home and additional measures may need to be put in place to manage the risk of the perpetrator.

Examples of risks which need to be assessed include:

- Not all properties can be made safe. Reinforcing a door when a property contains stud partition walls presents considerable risks.
- Some perpetrators maybe so dangerous as to make a sanctuary inappropriate. In rural areas the response time for the service in cases of emergency will need to be considered.
- Clear advice on personal safety needs to be provided to increase the safety of victims outside their home such as when visiting family and friends, or going to work. This can be especially important with regards to children who may be playing outside the home. The advice should be provided in the form of a safety plan, reviewed at regular intervals as the level of risk can be subject to change.

Should the victim's or perpetrator's circumstances change or the victim no longer feels safe in their own home then the use of the Sanctuary Scheme in this instance should be reviewed and alternative options considered.

A sanctuary should not be seen as an immediate emergency response, but a considered solution to providing proper professional security with support. The scheme should serve as part of a victim's long term safety planning. All security options should include risk management measures beyond the physical sanctuary security measures in order to increase safety. Addresses with Sanctuary Schemes installed should be clearly flagged on the IT systems of partner agencies, so that in the event of an emergency telephone call it is clear that an immediate response may be necessary.

Victims may want to get support and legal advice to assist with making decisions about the process to enable them to assess fully the consequences of any option chosen. They should be provided with information about local contacts such as a specialist domestic violence service, Housing Aid centre, Law Centre etc.

## **The link between Sanctuary Schemes and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences**

The purpose of a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference meeting is somewhat broader than that of a Sanctuary Scheme and is only appropriate for very high risk victims where multi-agency information sharing and risk management is a proportionate response. In practice there may

be some overlap between the two schemes, and it may be that a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference will recommend the implementation of a Sanctuary Scheme. Referral to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference is based on constant criteria relating to the overall risk profile of the victim. Clearly, a common understanding of risk between as many agencies as possible will have great practical advantages so that referrals between them can work as smoothly as possible.

## Case study

Sally is 36 years old and lives with her 12-month-old child in a two-bedroom ground floor flat owned by the Housing Association.

Police were called to her home by a neighbour stating that her ex-partner, Steve, was trying to gain entry to the flat. When police arrived, he had gone.

Sally explained that Steve had been sending her text messages and telephone calls threatening to kill her and the baby.

Steve is a crack addict and is very violent.

Sally was very concerned for her and her baby's safety, as her ex had assaulted her on previous occasions and she believed that he was capable of carrying out the threats.

Sally was visibly terrified and stated that she didn't want to move to another property as she was settled at this address. However, she had no option.

The Crime Prevention Officer carried out a survey at the flat and recommended the following security measures to be implemented, free of charge, under the Sanctuary Project:

- Replace the front door with a solid core door. Reinforce the frame with 'London' and 'Birmingham' bars and reinforce the glass panel above the door. Fit three large steel hinges, hinge bolts, key operated door chain and 180-degree door viewer. Fit a letterbox on the wall outside.
- Fit collapsible grilles across the bedroom window at the front of the property and collapsible grilles across the French doors at the rear.

This work was carried out and Sally now feels happy to stay at the address. She said

**“I feel 100% safer than I did before and I'm really pleased that I didn't have to move somewhere else. My baby and I are both settled in this flat.”<sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>4</sup>Case study supplied by Harrow Sanctuary Scheme.

## Who is eligible for a Sanctuary?

The criteria used should be very simple. It should be available free of charge regardless of type of tenure. It should be available, whether the victim is someone with a family or living on their own. The only test is that the referring agency must be satisfied that without the work the victim would be likely to become homeless. In short anyone who may be in danger of losing their accommodation as a result of being a victim of domestic violence or hate crime.

A sanctuary should not be limited to local authority or housing association tenants, but should also be available for those who own their home or those who live in the private rented sector.

It is not always possible to install a sanctuary in a multiple tenancy occupation due to the shared front door (see below for an example of how the Exeter Sanctuary Scheme overcame this problem). In private tenancies, the permission of the landlord will be needed before any work is undertaken. However, evidence from existing schemes shows that installing a sanctuary adds value to the property and is therefore attractive to landlords, all the more so as it is not cost effective to remove sanctuary products at the end of a tenancy.

### Exeter Sanctuary Scheme – creating a Sanctuary in multiple tenancy occupation

The woman at this address is a high risk domestic violence victim. Her ex-boyfriend has broken into her property before and entered premises using the communal entrance. He had also approached her while she was taking rubbish out to the main refuse collection area. The property is a top floor flat with two communal entrances and the view from the flat is very restricted – she can not see who is coming in through the communal doors.

#### **Action taken**

**Entrances** – both communal doors have been fixed so they now shut automatically. This increases security and reduces the risk of a non-invited person entering the block. The intercom was also repaired and is now working. Closed circuit television was fitted over both doors with external lighting fitted at the rear entrance. The closed circuit television has a sensor so it only activates when there is movement below camera. The cameras also have audio pick up so conversations can be heard. These cameras are linked to a portable television which is situated in the kitchen adjacent to the intercom; this allows the occupant to talk to the person and see who they are and whether there is anyone else with them before allowing entry. When the cameras are activated by movement a high pitched noise alerts the occupant to the fact there is someone outside.

**Door to flat** – new locks were fitted comprising of a five lever mortice lock, deadlock and two bolts at the top and bottom of the door. A chain was installed as well as a door viewer. The letterbox was sealed and a new external box was fitted to an outside wall.

**Bedroom** (safe room) – the old door was replaced with a solid core door and has a five lever mortice lock fitted and two bolts at the top and bottom. The door opens outwards to prevent the door being kicked in.

### ***General feelings from occupant***

The work was completed as soon as possible as her ex-partner's release from prison was imminent and she feared he might return to the address.

The occupant was very impressed with the work carried out. The closed circuit television is really helpful and gives her the opportunity to see and hear the people outside even at night when the system sends a high pitched audio signal warning of someone outside. Although thankfully she has not heard anything from her ex-partner she is still very pleased that the work has been done as she now feels very secure in her home.

The work conducted on the external areas of the flats (door now closes properly and external lighting fitted) also benefits other residents and makes the environment a safer one to live in.

## **Would you provide a sanctuary for victims of domestic violence where the perpetrator lives within the accommodation?**

Where the perpetrator still lives within the accommodation, a sanctuary is not appropriate. However, where a victim wishes to pursue legal action to remove the violent partner from the home, the availability of sanctuary security measures may help to inform a decision to seek to exclude the perpetrator.

## **What is the role of the civil court where the victim and perpetrator live within the same accommodation?**

Where the victim and the perpetrator live within the same accommodation, including owner occupiers and joint tenants, a victim may wish to use civil remedies through the Family Law Act 1996 to initially remove the perpetrator. In the case of rented properties, the victim may wish to seek to dissolve the joint tenancy thereby allowing the landlord to grant the tenancy as a sole tenancy.

Applications can be made to the County Court for injunctions under the Family Law Act 1996. Initially the applicant may wish to seek a non molestation order injunction preventing the respondent whether by him/her self, his servants or agents from assaulting, threatening, harassing or pestering the applicant.

At the same time the applicant may also seek an occupation order preventing the respondent from either returning to the property, if he/she is already away from it, or ordering him/her to leave. The

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court may order the respondent to vacate within 24/48 hours, or maybe longer, depending on the facts of the case. In the case of jointly owned property, it may be possible to seek a condition to be attached to an occupation order, that locks can be changed under the provision of a Sanctuary Scheme.

Under the Family Law Act 1996 an application can also be made for a transfer of the tenancy of rented property from the joint names of the parties into the sole name of the applicant.

Emergency applications can be made very shortly after an incident ‘without notice’ (also referred to as ex-parte) without the alleged perpetrator present. A non-molestation order and/or occupation order can be made the same day although occupation orders are made less frequently at ‘without notice’ hearing and if so, time is abridged for a quick return date. Both applications will require a further hearing ‘on-notice’ with both parties present.

Where there is a threat of violence a court can be asked to attach a power of arrest to any order given. This means that if the respondent then breaches the orders or any part of the orders to which the power of arrest is attached, he/she is likely to be arrested and can be brought back before the civil court where he/she may be sentenced to a term of imprisonment up to 2 years (in the county court). As soon as an occupation order is made in respect of a joint tenancy, even if action has not been commenced to transfer the tenancy to a sole tenant or remove the perpetrator in the case of freehold joint tenants, at that stage, a sanctuary can be put into a property as long as any required consents have been obtained.

For full information on legal options please refer to ‘Domestic Violence a Guide to Civil Remedies and Criminal Sanctions’ produced by the Department for Constitutional Affairs.<sup>5</sup>

## How can a joint tenancy of a rented social housing property be brought to an end in cases of domestic violence?

It is important that local authorities and housing associations as social landlords are aware of their legislative rights and responsibilities, so that they are clear regarding action they can or cannot take to assist victims of domestic violence who hold tenancies with them.

Rules that apply to all joint tenancies are applicable. A joint tenancy can be brought to an end by:

- Mutual agreement (surrender). In such a case the tenants arrange to hand in the keys and give vacant possession at a time agreed with the landlord
- All joint tenants must agree to this method which may be unlikely where there is a perpetrator of domestic violence.
- By notice to quit by one joint tenant, which brings a joint tenancy to an end.

Therefore, a joint tenancy (in the case of a social tenant this is likely to be either secure or assured tenancy) in England could be brought to an end by the victim of domestic violence giving four

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<sup>5</sup>Department for Constitutional Affairs: ‘Domestic Violence a Guide to Civil Remedies and Criminal Sanctions’ November 2004: [www.dca.gov.uk/family/dvguide04.pdf](http://www.dca.gov.uk/family/dvguide04.pdf).

weeks notice in writing and a new tenancy could then be created for that victim. However, it is important to note that a joint secure tenancy cannot be converted to a sole tenancy by one of the joint tenants executing a deed of release, surrender, transfer or assignment unless this is to comply with a court order made in family proceedings. The only way for a joint secure tenancy to be converted to a single tenancy is for a joint tenancy to be terminated and a new tenancy created in a sole name.

Local authorities and housing associations are encouraged to take a sympathetic view of rent arrears or other tenancy breaches in cases of domestic violence to ensure that a new tenancy can be provided following the termination of a joint tenancy by a victim of domestic violence. Likewise, local authorities and housing associations should give careful consideration to requests for joint tenancies to be ended and new sole tenancies granted where the request arises as a result of domestic violence.

## Tenancy agreements

It should be made clear in local authority and housing association tenancy agreements that an authority reserves the right to end a joint tenancy and grant a sole tenancy to the victim, where one joint tenant has perpetrated domestic violence against another joint tenant.

### **Suggested wording for tenancy agreement** (Redbridge Victim Support)

*“The tenant must not use threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) against any other person lawfully entitled to reside in the property. In the event of any domestic violence being reported to any statutory or voluntary agency, this will leave you in breach of your tenancy agreement and you can be evicted. It is sometimes difficult to prove domestic violence has taken place, so the word of the victim will be taken as a legitimate source of information and taken at face value unless there is firm evidence to the contrary. Evidence of domestic violence for eviction purposes does not need to rely on a criminal charge. Evidence may be based on civil evidence.”*

Under the Housing Act 1996, where a partner has been driven from the home by violence or the threat of violence, Ground 2A (secure tenants) or Ground 14A (assured tenants) can be used to bring possession proceedings against the perpetrator. This could be important where the perpetrator is a sole tenant, or where a renting joint tenant is unwilling to end the joint tenancy but has been driven from the home by the violence or threat of violence.

The above is a basic guide to civil remedies and tenancy law but is no more than that. Housing organisations should take full legal advice on all issues relating to any proposed legal action against tenants and actions to end joint tenancies.

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## Private landlords

For advice and support on the removal of perpetrators from privately rented accommodation where there is a joint tenancy, private landlords can seek advice and support from the local housing authority.

## What is the typical tenure for those referred?

Clearly, this will depend on the typical tenure for each area, although to date the majority of those referred are occupying social housing. Below is the tenure breakdown for Harrow local authority, a breakdown that may be reflected in many other London or large city areas.

- Local authority tenants: 30%
- Housing Association tenants: 25%
- Housing Association leased temporary accommodation properties: 15%
- Private rented or owner occupied: 30%

## Potential benefits of a Sanctuary Scheme

### General

In addition to the potential savings associated with setting up a Sanctuary Scheme (discussed elsewhere within the guidance) there are many other important social benefits that can be realised when victims are able to stay in their own accommodation.

Not moving can enable victims to keep in contact with many of the ‘protective’ factors (the more positive aspects of our lives that help take care of our mental health) which might include family support, social networks (e.g. friends, colleagues), self-esteem and environmental factors (such as housing) which may well mitigate some of the consequences of domestic violence.

Being able to stay in their own accommodation means that in addition to maintaining existing social networks they will not have to find new GPs or new schools for their children. It is likely that this can also mitigate some of the financial hardship that may occur when having to set up a new house. Research showed that the possible cost of furnishing a new home for a mother and child was £640 (not including carpet) from a second hand shop and £1,400 from the cheapest local retailer.<sup>6</sup>

### Children and Young people

In witnessing domestic violence children are also victims. Living with domestic violence will have an adverse effect on each of the five Every Child Matters outcomes. In 90% of domestic violence

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<sup>6</sup>(Speak 1995). Taken from the Women & Equality Unit’s report ‘The Cost of Domestic Violence’ (September 2004).

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incidents, children were in the same or the next room<sup>7</sup> and in general those children will have significantly more frequent emotional and behavioural problems than those in non-abusive environments.

That domestic violence can and does have a severe effect on children is beyond doubt.

A fact sheet produced by the Royal College of Psychiatrists describes some of the effects:

*Younger children may become anxious; complain of tummy-aches or start to wet their bed. They may find it difficult to sleep, have temper tantrums and start to behave as if they are much younger than they are.*

*Older children react differently. Boys seem to express their distress much more outwardly. They may become aggressive and disobedient. Sometimes, they start to use violence to try and solve problems, as if they have learnt to do this from the way that adults behave in their family. Older boys may play truant and may start to use alcohol or drugs.*

*Girls are more likely to keep their distress inside. They may withdraw from other people and become anxious or depressed. They may think badly of themselves and complain of vague physical symptoms. They are more likely to have an eating disorder, or to harm themselves by taking overdoses or cutting themselves.*

*Children with these problems often do badly at school. They may also get symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, for example have nightmares and flashbacks, and be easily startled.<sup>8</sup>*

It should be noted, however, that this is not necessarily true for **all** boys and girls and is merely an indicator of potential behaviour as the effects can vary from child to child.

As we can see the effects of domestic violence can be very severe but if we put these to one side for a moment we can also see that moving to another place can itself been shown to affect some children. Although much of the research is more relevant to frequent moving it does illustrate what effect a move can have on a child or young person. Education is one area where the impact of mobility is most keenly felt.

The evidence that mobility can have a negative effect on children's education is strong. There is a significant gap in attainment at key stage 4 (age 16) between mobile and non-mobile pupils.<sup>9</sup> Research shows that pupils who stay at the same school for all of their secondary education were much more likely to achieve 5 GCSE passes than those who joined later

For a family with an older male child, moving out of their accommodation and into a Refuge could prove problematic as some Refuges may not, for understandable reasons, allow him to stay. In this case a Sanctuary Scheme can help ensure a family is not further split.

These brief examples illustrate some of these problems that can be mitigated by enabling the victim to remaining safely in their accommodation and thus some of the benefits a Sanctuary Scheme can bring.

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<sup>7</sup>Hughes, H. (1992) 'Impact Of Spouse Abuse On Children Of Battered Women' Violence Update.

<sup>8</sup>Mental Health and Growing Up, Third Edition Domestic violence – its effects on children. Factsheet 17, for parents and teachers Royal College of Psychiatrists 2004.

<sup>9</sup>Dobson, J. and Pooley, C. (2004) Mobility, Equality, Diversity: a study of Pupil Mobility.

## Barnet Sanctuary Project

The Barnet Sanctuary Project was piloted in December 2003 and officially launched in May 2004 by Barnet Council's Housing Needs and Resources Section. It is based on the Harrow model and as been developed in partnership with the ODPM (now DCLG), Metropolitan Police, Barnet Domestic Violence Support Service and the Barnet Safer Communities Partnership.

### ***Facts and Figures***

Since its inception the Barnet Sanctuary Project has been very successful in offering an alternative to temporary accommodation and preventing homelessness. It has helped domestic violence survivors feel safer in their home, as well as saving large sums of expenditure on temporary accommodation.

During 2004/05:

- 45 sanctuaries approved, with 40 having been completed. This means 40 families have been made safe from domestic violence and prevented from becoming homeless
- This has resulted in a more than 40% reduction in families fleeing domestic violence having to go into temporary accommodation last year.
- Had the 40 cases mentioned above been taken into temporary accommodation and remained there for a year it would have cost £669,760 per year to house them
- The total costs for the project for 2004/05 amounted to £68,461, which means the project has saved £601,299 in aborted temporary accommodation costs.

### ***Client Satisfaction Survey Results***

Following security installation, all clients are asked to complete a feedback questionnaire, allowing them to comment on various aspects of the service.

- 100% of clients were very satisfied or satisfied with the service provided by the Crime Prevention Officer
- 100% of clients were very satisfied or satisfied with the service provided by the Domestic Violence Support Service
- 85% of clients were very satisfied or satisfied with the service provided by the specialist contractor Pinner Locks
- 95% of clients were very satisfied or satisfied with the overall service provided by the Barnet Sanctuary Project
- 90% of clients were very satisfied or satisfied that they felt safer in their home following installation of the security works.

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# Setting up a Sanctuary Scheme

## Getting started

The first stage in setting up a scheme is to call a meeting of all relevant partners. It may take several meetings, as there are likely to be a number of issues that need to be resolved and clarified. As a basic checklist the following is suggested:

- Who will gather evidence of local need and how?
- Agree who the key partners for the scheme are (for example, Fire Service, domestic violence voluntary sector etc).
- A presentation may be needed to all key partners to ensure that all fully understand and are committed to the scheme. A presentation from a neighbouring local authority who has implemented a Sanctuary Scheme could be of benefit.
- What processes need to be agreed including who can refer; who will lead on assessing the property; who will lead on support?
- How will any local scheme be funded? Is member or senior officer consent required?
- How will a local contractor be chosen? If by tender, who will lead the tendering process?
- How will the scheme be monitored regarding outcomes and success factors? How will user views be taken on board?

## Good practice guide to the referral process

**Pre-referral stage:** partner agencies will need to decide who can make referrals to the Sanctuary Scheme and who will receive the referrals. They will also need to agree the referral process itself. An example of a possible referral process is detailed below.

- Stage 1** After receiving a referral, directly from a victim or from a referral agency, the local housing authority, by way of interviewing the victim or contacting the referring agency, decide whether if a sanctuary wasn't provided the victim would be likely to become homeless.
- Stage 2** Where installation of a sanctuary is agreed (with the landlord's permission where relevant) and is the chosen option of the victim, the local authority refer the case onto the Police Crime Reduction Unit with as much background information as possible to enable them to arrange for a technical inspection of the property to be carried out.
- Stage 3** The Crime Reduction Unit contacts the victim to make an appointment to view the premises. The visit could be carried out jointly with the local specialist domestic violence service or the organisation appointed to provide support to the victim in making a decision on whether to opt for sanctuary security measures. If a joint

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visit is not possible, separate visits will suffice. This is an area where many specialist domestic violence voluntary organisations may struggle regarding any additional costs. The cost of providing support needs to be addressed in the planning of Sanctuary Schemes.

- Stage 4** The Crime Reduction Unit attend the premises and complete a security survey and risk assessment based on any police knowledge of the perpetrator, as well as feeding into any Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference processes in operation. The survey should be undertaken in the presence of the victim so that all security options can be fully explained. It may also be appropriate for a member of the Fire Service to attend to carry out an assessment of any fire safety issues specific to the building.
- Stage 5** The victim decides whether or not to opt for a sanctuary.
- Stage 6** Once agreement has been given by the victim (and the landlord where relevant), the Crime Reduction Unit send their recommendations for work to be carried out to the local authority and the approved contractor.
- Stage 7** The local authority establish the landlord/owner of the property belongs to and either give permission for the work to be carried out in the case of their own properties, or confirm that permission has been granted by the housing association or private landlord.
- Stage 8** The local authority instructs the contractor when permission has been granted by the landlord/owner.
- Stage 9** The local contractor installs the sanctuary recommendations.
- Stage 10** A member of the partnership checks that the sanctuary recommendations have been installed and that the victim and any family feel secure enough to remain in the accommodation.

The likely timescale for the above process could range from five days to two weeks. Whilst the process is followed the victim may need respite temporary accommodation.

## Suggested specification for Sanctuary Scheme security adaptations

The following is a suggested specification that partnerships seeking to develop a Sanctuary Scheme may wish to consider for tendering purposes. An example of tendering documentation is given at appendix A. This provides details of all technical requirements and likely usage over a six month period, for a large local authority looking to install between 50-70 Sanctuaries per year. Smaller local authorities should alter the projected requirements according to their needs.

The following specification is a guide to the **minimum standard**. A number of safety schemes may claim to have elements of a Sanctuary Scheme but below is a guide to the minimum standard. It is

important to maintain the credibility/integrity of the Sanctuary Scheme brand and is therefore vital that partnerships maintain these minimum standards.

The component parts are made up of various security products, which must comply with British and/or European Standards where available.

- 1 × 44 mm solid core fire door ½ hour fire rated (minimum).
- 1 × intumescent strip rebated to the full perimeter of the door.
- 2 × Europrofile locks with internal thumb turns.
- 3 × 200mm (8") steel hinges secured with 30 mm × 5 mm (1" × 1/8") steel screws.
- 2 × hinge bolts
- 1 × memo door viewer
- Collapsible security grilles where appropriate, i.e. ground floor flats.

Sanctuary doors are not suitable for stud partition walls.

- Frames are to be secured with 130 mm (5") frame fixers, positioned at 400mm (1'6") centres.
- The door jambs are to be secured with 50 mm × 5 mm (2" × 1/8") screws positioned at 200mm (8") centres.

The list of security products that can be used throughout the remainder of the property is not exhaustive, but should include sealing off letterboxes and fitting wall mounted external letterboxes, provision of fire safety equipment, i.e. fire blanket, fire extinguisher, break-glass hammer and torch.

All other security products should be tailored to the needs of the victim, based on the risk assessment.

## East Riding of Yorkshire Council

In East Riding the Domestic Violence Accommodation Project has gone further than the definition of a Sanctuary Scheme set out in Best Value Performance Indicator 225 (see Outcomes section) – to ensure that a range of support is offered, tailored to the needs of the individual and so that safety measures are put in place which are appropriate to a rural community.

A 'safe room' within a property is not always an appropriate solution in rural communities when response times from the emergency services may be slower due to distances travelled. Of more critical importance in this situation is target hardening of the whole property and an agreed safety plan for all members of the household.

In the East Riding, the use of Lifeline alarms has always been a crucial measure to give individuals and their dependents direct access to staff in a 24-hour centre. Staff at the Lifeline Control centre will alert the police immediately on receiving a call for assistance. They can also record the incident from the first call and this recording can be useful in subsequent prosecutions. In addition, a range of target-hardening measures are also available to assist with dwelling security, such as new or additional locks and bolts for doors and sash-jammers for windows, door defenders, smoke alarms and fire boxes. The use of legal measures such as Non-molestation Orders and Occupation Orders are also a central part of the approach in order to establish the right of victims and their children to remain in their own home.

A range of safety and security measures is essential to support people who wish to remain in their own home. Crucial to this is the ongoing support provided by outreach services or by floating support services – target-hardening initiatives alone are not sufficient to support victims in this situation. East Riding believes it is important that victims are offered choices to meet their identified safety needs and empowerment over their own risk assessment planning.

## Fire safety

Fire safety is paramount and the Fire Service, and where necessary the relevant local authority Building Control office, should be fully involved in planning local Sanctuary Schemes. Consideration should always be given to Fire Service access and where possible, sanctuary rooms located at the front of properties to facilitate rescue.

- The 44mm solid core sanctuary doors must be at least ½ hour fire rated (known as FD30 or E30 doors).
- Intumescent (expanding) and cold smoke fire seals are rebated into all internal sanctuary doors (or the receiving frame) and in the event of a fire, intumesce (expand) to many times their original volume to seal the gap around the door. This generally provides, in the early stages of a fire a safe and effective barrier against the passage of fire and smoke.
- Front door letterboxes are sealed up and wall mounted letter boxes fitted externally.
- Rechargeable, battery operated emergency lights are fitted directly outside sanctuary rooms, in case of a mains failure.
- 10-year battery powered smoke alarms should be provided within the circulation spaces (one per floor) of the premises.
- Fire safety packs containing fire safety literature, fire extinguishers, fire hammers and fire blankets should also be provided. Victims should also be reminded to devise an emergency escape plan, including bedtime key routine, especially where additional security has been added to both front and back doors and windows.
- In cases where there are direct threats of arson, mains powered smoke alarms and domestic sprinkler systems can also be supplied.

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## Security products

Victims with mobile phones must be advised to keep their phone with them at all times and to keep the charger in the sanctuary room.

'Pay as you go' or '999 only' mobile phones and chargers can be supplied to victims. Some areas may be able to provide a domestic violence alarm which is linked to a police response through a local emergency alarms scheme. In addition, Fones4Safety will be available in some areas. This scheme re-programmes old and unwanted mobile phones so that 999 can be dialled by pressing any button.

This list of security products is not exhaustive, but any items used must comply with British/European Standards.

- 44 mm solid core door ½ hour fire rated (minimum).
- 5-lever mortice lock
- Europrofile lock
- Rim latch lock
- Hinge bolt
- Mortice bolt
- Key operated multi-purpose bolt
- 200 mm (8") steel hinge
- 'London' bar
- 'Birmingham' bar
- Memo viewer
- Key operated door chain
- Window lock
- Locking window handle
- Collapsible grille
- Fixed grille
- Security film
- Closed circuit television camera (cameras are linked to a screen in the sanctuary and may have recording facilities)
- Security light
- Combined closed circuit television and security light

Security companies should be asked to quote a price for providing and fitting each of the above products both individually and as a combined package. Each partnership seeking to develop a

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Sanctuary Scheme should decide what basic package of measures is appropriate for their own scheme. As can be seen above, a Sanctuary Scheme provides proper, professionally installed, security which does not compromise a victim's safety. As such, schemes which consist of minor security work such as hand held alarms, window locks or hedge trimming should not be considered as providing a level of security appropriate to a Sanctuary Scheme.

All sanctuaries must be tailored to the needs of the individual. In extreme cases this may mean providing more than one safe room in order to protect children. There is no set list of standard work – what is appropriate to the needs of the individual is what should be provided.

## How can support be provided to victims throughout the process?

Ideally a local specialist domestic violence service outreach worker or a specialist domestic violence officer should accompany the Police Crime Reduction Officer on the initial visit to discuss the possibility of sanctuary work.

The reality is that many local specialist domestic violence services may not have the existing capacity or access to additional funds to provide support in every case and this should be discussed with the relevant agency and local partnership as part of the development process. There are, however, alternatives. For example, using volunteers recruited through the local specialist domestic violence service may provide a partial solution. Links can be made to other voluntary sector agencies, such as Victim Support, to ensure that a trained support worker can be provided to help a victim make a decision and to provide ongoing support after the work has been completed. Support could also be built into the role of tenancy support organisations.

However it is provided, what is important is that support is available for victims who are considering a Sanctuary Scheme. Each victim should be invited to agree a support plan which addresses their needs and the needs of any children. The local specialist domestic violence service may be able to provide a model support plan.

## Partnership working

What is described in this document is the recommended partnership involving the police, the local authority, the fire service and a local specialist domestic violence service. However, where resources do not allow such an approach a scheme can still be implemented through locally agreed options as long as it meets the criteria and is based on a partnership approach.

A local authority could use its own surveyor to inspect and specify the work or alternatively contract this function out. A homelessness prevention officer could be used to talk through the options. A specialist post could be established to undertake all functions including discussing the options, specifying the work and providing ongoing support. A local authority's Direct Service Organisation could carry out the work instead of a private contractor. All these alternatives are realistic. However, using the police/local authority/local specialist domestic violence service/fire service partnership has clear advantages providing:

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- A consistent and sympathetic service for victims.
  - Encouragement for victims to trust the police and therefore have more confidence in the response they are likely to receive from them.
  - Easier maintenance of confidentiality for the victim.

## Is there a danger of some victims feeling compelled to accept a Sanctuary?

The fundamental basis of the scheme is that it is a voluntary option and the wish of the victim to remain in the accommodation is paramount. The success of the scheme depends on a genuine and honest partnership between the local authority, the police, the local specialist domestic violence voluntary sector and the fire service. **If there is any question of compulsion the scheme will not work.**

## Confidentiality

Victims' confidentiality must be guaranteed throughout the process. This issue must be specifically addressed when appointing and training contractors and standard vetting procedures should be used for the appointment of all contractors. Paperwork and any personal data relating to the victim must be stored securely.

Confidentiality is particularly important when dealing with any press or media enquiries. Victims should never feel obliged to talk to the media. The confidentiality, security of personal data and hence safety of the victim is paramount.

## Should the scheme be a 24 hour, seven day a week response?

Some victims of domestic violence will need 24 hour protection and access to services and support. But does this mean that the Sanctuary Scheme itself needs to provide a round the clock service?

Initially early sanctuary partnerships considered setting up a 24 hour, 7 day a week response. However, having considered the issue carefully they concluded that:

- The most important first response should be to ensure that the victim is safe whilst a sanctuary is considered. Respite emergency accommodation is perhaps a more sensible initial approach.
- It is important that a victim is given time to make the decision of whether or not to stay in their own accommodation with the help of a sanctuary. The victim should never be pressurised into making a decision by an artificial timescale imposed by the local authority.

From referral to completed work will normally take up to 2 weeks but it is possible to speed up the process, if circumstances require it.

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## Costs and funding

### Funding options

Local authorities report an average cost of between: £750-£1000 per sanctuary. In addition, any elements in the support plan which require the input of other organisations and/or funding must be in place before the scheme is implemented.

There are a number of options available in terms of funding. Responsibility for implementing the actions in Domestic Violence Best Value Performance Indicator 225 (including the setting up of a Sanctuary Scheme) falls to the local authority, therefore, responsibility for consideration of how to fund the various elements of the scheme falls to them.

A local authority's housing department could pay for the work through its 'invest to save' approach to homelessness prevention. In Barnet, 40 sanctuaries were set up in 2004/5 leading to a 40% decrease in families in temporary accommodation as a result of domestic violence. The Sanctuary Scheme costs for the year were £68,461, leaving an estimated saving of over £600,000.

Alternatively, money could be held centrally and used for specific tenures, if for example, a housing association required funding just to be spent on their tenants.

Sources of funding can be quite flexible:

- Schemes could be paid for through a homeless prevention fund or an 'invest to save' approach. Many local housing authorities have developed this type of approach or are looking to set one up.
- Schemes could be funded through a local authority's Private Sector Renewal Strategy. Each local authority was required to develop a private sector renewal strategy by July 2003. The result is that an authority now has far more flexibility over how it spends its capital private sector grants. Grants can be used for any sector and providing small grants for such things as crime reduction and anti-burglary are often in existing strategies, giving authorities the power to pay such grants for Sanctuary Schemes already. Alternatively, a local authority may need to make a small amendment to its Private Sector Renewal Strategy allowing small grants to be paid for sanctuary work. Spending grant money out of capital resources can often be easier than trying to obtain resources from general fund revenue.
- In the case of social housing, funding could come from the landlord. Up to 60% of Sanctuary Scheme users in some local authority areas are existing local authority, Large Scale Voluntary Transfer, Arms Length Management Organisation or housing association tenants. All social landlords have a duty of care to their tenants and therefore, a duty to keep them safe. Sanctuary security work is a practical example of meeting this duty.
- Often the police or the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership may have grants, or one off funding to target crime reduction which could be directed to funding Sanctuary Schemes.

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## Local Area Agreements

Local Area Agreements set out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and a local area (the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership) and other key partners at the local level. Local Area Agreements simplify some central funding, help join up public services more effectively and allow greater flexibility for local solutions to local circumstances.

Local Area Agreements are rapidly becoming a key component in the Government's local public service reform programme. For local authorities, there is growing evidence that Local Area Agreements may be a foundation for expanding the scope of their policy remit. They put the authority at the centre of a network of local public service providers and encourage partners to support each other in furthering common goals.

Sanctuary Schemes are exactly the sort of cross-cutting initiative that can fit within the structure of the Local Area Agreement framework. In Local Area Agreements partners are already pooling and aligning funding to achieve common goals and working closely across a range of services to deliver real transformation in key services.

## Costs

The majority of funding will be required to meet the cost of carrying out the security work. Other costs can normally be assimilated into the core work of partners. For example:

- **Setting up the scheme:** Officer time for local authority officers, police, fire service and the local specialist domestic violence service. Clearly setting up a partnership will be time consuming and the capacity of the voluntary sector to respond will need to be taken into account.
- **Support to victims to help them to decide whether to opt for a Sanctuary:** This could be provided by a local specialist domestic violence service outreach worker; another voluntary sector group; a housing management officer if the victim is a tenant; or an authority's homelessness prevention officer.
- **Work Specification and carrying out a risk assessment:** Work specification is often best left to the contractor who will actually undertake the work, but could also be carried out by the police crime reduction officer or even a technical officer from the local authority, housing association, or grants team. Risk assessments are part of the police responsibility and implementation of risk management measures may include other agencies as appropriate – e.g. probation.
- **Carrying out the work:** A single contractor should be appointed across the whole scheme and trained in domestic violence awareness and the need for confidentiality. This will ensure consistency of approach and mean that victims will not have to deal with an array of different organisations. Some schemes are looking to contractors to appoint female engineers as part of the tendering process.
- **Ongoing support post sanctuary:** A local specialist domestic violence service, other voluntary sector outreach service, or tenancy support.

## The West Cornwall Sanctuary Project

The West Cornwall Sanctuary Project was officially launched in December 2005 by Penwith and Kerrier District Councils' Housing Sections.

Since its inception the scheme has had a huge impact and been a tremendous success in offering an alternative to temporary accommodation and preventing homelessness. It has helped to make those affected feel safer and more secure in their family home and has saved Penwith and Kerrier District Councils large sums of expenditure on temporary accommodation.

This means a number of families have been successfully offered an alternative option to temporary accommodation or a refuge. This has led to a reduction in accepted homeless cases, a reduction in temporary accommodation admissions, and most importantly, this means that families do not have to move home on numerous occasions, uprooting from the community and avoiding all the associated social problems of moving away from family, friends, support networks and finding new schools for their children.

- Six sanctuaries completed in the first six months of 2005/06, which included a full fire safety survey.
- Since the introduction of the Sanctuary Project, the number of accepted domestic violence cases has dropped to '0' in the final quarter of 05/06. The total number of households accepted as having fled DV in 2004/2005 was 7 compared to the total number of households accepted having fled DV in 2005/2006 which was 4.
- Had the six cases mentioned above been taken into temporary accommodation and remained there for a year it would cost Penwith District Council  $\pounds 350 \times 6$  weeks B&B at 10.5 months PSL the total spend for TA would be  $\pounds 6,300 \times 6$  households amounting to  $\pounds 37,800$ .
- The total cost of the sanctuary provisions for the 6 cases has been  $\pounds 270.75$
- the total spend for the equipment, alarms, literature, printing costs and the project launch was  $\pounds 7,222.43$  (inclusive of the above amount)

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## Outcomes

### How successful have Sanctuary Schemes been?

Currently, there are no national figures for the number of Sanctuary Schemes in place or for the number of victims who have benefited from the installation of sanctuary security measures.

It is important that individual schemes regularly evaluate their own service provision, including consulting users to gauge satisfaction and perceived impact on safety.

In Harrow, where the scheme began, over 250 Sanctuaries have been installed with an 80% completion rate compared to referrals. Of the referrals not carried out, half were cancelled by the Police Crime Reduction Team who visited the property and either did not consider that it could be made safe or were not able to proceed due to the scope of the work. The other half were cases where the victim did not want the work to be carried out.

Results of the customer satisfaction survey carried out in Barnet revealed a 95% satisfaction rate with the overall service, with 90% of users feeling safer in their home after works were completed.

There is no doubt that the scheme will work best where:

- All partners are fully committed to the scheme.
- Where the referral process and funding streams are made simple.
- Where support is available to victims, helping them to explore the option of a sanctuary.

### Do people feel safer with a Sanctuary?

Partnerships that survey victims of domestic violence who have had a sanctuary installed record that the victims do feel safer. Often these are victims who have previously had to move several times, disrupting their lives and the lives of any children. The following are two examples from victims who have requested sanctuary security.

- **“I don’t think I would have been able to cope without it. Everyone has been really amazing. You don’t realise how much help is out there. My children and I are free and safe again.”**
- **“Since the locks have been fitted I feel a great deal safer. It is just so reassuring to be able to turn the lock and know that the front door cannot be kicked in. My son has, for the first time in a number of month, returned to sleep in his own room and we are both a lot happier.”<sup>10</sup>**

Results of a small local consultation with victims of domestic violence revealed that overall 71% believed that Sanctuary Schemes were a good idea. Those who were in receipt of outreach services were slightly more enthusiastic (83%) than those who were in receipt of refuge services (62.5%). Some victims did express reservations about safety outside of the home and/or the persuasive ability of perpetrators to talk their way into the home. Victim reservations of this nature suggest that Sanctuary Schemes will need to be supported by on-going assessment of risk and outreach services, and provided as one component of an area’s response to domestic violence.

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<sup>10</sup>Quotes from clients of the West Cornwall Sanctuary Project.

## Case study

Nicola is 29 years old and lives alone in her own two-bedroom ground floor flat. Her ex-partner, David, had attended the flat and attempted to kick the front door in. Nicola explained that she had finally decided to split up with her boyfriend following two years of physical abuse. Apparently David becomes very violent when he has been drinking. On this occasion he threatened to return to the flat with a gun and kill Nicola.

She has been living in fear and as a result of this latest threat, had temporarily moved in with a friend. The crime prevention officer carried out a survey at the flat and recommended the following security measures to be implemented free of charge under the Sanctuary Project:

- Replace the front door with a solid core door, reverse to open outwards into the porchway and reinforce the frame where necessary.
- Fit two 5 lever mortice locks to the top and bottom of the door, three large steel hinges, hinge bolts, key operated door chain and 180-degree door viewer.
- Reinforce the glass panel above the door and fit a letterbox on the wall inside the porch way.
- Replace the back door with a solid core door. This door already opened outwards.
- Reinforce the frame where necessary and fit two 5 lever mortice locks to the top and bottom of the door, three large steel hinges and hinge bolts. All mortice locks keyed to the same key.
- Replace the uPVC window handles with locking handles.

When the work was completed, Nicola said

**“I didn’t think I’d be able to stay here anymore. I was terrified that he’d kill me. I now feel safe in the flat and have started to get a bit more self confidence”.**<sup>11</sup>

## Recording outcomes, monitoring and feedback

Any sanctuary partnership should seek to obtain feedback from users who have chosen to have sanctuary security installed. Questions relating to the quality of support provided, the professionalism of the organisation that is contracted to install the security measures, and whether the person feels safer as a result should be paramount.

Examples could include:

- % of users who were satisfied with the service provided by the partner lead (police, local housing authority, local specialist domestic violence service).
- % of users who felt that they were given clear information on the Sanctuary Scheme option and what it consisted of.

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<sup>11</sup>Case study supplied by Harrow Sanctuary Scheme

- % of users who were satisfied with the support provided in making the decision on whether to have a sanctuary installed.
- % of users who were satisfied with the speed of the process.
- % of users who were satisfied with follow up support after a sanctuary had been installed.
- % of users who were satisfied with the service provided by the specialist security contractor.
- % of users who were satisfied with the overall service provided by the Sanctuary Scheme.
- % of users who felt safer in their accommodation following installation of sanctuary security work.

What other measures or outcomes might a partnership record? A sanctuary partnership might look to record:

- Number of referrals by referral agency
- Tenure for each referral
- Initial response times
- Number of referrals that did not lead to a sanctuary being installed, due to either the victim not wishing to proceed; the risk assessment indicating the property was not appropriate; or the risk assessment indicating that the threat was too great to allow a sanctuary to be installed
- Number of sanctuaries installed
- Type of sanctuaries installed
- Cost per sanctuary
- Overall cost versus set budget
- User satisfaction rates
- Ethnic background, gender, age and disability status of referrals and sanctuary users
- Estimate of money saved in temporary accommodation costs
- Any evidence of a higher level of prosecution action against perpetrators for sanctuary cases compared to non sanctuary victims of domestic violence.

Given the scheme's early success many similar schemes have, or are being, developed across the country. Fifty schemes were established in 2003/04, using funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's [now Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)] Homelessness and Housing Support Directorate's grant programme. In response to a survey of local authorities undertaken by DCLG in September 2005, 120 local authorities said that they already had a Sanctuary Scheme in place and a further 165 said that they plan to have a Sanctuary Scheme in place by March 2007. Other forms of housing outreach and target hardening initiatives have also proved successful in assisting victims of domestic violence.

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## Best Value Performance Indicator 225

On 1 April 2005, the Government introduced a substantially revised domestic violence Best Value Performance Indicator 225. First introduced in 2000/01, Best Value Performance Indicators enable local authorities to benchmark themselves against other authorities in other areas and allow central government to monitor progress over time.

The purpose of domestic violence Best Value Performance Indicator 225 is to assess the overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims of domestic violence and prevent further domestic violence. It includes 11 questions covering a range of activities. The indicator is measured as a percentage score of the number of questions to which an authority can answer 'yes'.

One of the key questions in Best Value Performance Indicator 225 asks whether a local authority has developed a Sanctuary Scheme to enable victims of domestic violence to choose whether to remain in their home with professionally installed security measures, where it is safe for them to do so. As a result many local authorities are in the process of developing local Sanctuary Schemes and this short practice note is aimed at helping them to develop schemes that are effective. It does not replace the definition of Best Value Performance Indicator 225 as found in the official Best Value Performance Indicator Guidance.

Metropolitan authorities, London boroughs, unitary authorities district councils, Council of the Isles of Scilly and the Common Council of the City of London have to provide performance information against Best Value Performance Indicator 225 and will need to have a Sanctuary Scheme in place to score 100% against the Indicator.

### **East Cambridgeshire District Council – Lessons Learnt**

East Cambridgeshire believes that the best way to learn how to run a successful, local Sanctuary Scheme is to set up a pilot. This is where most lessons will be learnt and the scheme fine-tuned. Some of the lessons learnt from the Cambridgeshire pilot are:

- Have a Memorandum of Understanding that clearly defines the roles of each agency. This helps manage expectations in the longer term as well as ensure the process runs smoothly for the agencies and the client. Make sure the Memorandum of Understanding sets out who is ultimately responsible for making the decisions as to whether a sanctuary is appropriate for the potential client.
- Ensure those coming into contact with the client are trained to understand the sensitivities around domestic violence, as well as how to represent their organisation in a professional manner. For example it was clear from the behaviour and language of some of the male operatives carrying out this building work that they had no appreciation of the reason for the work and the sensitivity around this. Special training was held for the team who would be carrying out the work and this has given them a new insight and ownership of the process and the part they play in it.

- Ensure that there is clarity around what essential works in setting up a sanctuary room and what other security measures would be desirable. Inevitably there will be issues around funding, so it is best to be clear from the beginning about what items will be paid for as part of the Sanctuary Scheme.
- Make sure that there is a process for checking the quality of the workmanship and that all of the agencies met their responsibilities within the timescales agreed as part of the Memorandum of Understanding. East Cambridgeshire has a database that sits within the housing team that stores all of this information and will be used in future to assess the effectiveness of the scheme.

## Who can be contacted for further information on how to develop a Sanctuary Scheme?

If you would like to talk through how to set the scheme up with two local authorities who already have schemes in place, contact Harrow Borough Council on telephone number 020 8863 5611 or via e-mail at [info@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:info@harrow.gov.uk). Alternatively contact Barnet Borough Council on telephone number 020 8359 2277 or by e-mail at [first.contact@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:first.contact@barnet.gov.uk)

Each English region has a named domestic violence coordinator based in the Government Office (GO) for the Region. They may be able to provide help and advice concerning local activity. Contact details for GOs are:

### **GO North West**

Tel: 0161 952 4000

E-mail: [gonwmailbox@gonw.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:gonwmailbox@gonw.gsi.gov.uk)

### **GO North East**

Tel: 0191 201 3300

E-mail: [general.enquiries@gone.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:general.enquiries@gone.gsi.gov.uk)

### **GO West Midlands**

Tel: 0121 352 5050

E-mail: [enquiries.team@gowm.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.team@gowm.gsi.gov.uk)

### **GO West Midlands**

Tel: 0121 352 5050

E-mail: [enquiries.team@gowm.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.team@gowm.gsi.gov.uk)

### **GO South West**

Tel: 0117 900 1700

E-mail: [swcontactus@gosw.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:swcontactus@gosw.gsi.gov.uk)

### **GO Yorkshire & Humber**

Tel: 0113 280 0600

E-mail: [yhenquiries@goyh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:yhenquiries@goyh.gsi.gov.uk)

### **GO East of England**

Tel: 01223 372500

E-mail: [enquiries.GOEast@goeast.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.GOEast@goeast.gsi.gov.uk)

### **GO South East**

Tel: 01483 882255

E-mail: [info@gose.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@gose.gsi.gov.uk)

### **GO London**

Tel: 020 7217 3328

E-mail: [enquiries@gol.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@gol.gsi.gov.uk)

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## Appendix A: Extracts from a Sanctuary Tendering Specification

**NB** – The following is used purely as an example of a tendering specification and is not a DCLG or LGA endorsement of its contents, nor a recommendation that local authorities should use it as a template. When tendering, authorities should seek their own legal advice and draw up contracts that are appropriate and specific to their own requirements.

### Taken from the 2005 Harrow Council Sanctuary Tendering Exercise

#### Specification for the Provision of Locksmith Services

##### *Sanctuary Scheme Specification*

The Sanctuary Scheme aims to make it possible for victims of domestic violence and hate crime to remain in their homes and feel safe. The scheme is not limited to local authority or housing association tenants but covers all tenures.

The core element of the scheme is to create, free of charge, a “sanctuary room” or “safe room” within the home where victims can call for and wait for the Police to arrive. In certain cases other additional security is also provided. The level of security provided under the Sanctuary Scheme can be categorised as either ‘Sanctuary A’ or ‘Sanctuary B’.

Sanctuary A involves the installation of a safe room, additional and/or replacement locks on doors and windows, door frames being re-enforced and fire safety measures supplied and fitted. Sanctuary B would normally have all the above elements, plus additional bespoke security grilles.

Since its launch in September 2002 over 180 works have been completed. In 2004/05 78 works were completed.

Once the Council instruct the contractor to commence work Sanctuary A would carry a 48-hour completion time, Sanctuary B, a 7 day completion time. All contractor referrals would commence on receipt of a fax and confirmation telephone call from the Crime Reduction Unit. Where the contractor is unable to contact the victim or the victim specifies they would like an appointment outside the completion time a written record must be made and available for inspection by the Council. Where works are not carried out within the specified completion times without good reason then a payment penalty may be invoked.

When the contractor visits the victim identification must be carried which conforms to Royal National Institute of the Blind regulations. Because of the sensitive nature of working in homes where victims may have been the victims of violence and/or who are vulnerable, all contractors must have been checked by the Criminal Record Bureau. Contractors must adhere to the Harrow Council Code of Conduct.

All products used must comply with British /European standards where such a product exists. All work completed should hold at least a six month guarantee including parts. If fault is found the contractor has 7 days to correct the work after receiving a snagging sheet. If any complaints arise due to unsatisfactory work the contractor must contact the victim within 2 working days to

discuss the problem. How the problem is to be resolved is to be approved by the Council, and the contractor should record all complaints and the outcome in writing.

Once works are completed an invoice must be sent to the Council within 14 days. The invoice must include the contractors name and address, the address of where the work was carried out, a date, invoice number and detailed breakdown of the work carried out. The preferred method of payment is the government procurement card.

## Sanctuary Scheme Itemised Pricing List

\*Please note that volumes stated are for indicative purposes only and are based on approximately six months usage. Actual volumes vary more or less over the contract term.

Product Description	*Estimate Volume	Unit Price
Adjustabars	1	
Alarm System	2	
Auto Deadlocking Nightlatch	5	
5 Lever BS Deadlock	11	
5 Lever Sash Lock	2	
Barred Gate	1	
Blanking Plate for letter box	10	
Brass Handles	1	
Break Glass Hammer	11	
Closed circuit television	4	
Collapsible Gates	5	
Deadlock cases	9	
Diamond Mesh Grille	7	
Door Blank	2	
Door Defender	1	
Door Pull	1	
Door Viewer	1	
Euro Profile cylinder	12	
Euro Deadlock Case		
Escutcheons	2	
Event activated camera with Passive Infra Red light	1	
Fire Blanket	15	
Fire Extinguisher	17	
Fire escape ladder	3	
Fire Stop		
Floodlights with closed circuit television incorporated	2	
Glue louvered windows	2	
Grilles including fitting	2	
Hasp and Staple	2	
Hinge Bolts	9	
Hinges	5	
Intumescent Strip	20	
Key operated door chain	1	
Legge Tubular latch	1	
Letter box	15	
Letter box shield		

*Continued*

Product Description	*Estimate Volume	Unit Price
London / Birmingham Bar	18	
Master 6121 Padlock	2	
Memo Door Viewer	14	
Metal Window locks	4	
Mortice Bolts	3	
Multi point locking system	1	
Multi purpose bolt	5	
Pay as you go mobile phone	3	
Personal alarm		
Passive Infra Red Light		
Reinforcing Steel plate	4	
Security film for windows	3	
Security lighting		
Sliding door lock		
Smoke alarm	12	
Torch	1	
Tubular Latch		
UPVC Window Lock	4	
Videx Video Entry system	1	
Window locks for metal windows		
Window pane replacement		
Window restrictors	1	
Wooden Window Locks	4	
Yale 89 Lock	2	

\*Of the 40 cases looked at 34 were full sanctuary and 6 were part sanctuary

Description	Unit Cost to provide full Specification requirements;
Fixed cost for Sanctuary A to include materials and labour	£
Fixed cost for Sanctuary B to include materials and labour	£
Please provide a breakdown of the above costs to include;	
Total Materials Costs included for Sanctuary A	£
Total Materials Costs included for Sanctuary B	£
Labour Rate per hour	£ per hour
Other costs * please specify	
Early payment discount offered	.....%

# Appendix B – Examples of forms used by Hart Sanctuary Scheme Steering Group

## REFERRAL to HDC SANCTUARY SCHEME

Referring Officer:		Email Address:	
Tel No:		Date:	
Fax No:			
Agency Name:		Agency Address:	
I ..... consent to information being shared with other organisations and to other organisations providing information to Hart DC about matters which may affect my referral to the Sanctuary Scheme. Hart DC will not use this information for any reason that is not related to the Sanctuary Scheme or housing circumstances.			
Name:	Signature:		

Household Details			
Surname:	First Names:	Date of Birth:	Relation to Applicant:

Applicant Contact Details		
Address:	Telephone Nos.	
	Home	
	Work	
	Mobile	
Full work schedules by individual agencies should be submitted as soon as possible. Initial recommendations (please attached brief details of the applicants circumstances):		

Please return the signed form by fax [ ] or by post to [ ] Tel No [ ]

## OUTCOME OF REFERRAL to HDC SANCTUARY SCHEME

Referring Officer:		Email Address:	
Tel No: Fax No:		Date:	
Agency Name:		Agency Address:	

<b>Applicant Contact Details</b>		
Address:	Telephone Nos.	
	Home	
	Work	
	Mobile	
Referral/Approved?      Yes/No Please give details.		

Please return the signed form by fax [ ] or by post to [ ] Tel No [ ]

# Hart District Council Sanctuary Scheme

## Schedule of works

ITEM REQUIRED	TICK
Sanctuary Room: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Door to a main room, generally the master bedroom, is replaced with a solid core fire door, reversed to open outwards and the frame reinforced.</li> <li>● Two Europrofile locks to be fitted to the top and bottom of the door with thumb turns on the inside, three large steel hinges, hinge bolts and a memo door viewer where the victim can call and wait for the arrival of the police</li> <li>● Window locks</li> <li>● Front door lock</li> <li>● Back door locks</li> <li>● Fire safety equipment to be provided (as per fire officers recommendation)</li> </ul>	
Sanctuary Plus (the above elements plus additional security features) i.e. in extreme cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Grilles</li> <li>● Extra 'sanctuary' door to the front of the property</li> <li>● Extra 'sanctuary' door to the rear of the property</li> <li>● 'London' and 'Birmingham' bars (security bar)</li> <li>● Other items:</li> </ul>	
Fire Safety Equipment / Measures:	
Other items:	
(Any equipment supplied by the approved contractor must be fit for purpose)	

## Crime Reduction / Fire Officer Comments

Date of inspection:	
Date of referral of works:	
Hart Housing Officer:	
Contractor:	

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## Glossary

### **‘Birmingham’ Bar**

Similar to a ‘London’ Bar this is a steel reinforcing bar that is mainly used to strengthen the hinge side of the door frame on inward opening doors. Birmingham Bars can also be fixed (with appropriate security fixings) to the external face of the frame to resist jemmy and chisel attacks on outward opening doors.

### **Intumescent strips**

In the event of a fire the corresponding rise in temperature will cause the intumescent strips to swell and close the gaps between the door and frame. This helps to minimise the susceptibility of door edges to early penetration by fire.

### **‘London’ Bar**

A ‘London’ Bar – is a steel door frame reinforcing bar with a ‘D’ shaped staple to fit over and secure the locking point side of the frame. It is attached to the internal face of the lock side of the frame and will resist kicking, splitting and forcing open on the door.

### **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference**

A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference pulls together police, the Local Authority and representatives from health, housing, education and voluntary sector support groups to provide a victim-focused service to those experiencing domestic abuse.

A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference event will allow all of the partner agencies to share information to achieve a better understanding of issues facing the victim and their family and how these can best be addressed. The victim, who will be in regular contact with representatives of the group, will then be provided with a list of suggested actions. After consultation, the group will be able to offer all of the necessary support to address the problems.

### **Memo door viewer**

A door viewer allows the occupant of the property to see a wide-angle view of the outside and therefore see who is directly outside the door.

### **Sanctuary Scheme**

A Sanctuary Scheme is a victim centred initiative and is an innovative approach to homelessness prevention. It is designed to enable victims of domestic violence to remain in their own accommodation, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice and where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation.

### **Stud partition walls**

A stud partition wall is an easy way to divide an internal room, it is really a temporary structure consisting of wood and plasterboard which can be removed if the use of the area changes. Its relative fragility means that rooms with stud partitions walls cannot be used as a sanctuary as access to a room can sometimes be gained through them.