

The Barnet Sanctuary Project

**Keeping families safe from
domestic violence and
preventing homelessness**

“**40** Not Out”

**The First Annual Report (2004/05)
of The Barnet Sanctuary Project**

Foreword

Foreword from Councillor Brian Salinger



The problems caused by domestic violence have always been, and will always be taken seriously by Barnet Council.

The Sanctuary project launched in 2004 has proved that measures taken to secure the homes of victims of domestic violence play an important part in restoring normality to family life for many people.

Barnet Council recognises the disruption that is caused by homelessness whatever the cause, and will continue to work to find the best ways to avoid the consequences.

Having been the Lead Member for Housing for the last 3 years I am proud of the achievements of the Housing Needs team and our partners who have worked tirelessly in that time to improve the lives of so many people.

Cllr Brian Salinger
Leader, Barnet Council.
June 2005.



Cllr Fiona Bulmer
Cabinet member for
Community Services

I am delighted to mark the first anniversary of the Sanctuary scheme. Its first year has been extremely successful in giving the support to victims of domestic violence to allow more of them to stay safely in their own homes. It also clearly underlines the council's commitment to reducing homelessness and providing innovative and effective solutions that help residents and their children remain in a stable environment even when they face difficult times in their lives.

The Sanctuary project could not have succeeded without a strong commitment from a number of different agencies, and I would like to thank all our partners who have played such an important role in making it happen and its success over the past year.



The First Year (2004/05) Results

Introduction

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 model developed by Harrow and has been developed in partnership with the ODPM, Metropolitan Police, Barnet Domestic Violence Support Service (DVSS) and the Barnet Safer Communities Partnership . This annual report covers the first full year of operation April 2004-March 2005

The primary objectives of the project are simple:-

“keep families safe from domestic violence and prevent homelessness”



The Project was introduced as an alternative option to temporary accommodation. It provides additional security measures to the homes of domestic violence survivors and makes it possible for them to remain in their homes and feel safe. It is a victim centred initiative that is not limited to Council or Housing Association tenants but covers **all tenures** and includes **any person** threatened with homelessness due to domestic violence.

At the end of March 2005, 40 sanctuaries had been successfully fitted to the homes of families threatened with domestic violence. This means these families have avoided being uprooted from their community and all the associated social problems of moving away from schools, family, friends, and support networks.

2004/05 - The Facts and Figures

Since its inception the Barnet Sanctuary Project has been tremendously 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.

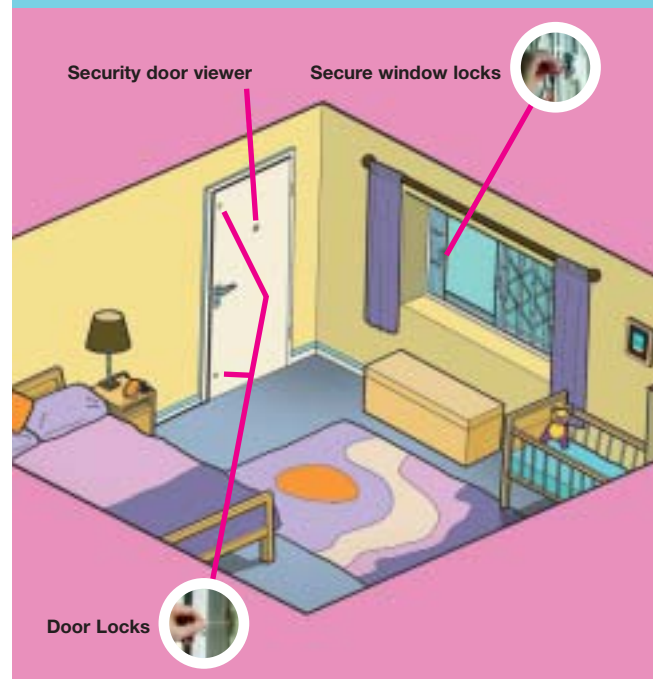
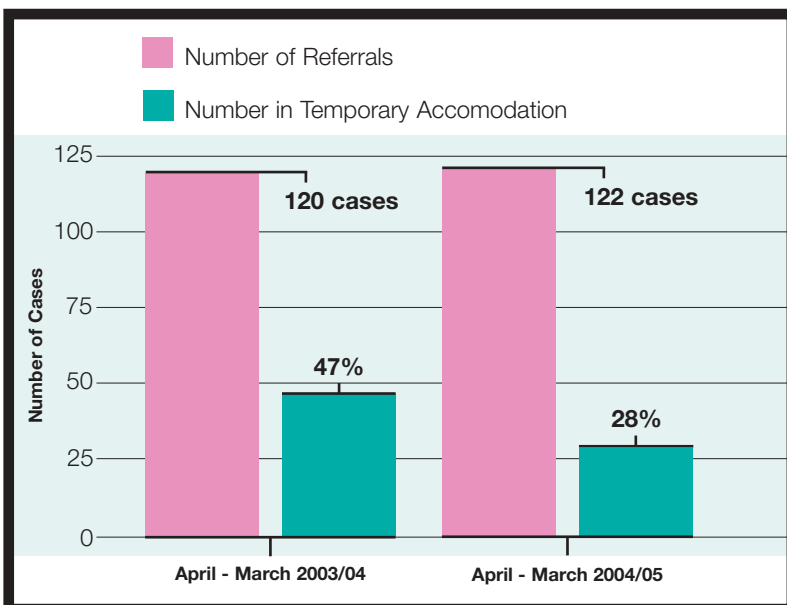
"I feel confident mainly at night that once my door is locked shut, I can sleep peacefully, with no worry of it being kicked open."

A satisfied client

The statistics for 2004/05 are as follows: -

- 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.

Number of cases placed in temporary accommodation April to March 2003/04 compared to April to March 2004/05



Client Satisfaction Survey Results for 2004/05

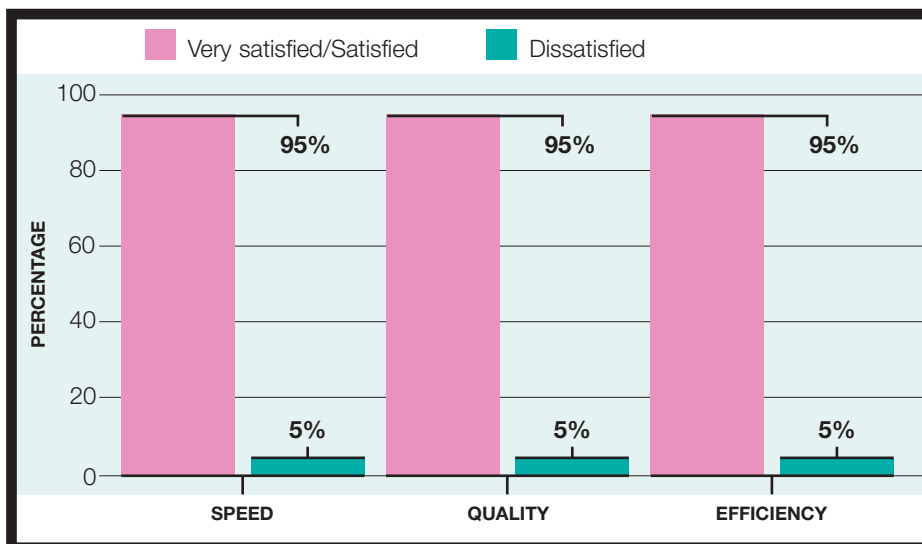
Following security installation, all clients are asked to complete a feedback questionnaire, allowing them to comment on various aspects of the service.

The highlights of customer feedback for 2004/05 are as follows: -

- 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.

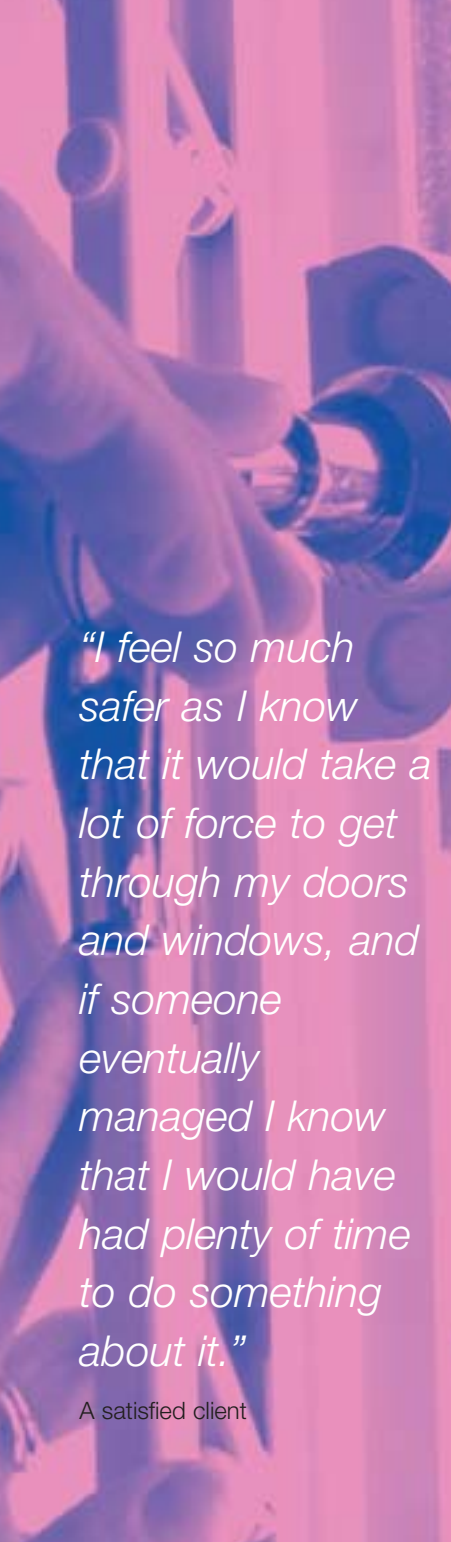


Overall Evaluation of Speed, Quality and Efficiency of Service



“I would like to thank you all for this sanctuary project. I am very grateful for you giving me and my son the extra protection in our home. Please continue doing this good work for the community.”

A satisfied client



“I feel so much safer as I know that it would take a lot of force to get through my doors and windows, and if someone eventually managed I know that I would have had plenty of time to do something about it.”

A satisfied client

Demographic Information of Sanctuary Clients in 2004/05

Available Demographic Information		
Gender	Female	21
	Male	0
Average	Age	32.2 years
	Number of children	1.4
Ethnicity	White British	52%
	Irish	9.5%
	Bangladeshi	5%
	Israeli	5%
	Turkish	9.5%
	White other	9.5%
	Client refused to answer question	9.5%

Conclusion

The first full year of the Barnet Sanctuary Project has achieved what it set out to do and has been extremely successful in its aims of making families safer from domestic violence, reducing presentations as homeless and reducing the number of families going into temporary accommodation. In addition to this it has demonstrated very high levels of client satisfaction, excellent value for money and saved large sums by avoiding temporary accommodation costs.

For further information on the project please contact **Alvin Wade, FCIH** at Barnet Council on **0208-359-6002** or E-mail **alvin.wade@barnet.gov.uk**

Victims of violence safe in their homes

As reported on Thursday, November 18, 2004 in Hendon and Finchley Times

People who have suffered domestic abuse can now stay in their own homes, rather than be sent to a temporary safe house or hostel, under a new scheme run by Barnet Council, the police and a victims' charity. ALEX GALBINSKI speaks to one of the 17 people who have benefited from the service so far.

She is witty, articulate, intelligent and independent. Nothing like Little Mo from Eastenders. In fact, she fits none of the preconceptions of a domestic abuse victim. Yet she still suffered at the hands of a violent ex-partner who has not yet been brought to justice.

Rebecca, a former businesswoman in her early 40s, now has iron grilles fitted to the windows of her flat, fortified locks on the doors and a panic button with links to the police. In short, she has every form of protection that can be given to her.

Never involved in violent or criminal activity, or brought up around anyone who had been, she only discovered her former partner was a habitual liar and extremely disturbed eight months into the relationship. She had been living with him for three.

"There were signs, of course, but you don't take too much notice of them at the time," she said. "But I thank God there were so many pointers that suggested all was not well. He has to be in a position of power. He wanted [absolute control over] me, whether I was alive or not."

'The scheme has allowed me to see my home as a safe place to be. There is a part of me which thinks, "Why should I have to move?" I don't want to move away'



‘Why should I have to move? I don’t want to move away.’

Rebecca, whose name has been changed to protect her identity, became a victim of an assault in her own home in March. The Police Community Safety Unit told her about the Sanctuary Project that is run via the Domestic Violence Support Service, a charity based in their office.



The Sanctuary Project fortifies the homes of victims of domestic abuse, so that the victims do not have to move out and can feel safe in their own homes again. While 95 per cent of domestic abuse victims are women, the scheme is open to men as well. When both people involved own the home, victims can go to court to get an order to get their abuser out.

Painful experience: enabling victims of domestic violence to remain in their own homes can at least prevent major upheaval, including the loss of friends and supportive neighbours

Rebecca said: “To be honest, as I was in such a state emotionally, I didn’t ask any questions — I was in another place in my head because of all that had happened to me. [But I needed] to feel safer, because it was quite likely that my abuser would come back for me. The scheme has allowed me to see my home as a safe place to be. There is a part of me which thinks, ‘Why should I have to move?’ I don’t want to move away.”

Rebecca is by no means alone in suffering domestic abuse. One in four murders in London are related to domestic violence. In Barnet specifically, around 3,000 domestic incidents were reported to the police last year, with 120 families being made homeless as a result of domestic violence.

But unlike many other victims of domestic abuse, Rebecca has not been forced to move out of her own home.

Piloted in December 2003, the Sanctuary Project went live in May 2004.

It is based on a model developed by Harrow Council and the police in autumn 2002, and has been progressed in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), Barnet Domestic Violence Support Service and the Barnet Safer Communities Partnership as an alternative to temporary accommodation.

The ODPM has been so impressed with the project that it has referred it to the National Audit Office as an example of best practice in Homelessness Prevention.

Alvin Wade, homeless prevention project manager for Barnet Council, said: “Through this scheme, we are aiming to cut homelessness by 50 per cent because if families have to go into temporary accommodation, there is a financial and social cost of living in cramped conditions and it puts a huge strain on them.”

It costs the council £322 per week to keep a family in temporary accommodation, while the average Sanctuary costs are between £600 and £1,200 per family.

Nigel Hamilton, the council’s head of housing said: “If we can halve this figure and keep people in their homes, it would be better for them and it would save the council over £1 million a year – it makes so much sense.”

Since its introduction, 17 families have had their homes fortified. This avoids major upheaval at a particularly traumatic time and ensures that families do not have to cope with added insecurity, including loss of their emotional network such as friends and neighbours.

For safety reasons, the council cannot disclose exact details but the scheme involves physically securing one room in a property to prevent forced entry. This would enable a person in danger at that property to hide in the room, contact police and then safely await their arrival.

Safe house: mothers who have suffered in violent relationships are being offered extra home security, including a direct line to call for police assistance



PC Duncan Hillcoat, crime reduction officer for Barnet police, said: "It gives the victim a feeling of safety and security and this takes away the fear aspect. It is a sanctuary and provides victims of domestic violence with a much greater degree of home security than they had previously."

The project covers the whole of the borough of Barnet, and applies to any property, regardless of ownership. All referrals go through the borough's specialist unit, the Domestic Violence Support Service.

Contact the Police Community Safety Unit on 020 8733 4573. A freephone number 0808 2000 247 provides access to 24-hour emergency refuge accommodation as well as an information service.

agalbinski@london.newsquest.co.uk

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(Somali)

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Address

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Telephone number

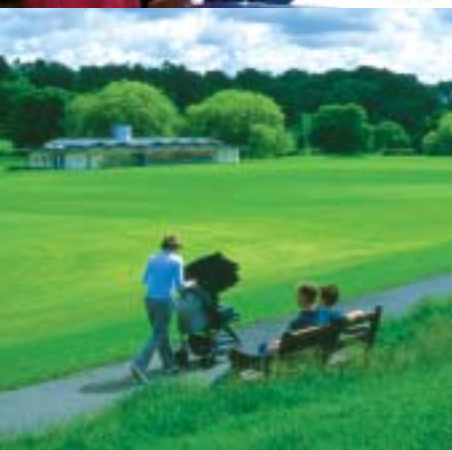


"I am very thankful to the council because up to now I was living in fear, but now I feel safe. I really appreciate what the council has done for me and my family."

A satisfied client



Cut along dotted line



"I do feel more secure - especially with the strong door added to the bedroom... I know no-one can get into the room without at least waking me up and giving me a chance to call police... I think that this is an exceptional project. Had the work not been carried out I don't think I could have stayed here... I am very appreciative of the additional locks put on my internal door as this has given me some peace of mind in very stressful circumstances."

A satisfied client

Key Priorities for our Community

A First Class Education Service

Tackling Crime

Supporting the Vulnerable in our Community

A Cleaner Greener Barnet

Repairing Roads and Pavements