

1

Background

Lancashire County Council has a statutory duty under [Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#), to provide **support within relevant safe accommodation** for domestic abuse survivors and their children.

[The Domestic Abuse Support Services Lancashire \(DASSL\)](#) is the service commissioned by Lancashire County Council to meet its Part 4 duty. [DASSL](#) aims to deliver seamless and holistic support from early intervention and recovery to intensive support to prevent further harm. The service is available to all survivors, regardless of perceived level of risk. Safe accommodation and support services are essential to helping survivors stay safe and access the right specialist support for them when they need it.

This includes but is not limited to: Safety planning advice, group recovery sessions, legal advice, advocacy, financial support / benefits, support for children and educational support.

Safe accommodation in Lancashire is open to anyone. There are specialist services for male survivors, LGBTQ+ and BME communities.

2

Why it Matters

The DASSL partnership works to remove many of the barriers survivors face in accessing support.

For survivors who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF), survivors can be supported to secure emergency funding through Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession (MVDAC) application. This process can take up to 5 weeks, so services work together to access funds and provide specialist support until this can be secured.

The DASSL partnership has specialist accommodation for those with multiple vulnerabilities. Bespoke assessments ensure tailored support for minority and migrant communities, LGBTQI+ individuals, young people, older survivors, male survivors and those with vulnerabilities such as substance and alcohol use.

How long someone stays in safe accommodation will depend on their needs. Their recovery will be on-going, and in some cases, survivors may need to return to safe accommodation if they are no longer safe again.

3

Types of Safe Accommodation

Safe accommodation and levels of support

It's acknowledged the critical role of refuge in providing safety and support, particularly to those survivors at high risk of serious harm, the government recognises that survivors may need to live in a variety of different forms of **relevant safe accommodation**.

A **refuge** (often staffed 24hrs) offers single gender or single sex accommodation with support which is tied to that accommodation. Survivors and their children have access to therapeutic and practical support. Accommodation may be in shared or self-contained housing, but in both cases the service will enable peer support from other refuge residents.

4

There are also **specialist refuges** for survivors with multiple disadvantage/vulnerabilities, who need for instance, specialist support around mental health and substance misuse.

Dispersed accommodation: (also known as safehouses) is safe self-contained accommodation with the same level of support as provided within a refuge but which may be more suitable for survivor who are unable to stay in a refuge with communal spaces due to complex support needs, or for families with teenage sons, or a number of children for example.

7

Further Information

Privately owned temporary accommodation such as a B&B/hotels are not considered relevant safe accommodation and is specifically excluded in the regulations.

The address of safe accommodation is not publicly available, and it should not be shared by residents and visitors. If a survivor discloses the address of safe accommodation, then they will have to move-on to keep themselves and others safe.

A survivor may need to travel away from their local area for safe accommodation if nearby options are unsafe or unavailable.

The DASSL partnership relies on the support of multiple agencies to ensure survivors can stay safe and begin their recovery. Professionals are welcome to provide support within safe accommodation settings. Please note that in single-gender or single-sex accommodation, it is more appropriate for a support worker to be of the same gender.



6

Help and support at home

Sanctuary Schemes: provide enhanced physical security measures within a home and are a survivor-centred initiative which aims to make it possible for survivors to remain in their own homes, where it is safe to do so, where it is their choice, and the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation. These are available through district councils.

[Outreach support](#) is available throughout Lancashire via the DASSL partnership, this is for adults and children who have witnessed and have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse. Accessing outreach support can help reduce the disruption or the need to access safe accommodation so they can stay safe in their own home and close to their support networks.

5

Move-on/second stage accommodation – these are interchangeable terms for temporary accommodation for survivors, who no longer need the intensive level of support provided in a refuge but still benefit from a lower-level specific support before they move to independent and permanent accommodation. Not every survivor will need this.

'By and For' support services are designed and led by those who share the same protected characteristic(s) as the survivors they aim to serve, for instance Lancashire has a By and For service for Transgender and non-binary people as part as the DASSL Partnership called [Living Me](#)