



SAFER
WEST SUSSEX
PARTNERSHIP

The Bill will:

Local Authority Statutory duties for victims of domestic abuse

[The Bill](#) will place a statutory duty on **tier one local authorities** to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children within refuges and other safe accommodation

The Bill will put in place a four-part statutory framework for the delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation and provide clarity over governance and accountability:

- Place a duty on each tier one local authority in to appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which it will consult as it performs certain specified functions. These are to:
- Assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in their area, including those who require cross-border support.
- Develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, having regard to the needs assessment.
- Give effect to the strategy (through commissioning / de-commissioning decisions).
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.
- Report back to central government.
- Require local authorities to have regard to statutory guidance in exercising their functions.
- Require the Secretary of State to produce statutory guidance, having consulted the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, local authorities and such other persons as considered appropriate.
- Require tier two councils (district or borough councils, and London Boroughs) to co-operate with the lead local authority, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- We propose to maintain a broad definition of safe accommodation in recognition of the diversity of housing in which victims and their children may live.

The new duty will cover the provision of support to victims and their children residing in:

- Refuge accommodation
- specialist safe accommodation
- Dispersed accommodation
- Sanctuary schemes
- Move-on or second stage accommodation

Domestic abuse support provided through the new duty will include:

Advocacy support – development of personal safety plans, liaison with other services

Domestic abuse-prevention advice



Support to assist victims to recognise the signs of abusive relationships, to help them remain safe (including online) and to prevent re-victimisation

Specialist support for victims with protected characteristics and / or complex needs, for example, interpreters, faith services, mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support, and immigration advice;

Children's support – including play therapy and child advocacy;

Housing-related support – providing housing-related advice and support, for example, securing a permanent home and advice on how to live safely and independently; and

Counselling and therapy for both adults and children.

Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Boards

The makeup of Local Partnership Boards may vary across local authority areas, but they are expected to include a broad range of representative partners.

As a minimum, the Boards will include persons representing local authorities, victims and their children, domestic abuse charities or voluntary organisations, health care providers and the police or other criminal justice agencies.

Statutory commitments

- Create a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse.
- Establish in law the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner and set out the Commissioner's functions and powers.
- Provide for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order.
- Placing a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.
- Prohibit perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in the civil and family courts in England and Wales.
- Create a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts.
- Clarify by restating in statute law the general proposition that a person may not consent to the infliction of serious harm and, by extension, is unable to consent to their own death.
- Extend the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to further violent and sexual offences.
- Enable domestic abuse offenders to be subject to polygraph testing as a condition of their licence following their release from custody.
- Place the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme ("Clare's law") on a statutory footing.



SAFER
WEST SUSSEX
PARTNERSHIP

- Provide that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have ‘priority need’ for homelessness assistance.
- Ensure that where a local authority, for reasons connected with domestic abuse, grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an assured shorthold tenancy) this must be a secure lifetime tenancy.

Non Statutory Commitments

- The non-statutory commitments include:
- Introduce regulations and statutory guidance on Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education, and Health Education.
- Invest in domestic abuse training for responding agencies and professionals.
- Develop national guidance for police on serial and repeat perpetrators.
- Improve awareness and understanding of coercive control offence and review effectiveness of offence.
- Continue to develop means to collect, report and track domestic abuse data