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# **Domestic abuse prevention within the housing sector**

**A Rocket Science report for Fresh Visions**



**FRESH  
VISIONS**



**SOUTHERN  
HOUSING**

**PILON FUSION<sup>21</sup>**

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# Project funders



## Fusion21 Foundation

Fusion21 is a national social enterprise specialising in efficient and impactful public sector procurement and visible social value.

The Fusion21 Foundation was set up in 2015 as a registered charity, to help build brighter futures for the communities that Fusion21 operates in. Since its inception, the Foundation has given over £4 million in grants and has committed £2 million in social investment.

The Foundation has three areas of focus: Employment and Skills; Health and Wellbeing; Financial Inclusion and Resilience.

[www.fusion21.co.uk/foundation](http://www.fusion21.co.uk/foundation)

## Southern Housing

Southern Housing is one of the largest housing providers in the UK with over 80,000 homes across London, the South East, the Isle of Wight and the Midlands, giving over 167,000 people somewhere affordable to call their own.

They understand the difference safe, secure, and affordable homes can make to people's lives. Whether it's traditional social housing, shared ownership, affordable rent, private market rent, student accommodation, care and support or outright sales, they offer a range of services. Their vision is to create communities where everyone has a safe home in a place where they're proud to live.

[www.southernhousing.org.uk](http://www.southernhousing.org.uk)

## Fresh Visions

Fresh Visions charity supports children, young people and adults who face extreme disadvantage as a result of poverty, domestic abuse, lack of education and social exclusion. The charity operates in some of the poorest neighbourhoods in the UK. Their projects empower people to gain control of their lives by developing the confidence, motivation, and skills to achieve their potential and build brighter futures.

[www.freshvisions.org.uk](http://www.freshvisions.org.uk)

## PiLON

PiLON are an award-winning contractor, providing refurbishment, compliance, and planned maintenance services to the social housing sector across London, South-East, and Midlands. PiLON works closely with clients including Southern Housing to deliver tailored social impact at a local and national level, improving lives and opportunities for all. These include resources, training, and funding.

[www.pilon.co.uk](http://www.pilon.co.uk)

**This report represents the research and views solely of the author.**

# Executive summary



In 2024, Fresh Visions commissioned Rocket Science to explore how housing providers can play a strategic role in preventing domestic abuse. This involved:

- Advanced statistical analysis of Southern Housing's anti-social behaviour reports data to understand the extent to which and how demographic characteristics, temporal factors and geography affect an individual's likelihood to report domestic abuse compared to other types of anti-social behaviour
- A rapid evidence review into 'what works' and best practice approaches for housing providers in domestic abuse prevention
- A light-touch evaluation of Fresh Visions school- and community-based domestic abuse prevention provision and support in Rye and Hastings, exploring both impact and delivery.

## Findings

### Statistical analysis

Analysis of Southern Housing's anti-social behaviour (ASB) reports data shows that domestic abuse ASB reports are significantly more likely to be associated with people that are female, in young-to-early adulthood (aged 17-35), with mixed or multiple ethnicity, and living in Sussex or Kent. They are comparatively less likely among men, older adults (especially those aged 46-55), and women aged 56 and over.

These insights can help Southern Housing build a clearer profile of reporting patterns and inform more targeted support responses. However, it is important when interpreting these findings to remember the data is based on administrative reports, not direct accounts of domestic abuse experiences. As such, the analysis likely reflects variations in reporting behaviours, service engagement and/or recording practices, as well as actual incidence of abuse. The above findings should therefore inform, rather than narrow, the scope of preventative action.

### Evidence review

Domestic abuse is a leading cause of homelessness, particularly among women, and housing can be used as a tool for coercive control. As such, housing providers can play a critical role in domestic abuse prevention. The foundation for effective prevention practice is an explicit and regularly updated organisational ambition, supported by corresponding policies, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. A survivor-centred approach to prevention improves engagement and outcomes and should be embedded across all aspects of service design and delivery. Training staff and raising knowledge and awareness in the community – through primary prevention and early intervention – can help address underlying causes and domestic abuse risk factors at the societal, community and individual levels. Strong partnership working with local agencies is essential. This includes awareness of local support services and clear referral pathways and signposting routes. Given variation in service provision between local authorities, tailored partnership approaches are also needed. Housing providers typically hold valuable data on domestic abuse. Establishing clear systems to gather, analyse



and learn from this data is vital – especially when testing new or innovative prevention approaches. Finally, the evidence shows that DAHA-accredited organisations are better equipped to identify and manage risk, support survivors, and coordinate effectively with partners.

**Light-touch evaluation of Fresh Visions school- and community-based domestic abuse provision**

Fresh Visions school-based provision improved children and young people’s understanding of healthy relationships. Participants consistently reported increased confidence in recognising unsafe dynamics and giving relationship advice and guidance to their peers, as well as demonstrating practical application of strategies learned during the course. Families who accessed Fresh Visions community-based provision reported notable improvements in mental health and wellbeing, confidence, and social networks. The relational, trauma-aware, or trauma-informed approach taken by delivery staff was essential to engagement and impact for school- and community-based provision, respectively. However, lack of coordination and communication between strategic and delivery partners in relation to community-based provision – particularly around early-phase planning and establishing referral pathways – limited the intended scope of delivery and the potential impact(s) for beneficiaries.

**Recommendations**

Triangulating insights from the three strands of research, Rocket Science has developed a suite of evidence-based, actionable recommendations and suggested next steps to establish Southern Housing as a proactive stakeholder in trauma-informed, housing-led domestic abuse prevention.

Theme	Recommendation
Developing best practice	Southern Housing should consider options and work towards formal Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation – starting with the Bronze Award and progressing to Silver and Gold over time.
Defining your role	Linked to DAHA accreditation standards, Southern Housing should begin to plan and prioritise an ambitious prevention strategy and communicate this clearly, internally, and externally. Within the strategy, clarify which members of the Southern Housing team have specific accountabilities and provide training for all employees to support understanding of policies and procedures. This includes trauma-informed training for staff delivering domestic abuse support and in roles which support families affected by domestic abuse.
Strengthening partnerships and referral/signposting routes	Given the geographical spread of Southern Housing’s operations, invest resources in nurturing local partnerships and generating evidence about what works. Information about effective partnership working and its impact can then be shared across Southern Housing’s locations (e.g., via case studies).



Training, knowledge, and awareness-raising	Southern Housing should connect into existing awareness-raising and training campaigns as a partner and develop new approaches based on areas of risk and evidence-based practice.
Generating evidence and using data	<p>Southern Housing should build on its current domestic abuse data collection system by developing structured processes to routinely analyse and reflect on existing data to inform operational delivery and strategic decision-making.</p> <p>In parallel, for new or innovative approaches to prevention, Southern Housing should embed learning cycles that include clear mechanisms for capturing, reviewing and acting on emerging insights. This will support continuous improvement by ensuring that promising practices are identified, tested, and refined in real time.</p> <p>Either or both of these could be actioned by Southern Housing internally or with the support of an external evaluation and learning partner.</p>
Engaging at-risk population groups	<p>Southern Housing should target high-risk groups without excluding others. This would involve tailored outreach for individuals identified as more likely to report domestic abuse, while also ensuring that potentially under-represented groups (for example, men, older adults) are not overlooked in prevention planning.</p> <p>Interventions should be designed on the understanding that reporting likelihood is different from risk. Communication strategies, campaigns, and services must intentionally engage individuals who may be under-/not reporting abuse.</p> <p>Given the apparent effectiveness of strong MARAC engagement in Sussex, Southern Housing should proactively engage in place-based prevention strategies in other areas where they have housing stock (e.g., London, Kent).</p>
Engaging at-risk population groups	Southern Housing should explicitly distinguish domestic abuse from anti-social behaviour in internal reporting. This would involve a separate, survivor-centred triage process for domestic abuse.
Future pilot interventions	Future prevention efforts should align with the core mandate of housing providers. Southern Housing should prioritise strengthening their capacity to identify and respond to domestic abuse within the communities they serve – through, e.g., staff training, safeguarding partnerships, and support pathways. Cross-sector collaboration should be maintained to ensure complementary, rather than duplicative, efforts.
Future pilot interventions	Fresh Visions should research and explore investing in holistic, community-based family support. This could involve establishing bases (e.g., family hubs) where children and families can access support and be signposted to additional provision, including therapeutic interventions.



Future pilot interventions	Fresh Visions should champion survivor voice and lived experience. This could include creating opportunities for survivors to shape future interventions and/or supporting existing resident-led initiatives.
Future pilot interventions	Southern Housing should strengthen strategic coordination with delivery partners. This would involve formalising partnership agreements with clear roles, responsibilities, accountability and referral mechanisms between Southern Housing and delivery partners.

## Next steps

As a housing provider with a charitable arm, Southern Housing is well-positioned to lead the development of a housing-informed domestic abuse prevention model. To progress this work, Southern Housing should next:

- **Convene a stakeholder workshop** with Southern Housing staff, local stakeholders, Fresh Visions delivery partners and survivors to share these findings and co-prioritise actions
- **Secure and allocate funding** to scale holistic, community-based family support (including therapeutic intervention offers) through Fresh Visions, and pursue DAHA accreditation options internally.

Together, actioning the above recommendations and suggested next steps would establish Southern Housing as a proactive stakeholder in trauma-informed, housing-led domestic abuse prevention.



# 1. Introduction

Fresh Visions is a charity that supports children, young people and adults who face extreme disadvantage as a result of poverty, domestic abuse, lack of education and social exclusion.

Working with systematically marginalised individuals and communities in areas of high need across the UK, Fresh Visions projects empower people to gain control of their lives by developing the confidence, motivation, and skills to achieve their potential and build brighter futures.

Through their diverse range of services, Fresh Visions help:

- Adults and children heal from the trauma of domestic abuse and unstable home lives through counselling services
- Young people who've missed out on education, training and employment make their first steps into work through job placements and practical skills training
- Socially isolated older people regain the confidence and life skills to live healthier, happier, engaged lives.

Fresh Visions receives funding from grant funders and individual donors to design and deliver their programmes of work.

In 2024, Fresh Visions commissioned Rocket Science to **explore how housing providers can play a strategic role in preventing<sup>1</sup> domestic abuse**. This involved:

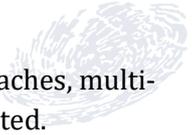
- Advanced statistical analysis of Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports data to understand the extent to which and how demographic characteristics, temporal factors and geography affect an individual's likelihood to report domestic abuse compared to other types of anti-social behaviour
- A rapid evidence review into 'what works' and best practice approaches for housing providers in domestic abuse prevention
- A light-touch evaluation of Fresh Visions school- and community-based domestic abuse prevention provision and support in Rye and Hastings, exploring both impact and delivery.

The remainder of this report is structured across five chapters:

- **Chapter Two: The role of housing providers in preventing domestic abuse** delineates the roles that housing providers can fulfil in preventing and responding to domestic abuse in

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<sup>1</sup> In this report, the term *prevention* is used in a broad sense to cover both **primary prevention** (activities aimed at stopping domestic abuse before it occurs) and **secondary prevention/early intervention** (timely action following disclosure or identification of risk to prevent escalation and further harm). The intended meaning in each instance should be understood with respect to the surrounding context.



relation to primary prevention, early intervention initiatives, housing-led approaches, multi-agency models, and becoming Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accredited.

- **Chapter Three: Evidence-based prevention approaches** examines the evidence base for effective domestic abuse prevention practice for housing providers.
- **Chapter Four: At-risk population groups** explores the results of advanced statistical analyses of Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports data to establish whether and how demographic characteristics, temporal factors and geography affect an individual's likelihood to report domestic abuse compared to other types of anti-social behaviour. These insights can help Southern Housing build a clearer profile of reporting patterns and inform more targeted support responses.
- **Chapter Five: Fresh Visions domestic abuse intervention: rapid evaluation findings** outlines insights gleaned from fieldwork conducted in April 2025 to evaluate Fresh Visions school- and community-based domestic abuse prevention provision and support in Rye and Hastings, including impact and process findings.
- **Chapter Six: Recommendations** outlines a suite of evidence-based, actionable recommendations and suggested next steps to establish Southern Housing as a proactive stakeholder in trauma-informed, housing-led domestic abuse prevention.

## 2. The role of housing providers in preventing domestic abuse



This chapter outlines the roles that housing providers can fulfil in preventing and responding to domestic abuse in relation to primary prevention, early intervention initiatives, housing-led approaches, multi-agency models, and becoming Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accredited. The following chapter ([Chapter 3: Evidence-based prevention approaches](#)) provides detail on the evidence base for different prevention approaches.

Domestic abuse is a critical social issue in the UK, with a person's housing situation often playing a pivotal role in both risk and protection. Social housing providers are uniquely positioned to identify early signs of abuse, offer safe and stable accommodation, and support prevention and intervention efforts. However, the approaches taken across the country vary widely, and there is a growing need for clear, evidence-based recommendations that social landlords can act on.

### 2.1 The relationship between domestic abuse and housing insecurity

Domestic abuse is a leading cause of homelessness, particularly among women – with one in five homeless women citing abuse as a contributing factor.<sup>2</sup> Housing can be used as a tool for coercive control, as perpetrators can manipulate housing arrangements – such as joint tenancies – to threaten survivors with the prospect of homelessness. Due to the lack of affordable housing in the UK, with social homes in increasing demand, survivors of domestic abuse often face difficulties in securing safe and stable accommodation.<sup>3</sup> Survivors can also struggle to access social housing due to restrictive eligibility criteria and needing to prove vulnerability to be prioritised. This can lead to a support gap among those made homeless by domestic abuse, between those who are able to be granted priority status for social housing and those who are unable.<sup>4 5</sup>

There exists a lack of straightforward legal procedures to effectively remove perpetrators from tenancies, which can add to the risk of survivors losing their homes or being forced to flee.<sup>6</sup> While recent legislation such as the Domestic Abuse Act (2021)<sup>7</sup> has improved the situation by granting survivors automatic priority need for housing, social landlords are often having to deal with less clear guidance and limited legal powers to intervene effectively. These challenges faced by survivors can put them in a social housing crisis with a shortage of homes, systemic barriers and having to navigate perpetrator control.

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<sup>2</sup> Garvie, Rich, and Thompson, (2024). Briefing: Social Housing – A Place of Safety for Domestic Abuse Survivors, *Shelter*. [Link](#).

<sup>3</sup> A Whole Housing Approach to Domestic Abuse, *Pathways to safe and stable housing*, DAHA Alliance, (2020). [Link](#).

<sup>4</sup> A Safe Home, Breaking the link between homelessness and domestic abuse, Campaigns Report, APPG, (2019). [Link](#).

<sup>5</sup> Magnusson and Davidge, (2020). The Domestic Abuse Report 2020, The Hidden Housing Crisis, *Women's Aid*. [Link](#).

<sup>6</sup> Consultation on the impacts of joint tenancies on victims of domestic abuse, *National Housing Federation*, (2020). [Link](#)

<sup>7</sup> The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, *Legislation Gov UK*, (2021). [Link](#).



Nonetheless, given the centrality of housing to people's everyday lives, there exist many entry points for housing providers to intervene in preventing domestic abuse – both through upstream prevention and in response to occurrences, and both individually and through working with partners.

## 2.2 Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation<sup>8</sup> is widely considered to be the benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse in the UK. It has been recognised in the UK government's Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2020.<sup>9</sup> By becoming DAHA accredited, housing providers and services ensure they deliver safe and effective responses to domestic abuse. The DAHA accreditation framework includes eight priority areas (below) that considers an organisation's operations and interventions in domestic abuse. It builds in processes that help guide staff to adequately address the needs of survivors and hold perpetrators to account. DAHA's standards include the following priority areas:

- Partnerships and collaboration
- Staff development and support
- Policies and procedures
- Survivor-led support
- Safety-led case management
- Intersectionality and Anti-Racism
- Perpetrator accountability
- Publicity and awareness

## 2.3 Overview of approaches to domestic abuse prevention for housing providers

### Primary prevention

Primary prevention refers to strategies designed to stop domestic abuse before it occurs, typically by addressing the underlying causes and risk factors at the societal, community and individual levels.<sup>10 11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> DAHA Accreditation Framework, *Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)*, (no date) [Link](#).

<sup>9</sup> Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2020, *UK Government* (2016). [Link](#).

<sup>10</sup> Bullinger, et al. (2024). Paid Family Leave: An Upstream Intervention to Prevent Family Violence, *Journal of Family Violence*. [Link](#).

<sup>11</sup> Bland, Calder, Fyfe, Anderson, Mitchell, and Reid, (2021). Public Policy Reform and Police Prevention Practice: A Journey Upstream?, *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, Volume 15, Issue 3. [Link](#).

<sup>12</sup> Interventions must respond to changing social norms and structures, e.g., gender inequalities, including challenging and reforming structures within relationships, communities, and organisations. Therefore, primary prevention programmes often seek to develop knowledge and skills, such as teaching children and young people about healthy relationships, consent, conflict resolution, and gender equality.<sup>13</sup> <sup>14</sup> Designing interventions using robust evidence and in consultation with survivors and affected communities can improve effectiveness.

The potential for housing providers' direct involvement in primary prevention is necessarily limited by diffused statutory responsibilities and economies of scale. However, providers with a charitable arm (such as Southern Housing) are in a strong position to contribute to national efforts through the provision of hyper-local prevention interventions.

Guidance produced by the National Violence Against Women Network, Zero Tolerance, and the Improvement Service<sup>15</sup> recommends that, to further support upstream domestic abuse prevention, housing providers should:

- Ensure gender equality is central to local authorities' housing strategies through advocacy and awareness-raising
- Ensure housing representatives are active members of their local multi-agency Violence Against Women Partnership (VAWP)
- Offer or signpost high-quality professional development on gender inequality and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) issues to housing officers
- Ensure that partners and any local community planning partnerships use up-to-date and disaggregated gendered statistics for reasons for homelessness to inform the area's housing strategy.

## Early intervention

Early intervention approaches focus on identifying and addressing risks, warning signs, and any harmful behavioural patterns at the earliest possible moment – before abuse becomes entrenched or escalated.

Effective early intervention often involves a multi-agency approach and collaborative efforts between statutory and voluntary services. This can include social care, emergency services, and specialist domestic abuse organisations, to share information and integrate support offered to survivors and

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<sup>12</sup> Atkinson and Roberto, (2024). Global Approaches to Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Elder Abuse Prevention: A Scoping Review, *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse, Volume 25 (1)*. [Link](#).

<sup>13</sup> Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women, Research and Policy, *Engender*, [Link](#).

<sup>14</sup> What is Primary Prevention?, *Zero Tolerance*, (2021). [Link](#).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

perpetrators.<sup>16 17</sup> Such approaches often start with early engagement with perpetrators, focusing on their behaviour and aiming to address abusive traits before they escalate. Relevant interventions emphasise teaching respect, communication, and conflict resolution to prevent instances of future abuse.<sup>18</sup>

Early intervention also provides support for those at risk and their families, including advocacy, safety planning, and access to specialist services. This allows survivors to escape abusive situations sooner and reduce the risk of repeat victimisation.<sup>19</sup> Early intervention can also rely on systems needing to identify and detect the abuse and risk factors, as victims can delay disclosure due to fear, denial, or mistrust of procedures and services. Trained professionals, across agencies, must recognise the signs and create accessible pathways to support.<sup>20</sup>

Housing providers that collect detailed data on residents' demographic information and domestic abuse reports (such as Southern Housing) are in a strong position to identify individuals and families to signpost to relevant prevention support – either provision delivered by local partners or, in the case of Southern Housing, through their charitable arm.

Housing providers can further support early intervention through:

- **Developing staff abilities to recognise signs of abuse.** Signs specific to the housing context include anti-social behaviour, rent arrears due to economic abuse, and property damage
- **Having dedicated domestic abuse policies and procedures through which staff can respond safely and appropriately** – following the five steps recommended in [DAHA's good practice guide](#)
- **Referring individuals** to support services and police for sanctuary schemes
- **Managing perpetrators** – DAHA recommends that housing staff contact the [Respect phonenumber](#) for advice and information on how to safely engage with perpetrators in a way that does not put survivors (including children) at further risk of harm
- Participating in **multi-agency models**.<sup>21 22 23</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ash, Malloch, and Bellussi, (2024). Children and Families Affected by Domestic Abuse, Innovation in multi-agency settings for supporting children and families affected by domestic abuse: police notification schemes, *University of Stirling*. [Link](#).

<sup>17</sup> Cleaver et al., (2019). A Review of UK based Multi-Agency Approaches to Early Intervention in Domestic Abuse: Lessons to be Learnt from Existing Evaluation Studies, *University of Greenwich*. [Link](#).

<sup>18</sup> Guy, Feinstein, and Griffiths, (2018). Early Intervention in Domestic Violence and Abuse, *Early Intervention Foundation*. [Link](#).

<sup>19</sup> Davies, Barlow, and Fish, (2023). The hard and complex work of implementing new multi-agency risk assessment approaches to policing domestic abuse, *Crime Prevention and Community Safety, Volume 25*. [Link](#).

<sup>20</sup> Martin-Denham, (2021). Walking on eggshells: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of service-users' perspectives of domestic abuse support services, *University of Sunderland*. [Link](#).

<sup>21</sup> Henderson, (Perpetrator Management Toolkit, (no date), *Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)* [Link](#).

<sup>22</sup> Private Rented Sector (PRS) Domestic Abuse Good Practice Guide, *Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)* (2024) [Link](#).

<sup>23</sup> Kogulathas, Crosby and Vickress, Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Toolkit, *Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)*, (no date) [Link](#).



For early intervention, housing providers should develop a clear policy for staff and tenants, setting expectations and outlining support pathways. This may include tenancy agreements with clauses relating to perpetration and supporting accountability and coordinated action. Housing providers can also offer routine contact with home visits and calls. They are able to fast-track to advocacy, counselling, and practical support, with the use of an intersectional approach to adapt to the complex needs and barriers of particular individuals.<sup>24</sup> Housing providers' role can reduce the duration of harm and abuse, prevent homelessness, and significantly cut costs associated with tenancy turnover.

## Housing-led approaches

Housing-led approaches to domestic abuse prioritise providing a safe, stable housing solution for survivors and, where appropriate, managing perpetrators' accommodation to maximise survivors' safety and choice. The Whole Housing Approach (WHA) model aims to improve access to safe housing across all tenures, including social, private rented and private ownership, to ensure survivors are relocated for safety or can remain in their homes with appropriate support.<sup>25</sup> The approach emphasises a coordinated response across agencies to deliver earlier intervention and better outcomes. The support offered is typically flexible to support the varying needs of individuals, whilst housing providers adhere to quality standards with accreditation to follow such as best practice guidance from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA).<sup>26</sup>

Tenancy sustainment for survivors of domestic abuse involves supporting individuals to maintain safe, stable, and independent housing after they have left an abusive situation or living arrangement. The approach recognises that providing the tenancy itself does not offer a comprehensive solution; therefore, ongoing wraparound support and appropriate housing options are vital in preventing homelessness and promoting long-term improved wellbeing.<sup>27</sup> A sustainable tenancy is one that allows survivors, and any dependents, to live independently and regain control of their lives. Individuals work with support agencies to identify goals and specific needs, to build a secure home, stabilise income and gain confidence through psychological and social support.

There are, however, several factors that can affect sustainment for individuals: the quality of housing and surrounding neighbourhoods, ongoing risks from the perpetrator, and any institutional or personal dynamics. Institutional dynamics may include local housing policy barriers, where some housing providers require survivors to demonstrate a local connection to access social housing. Furthermore, navigation of multiple agencies can be time-consuming and complicated, especially for those with additional support needs. Personal dynamics that could affect sustainment include social and psychological factors such as trauma, fear of isolation, and (limited) personal networks in the local area. In addition, a lack of financial independence or employment history can impact a tenancy and put individuals at risk of arrears, with survivors potentially facing upfront costs of deposits and transitioning to independent living.<sup>28</sup>

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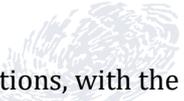
<sup>24</sup> Developing your own domestic abuse and housing operational group (HOG), DAHA Alliance, (2022). [Link](#)

<sup>25</sup> A Whole Housing Approach to Domestic Abuse, *Pathways to safe and stable housing*, DAHA Alliance, (2020). [Link](#).

<sup>26</sup> Accreditation for housing providers, *DAHA Alliance*, (2020). [Link](#).

<sup>27</sup> Edgar, Williams, McMahon, and McAvoy, (2018). Sustaining Tenancies Following Domestic Abuse, Joint Centre for Scottish Housing Research, *University of Dundee*. [Link](#).

<sup>28</sup> The Complexity of Housing for Domestic Abuse Victims, Social Research Report, *University of Brighton*, (2020). [Link](#)



As per government guidance, survivors have statutory rights to housing and legal protections, with the ability to exclude perpetrators from their homes or transfer tenancies into their names. With multi-agency and landlord support, housing providers can build a strong relationship with survivors to ensure sustainment and tailored support.<sup>29</sup> The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) places the duty on local authorities to assess needs and ensure that sufficient safe accommodation and support are available; this can extend to families and children affected by domestic abuse.<sup>30</sup> To provide safe accommodation, there is typically a single point of contact, where survivors can benefit from a trusted relationship, not having to repeat any narrative, and improving engagement with services. Similarly, the support is designed as holistic and trauma-informed, allowing for emotional, practical and specialist advice tailored to the individual. This flexibility in the support maximises accessibility for survivors from a diversity of backgrounds.<sup>31</sup>

Housing providers have a clearly defined role under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, particularly in preventing homelessness and ensuring survivors can access safe and secure housing. Local housing authorities must treat survivors of domestic abuse as an automatic priority to avoid any risk of homelessness, and they are obliged to secure suitable accommodation as quickly as possible. When housing providers are rehousing survivors who previously held a secure lifetime tenancy or assured tenancy, the local housing authority are required to grant a secure tenancy which enhances tenure security. Housing providers, especially social landlords and local authorities, are part of the delivery of the framework for relevant accommodation under the Act; this includes refuges, specialist safe accommodation, and sanctuary schemes. They have a role to play in supporting survivor safety and perpetrator accountability with the management of tenancy agreements and provisions in place to prevent abuse and contribute to safe housing.<sup>32</sup>

With housing-led approaches, housing provider staff should receive training on the types, signs, and impacts of domestic abuse. This training enables staff to be knowledgeable about how abuse may be present in the household and the legal responsibilities of housing providers.<sup>33</sup> <sup>34</sup> Staff should be trained in risk assessment and management using tools such as risk identification checklists to recognise the potential perceived or real risks and make referrals for housing and wider support. Training also emphasises safeguarding practices, in line with the approach of multi-agency collaboration, to share information and minimise risk and promote effective safeguarding.<sup>35</sup> Providers should complete local risk assessments, attend conferences, share information, and develop robust plans for survivors to seamlessly transition into new communities or increasingly feel a part of their existing one. This can help prevent feelings of isolation among survivors.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Statutory Guidance: Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Gov UK, (2022). [Link](#).

<sup>30</sup> Support in Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Gov UK, (2024). [Link](#).

<sup>31</sup> Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021-2024, Bracknell Forest, (2021). [Link](#).

<sup>32</sup> The Domestic Abuse Act 2021: What does it mean for social housing providers?, Local Government Lawyer, (2021). [Link](#)

<sup>33</sup> Safeguarding for housing and support staff, Shelter, (2018). [Link](#).

<sup>34</sup> Domestic Abuse Housing Policy, Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, (2020). [Link](#).

<sup>35</sup> Understanding Domestic Abuse in a Housing Context, Scottish Women's Aid, (2024). [Link](#).

<sup>36</sup> Private Rented Sector, DAHA Alliance, (2025). [Link](#).



## Multi-agency models

Multi-agency models bring together services across sectors to provide coordinated holistic interventions for survivors, children, and perpetrators. Partnership and collaboration is the first standard that housing providers are expected to meet for DAHA accreditation.

In the UK, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) focus on the highest-risk domestic abuse cases where representatives from the police, probation, health, child protection, housing and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) share information and develop coordinated safety plans for victims and children.<sup>37 38</sup> This process allows each agency to identify risks and ensure that each aspect of a survivor's situation is accounted for in the decision-making process, with over 270 MARACs across the UK managing tens of thousands of cases annually.<sup>39</sup>

Housing providers can support MARACs by:

- Identifying and assessing individuals at risk of domestic abuse – for example, by using the [DASH Risk Checklist](#)\*
- Referring onward individuals who are assessed as high risk, where there is an escalation in abuse, or where professional judgement or survivor perception of risk deems a referral necessary
- Sharing relevant and proportionate risk-focused information
- Volunteering actions in response to the risk of harm identified.<sup>40 41</sup>

Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) identifies the most harmful and serial domestic abuse perpetrators and delivers tailored interventions to these individuals to reduce recidivism and prevent further harm.<sup>42</sup> This typically involves the police, community safety partners, and government departments to assess the individuals and create and agree upon a bespoke action plan. This will include referrals to prevention programmes and support with housing, health, and often substance misuse. Survivors are supported through IDVAs, and local safety plans are developed with local authorities and voluntary organisations.<sup>43</sup> There is a process for arrangements, particularly for children living with domestic abuse, which brings together local authority involvement and health and

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<sup>37</sup> Davies, (2021). Practicing Co-Produced Research: Tackling domestic abuse through innovative multi-agency partnership working, *Department of Social Sciences, Northumbria University*. [Link](#).

<sup>38</sup> Domestic Abuse Response in the UK, Safe Lives, (2020). [Link](#).

<sup>39</sup> Partnership working and multi-agency responses/mechanisms, *College of Policing*, (2018). [Link](#).

<sup>40</sup> Domestic abuse risk identification, assessment and management – A guidance for housing professionals, *Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)*, (2020) [Link](#).

<sup>41</sup> Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, (Marac) „Safer, Sooner and Save Lives ,(2024). [Link](#).

\* DASH stands for Domestic Abuse, Stalking And 'Honour'-based abuse and is a multi-agency tool used to identify, assess and manage abuse.

<sup>42</sup> Multi-agency tasking and coordination domestic abuse programme, *College of Policing*, (2024). [Link](#)

<sup>43</sup> Innovating during the Pandemic? Policing, Domestic Abuse and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARACs), *The Journal of Adult Protection*, (2020). [Link](#).

social care organisations. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) streamline communication across parties to allow for informed decision-making and a joined-up approach for families at risk.<sup>44</sup>

The Coordinated Community Response (CCR) approach was pioneered by Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse (STADA) and is part of the Whole Housing Approach. A CCR aims to enable a “whole system response to a whole person”<sup>45</sup> involving a wide range of public, third sector and private organisations, from housing providers to banks. While there is no standardised protocol for implementing a CCR, it involves forming a local council of service providers in order to provide a more comprehensive response for survivors.<sup>46</sup>

There are key features across all models involving multiple agencies and services, notably information sharing, tailored action plans, cross-sector engagement, and victim advocacy and support. DAHA Bronze Accreditation<sup>47</sup> requires housing providers to have referral pathways established with a MARAC, domestic abuse services, and safeguarding agencies. At Silver, providers must map local demographics and *By and For* services to meet intersecting needs, and have relevant staff attend safeguarding and multi-agency meetings, raise awareness, and actively engage in local governance both strategically and operationally. At Gold, providers should have relationships with local and national *By and For* services and formal information-sharing agreements with agencies as part of a CCR.

### 3. Evidence-based prevention approaches

Following the previous chapter which described the varying types of housing provider approaches to prevent domestic abuse, this chapter outlines the evidence base for effective practice, including:

- The policies, procedures and systems housing providers can design and implement
- Examples of prevention approaches including in specific geographies and with specific population groups
- Enablers and barriers to effective domestic abuse prevention within housing settings
- Implications for social housing providers
- Evidence gaps.

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<sup>44</sup> Multi-agency safeguarding and domestic abuse, *Safeguarding Practice Review Panel*, (2022). [Link](#).

<sup>45</sup> In Search of Excellence. A refreshed guide to effective domestic abuse partnership work – The Coordinated Community Response (CCR), *Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse (STADA)*, (2020) [Link](#).

<sup>46</sup> Shorey, Tirone and Stuart, Coordinated Community Response Components for Victims of Intimate Partner Violence: A Review of the Literature, *Aggress Violent Behav*, (2014) [Link](#).

<sup>47</sup> DAHA Accreditation Framework, *Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)*, (no date) [Link](#).



## 3.1 Policies, procedures, and systems

Social housing providers can adapt and scale a range of policies, practices, and programmes to strengthen their response to domestic abuse. The first step is a comprehensive domestic abuse policy for both residents and staff. This should be a survivor-centred approach which sets out how reports will be taken forward, clearly defines roles and responsibilities, outlines support action plans for survivors, and holds perpetrators accountable.<sup>48</sup> The policy should regularly review legislative changes to inform best practice, which has been shown to improve outcomes for survivors and children.<sup>49</sup> The policy should cover all forms of abuse, including verbal, physical, and coercive control – and should apply to all tenants and household members, regardless of their tenure.<sup>50 51</sup>

Additionally, DAHA accreditation requires that policies and procedures take a survivor-centred, intersectional, and anti-racist approach, reflect perpetrator responsibility, and that support available for survivors and perpetrators is publicised. The policy must focus on early intervention, with staff training provided to recognise the signs of abuse and encourage and support residents to engage and report incidents.

The housing provider can offer a suitable range of accommodation alongside advocacy advice to enable individuals to make the most informed choices.<sup>52</sup> Training should embed a trauma-informed approach, allowing for survivors to feel empowered and have their voices heard; this approach aids providers in addressing the complexities of the situation as well as factors affecting more vulnerable or marginalised groups in society.<sup>53</sup> DAHA Accreditation requires survivor-led support be provided. At Bronze:

- Information is shared safely and proportionately with partners
- Responses to perpetrators are led by survivor needs
- Case notes are factual, accurate and precise
- Sanctuary, target hardening or moving options are offered where appropriate
- Survivors are supported to move
- Survivors are supported to disclose safely

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<sup>48</sup> Welker, (2022). Victim Moves or Survivor Stays? Domestic abuse safe housing in England and Scotland, *Heriot-Watt University*. [Link](#).

<sup>49</sup> Housing associations and domestic abuse – legislative/policy update, *Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations*, (2023). [Link](#).

<sup>50</sup> Domestic Abuse Policy, *Angus Housing Association*, (2024). [Link](#).

<sup>51</sup> Domestic abuse: a good practice guide for social landlords, *Women's Aid*, (2021). [Link](#).

<sup>52</sup> Statutory Guidance: Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse, *Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Gov UK*, (2022). [Link](#).

<sup>53</sup> Domestic Abuse Policy, *North Ayrshire Council*, (2021). [Link](#).

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- Staff demonstrate a survivor-centred approach, empowering survivors to have autonomy and choice
  - Staff are able to recognise risk and complete a DASH risk assessment where appropriate.

At Silver, survivors are referred to specialist domestic abuse services for support, while staff are transparent, provide regular and timely updates, respect survivor decisions, and use methods for capturing survivor voice. To attain Gold, survivor feedback and experience must be used by providers to develop and inform services.

Safety-led case management is another DAHA accreditation requirement. For Silver, systems must be in place to record case information and manage cases. Case reviews should be survivor-centred, and perpetrators recorded in case management notes and shared with agencies where appropriate. For Gold, the case management system must be embedded and inform services, data must be used to understand the needs of local communities and develop an appropriate response, and case audits must demonstrate a survivor-centred, non-judgemental and believing approach.

Gold DAHA accreditation further requires that intersectionality and anti-racism should be considered in system design. Any internal systems which discriminate or negatively impact survivors should be removed and external systems challenged.

Perpetrator accountability should also be built in, with perpetrator interventions available to staff. These should be clear and understood by staff with evidence of being used where appropriate.

Community engagement is important to ensure that tenants and local residents are aware of the policy; through campaigns and newsletters, housing providers can raise awareness and encourage tenant participation in improving and shaping policy through lived experience.<sup>54</sup> DAHA Gold accreditation requires that housing providers organise, host and support events and campaigns around domestic abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

The implementation of DAHA standards has led to improved housing outcomes, including reduced homelessness and more survivors in independent living, as well as cost savings for councils and the wider local system, and positive impacts for marginalised groups due to partner and trauma-informed responses.<sup>55</sup>

In summary, policies, procedures, and systems in social housing can play a vital role in supporting survivors, with trauma-informed approaches, survivor-centred training and management, and recognising and aligning with national legislative practices key elements of this.

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<sup>54</sup> Housing Domestic Abuse Policy, North Lanarkshire Council, (2022). [Link](#).

<sup>55</sup> A framework for addressing the housing needs of survivors of domestic abuse, *Local Government Association*, (2025). [Link](#).

## 3.2 Examples of effective prevention approaches



### Reciprocal schemes in England

In England, approaches to domestic abuse in the housing sector vary widely. The Pan-London Housing Reciprocal scheme enables survivors with social tenancies to move safely across boroughs, coordinated by Safe London. The scheme addresses the challenges presented by cross-borough moves, particularly where survivors require their support networks and to ultimately escape risk. The scheme is supported by the Mayor's Office and works in a multi-agency partnership to coordinate this process.<sup>56</sup> Other regions, such as Cambridgeshire, have adopted similar managed reciprocal schemes through the WHA but with less coordination capacity than their London counterparts. Many regional differences come down to staffing, resources, funding, and available housing stock, which conditions the effectiveness of individual schemes.

### Exemptions to local connections rules

From July 2025, survivors of domestic abuse across England will be exempt from local connections rules, allowing them to apply for social housing anywhere in England without needing to demonstrate previous ties to the area. This is a major step in removing barriers for individuals fleeing abuse, offering more guaranteed safety.<sup>57</sup> There exist funding disparities across regions, with local authorities outside London now receiving a share of the government's £160m annual funding to meet their statutory duty to provide safe accommodation and support for domestic abuse survivors.<sup>58</sup> It should be noted that the scale and quality of provision will differ across regions, with local authorities varying in capacity and their ability to deliver outcomes and meet regional demand.

### Prevention for specific population groups

In London, most provision is tailored towards women and children, with refuge spaces, specialist support, and priority access to social housing. The majority of adults able to secure safe accommodation are women (96%), while services are primarily focussed on supporting women, with limited provision for other genders.<sup>59</sup> In 2022-2023, over 15,000 households fleeing domestic abuse were denied support and safe accommodation. This was mainly due to lack of capacity and providers' inability to meet the specific needs of individuals and families. The most common unmet needs were for those with no recourse to public funds, mental health support, and for larger families or those with older children.<sup>60</sup>

Global Majority communities across England face greater barriers to support due to limited specialist provision and immigration restrictions. Evidence suggests that Global Majority communities are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse, on top of inequalities in service support and

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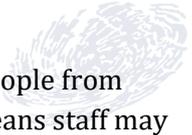
<sup>56</sup> Traynard, (2020). Managed Housing Reciprocal, *Safer London*. [Link](#).

<sup>57</sup> Round up of housing law and news: June 2025, *Shelter*, (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>58</sup> Care leavers and victims of domestic violence to have greater access to social housing, Paul Dodds Law, (2025). [Link](#).

<sup>59</sup> Experiencing Domestic Abuse, *The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Housing Needs*, (2024). [Link](#).

<sup>60</sup> Jayanetti, (2024). More than 15,000 households fleeing domestic abuse across England denied access to safe housing, *Inside Housing*. [Link](#).



accessibility.<sup>61</sup> Housing providers can tailor their support by first understanding that people from Global Majority communities may not disclose abuse, particularly to ‘outsiders’. This means staff may need to invest more time in building trust, while still being skilled and confident to safeguard victims regardless of ethnicity. Housing staff should also receive specific training to work with Global Majority survivors.<sup>62</sup> As noted above, DAHA Gold accreditation requires that internal systems which discriminate or negatively impact survivors are removed and that external systems are challenged.

Individuals with disabilities can struggle to find specialist services, with none available in the North East, East of England, or Midlands. Disabled survivors often encounter accessibility issues and a lack of tailored support. Many report being placed in accommodation that is not physically accessible, whilst some feel they have to validate their disability to be offered tailored accommodation, which can be emotionally taxing. Housing providers can do several things to support Disabled survivors. Staff training on disability equality issues and the Equality Act 2010 should be provided. A person-centred approach should be taken, including flexibility around appointment times and providing information in a survivor’s preferred format. Providing a range of service options and ways of accessing them can help reach disabled women in particular.<sup>63</sup>

LGBTQ+ survivors also experience challenges with a lack of services across the country. Research shows that 81% of LGBTQ+ people experiencing domestic abuse live in areas without specialist services, leaving them at higher risk of exploitation, homelessness, and remaining in abusive situations.<sup>64</sup>

## **The Domestic Violence Housing First Model (DVHF)**

The Domestic Violence Housing First Model (DVHF) is an adaptation of the original Housing First approach, specifically designed to help survivors of domestic violence and their children achieve safe, stable, and permanent housing, while receiving trauma-informed support tailored to their needs. The model centres around survivor autonomy and choice, recognising individuals’ experiences and allowing for flexible support and a response with the ability to evolve with their needs whilst prioritising safety and dignity. Trained advocates work with survivors to offer tailored solutions, with DVHF focussing on securing safe housing as a foundational step. The model incorporates flexible financial assistance to address immediate housing needs, such as paying back rent, security deposits, home repairs, and transportation costs. Furthermore, the model recognises that survivors’ needs vary, therefore a survivor-led approach is adopted with the aid of community and local organisations. Research indicates that survivors in DVHF programmes experience greater housing stability and reduced repeat abuse or re-traumatising events compared to individuals receiving business-as-usual

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<sup>61</sup> Domestic Abuse in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups, *Interventions Alliance*, (2021). [Link](#).

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Meakin, Shaping Our Lives A Refuge for All Project and Findings, *Shaping Our Lives Report* [Link](#).

<sup>64</sup> More accessible domestic abuse services needed across the UK, research shows, *School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh*, (2021). [Link](#).

services. Survivor feedback highlights the importance of individual support, flexible engagement, and trauma-informed advocacy in enabling positive outcomes.<sup>65 66</sup>

Survivors participating in housing-led approaches such as the DVHF model report experiencing less abuse and are less likely to live with their abuser after intervention. Studies show a significant decline in violence between baseline and post-six months for those who are engaged with such programmes. Through a focus on interventions, paired with housing providers' assistance, individuals are more likely to achieve positive outcomes compared to those in temporary or short-term arrangements.<sup>67</sup> Typically, those with increased engagement with services and programmes show more stability in their finances, relationships, and psychological wellbeing, which is critical for long-term independence and sustainment.<sup>68</sup>

## 3.3 Enablers and barriers to effective prevention within housing settings

### Enablers

The primary enabler of effective domestic abuse prevention is multi-agency collaboration, with the evidence showing the importance of strong partnerships between housing providers, local authorities, and coordinated support efforts across sectors. These partnerships ensure that holistic risk management is implemented alongside a trauma-informed approach, as agencies combine their expertise and resources, leading to more effective interventions and better outcomes for survivors. In practice, this can be structured risk assessments and referrals, with housing providers using standardised checklists and making use of multi-agency conferences.

Another key enabler involves the statutory duties outlined in the Domestic Abuse Act (2021), ensuring local authorities and housing providers take accountability and are responsible for access needs, providing safe accommodation and that support is inclusive and accessible (while housing providers do not have direct statutory duties imposed by the Act, they are required to operate with local authorities in delivery).<sup>69</sup>

Processes must be survivor-centred, offering specialist support and including regular needs assessments and monitoring. This allows provision to remain responsive and effective, taking into account protected characteristics and empowering survivors' decision-making.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Sullivan & Olsen, (2018). Common ground, complementary approaches: adapting the Housing First model for domestic violence survivors, *National Library of Medicine*. [Link](#).

<sup>66</sup> Sullivan, et al., (2022). Impact of the Domestic Violence Housing First Model on Survivors' Safety and Housing Stability: 12-month Findings. *National Library of Medicine*. [Link](#).

<sup>67</sup> Stulz, Francis, Naidu, and O'Reilly, (2024). Women escaping domestic violence to achieve safe housing: an integrative review, *BMC Women's Health*. [Link](#).

<sup>68</sup> Understanding domestic abuse interventions for women experiencing multiple disadvantage, *Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities*, (2024). [Link](#).

<sup>69</sup> Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan, *Home Office, Gov UK*, (2022). [Link](#).

<sup>70</sup> Bristol Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy and Needs Assessment, *Bristol Council*, (2022). [Link](#).



## Barriers

Key barriers to effective domestic abuse prevention centre around capacity and resource constraints, with limited availability of safe accommodation, particularly when addressing specific and/or accessibility needs. This can lead to survivors being left without options or placed in unsuitable accommodation.

There are regional differences in implementation – for example, rural local authorities tend to deal with community visibility and stigma attached to survivors, as anonymity is harder to achieve. This occurs alongside comparatively limited housing stock and fewer local services, with survivors travelling longer distances to access resources, which can negatively impact their families and networks during the process. This leads to unequal outcomes with varying results across providers and councils.<sup>71</sup>

There are often bureaucratic hurdles for survivors to navigate, with the potential for re-traumatising events as they are required to provide evidence and often undergo a ‘vulnerability test’. Local authorities have been found to inconsistently apply priority criteria, leading to some survivors being denied support and assistance.<sup>72</sup> Systemic issues include that the current system and approach expects survivors to uproot their lives, employment, networks and children’s education; this is often a traumatic experience in itself and can result in instability and the need for mental health support.<sup>73</sup> The high demand and low supply of social housing means that perpetrators rarely access alternative accommodation, often resulting in survivors being forced to leave and bear the costs of disruption and starting over.

The lack of social housing in England means that many survivors are forced into rented accommodation, where high rents, benefit caps and lack of stable housing can exacerbate negative experiences of relocation. With the shortage of housing posing a challenge to many local authorities, survivors may have to remain in temporary accommodation for extended periods, which may not be suitable and as a result blocks spaces for others in urgent need.

### 3.4 Implications for social housing providers

There are direct housing and support costs to consider, with the average cost for a survivor to leave an abuser and rebuild a safe and independent life, including temporary accommodation, deposits, rent support, discretionary payments, and the necessary security measures, estimated to total £8,850 per case. The available subsidies only cover around two-thirds of these costs, and do not take into considerable costs to flee, childcare, and legal costs.<sup>74</sup> The cost of providing a single refuge space is estimated at over £31,000 per year, with a national need for thousands of such spaces. Social landlords also deal with repair and maintenance costs linked to domestic abuse, estimated at £383 million

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<sup>71</sup> A Safe Home, Breaking the link between homelessness and domestic abuse, Campaigns Report, APPG, (2019). [Link](#).

<sup>72</sup> Written evidence submitted by the Public Bill Committee from the National Housing and Domestic Abuse Policy and Practice, *Domestic Abuse Bill*, (2020). [Link](#).

<sup>73</sup> Accommodation for Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse, *DAHA Alliance*, (2021). [Link](#).

<sup>74</sup> The Price of Safety: The cost of leaving an abuser and rebuilding a safe, independent life, Women’s Aid, (2024). [Link](#).

annually for the entire sector.<sup>75</sup> There are also staffing and operational costs to consider for social housing providers. Nationally, crisis accommodation for domestic abuse survivors costs around £119 million per year.<sup>76</sup>

There is systemic investment to aid in transforming the response to domestic abuse and cover evolving practices around prevention, professional training, and public health campaigns; this has been estimated to total £2.2 billion per year across England and Wales.<sup>77</sup> Early intervention and prevention can reduce the need for a costly crisis response, emergency accommodation and repairs, with survivors up to seven times more likely to be in arrears without support. With effective prevention, the financial burden on local authorities, health services and the judicial system can be reduced.<sup>78</sup> Social housing providers who invest in staff training, partnership working and survivor-centred policies see improved outcomes and reduced operational costs and disruption.

Social housing providers who invest in staff training, partnership working and survivor-centred policies typically allocate resources that reflect both the necessity of sustained development and the scale of their current housing stock. DAHA accreditation involves an average investment of around £5 per home to cover staff training and resourcing of a WHA; and accreditation processes generally cost a minimum of £3,000 per organisation and take 12-18 months, which includes membership, assessment, designated leads, and staff training. Housing providers with robust training and partnership frameworks report increased tenancy sustainment and reduced homelessness. With trauma-informed policies, they can foster empowerment and dignity, improving overall safety and mental health outcomes for survivors. Tailored services address intersectional needs for marginalised groups, such as those with economic abuse experiences, which leads to more equitable access to housing.<sup>79</sup>

### 3.5 Evidence gaps

There is inconsistency in data collection and the measurement of prevention outcomes, namely a lack of a robust and standardised approach for housing providers and other agencies to follow. Many local authorities do not systematically collect or report on key indicators (sustainment, survivor wellbeing, repeat victimisation) and this creates challenges when looking to assess the impact of approaches and the compare effectiveness of models across regions and populations.<sup>80 81</sup>

There is insufficient evidence on how well current housing provider interventions serve particular population groups, including Black women, people with disabilities, and those with no resource to public funds (NRPF). Research and practice reports highlight that these groups face additional barriers, but there is limited data on which types of intervention are most effective in overcoming

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<sup>75</sup> Oliver, Alexander, Roe, and Wlasny, (2019). The economic and social costs of domestic abuse, *Home Office*. [Link](#).

<sup>76</sup> The cost of domestic abuse, *MRI Social Housing*, (2020). [Link](#).

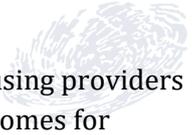
<sup>77</sup> A Safe Fund: costing domestic abuse provision for the whole family, *Safe Lives*, (2021). [Link](#).

<sup>78</sup> The cost of domestic abuse, *MRI Social Housing*, (2020). [Link](#).

<sup>79</sup> Why should your organisation invest in DAHA accreditation? *DAHA Alliance*, (2023). [Link](#).

<sup>80</sup> Written evidence submitted by the National Housing and Domestic Abuse Policy and Practice Group, *The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance*, (2019). [Link](#).

<sup>81</sup> Annual progress report from the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation National Expert Steering Group 2021-22, *Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Gov UK*, (2023). [Link](#).



these challenges.<sup>82</sup> There is variation in local authority practice, including how local housing providers interpret and apply statutory duties, creating inconsistencies and affecting real-life outcomes for individuals. There is little systemic research as to why the variations occur and how to improve these practices with a more standardised approach.<sup>83</sup>

The implications for practice centre around the need for standardised outcomes frameworks which prioritise equity and inclusion. To drive continuous improvement and implement a culture and practice of accountability amongst services, local authorities should adopt standardised approaches for measuring and reporting outcomes.

Housing providers can inform local authorities with their reporting data on survivors and the outcomes from cases, and these insights can be used to shape policy. Such detailed resident insight is specific to the local area, allowing for nuanced conversation around gaps, risks and evolving resident profiles. Housing providers can engage with multi-agency forums to ensure that policies are grounded in the realities of service delivery and survivor needs. Housing providers can also facilitate resident consultation and enable the co-production of services, capturing community specific needs and authentic resident solutions.<sup>84</sup> It is essential that evidence gaps are filled to ensure that domestic abuse survivors are offered and experiencing the most suitable interventions and housing providers can offer safety and stability for prioritised individuals.

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<sup>82</sup> More accessible domestic abuse services needed across the UK, research shows, *School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh*, (2021). [Link](#).

<sup>83</sup> Welker, Fitzpatrick, and Watts-Cobbe, (2025). Shared Domestic Abuse Refuge in the Age of Housing First: An Outdated Model?, *International Journal on Homelessness, Volume 3 (3)*. [Link](#).

<sup>84</sup> A guide to better partnership working between local authorities and housing associations, *Building Bridges*, (2018). [Link](#).



## 4. At-risk population groups

This chapter presents analyses of Southern Housing anti-social behaviour (ASB) reports data to answer the following key questions:

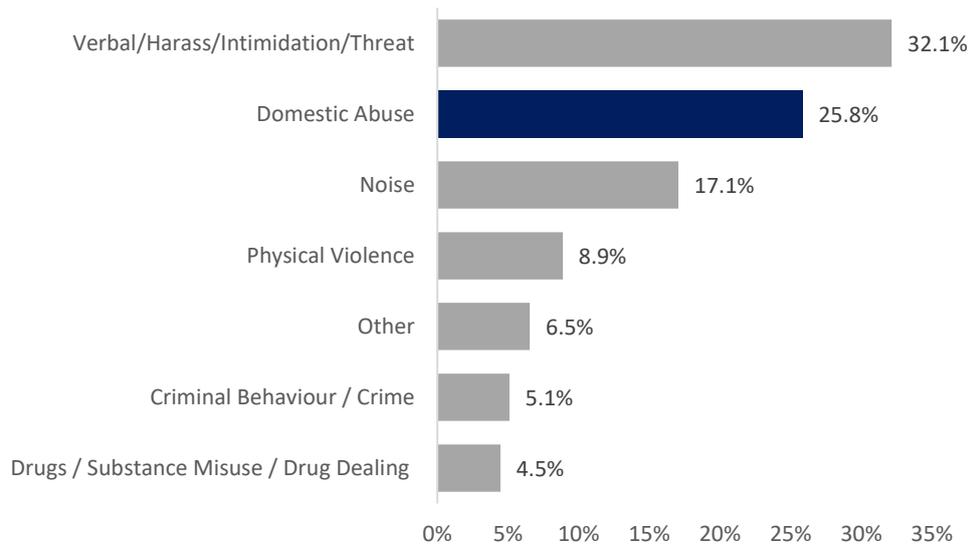
- How prevalent is domestic abuse within recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour?
- Which population groups are more likely to report domestic abuse-related anti-social behaviour?
- How, if at all, do domestic abuse reports vary according to time and place?
- To what extent are demographic characteristics, temporal factors, and geography predictors of a domestic abuse report?

### 4.1 Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports

In the five-year period between February 2019 and February 2024, Southern Housing received 4,645 reports of ASB. Based on the details received, Southern Housing officers categorised each report as one of 16 specific types of ASB.



**Figure 1 – Domestic abuse was the second most common type of ASB report received by SHG**



Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024

Notes:  $n=4,645$

'Other' includes alcohol-related (0.1%), hate-related (3.2%), litter/rubbish/fly-tipping (0.2%), misuse of communal area or loitering (0.6%), not recorded (0.1%), nuisance from vehicles (0.2%), garden nuisance (0.2%), pets and animal nuisance (1.1%), prostitution/sexual acts (0.1%), and vandalism and damage to property (0.9%) ASB reports.

Figure 1 above outlines the relative frequency of ASB report type received by Southern Housing during this period. Domestic abuse constitutes the second most common type of ASB, comprising just over a quarter (25.8%) of all reports received between 2019 and 2024.

## 4.2 Domestic abuse reports: demographics

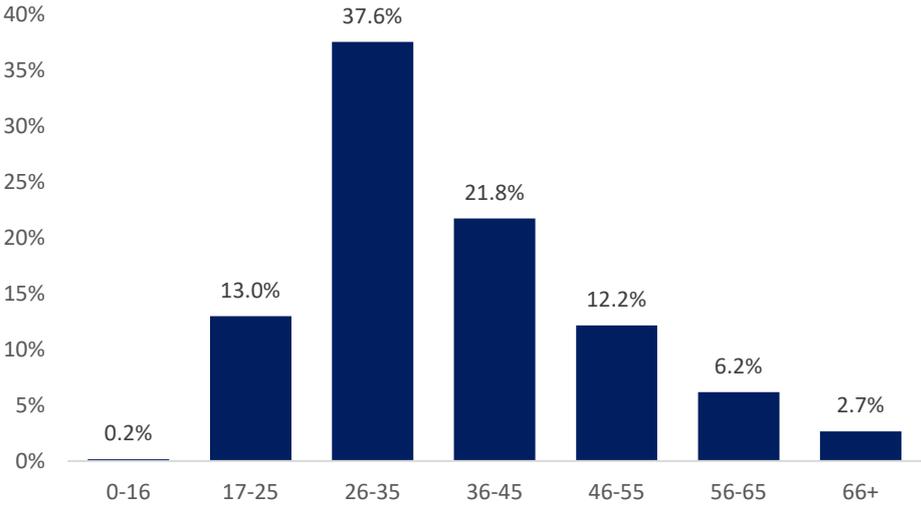
This section outlines analyses of Southern Housing domestic abuse reports by the demographic characteristics age, gender, and ethnicity.

### Age

Figure 2 below shows that a plurality (37.6%) of domestic abuse reports were made by individuals aged between 26-35, followed by those aged 36-45 (21.8%), 17-25 (13.0%) and 46-55 (12.2%). Less than 10% of reports were made by individuals in other age ranges.



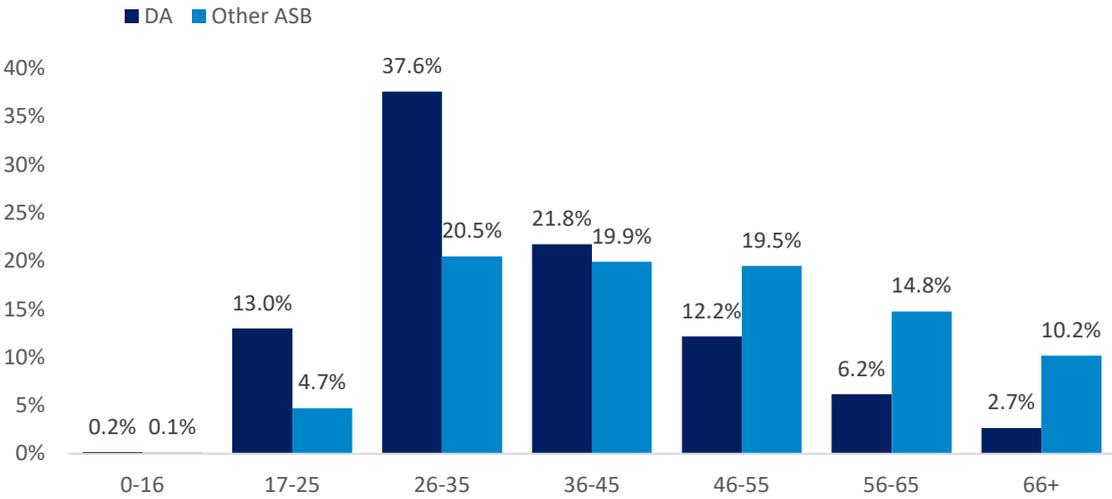
**Figure 2 – A plurality of domestic abuse reports were made by individuals aged 26-35**



Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
Notes: n=1,200

Figure 3 below shows the age distributions for those reporting domestic abuse and those reporting other types of ASB. Comparing the two distributions shows that individuals reporting domestic abuse tend to be younger than those reporting other types of ASB, with the latter reports being comparatively more evenly distributed across age groups. For example, while a plurality (37.6%) of domestic abuse reports were made by individuals aged between 26-35, just over a fifth (20.5%) of other ASB reports came from individuals in this age range. Conversely, while only 12.2% of domestic abuse reports came from those aged 46-55, just under a fifth (19.5%) of other ASB reports came from this age group.

**Figure 3 – Individuals reporting domestic abuse tend to be younger than those reporting other types of ASB**



Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
Notes: n=4,645

Table 1 below shows that there is a significant association between age group and type of ASB report, with certain age groups significantly more or less likely than others to be involved in domestic abuse-related ASB reports. In particular, people aged 26-35 and 17-25 are significantly over-represented in domestic abuse ASB reports, while older age groups (particularly 56+) are significantly under-represented.

**Table 1 – Younger people are significantly over-represented in domestic abuse ASB reports, while older people are significantly under-represented**

Age group	Domestic Abuse	Other ASB	All	% of DA incidents	p-value	Significant? (p < .05)
0-16	2	4	6	0%	0.65	n
17-25	156	163	319	13%	0.00	y
26-35	451	706	1157	38%	0.00	y
36-45	261	687	948	22%	0.18	n
46-55	146	672	818	12%	0.00	y
56-65	74	509	583	6%	0.00	y
66+	32	351	383	3%	0.00	y
<b>Total</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>3445</b>	<b>4645</b>	<b>26%</b>		

Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
 Notes: n=4,645

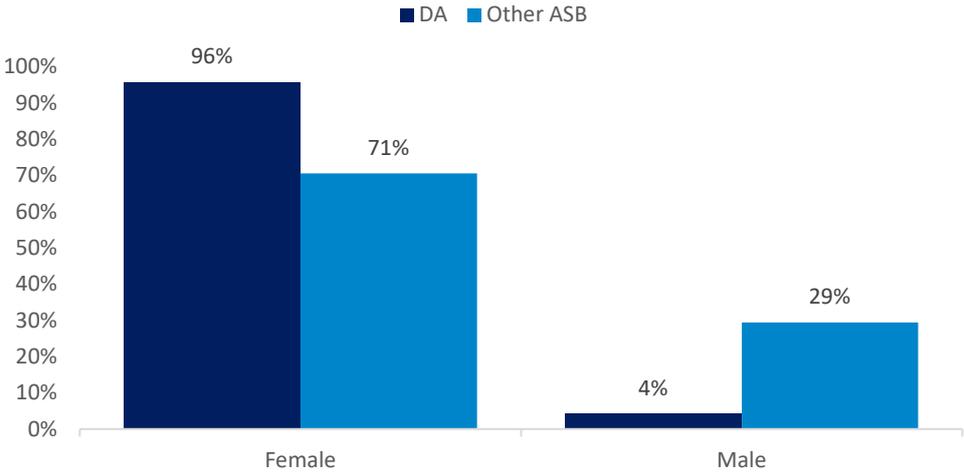
The data shows a clear age-related pattern, with domestic abuse ASB reports being comparatively more common among individuals in young and early adulthood (i.e., aged 17-35).

**Gender**

The overwhelming majority of domestic abuse-related ASB reports (96%) were made by females, with only 4% from males (n=1200). While females account for approximately 77% of all ASB reports, and 71% of non-domestic abuse-related reports, they comprise a disproportionately large share of domestic abuse reports.



**Figure 4 – Females comprise a disproportionately large share of domestic abuse reports**



Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
 Notes: n=4,645

Table 2 below shows that there is a statistically significant association between gender and whether an ASB report relates to domestic abuse. More specifically, females are significantly more likely to be associated with domestic abuse ASB reports than males, relative to other types of ASB.

**Table 2 – Females are significantly more likely to be associated with domestic abuse reports than males, relative to other types of ASB**

Gender	Domestic Abuse	Other ASB	All	% of DA incidents	p-value	Significant? (p < .05)
Female	1149	2432	3581	96%	0.00	y
Male	51	1013	1064	4%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>3445</b>	<b>4645</b>	<b>26%</b>		

Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
 Notes: n=4,645

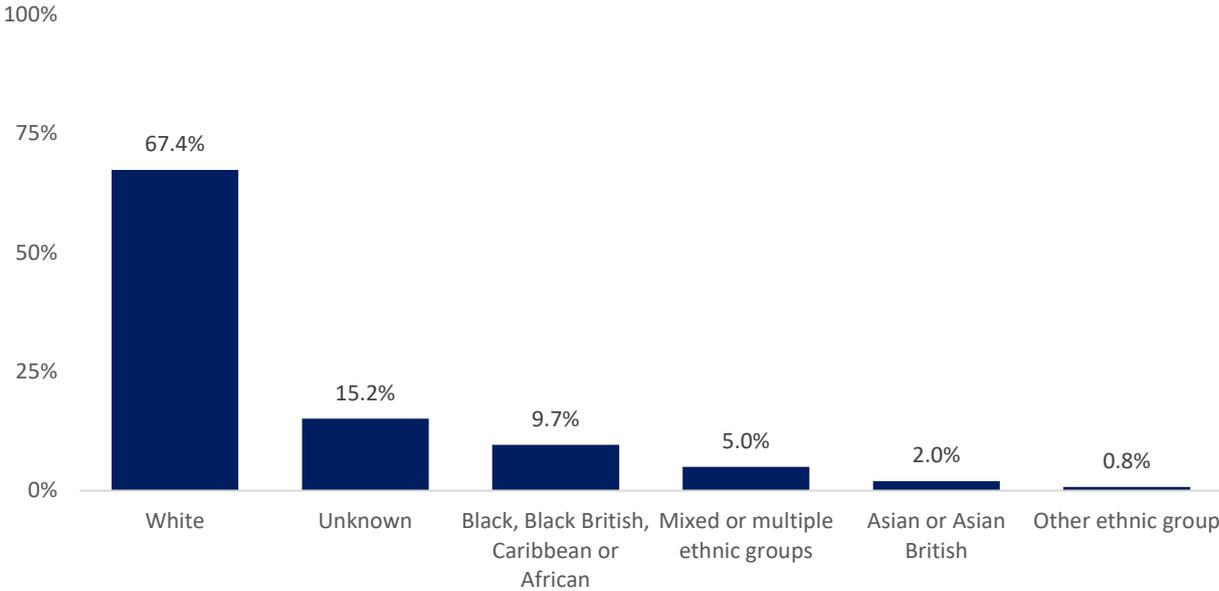
The data shows a clear gendered dimension in ASB reporting, with domestic abuse-related reports substantially more common among females.

**Ethnicity**

Figure 5 below shows that more than two-thirds (67.4%) of domestic abuse reports were made by white individuals, with no other ethnicity respectively comprising more than 10% of domestic abuse reports.



**Figure 5 – More than two-thirds of domestic abuse reports were made by white individuals**

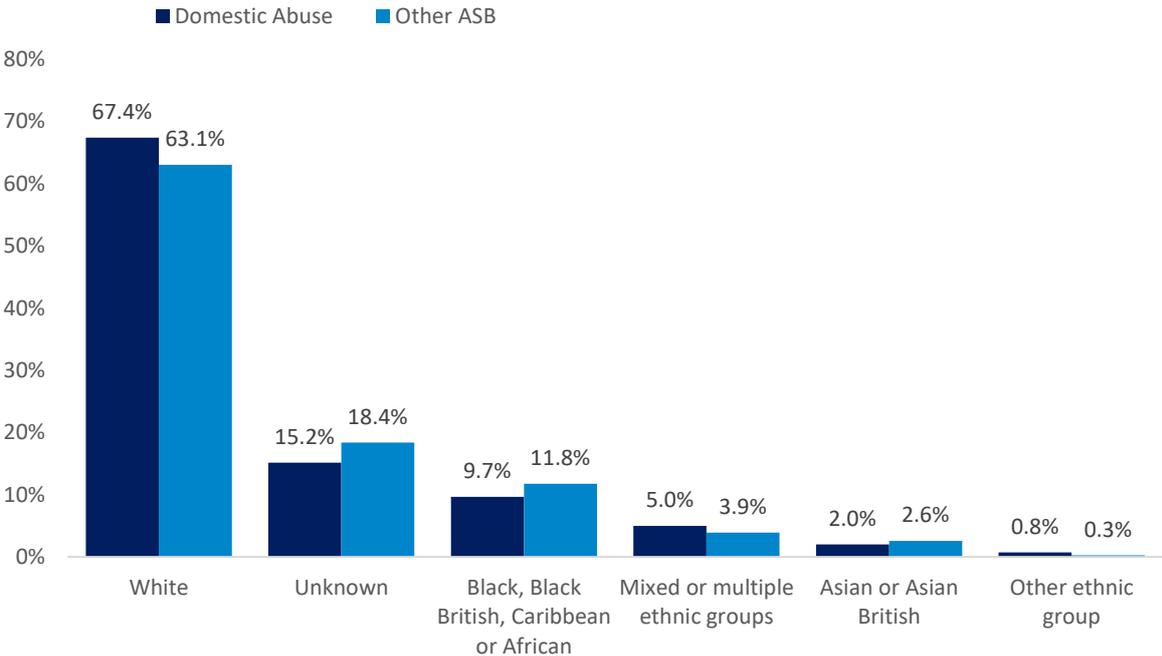


Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
Notes: *n*=1,200

Figure 6 below outlines the ethnicities of those reporting domestic abuse and other types of ASB. Comparing the two distributions shows that 67.4% of domestic abuse ASB reports were made by white people, compared to 63.1% of other ASB reports. This suggests a slightly higher representation of white individuals in domestic abuse-related ASB compared to other ASB types. Conversely, Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African individuals are slightly less represented in domestic abuse ASB reports (9.7%) compared to other ASB reports (11.8%).



**Figure 6 – White people are slightly over-represented in domestic abuse-related reports compared to other ASB types, while Black people are slightly under-represented**



Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
 Notes: n=4,645

Table 3 below shows that there is a significant association between ethnicity and type of ASB report, with certain ethnicities being significantly more or less likely than others to be involved in domestic abuse ASB reports. In particular, white people are significantly over-represented in domestic abuse ASB reports, while Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African people are significantly under-represented.

**Table 3 – White people are significantly over-represented in domestic abuse ASB reports, while Black people are significantly under-represented**

Ethnic group	Domestic Abuse	Other ASB	All	% of DA incidents	p-value	Significant t? (p < .05)
Asian or Asian British	24	89	113	2.0%	0.28	n
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	116	406	522	10%	0.05	y
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	60	135	195	5%	0.11	n
White	809	2173	2982	67%	0.01	y
Other ethnic group	9	9	18	0.8%	0.03	y
Unknown	182	633	815	15%	0.01	y
<b>Total</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>3445</b>	<b>4645</b>	<b>26%</b>		

Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
 Notes: n=4,645

The data shows a clear ethnicity-related pattern, with domestic abuse ASB reports being comparatively more common among white individuals.

Overall, analysis of the demographic data linked to Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports indicates that those reporting domestic abuse are more likely to be in young and early adulthood, female, and white.

### 4.3 Domestic abuse reports: temporal dimensions

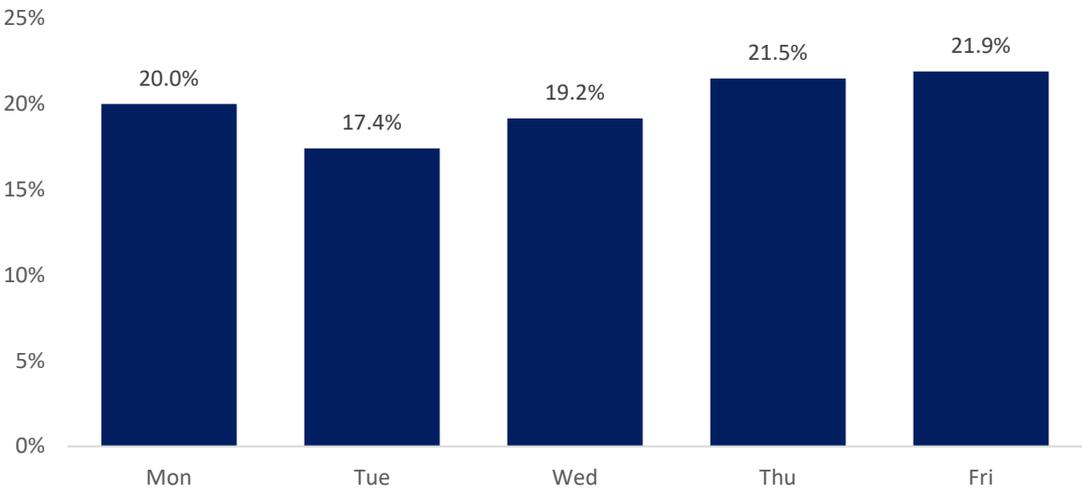
In this section, we outline analyses of Southern Housing domestic abuse reports by their temporal dimensions: specifically, time of day, day of the week, season, and concurrence with major sporting events.<sup>85</sup>

#### Time of day and day of the week

The majority of domestic abuse reports (55%) were logged in the afternoon, with 44% being logged in the morning (n=1200). The distribution of other ASB reports is similar, with 57% being logged in the afternoon and 43% in the mornings. These differences are neither substantial nor statistically significant – the overall time-of-day reporting patterns are broadly similar for both types of ASB, with afternoons being the most common reporting period for both.

Analysis of domestic abuse reporting data by day of the week reveals that there is a relatively even distribution of reports across the working week, from a low of 17.4% of domestic abuse reports being logged on a Tuesday to 21.9% being logged on a Friday.

**Figure 7 – The distribution of domestic abuse reports is relatively even throughout the working week**

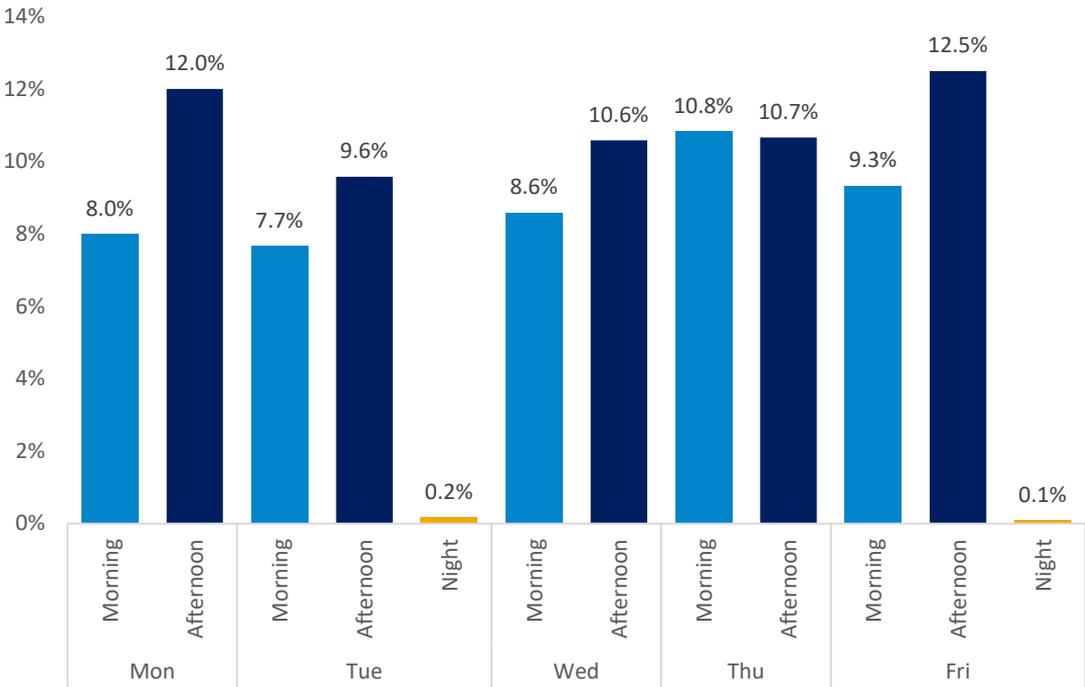


Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
Notes: n=1,200

<sup>85</sup> We used the *Date Logged* variable in the data provided as a temporal proxy for the occurrence of incidents. We recognise that there may be a lag between the occurrence of an incident and it being reported – however, the likely impact of this on our analyses reduces as the temporal scale increases (i.e., time of day → day of week → season)



**Figure 8 – The distribution of domestic abuse reports is relatively even throughout the working week, including by time of day**



Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
Notes:  $n=1,200$

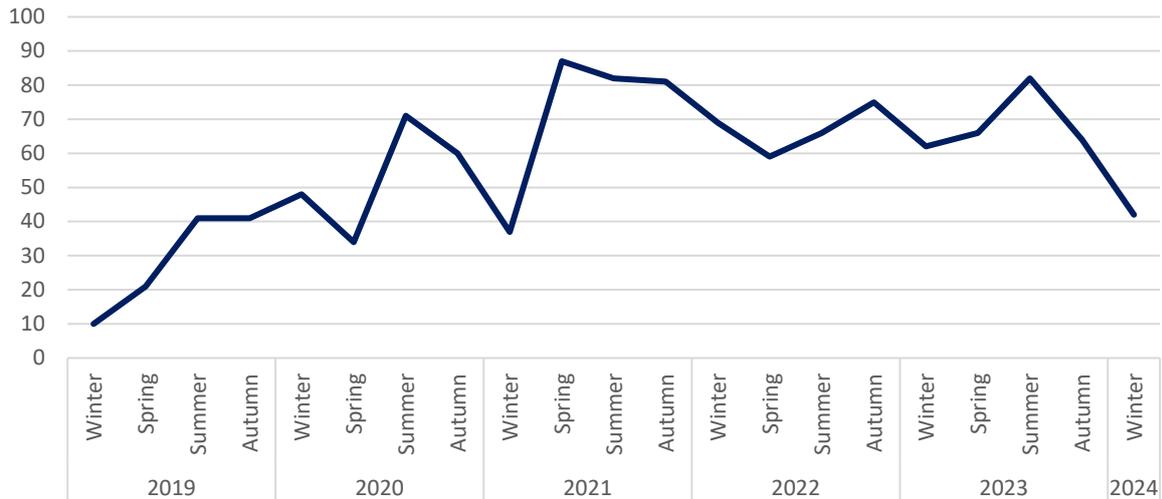
Moreover, the proportion of domestic abuse reports being logged on any given day of the working week is not substantially different from the corresponding proportion for other ASB reports. Furthermore, these differences are not statistically significant.

### Season

To identify potential seasonal variation in domestic abuse reports, we analysed season-level report counts between 2019-2024. Figure 9 below shows a general upwards trend in the number of domestic abuse reports in this period. Reports typically increase from winter to spring, and then again from spring to summer, before falling between summer and autumn and then again from autumn to winter.



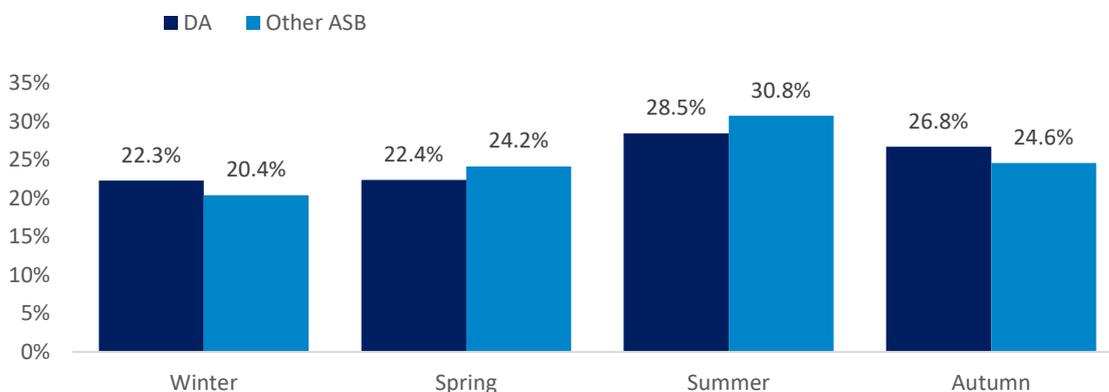
**Figure 9 – Season variation in domestic abuse reports, 2019-2024**



Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
Notes: n=1,200

Figure 10 below shows that while domestic abuse reports are generally slightly higher in summer and autumn, the proportion of domestic abuse reports being logged during any given season is not substantially different from the corresponding proportion for other ASB reports. Moreover, these differences are not statistically significant.

**Figure 10 – Seasonal reporting patterns are broadly similar for domestic abuse and other types of ASB**



Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
Notes: n=4,645

## Concurrence with major sporting events

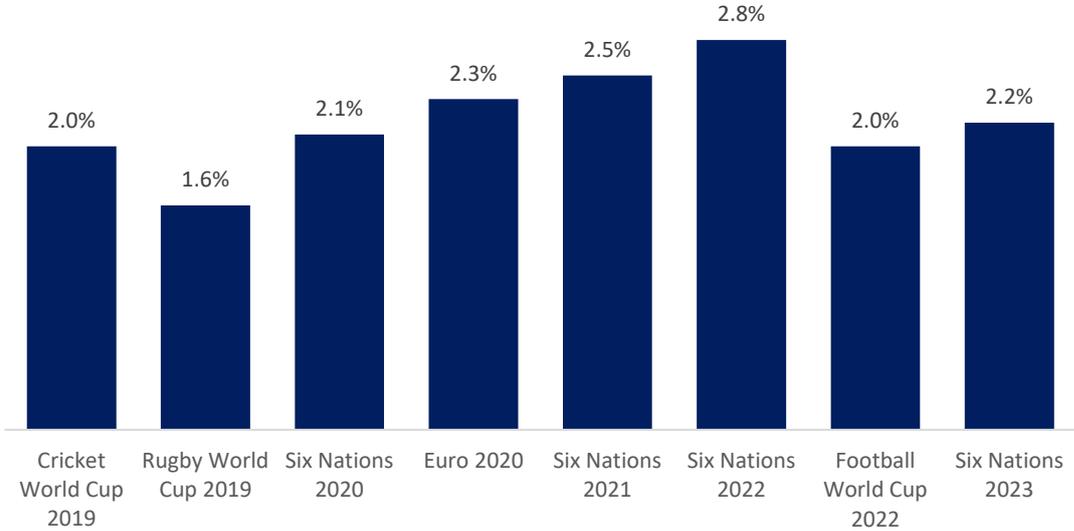
Domestic abuse report dates were also matched with those of major sporting events<sup>86</sup> occurring in the period February 2019–February 2024, including the 2022 FIFA World Cup, UEFA Euro 2020, the 2019

<sup>86</sup> In line with existing evidence regarding the relationship between major sporting events and instances of domestic abuse, we focus here on the male iterations of these sports.



Rugby World Cup, the Six Nations Championship (annual, 2019-2023), and the 2019 Cricket World Cup.

**Figure 11 – The proportion of domestic abuse reports during major sporting events was relatively consistent between 2019 and 2024**



Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
 Notes: *n*=1,200

While the total number of days during which these events were delivered comprises approximately 18% of the period between February 2019–February 2024, the reports received during these events comprise 15.2% of all domestic abuse reports in this period. Moreover, the total number of other ASB reports received during these major sporting events comprises 16% of those received between 2019-2024. As such, there is no evidence to indicate a substantial, still less statistically significant, spike in domestic abuse reports during the major sporting events outlined above.

Overall, the Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports data provides no evidence to suggest that domestic abuse reports are significantly more or less likely to occur at particular times of the day, on particular days of the week, during particular seasons, or during major sporting events.

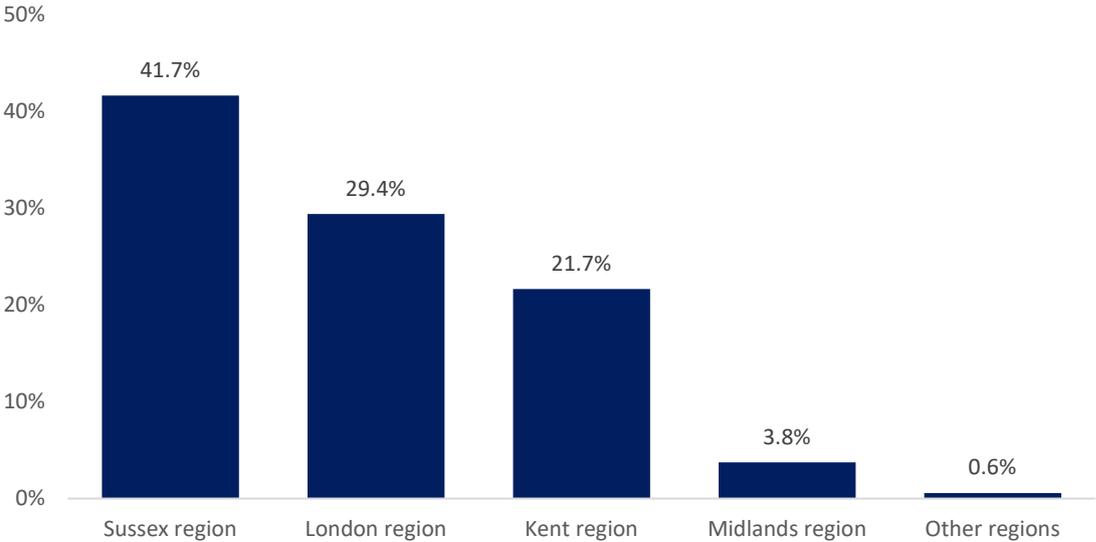
## 4.4 Domestic abuse reports: geography

In this section, we outline analyses of Southern Housing domestic abuse reports by geography, at both regional and local authority levels.

### Region

Figure 12 below shows the regional distribution of domestic abuse cases reported to Southern Housing during the period February 2019–February 2024.

**Figure 12 – A plurality of domestic abuse reports were made in the Sussex region**



Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
Notes: *n*=1,200

A plurality of domestic abuse reports (41.7%) were made in the Sussex region, followed by just under a third in London (29.4%) and just over a fifth in Kent (21.7%). However, this distribution does not take into account the regional variation in Southern Housing stock; for example, the comparatively greater proportion of reports in Sussex may be a function of Southern Housing having more stock in this region.

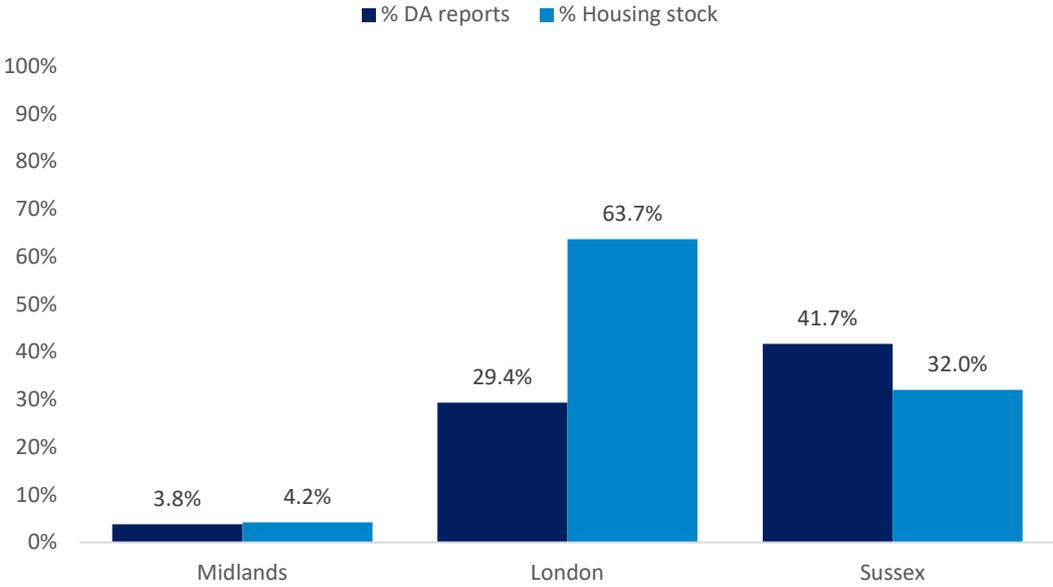
To mitigate this, Figure 13 below compares the distribution of domestic abuse reports and housing stock for three regions<sup>87</sup>.

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<sup>87</sup> Due to inconsistencies in Southern Housing’s internal data collection processes – specifically, the use of different geographical categories for logging ASB reports and tracking housing stock numbers – it was only possible to do this for the three regions here.



**Figure 13 – Sussex is over-represented with domestic abuse ASB reports, relative to its proportion of Southern Housing stock, while London is under-represented**



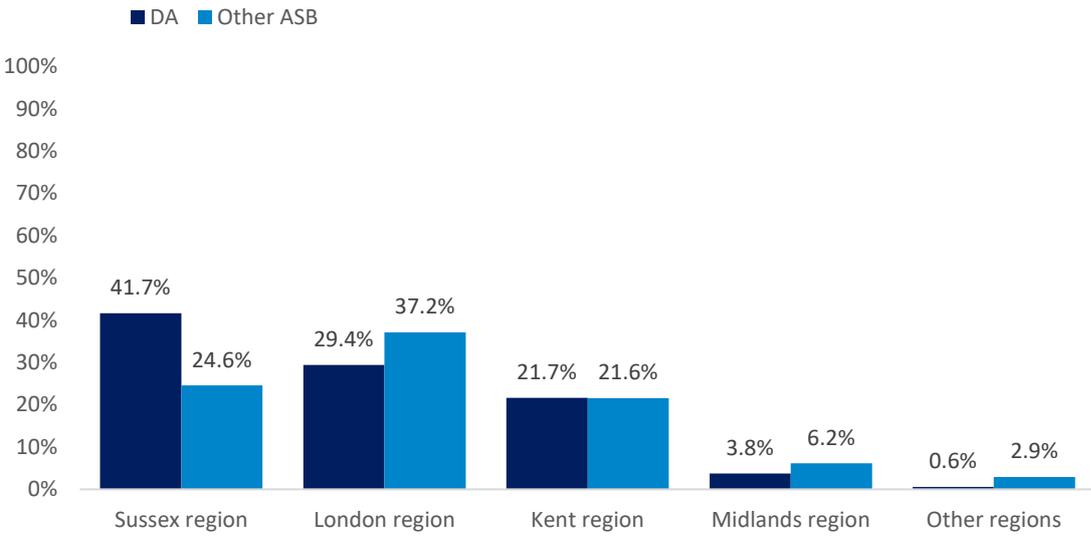
Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024 and 2025 regional housing stock

While Sussex accounts for just under a third (32.0%) of Southern Housing’s analysed housing stock, 41.7% of domestic abuse reports were recorded in this region between 2019-2024. Conversely, while London accounts for almost two thirds (63.7%) of Southern Housing’s analysed housing stock, just under a third (29.4%) of domestic abuse reports were logged in this region.

Figure 14 below shows the geographical distributions for domestic abuse and other types of ASB reports. While a plurality (41.7%) of domestic abuse reports were made in Sussex, just under a quarter (24.6%) of other ASB reports were logged in this region. Conversely, while only 29.4% of domestic abuse reports were made in London, a plurality (37.2%) of other ASB reports were logged in this region. Sussex is therefore over-represented with domestic abuse reports relative to other ASB reports, while London is under-represented.



**Figure 14 – Sussex is over-represented with domestic abuse reports relative to other ASB reports, while London is under-represented**



Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
 Notes: n=4,645

Table 4 below shows that there is a significant association between geography and type of ASB report, with certain geographies being significantly more or less likely to have domestic abuse-related ASB reports. In particular, Sussex is significantly over-represented in domestic abuse ASB reports, while London and the Midlands are significantly under-represented.

**Table 4 – Sussex is significantly over-represented in domestic abuse ASB reports, while London and the Midlands are significantly under-represented**

Region	Domestic Abuse	Other ASB	All	% of DA incidents	p-value	Significant? (p < .05)
Kent region	260	744	1004	22%	0.97	n
London Region	353	1280	1633	29%	0.00	y
Midlands Region	45	213	258	4%	0.00	y
Sussex Region	500	847	1347	42%	0.00	y
Other	42	361	403	3.5%	0.00	y
<b>Total</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>3445</b>	<b>4645</b>	<b>26%</b>		

Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
 Notes: n=4,645

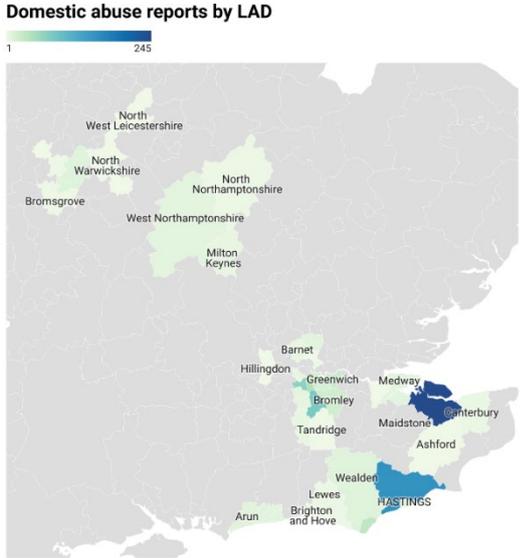
Together, these data show a clear geographical dimension to ASB reporting that cannot be entirely explained by regional variation in housing stock, with domestic abuse reports substantially more common in Sussex.



# Local authority

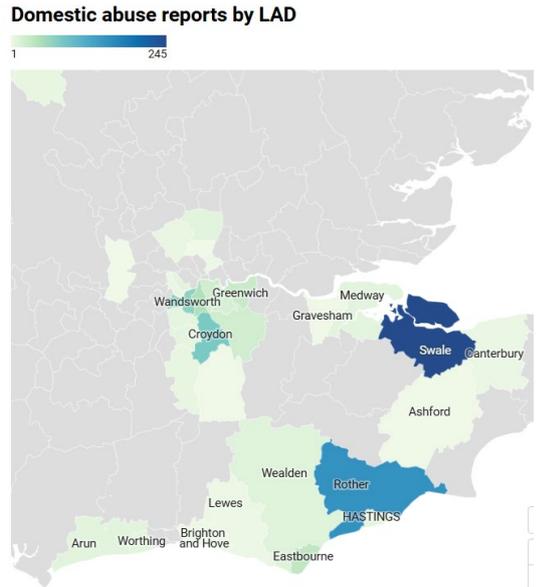
Using postcode data provided by Southern Housing, domestic abuse reports were mapped at the more granular local authority level. The figures below show that South East England and London have the highest concentrations of domestic abuse reports, with Swale (Kent), Rother (East Sussex), and Bromley and Wandsworth (London) the local authorities with the highest report counts.

**Figure 15 – South East England and London have the highest concentrations of domestic abuse reports**



Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
Notes:  $n=1,200$

**Figure 16 – South East England and London have the highest concentrations of domestic abuse reports (zoomed-in view)**



Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024  
Notes:  $n=1,200$



## 4.5 Predicting domestic abuse reports

A logistic regression analysis was used to better understand the characteristics associated with domestic abuse ASB reports. This allowed an examination of which factors are statistically associated with an increased or decreased likelihood of a report being related to domestic abuse, compared to other types of anti-social behaviour.

Where earlier analyses helped identify broad patterns across demographics, time and geography, logistic regression provides a more robust picture by controlling for multiple variables at once. In other words, it allows us to isolate the unique effect of each variable – such as age or gender – on the odds of an ASB report being domestic abuse-related.

This section summarises the key findings from the regression (the full model is included as [Appendix One](#)), highlighting which factors are significant predictors and how they influence the likelihood of a domestic abuse ASB report. These insights can help build a clearer profile of reporting patterns and inform more targeted support responses.

### Demographics

The odds of a domestic abuse ASB report are **9.4x higher for females** than for males, holding all other factors constant.

People aged 17-25 are **2.1x more likely**<sup>88</sup>, and those aged 26-35 **1.5x more likely**, to be associated with domestic abuse ASB reports than those aged 36-45. Conversely, people aged 46-55 are approximately **44% less likely** to be associated with domestic abuse reports than those aged 36-45.

The model includes an interaction term between gender and age, which helps us understand how the relationship between gender and domestic abuse reporting changes for older adults. While being female is strongly associated with increased odds of a domestic abuse ASB report overall, this effect is **significantly weaker among people aged 56 and over**. The odds of a domestic abuse report are approximately **56% lower for women aged 56+** than we would expect based on the individual effects of being female and being in this age group alone. This suggests that older women are less likely to be associated with domestic abuse reports compared to younger women, even after accounting for age and gender separately. In other words, the strong association between female and domestic abuse reports **does not apply in the same way for older women**.

People with mixed or multiple ethnic backgrounds are **1.5x more likely** than white individuals to be associated with domestic abuse reports. Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African people are 1.3x more likely, and those with Asian or Asian British ethnicity 1.5x more likely, to be associated with domestic abuse reports than white individuals, all else being equal – but these two findings are not statistically significant.

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<sup>88</sup> 'More/less likely' refers to higher/lower odds as estimated by the logistic regression model, not to direct differences in probability.



## Geography

The regression model shows that the likelihood of a domestic abuse report **varies significantly by region**, compared to the reference area (London). People in **Sussex** are **2.5x more likely** to be associated with a domestic abuse report than those in London. People in **Kent** are also **more likely** to be associated with a domestic abuse report than those in London, though to a lesser extent – with the odds of a domestic abuse report being **1.5x higher**.

## Predicted probabilities

To support interpretation of the regression findings, Table 5 below presents predicted probabilities of an ASB report being related to domestic abuse for selected combinations of characteristics.<sup>89</sup>

**Table 5 – Predicted probabilities of an ASB report being domestic abuse-related**

Profile	Probability (%)
Female, 17-25, mixed or multiple ethnicity, Sussex	70.9%
Female, 17-25, white, Sussex	62.0%
Female, 36-45, white, Sussex	43.8%
Female, 26-35, Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African, London	36.8%
Female, 26-35, white, London	31.6%
Female, 46-55, mixed or multiple ethnicity, Kent	27.9%
Female, 56+, Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African, London	11.4%
Male, 36-45, white, London (reference group)	3.2%

## Key considerations when interpreting the findings

Overall, the model shows that domestic abuse ASB reports are significantly more likely to be associated with people that are female, in young-to-early adulthood (i.e., aged 17-35), with mixed or multiple ethnicity, and living in Sussex or Kent. They are comparatively less likely among men, older adults (especially those aged 46-55), and women aged 56 and over.

However, it is important when interpreting the above findings to note that the data are based on administrative reports, not direct accounts of domestic abuse experiences. As such, the analysis likely

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<sup>89</sup> While odds can sometimes be difficult to interpret intuitively, converting these into predicted probabilities provides a clear sense of the relative likelihood of domestic abuse reports across different demographic and geographic profiles.

reflects variations in reporting behaviours, service engagement and/or recording practices, as well as actual incidence of abuse.

Groups with higher odds of being associated with domestic abuse reports may be more likely to seek help, be visible to authorities and/or have their cases classified in this way. For example, there is evidence to suggest that women are more likely to report domestic abuse than men, not only because they experience domestic abuse at higher rates, but because of gendered barriers to disclosure.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, available evidence suggests that older people are significantly less likely to report domestic abuse than younger adults.<sup>91</sup> For gender and age, it is therefore likely that part of the observed effects reflect differences in reporting behaviours rather than underlying prevalence alone. Consultation with Southern Housing stakeholders also identified that Sussex is an area where Southern Housing has strong engagement with MARAC arrangements, including good working relationships with local authorities and involvement in strategic groups. It is therefore likely that part of the observed effect for Sussex can be attributed to this.

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<sup>90</sup> ManKind Initiative, (2021). *Male victims of domestic abuse and partner abuse: 55 key facts*. [Link](#).

<sup>91</sup> Age UK, (2020). *No Age Limit: the blind spot of older victims and survivors in the Domestic Abuse Bill*. [Link](#).



# 5. Fresh Visions domestic abuse intervention: rapid evaluation findings

## 5.1 Overview

Fresh Visions' school- and community-based domestic abuse prevention provision and support has engaged 164 people to date, including 144 young people and 20 adults. The school-based intervention comprised four 6-week healthy relationships programmes that were delivered for 84 young people. Regarding community-based provision, 70 individuals have attended drop-in sessions across two community hubs, with 10 families having received support from a key worker. Fresh Visions' internal feedback data suggests that 100% of those in receipt of provision report increased confidence in recognising unhealthy relationships *and* in knowing where to get support.

Rocket Science's work included a rapid evaluation of both sets of support, exploring both delivery and impact. The findings outlined in this section are based on analysis of data collected through fieldwork conducted in April 2025, which comprised focus groups and interviews with – and observations of – school-aged children, families and project delivery staff in Rye and Hastings. In total, consultation included:

- 7 secondary-aged children (Rye College)
- 10 primary-aged children (St. Paul's CE Academy)
- 2 Fresh Visions delivery staff members
- 2 families who were supported

## 5.2 Impact findings

### School-based provision

Children and young people reported and demonstrated an **improved understanding of healthy relationships**. Both sets of students described how, through their Fresh Visions 'Healthy Relationships' course, they learned how to better define boundaries; identify, navigate, and resolve conflict; understand and respect consent; and remain safe while using social media. Students were able to clearly define healthy and unhealthy relationships and to identify the markers that distinguish between these types, including the role of physical, emotional, and verbal conflict in unhealthy relationships.

Young people reported feeling **more confident in recognising unsafe dynamics and giving relationship advice and guidance to their peers** following the course. They also demonstrated **practical application of strategies learned** during the course, with one pupil providing an example of having used the conflict desistance techniques provided in response to their brother popping a water balloon on them, using verbal communication to defuse the situation when they would previously have resorted to violence. Students consistently reported that the course should be more

widely delivered in their respective schools and expressed interest in further learning around healthy relationships.

Notwithstanding these benefits, delivery partners raised concerns about the appropriateness of housing providers (albeit through a charitable arm) taking on a role in educational delivery. They noted that healthy relationships education is already embedded in the national curriculum and argued that the education sector is best-placed to lead on this. Instead, they felt that housing providers could make a more meaningful and sustainable contribution by focusing on housing-related intervention and support for families and households that report and/or show signs of domestic abuse – for example, through community provision.

### Community provision

One mother outlined how both herself and her five children live with domestic abuse-related trauma, manifesting as PTSD, eating disorders, and emotional regulation difficulties. She described how her family had been referred to and provided with financial support to **access various alternative therapies** (including cooking, woodland, and horse therapy) through Fresh Visions. They drew positive comparisons between these therapies and previously-accessed local authority provision, reporting that both the relatively shorter waiting times and comparatively greater quality of psychological support have facilitated **improvements in their children’s mental wellbeing**.

*“If it weren’t for Bev and Sarah, my son would be on a volunteer based therapy again which was rubbish”*

- Family member

Another family described how, before attending a Fresh Visions youth club, one of their children – who has multiple complex health conditions – had longstanding challenges with navigating social situations, having few friends and experiencing bullying via social media. Their child’s physical and mental health further deteriorated when youth services and other social activities were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the pandemic, they began attending the youth club. The family reported that their attendance at a place they *“feel wanted”* has resulted in **improved mental health and wellbeing, confidence, and social networks** for their child.

They also reported being signposted by Fresh Visions to other valuable sources of support. In addition to attending the youth club, the aforementioned young person was signposted and supported to access a cooking course as an alternative therapy. Their family described **significant positive shifts in their behaviour** at home since starting the course, including trying new foods and improved communication with siblings. Without Fresh Vision interventions, their family believes that *“He wouldn’t be where he is at; he would have no purpose”*.

However, the impact of community provision would have benefited from improved communication between strategic and delivery partners. The delivery team would like to have been more involved in the project design. Their input led to changes being made to project outcomes to better reflect the needs of the beneficiaries.

The original pilot planned to include drop-in support sessions for families. The delivery team discontinued this strand of the work due to lack of attendance and referrals. Greater understanding and engagement from Southern Housing teams would benefit this area of work.



## 5.3 Process findings

### School-based provision

- Both primary and secondary school pupils responded positively to the **small group format** and **visual, activity-based** content (e.g., worksheets, drawing, games)
- Pupils particularly valued the **approachability and openness** of delivery staff in facilitating learning
- There were **scheduling clashes with the regular curriculum timetable**, particularly around creative subjects like PE or drama, which discouraged attendance
- Pupils were **not always informed about why they were selected** to take part, causing some pupils to feel apprehensive about their own relationships and behaviours.

### Community provision

- **Trusting relationships** between families and delivery staff played a key role in facilitating positive outcomes for families: *“It’s nice knowing our kids have another trusted adult; everyone needs a Bev and Sarah”*
- Drop-in support sessions for families saw low referrals and were eventually discontinued. Improved co-ordination between Southern Housing internal teams and clear referral pathways could lead to increased referrals in the future.

## 5.4 Reflections

The school-based and community provision had meaningful impacts on children’s understandings of healthy relationships and families’ wellbeing respectively, both underpinned by strong relationships between beneficiaries and delivery staff. However, strategic coordination must be strengthened for future delivery to reach its full potential.

### What worked well

- A **relational, trauma-aware, or trauma-informed approach** was essential to engagement and impact for school-based and community provision, respectively.
- **Embedding learning in schools** facilitated widespread access, strong continuity, and leverage of peer influence in encouraging engagement and sharing of learnings
- Community provision served as **inclusive spaces for identity-affirming support**, particularly for marginalised children
- The **relational and consistent approach** to delivery compared favourably to the often impersonal and fragmented nature of statutory support.

### Challenges



- **Lack of strategic coordination** limited the intended scope of delivery and the potential impact(s) for beneficiaries
- **Ambiguity around project aims** and **insufficient communication** between partners weakened early-phase planning.



## 6. Recommendations

Given the centrality of housing to people's everyday lives, and the close and multi-faceted relationship between domestic abuse and housing insecurity, there exist many entry points for housing providers to intervene in preventing domestic abuse – both through upstream prevention and in response to identified occurrences, and both individually and through working with partners. Housing providers with a charitable arm (such as Southern Housing) have even greater scope for involvement in domestic abuse prevention and reduction. In this section, we triangulate insights from the three strands of research in outlining a suite of evidence-based, actionable recommendations and suggested next steps to establish Southern Housing as a proactive stakeholder in trauma-informed, housing-led domestic abuse prevention.



Theme	Evidence	Recommendation
Developing best practice	The evidence shows that DAHA-accredited organisations are better equipped to identify and manage risk, support survivors, and coordinate effectively with partners.	Southern Housing should pursue formal DAHA accreditation – starting with the Bronze Award and progressing to Silver and Gold over time.
Defining your role	Domestic abuse is a leading cause of homelessness, particularly among women, and housing can be used as a tool for coercive control. Therefore, housing providers can play an important role in domestic abuse prevention. Setting out and regularly updating a clear ambition in relation to prevention, alongside corresponding policies, roles and responsibilities, is essential as the foundation for effective practice.	Linked to DAHA accreditation standards, Southern Housing should prioritise an ambitious prevention strategy and communicate this clearly, internally, and externally. Within the strategy, clarify which members of the Southern Housing team have specific accountabilities and provide training for all employees to support understanding of policies and procedures. This includes trauma-informed training for staff delivering DA support and in roles which support families affected by DA.
Strengthening partnerships and referral/signposting routes	Effective prevention requires close partnership working with other local agencies. This includes awareness of local support services and clear referral pathways and signposting routes. Service provision in varying boroughs differs meaning that bespoke approaches to developing partnerships are needed.	Given the geographical spread of Southern Housing’s operations, invest resources in nurturing local partnerships and generating evidence about what works. Information about effective partnership working and its impact can then be shared across Southern Housing’s locations (e.g., via case studies).
Training, knowledge, and awareness-raising	Training staff and raising knowledge and awareness of domestic abuse in the community through primary prevention and early intervention can help address underlying causes and domestic abuse risk factors at the societal, community and individual levels.	Southern Housing should connect into existing awareness-raising and training campaigns as a partner and develop new approaches based on areas of risk and evidence-based practice.



<p>Generating evidence and using data</p>	<p>Housing providers often have access to a wide range of data relating to domestic abuse. It is essential to design clear systems and processes for gathering, analysing and learning from this data. Gathering data for evaluation is especially important when implementing new or innovative prevention approaches to enable learning and adaptation.</p>	<p>Southern Housing should build on its current domestic abuse data collection system by developing structured processes to routinely analyse and reflect on existing data to inform operational delivery and strategic decision-making.</p> <p>In parallel, for new or innovative approaches to prevention, Southern Housing should embed learning cycles that include clear mechanisms for capturing, reviewing and acting on emerging insights. This will support continuous improvement by ensuring that promising practices are identified, tested, and refined in real time.</p> <p>Either or both of these could be actioned by Southern Housing internally or with the support of an external evaluation and learning partner.</p>
<p>Engaging at-risk population groups</p>	<p>Analysis of Southern Housing data shows that domestic abuse ASB reports are significantly more likely to be associated with people that are female, in young-to-early adulthood (i.e., aged 17-35), with mixed or multiple ethnicity, and living in Sussex or Kent. They are comparatively less likely among men, older adults (especially those aged 46-55), and women aged 56 and over.</p> <p>However, since the data are based on administrative reports, not direct accounts of domestic abuse experiences, the analysis likely reflects variations in reporting behaviours, service engagement and/or recording practices, as well as actual incidence of abuse. These findings should therefore inform, rather than narrow, the scope of preventative action.</p>	<p>Southern Housing should target high-risk groups without excluding others. This would involve tailored outreach for individuals identified as more likely to report domestic abuse, while also ensuring that potentially under-represented groups (i.e., men, older adults) are not overlooked in prevention planning.</p> <p>Interventions should be designed on the understanding that reporting likelihood is different from risk. Communication strategies, campaigns, and services must intentionally engage individuals who may be under-/not reporting abuse.</p> <p>Given the apparent effectiveness of strong MARAC engagement in Sussex, Southern Housing should proactively</p>



		engage in place-based prevention strategies in other areas where they have housing stock (e.g., London, Kent).
Engaging at-risk population groups	Southern Housing records domestic abuse reports as one of 16 types of anti-social behaviour. Framing domestic abuse through an ASB lens risks under-reporting by survivors and/or misunderstanding and mismanaging survivors' needs by housing officers.	Southern Housing should explicitly distinguish domestic abuse from anti-social behaviour in internal reporting. This would involve a separate, survivor-centred triage process for domestic abuse.
Future pilot interventions	Delivery partners raised concerns about the appropriateness of housing providers' involvement in education, reflecting that housing providers could make a more meaningful and sustainable contribution by focusing on housing-related early intervention and support for families and households that report and/or show signs of domestic abuse.	Future prevention efforts should align with the core mandate of housing providers. Southern Housing should prioritise strengthening their capacity to identify and respond to domestic abuse within the communities they serve – through e.g., staff training, safeguarding partnerships, and support pathways. Cross-sector collaboration should be maintained to ensure complementary, rather than duplicative, efforts.
Future pilot interventions	Families in receipt of Fresh Visions community provision reported significant benefits of informal, trusted environments and alternative therapies, both of which supported recovery in ways statutory services could not.	Fresh Visions should prioritise investing in holistic, community-based family support. This could involve establishing bases (e.g., family hubs) where children and families can access support and be signposted to additional provision, including therapeutic interventions.
Future pilot interventions	The evidence shows that survivor-centred design improves engagement and outcomes.	Fresh Visions should champion survivor voice and lived experience. This could include creating opportunities for survivors to shape future interventions and/or supporting existing resident-led initiatives.

Future pilot interventions

Lack of coordination and communication between strategic and delivery partners – particularly around early-phase planning and establishing referral pathways – limited the intended scope of delivery and the potential impact(s) for beneficiaries.



Southern Housing should strengthen strategic coordination with delivery partners. This would involve formalising partnership agreements with clear roles, responsibilities, accountability and referral mechanisms between Southern Housing and delivery partners.



## Next steps

As a housing provider with a charitable arm, Southern Housing is well-positioned to lead the development of a housing-informed domestic abuse prevention model. To progress this work, Southern Housing should next:

- **Convene a stakeholder workshop** with Southern Housing staff, local stakeholders, Fresh Visions delivery partners and survivors to share these findings and co-prioritise actions
- **Secure and allocate funding** to scale holistic, community-based family support (including therapeutic intervention offers) through Fresh Visions, and pursue DAHA accreditation internally.

Together, actioning the above recommendations and suggested next steps would establish Southern Housing as a proactive stakeholder in trauma-informed, housing-led domestic abuse prevention.

# Appendix One: Full logistic regression model output



Logistic regression model predicting likelihood of domestic abuse anti-social behaviour reports

Predictor	Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	Odds ratio ( $e^{\beta}$ )	Std. error	p-value
Constant	-3.42	0.033	0.21	<0.001
<b>Age group (ref: 36-45)</b>				
0-16	1.37	3.935	0.96	0.1883
17-25	0.74	2.096	0.15	<0.001
26-35	0.41	1.507	0.10	<0.001
46-55	-0.58	0.560	0.12	<0.001
56+	-0.29	0.748	0.35	0.4017
Other	0.21	1.234	0.17	0.2263
<b>Gender (ref: Male)</b>				
Female	2.24	9.393	0.18	<0.001
<b>Interaction: Female x Age 56+</b>				
Female x Age 56+	-0.81	0.445	0.37	0.0384
<b>Ethnicity (ref: white)</b>				
Asian or Asian British	0.38	1.462	0.26	0.1466



Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African	0.23	1.259	0.14	0.1043
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	0.40	1.492	0.18	<b>0.0284</b>
Other ethnic group	1.03	2.801	0.58	0.0847
Unknown	0.48	1.616	0.12	<b>&lt;0.001</b>

### Region (ref: London)

Sussex region	0.93	2.535	0.10	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Kent region	0.41	1.507	0.12	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Midlands region	-0.02	0.980	0.19	0.9364

Source: Southern Housing anti-social behaviour reports, 2019-2024

Notes: n=4,242.

Dependent variable: Type of anti-social behaviour report (1 = domestic abuse; 0 = other type of ASB).

Reference categories are Male (gender), Age 36-45 (age group), white (ethnicity), and London (region).

## Model performance

The above logistic regression model provides a good fit to the data. The likelihood ratio test was statistically significant ( $\chi^2(16) = 729.78, p < 0.001$ ), indicating that the model with predictors fits significantly better than a null model with no predictors.

The Hosmer-Lemeshow test ( $\chi^2(8) = 16.74, p = 0.033$ ) suggests some deviation between observed and expected probabilities across deciles of risk. However, given the large sample size (n=4242), this result likely reflects minor discrepancies rather than substantive misfit. For instance, we observed some over-prediction in the 4<sup>th</sup> decile and under-prediction in the 7<sup>th</sup> decile, but no clear pattern of systemic miscalibration.

The discriminatory ability of the model was assessed using the Area Under the Receiver Operating Characteristic Curve (AUC). The AUC was found to be 0.75, indicating that the model has good discriminatory power.

We are therefore confident that the model fits the data well in terms of explaining variance, producing well-calibrated probabilities, and distinguishing between classes.





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