

Domestic Abuse Local Needs
Assessment - Safe Accommodation
Redcar & Cleveland

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1 Introduction

1.1 Aim of the Local Needs Assessment

The aim of the local needs assessment is to provide an overview of local data and service provision for domestic abuse within Redcar and Cleveland, in the context of our duty to provide support in safe accommodation. It will identify current need and identify gaps in the service offer that need to be addressed, with a specific focus on safe accommodation. The needs assessment will conclude with some key recommendations for future service delivery. The needs assessment has been developed with due regard to the duty placed on the local authority by The Domestic Abuse Act.

1.2 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Introduced in 2021, The Domestic Abuse Act places a duty on “local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation”.

The Domestic Abuse Act:

I. Places duties on each relevant local authority in England to:

- i. Appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board which it must consult as it performs certain specified functions (below).
- ii. Assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of, the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support in their area for all victims and their children who reside in relevant safe accommodation, including those who come from outside of their area.
- iii. Prepare and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their area having regard to the needs assessment.
- iv. Give effect to the strategy (through commissioning / decommissioning decisions).
- v. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.
- vi. Report back annually to central government.

The local needs assessment will have a specific focus on safe accommodation and support provision within safe accommodation.

2 Methodology

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) provide a template to aid the data gathering process and this was used in Redcar and Cleveland. Information was provided by Council services including Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Housing, and Changing Futures, the Police, Domestic Abuse Services, Health and Beyond Housing (the main housing provider within Redcar and Cleveland).

A survey for the public was carried out to understand the experiences of victims/survivors of domestic abuse and what domestic abuse services are needed in Redcar and Cleveland. Survey questions included how long ago the abuse happened and if services were accessed. If services were used, how different was the experience depending on when they received services. The survey was open for 6 weeks and accessible via a link, and there was also the opportunity to complete it manually/paper copy. It was promoted through the partners of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, including domestic abuse services, internally within the council, on the council's social media platforms, to voluntary agencies and the Health & Wellbeing Network.

A survey for professionals was carried out to understand the experiences of those who work with victims/survivors of domestic abuse, and where there are gaps in service provision to ascertain what more is needed in Redcar & Cleveland. It was open for 6 weeks, promoted internally within the council, and sent out to partners of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, including domestic abuse services.

A focus group was arranged to bring partners together to discuss the findings and agree some priorities that will inform commissioning decisions regarding support provision in safe accommodation in line with statutory responsibilities in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Case studies were completed by domestic abuse services (Harbour, EVA Women's Aid and Halo) that highlighted the victim/survivor needs in safe accommodation, the support provided and the outcome.

One-to-one interviews were held with victims/survivors of domestic abuse who have lived in safe accommodation to find out about the support they received and their experiences of the support, what they felt was done well and what could be improved.

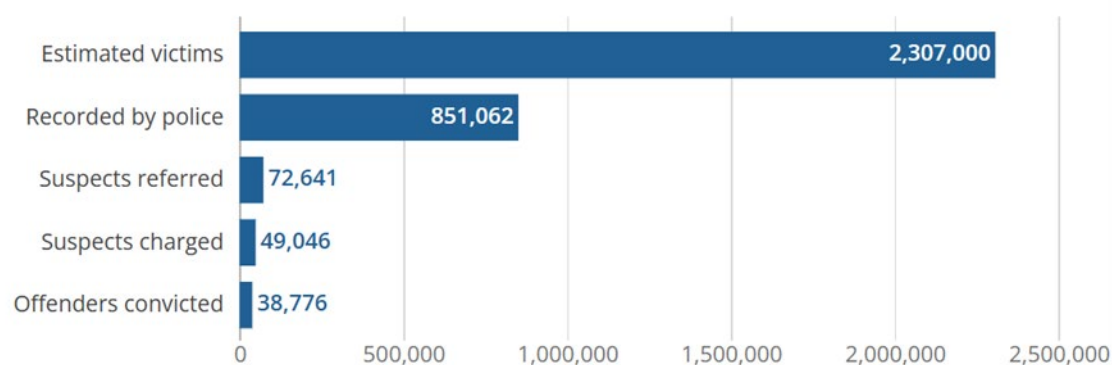
The following local data sets were analysed to produce the needs assessment:

- Cleveland Police report
- MHCLG template completed by council services and partners
- Domestic Abuse Survey analysis – Professionals
- Domestic Abuse Survey analysis – Public
- Domestic Abuse Survey deeper analysis – Public
- Domestic Abuse Partnership Focus Group
- Case study and survivor experience observations
- Redcar and Cleveland current commissioned services information

3 National and Local Data

- The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that 2.3 million people aged 16 years and over (1.6 million women and 712,000 men) experienced domestic abuse in year ending (YE) March 2024.
- There was no statistically significant change in the prevalence of domestic abuse experienced in the last year, compared with the previous year.
- The police recorded 851,062 domestic abuse-related crimes in England and Wales in YE March 2024; a decrease compared with the previous year (911,248), which, in part, reflects recent changes in police recording practices.
- There were 51,183 domestic abuse-related prosecutions in England and Wales in YE March 2024, compared with 51,288 in YE March 2023.

Domestic abuse data from incident to conviction, England and Wales, year ending March 2024.



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales from the Office for National Statistics, Police recorded crime data from the Home Office, and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

3.1 Economic and social costs of Domestic Abuse

Overall, in the year ending 31 March 2017, domestic abuse is estimated to have cost over £66 billion in England and Wales (see table below). The biggest component of the estimated cost is the physical and emotional harms incurred by victims (£47 billion), particularly the emotional harms (the fear, anxiety and depression experienced by victims as a result of domestic abuse), which account for the overwhelming majority of the overall costs.

The cost to the economy is also considerable, with an estimated £14 billion arising from lost output due to time off work and reduced productivity as a consequence of domestic abuse. Some of the cost will be borne by Government such as the costs to health services (£2.3 billion) and the police (£1.3 billion).

Some of the cost of victim services will also fall to Government, such as housing costs totalling £550 million, which includes temporary housing, homelessness services and repairs and maintenance. Victim services costs also include expenditure by charities and the time given up by volunteers to support victims.

Total costs of domestic abuse in England and Wales for 2016/17 (£ millions)

Costs in Anticipation	Costs as a consequence				Costs in response				Total
	Physical and emotional harm	Lost output	Health services	Victim services	Police costs	Criminal legal	Civil legal	Other	
£6m	£47,287m	£14,098m	£2,333m	£724m	£1,257m	£336m	£140m	£11m	£66,192m

Taken from the report by the Home Office: The economic and social costs of domestic abuse Research Report 107 Rhys Oliver, Barnaby Alexander, Stephen Roe and Miriam Wlasny January 2019 [The economic and social costs of domestic abuse](#)

3.2 Domestic Abuse in Redcar and Cleveland – Prevalence

In Redcar and Cleveland, 4145 domestic abuse incidents were recorded (July – June) 2023-2024; this is an increase of 7.6% on the previous year. This is a rate of 30.2 incidents per 1000 of the population within Redcar and Cleveland. This is the second lowest rate of the four neighbouring local authorities, the lowest being Stockton. 74.3% of these incidents were recorded as crimes with 10.5% of these resulting in a resolved outcome for the victim (10.5%). The 'solved rate' for Redcar and Cleveland is highest amongst the four local authorities.

Over the last two years, there has been a gradual rise of the average monthly number of domestic abuse incidents in Redcar and Cleveland.

Of the incidents recorded, 41.9% (1956) were domestic abuse incidents with a repeat victim – this is a 0.4% reduction despite an increase in the number of incidents. However, Redcar and Cleveland have the 2nd highest repeat incident rate amongst the four local authorities, after Middlesbrough.

Domestic Abuse related crime accounted for 21.2% of publicly reported crime in Redcar and Cleveland; this is the highest rate amongst the four local authorities. 77% of these were violent crimes, with criminal damage offences (10%) the second most common.

41.1% of crimes resulted in an arrest (41.1% in 2023/24) – this was an increase of 4.7% on the previous year but Redcar and Cleveland still had the second lowest rate of arrest amongst the four local authorities.

Cleveland Police Force (which includes Redcar and Cleveland area) has one of the highest rates (35 per 1000 population) of recorded domestic abuse incidents and crime, only topped by Gwent (44 per 1000 population).

When looking at comparable data, Humberside and Merseyside are similar size forces, and the rates of DA incidents reported are lower (30 and 23 per 1000 respectively) although the number of domestic homicides is higher.

Disclaimer

The information presented in this document is correct at the time of publication. However, as it is drawn from multiple live police systems, it remains subject to further change. For example, where quality assurance checks result in the source record being updated.

3.3 Local Housing/Homeless Statistics

In 2023/24, there were 337 temporary accommodation placements made by the Housing Options Team. 56 of these were relating to victims fleeing domestic abuse (16.6% of all placements).

This implies a significant number of domestic abuse victims are accessing temporary accommodation, which could be deemed to be an unsuitable option for victims at high risk.

3.4 Demographics

[Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

The recording of demographic data captured has significantly improved since the first Local Needs Assessment carried out in 2021, although some information is still not captured e.g., only age and gender information is available from the police.

3.5 Gender

The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that 1.6 million women and 712,000 men aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in year ending (YE) March 2024. This equates to approximately 7 in 100 women and 3 in 100 men.

For Redcar and Cleveland, the vast majority of victims recorded by the police are female at 71.8% with Homelessness recording 77.6% and Adult Social Care 83.7%. However, police data shows that there is a significant number of males (874) reporting domestic abuse, over a quarter of all cases reported to the police, and Changing Futures (who work with adults with multiple needs) reports two thirds female victims and a third male victims. Harbour have reported supporting 598 females (84%) and 114 males (16%) but this includes adults and children across all of Harbour's services. In terms of adults only 26 males have been supported in the outreach service in 2023/24 and this rose to 33 in 2024/25.

To note: EVA Women's Aid do not work with adult male victims so the 48 males reported will be children they have supported.

Non-binary and trans data are significantly underrepresented in the data.

3.6 Age

Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates showed that a significantly higher proportion of people aged 16 to 19 years were victims of any domestic abuse (8.7%) compared with those in age categories of 55 years and over for year ending (YE) March 2024. The percentage of people aged 20 to 24 years who were victims of any domestic abuse (7.1%) was higher than those aged 55 to 59 years (3.8%). For those aged 75 years and over, the percentage of victims was significantly lower than all other age groups (2.1%).

For Redcar and Cleveland, in adult age groups, the vast majority of victims recorded are aged 25-54, with the highest proportion in age group 35-44. Police and Adult Social Care data show a significant number of victims 55 years and over (16.5% and 43.7% respectively), however, this is not replicated by the domestic abuse services (Harbour 9.7% and EVA 8.9% and 0 for Halo).

3.7 Ethnicity

For year ending (YE) March 2024, differences between any domestic abuse estimates across different ethnic groups from the Crime Survey for England and Wales were found not to be significant.

According to the latest [2021 census](#), the population in Redcar and Cleveland is predominantly white (97.7%), with non-white minorities representing the remaining 2.3% of the population.

Harbour and EVA Women's Aid have recorded ethnicity as predominantly white with 95.4% and 96.3% respectively. Children's Social Care have recorded 96.3% and are the only agency to report any Gypsy/Roma/Traveller. Halo, who provide support to BAME victims of domestic abuse, supported 24 people in Redcar and Cleveland, 62.5% were Asian, 25% were Black/Black British and 12.5% were White.

To note: in 2023/24, 57% of referrals (29) accepted into Redcar refuge were from out of the local authority area. Of those 29, 20 were White British, 3 were Pakistani, 2 were White and Black African and the remaining 4 from other ethnic minority groups. Of the 22 that were accepted into refuge from within Redcar and Cleveland, 21 were White British and 1 was Other Asian Background.

3.8 Marital Status, Sexual Identity and Disability

Marital status, sexual identity and disability data has been captured by domestic abuse services and homelessness.

Marital Status

Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates showed that a significantly higher proportion of people aged 16 years and over who were separated or divorced experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those who were married or civil partnered, cohabiting, single or widowed, for year ending (YE) March 2024.

For Redcar and Cleveland, the vast majority of victims are single or in a relationship but not living together.

Sexual Identity

The Crime Survey has not collected this information.

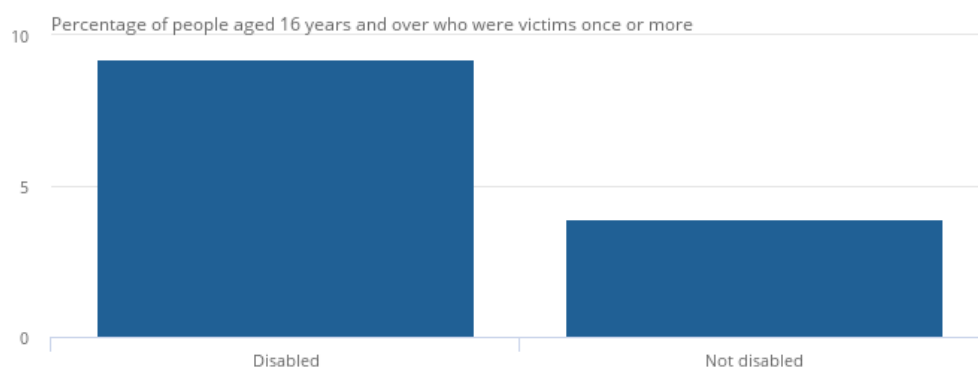
For Redcar and Cleveland, the overwhelming majority are heterosexual, with Homelessness reporting 8.6% and Harbour reporting 5.2% as gay/lesbian/bisexual suggesting there may be some underrepresentation from gay/lesbian/bisexual victims.

Disability

The Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that a significantly higher percentage of adults with a disability experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without, for year ending (YE) March 2024.

Figure 7: A higher percentage of people with a disability experienced domestic abuse than those without

Prevalence of domestic abuse in the last year for people aged 16 years and over, by disability, England and Wales, year ending March 2024



Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) from the Office for National Statistics

In terms of disability, Homelessness have recorded 41.4% with a disability, Harbour 16.3% and EVA Women's Aid 53.3%, however, the type of disability (physical/mental) is not known.

4 Safe Accommodation Provision in Redcar & Cleveland

There are a number of safe accommodation options within Redcar and Cleveland offered by local service providers; this includes council-commissioned and non-commissioned providers. The below table sets out existing provision:

	Accommodation Provision	Number of Units	Support within Safe Accommodation
Harbour (Commissioned Provider)	The Refuge	12 self-contained flats, ranging from one to three bedrooms with units having from one to six beds one unit being accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support workers • Mental Wellbeing Support (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Family Support (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Counselling for women and children (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Recovery support (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Access to services within the THRIVE partnership - drug and alcohol services, ITS courses
Harbour (Commissioned Provider)	Dispersed Properties	4 houses/flats situated throughout Redcar and Cleveland (as at 31/03/2024) This has risen to 9 as at 31/03/2025).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support workers • Mental Wellbeing Support (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Family Support (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Counselling for women and children (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Recovery support (solely reliant on DA Act Grant) • Access to services within the THRIVE partnership - drug and alcohol services, ITS courses
EVA Women's Aid (Local Provider)	Safe House Accommodation (Dispersed properties)	3 shared houses (2 standard, 1 for age 45+ total of 12 bed spaces for single women.	<p>Some of the support within the safe accommodation is commissioned by us:</p> <p>Move-On Support Worker (solely reliant on DA Act Grant)</p> <p>Support Plus Worker (solely reliant on DA Act Grant)</p> <p>'You and Me Mum' programme (solely reliant on DA Act Grant)</p>
EVA Women's Aid (Local Provider)	Move-on flats (second-stage accommodation)	7 single person flats for women.	<p>Some of the support within the safe accommodation is commissioned by us:</p> <p>Move-On Support Worker (solely reliant on DA Act Grant)</p> <p>Support Plus Worker (solely reliant on DA Act Grant)</p> <p>'You and Me Mum' programme (solely reliant on DA Act Grant)</p>
Harbour (commissioned provider)	Sanctuary Scheme (target hardening)	For victims who wish to remain in own home (64 properties in 2023/24)	<p>Support depending on need and risk.</p> <p>Outreach support - a dedicated Support worker providing emotional and practical support.</p> <p>Ongoing support offered via Recovery service.</p>

The Council of Europe and Istanbul Convention recommends a minimum of 1 unit of domestic abuse dedicated accommodation per 10,000 population. The latest census (2021) shows Redcar & Cleveland having a population of 136,500 and therefore should have 14 units of DA dedicated accommodation. Harbour (commissioned provider) have 20 units (12 in refuge and 8 in dispersed). In addition to this EVA Women's Aid have safe accommodation; dispersed 'safe houses' with 13 bed spaces and 7 single move-on flats. EVA Women's Aid accommodation is not commissioned, although Redcar & Cleveland Council have funded some of the support provision from the Domestic Abuse Act Grant.

4.1 Safe accommodation demand

Harbour, the Council's commissioned domestic abuse service, operates across the Northeast and manages refuges in the Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria areas, and will liaise with each other when looking to place someone. A total of 267 referrals were received, 263 for Refuge spaces and 4 for Dispersed Properties.

To note: the 263 referrals for Refuge will include those where Redcar has specifically been requested as well as referrals into Harbour where a specific location has not been specified, which means there will be duplication in numbers of Harbour referrals with other local authority areas where a specific location has not been specified.

The largest category of referrals for 'Out of Area' is 'Other - outside of the Northeast', 48 referrals (18.3%), and includes referrals from North Yorkshire, Wales, Scotland, London and Birmingham (not an exhaustive list).

The main reason for refusing a referral is due to no space and of the 263 referrals for Refuge, 178 were refused because of this.

Throughout 2023/24, 64 women and their families were supported in Refuge and 4 in Dispersed Properties. In total, this was 135 women and children, 126 in refuge and 9 in dispersed properties.

A Sanctuary Scheme is a survivor centred initiative which aims to make it possible for victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice, and where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation. This is done by providing additional security – 'installing a sanctuary' – to the victims' property or perimeter. Properties that have received this 'target-hardening' are included in the definition of 'safe accommodation'.

In 2023/24, 120 referrals were made to Sanctuary and 64 properties received sanctuary works, 33 were private rented/owned properties and 31 were social housing properties. In total, 189 victims and their children were supported and prevented from becoming homeless.

5 Public Survey Summary

A survey was open for 6 weeks between 16th October and 27th November 2024 and there were 83 responses. A report was produced that provides some deeper analysis of those who completed the survey in terms of demographics and experiences of services in the last 3 years (since the last LNA was completed).

- 83 people responded to the survey. 31% (26) said domestic abuse took place more than 10 years ago. 51% (43) said it was 6 plus years ago. 47% (39) have said took place in last 5 years.

- 69% (57) did ask for help from the domestic abuse services, 30% (25) did not and 1 did not answer.
- 87% (34) asked for help and 13% (5) did not ask for help in the last 5 years, compared to 53% (23) asked for help and 47% (20) did not ask for help during last 5 to 10 years. This indicates more people are asking for help from services now compared to over 5 years ago.
- Of those that said they did not ask for help, over 5 years ago more people said “I managed the situation myself or through my personal support network (e.g., friends, family)” or gave “Other” as a reason. The numbers that did not access services are too low to be able to do any meaningful analysis on the particular characteristics around, age group, sex, ethnicity etc.
- 40% (33) people had used a domestic abuse support service within the last 3 years and 29% (24) people had used a service over 3 years ago. 31% (26) did not answer this question

6 Experience of Using Services

Respondents provided some positive insights from their experiences of using services, but the majority were asking for improvements. Of the 29 responses, 11 indicated that they would have benefitted from more support; this was consistent with responses from the previous needs assessment. Issues with police understanding and helping with their issues was another key theme as was the need for support with housing. Issues with police and accessing support were consistent with the previous needs assessment but more identified housing as a theme than previously. This could indicate that housing is more prevalent of an issue than it was previously, but due to the limited number of responses it is not possible to draw a definitive conclusion from this statistic alone.

Insights

“Better support, quicker housing, family support”

“Police took on board recommendations from MARAC meetings. If refuge costs were not £400 a week for those working. If mental health services were responsive”

“Harbour was fantastic. They gave me the tools to show me the person he truly was and gave me the strength to become the woman I am today. That DV happens more than you think I am not alone. I became stronger and found the person I am. That I appreciate and love myself. I was lost and they helped put the pieces back together. I was back in control of my future.”

“The police need to change their criteria for what is classed as a “significant risk to life” when issuing information under a Subject Access Request. Apparently, the rights of a person to have access to information held on them is more important than protecting the victim. ANY report of ANY kind of abuse, in my mind, could be deemed a risk to life. There was absolutely no apology for what the police did, they could have put me at risk of more harm”

7 Professional Survey Summary

Experience of supporting individuals into safe accommodation

The vast majority of professionals who responded (70%) said their role does not involve finding accommodation for those experiencing domestic abuse, with the remaining third stating that their role does involve it.

Below half of respondents said that from their experiences they found that there aren't enough refuge provisions currently.

Over a third of professionals stated that they will sometimes have to find solutions to accommodate victims out of hours, with one saying that they usually have no issues and on the other hand another said that it can be difficult as there are not many services that extend out of hours.

Another said that language barriers can be a hurdle when working with victims to secure accommodation.

8 Additional Support needed

23% of respondents said that there needs to be more availability of services and shorter wait times for the people they work with.

A smaller portion of respondents (12%) said that there needs to be more financial support for those suffering from financial abuse, better or more support for rehoming. The same number of respondents said that discreet locations for domestic abuse support would be useful, such as offering it within social events/public places where a victim can seek support to avoid the perpetrator's awareness.

A minority of professionals also added that the freedom program needs to be delivered in schools, and out of hours relocation would be useful for safeguarding.

23.5% said they were unsure.

Despite issues with supporting individuals into safe accommodation being highlighted, this wasn't highlighted as a key area where additional support was needed. This is likely due to most professional respondents not being within a role which involves finding accommodation for those experiencing domestic abuse.

9 Harbour – Survivor Case Studies

9.1 Key Needs Identified

Survivor experiences are gathered through interviews with victims, and discussions with providers to understand the key needs of those accessing services, notably our commissioned provider, Harbour. Some of the key needs are legal support related to immigration status, divorce proceedings, applications for a private life in the UK and fee waiver applications. Mental health advocacy and therapeutic interventions for both survivors and their children are also important, emphasizing the importance of accessible, trauma-informed care. The need for safe accommodation emerges as a key issue, with calls for assistance in navigating housing applications, moving into independent accommodation, and securing

funding for refuge placement—particularly for individuals with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). Additional needs include access to education for children, employment support, wellbeing initiatives, and specialized refuge placements for individuals with mobility challenges or deteriorating health.

9.2 Experiences of Safe Accommodation and support

Survivors' experiences within safe accommodation highlight both positive impacts and ongoing challenges. Many benefitted from mental wellbeing activities, support with legal processes, and access to healthcare. Encouragement to engage in group activities within the refuge fostered a sense of routine, while access to counselling and structured programmes such as Inspire, and courses provided by Intuitive Thinking Skills enhanced recovery efforts. However, relocation to out-of-area refuges posed difficulties, including separation from family networks and disrupted contact with children. Some survivors found police responses to be supportive, although inconsistent attitudes and bias towards males being perpetrators remain concerns. The ability to bring pets into safe accommodation and structured wellbeing programs significantly aided survivors' recovery.

9.3 Observations

Findings from the case studies highlight the complex and multi-layered needs of survivors, spanning legal, health, housing, and mental wellbeing support. Findings to consider in relation to identifying gaps in provision or areas for improvement include:

- A notable increase in cases with multiple vulnerabilities reinforces the importance of more holistic, service approaches.
- Mental wellbeing workers received strong positive feedback, but there could be a need for more family-focused work and counselling provisions.
- Housing barriers, including the lengthy process of securing longer-term accommodation, contribute to delayed transitions and potential bed-blocking within refuges.
- For individuals with immigration-related vulnerabilities, a lack of clear financial pathways and lengthy application processes create barriers.
- The effectiveness of programmes, such as Inspire and Momentum programmes* is positive, but an evaluation of all programmes on offer may be beneficial to identify any gaps and/or areas for improvement.

*Inspire is Harbour's version of the Freedom Programme for women and 'Momentum' is a similar programme for male victims of domestic abuse.

9.4 Observations of Safe Accommodation Provision Available

- There is no specific provision for individuals with insecure immigration status or No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). In these cases, an agency agreement is required to cover refuge costs (e.g., Adults or Children's Social Care), and victims receive legal assistance to apply for the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession and Leave to Remain.
- Language barriers are generally addressed through interpreter services; Everyday Language Solutions are the usual provider. Important information/letters are translated appropriately in an individuals' preferred language.
- Services aim to be inclusive for individuals from diverse cultures and faiths. Adjustments are made to accommodate the varying needs of victims from different cultures and faiths;

maintaining a stock of halal meat, provision of a prayer mat and a Quran stored in accordance with cultural practices, celebration of all cultural and religious events and catering to dietary requirements (vegan, halal options).

- Victims of Honour Based Abuse are referred to HALO for specialist support.
- Accessible accommodation is provided for individuals with physical disabilities. This includes lowered kitchen counters and higher seating. However, availability is limited, which can pose challenges in securing suitable refuge or housing options. Consideration should be given to whether this acts as a barrier to disclosure.
- Adjustments are made for individuals with disabilities – this includes implementation of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan tailored to need in emergencies.
- Mental health needs and children's health needs are prevalent among those accessing safe accommodation. Dedicated support roles, such as Mental Wellbeing Workers and Family Support Workers, are very valuable, though an evaluation of the sufficiency of child-specific support may be required.
- Substance misuse is a common support need among victims. Harbour staff receive training from With You through the THRIVE partnership, and Redcar Refuge accommodates more individuals with substance misuse issues than other Northeast refuges, except for the complex needs refuge in Hartlepool.
- Harbour facilitates fortnightly housing and regular legal surgeries to provide advice and assistance. Residents are also supported in accessing food banks and financial aid.
- Work is underway to develop a complex needs refuge in Redcar, acknowledging the increasing prevalence of domestic abuse victims with additional support needs.

9.5 Gaps in Safe Accommodation Provision

Through the needs assessment, we have identified the following gaps in safe accommodation options as part of local service provision:

- There is no specialist accommodation within the borough for BAME victims facing high-risk crimes such as honour-based abuse, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation (FGM). Existing refuges do not always address the specialist needs of these individuals, which can lead to isolation and further trauma. While a low proportion of local victims require this support, 57.7% of referrals (30) accepted into Redcar refuge in 2023/24 were from outside Redcar and Cleveland, and 30% of those (9) were from non-white backgrounds. Outreach work provides support, and Harbour refers victims to HALO for more specialist support.
- Gender identity can be a barrier to accessing refuge and temporary accommodation, as there is currently no dedicated provision for individuals of diverse gender identities. Most temporary housing consists of same-sex HMO accommodation, which may not meet the needs of all individuals.
- Sexual identity can be a barrier, as victims fleeing same-sex relationships may not feel safe in shared accommodation with others of the same sex. In such cases, single-person accommodation may be preferable, but options are limited.
- There is provision for families in refuge and dispersed accommodation, but an assessment is needed to determine whether this adequately accommodates different family sizes. Although there are national capacity issues, the local provision should be reviewed against nationally recognized quotas for suitability.

- Rental and service charges can make refuge and dispersed accommodation financially inaccessible for individuals who are employed or on low incomes. Data indicates that all residents were either receiving benefits or had not disclosed their income, suggesting affordability may be a widespread concern that could impact survivors' willingness to remain in, or indeed seek safe accommodation.
- Fear of disclosure is an issue among those seeking accommodation, as individuals may worry that reporting their needs will impact their housing eligibility. Those with multiple support needs who have issues with sustaining a tenancy may struggle to secure future housing. Plans for a complex needs refuge are underway to address these challenges.

10 Adult Social Care

- Under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014, local authorities have a duty to make, or cause to be made, enquiries in cases where they reasonably suspect that an adult with care and support needs is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and, as a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves from this actual or risk of abuse and neglect.
- In 2023/24, 106 safeguarding concerns were raised in Redcar and Cleveland regarding adults with care and support needs who were affected by domestic abuse, representing 5.6% of the total. While this marks a slight decrease from 5.8% in the previous year, it remains higher than figures from earlier years (4–4.9%).
- Despite no significant rise, there is a gradual upward trend, potentially due to greater awareness among practitioners and improved identification of domestic abuse as a safeguarding issue.
- 33 Section 42 enquiries related to domestic abuse, accounting for 7.7% of all S42 enquiries. This is slightly down from 8.3% in the previous year, but historical data shows fluctuations between 5% and 8% over the past five years, making it difficult to determine a clear trajectory.
- Due to the relatively low number of Section 42 enquiries compared to broader safeguarding concerns, percentage variations can be influenced by small changes in case numbers. As a result, identifying definitive trends remains challenging.

11 Children's Social Care

- Between April 2023 and March 2024, concerns about a child's parent being subject to domestic abuse were recorded in a significant number of children's social care cases (36.3%).
- 8.1% of cases also had recorded concerns of a child being subject to domestic abuse.
- A smaller number of cases (2.8%) recorded concerns about another person living at the house being subject to DA.
- This shows domestic abuse is a prevalent factor within children's social care cases, particularly where there are concerns about a child's parent being subjected to domestic abuse. This indicates that children's social care professionals are adept to recognising signs that domestic abuse may be present within a household and that in many domestic abuse

cases there is need to protect and accommodate families with children within safe accommodation.

- A Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to children who are victims of domestic abuse in Redcar and Cleveland was completed in April 2025. The inspection identified strengths and observed that children affected by domestic abuse in Redcar & Cleveland are generally well supported through prompt, collaborative action by practitioners across services. Leadership commitment to reform, alongside strong commissioned services and consistent safeguarding referrals by frontline responders, reflects a system actively working to improve outcomes for vulnerable children.

Nonetheless, the inspection also drew upon a number of areas for improvement, as highlighted below:

- The STSCP governance arrangements, development and alignment of a specific children's domestic abuse strategy across the partnership that recognises children as victims of domestic abuse.
- Redcar & Cleveland's understanding and needs assessment of the impact of domestic abuse on unborn and young children's unique and diverse needs locally.
- The inclusion and consideration of children's experiences in referrals and in multiagency meetings.
- How well practitioners across the partnership are listening to the voices of children and understanding what it means for children to be victims of domestic abuse.
- Communication with and involvement of probation services strategically and operationally.
- The overreliance of safety plans on non-abusing parents, mostly mothers, in protecting children.
- Multi-agency training for all agencies in recognising children as victims of domestic abuse and understanding parental consent.
- The consistent completion of work with perpetrators of domestic abuse and engagement with victims prior to decisions being made to end child protection plans.

12 Beyond Housing

- In 2023/24, Beyond Housing, the local social housing provider, processed 56 housing applications under Band 1 Domestic Violence, supporting 125 individuals.
- The most affected age group was 25-44 years, with 42 victims falling within this bracket, suggesting this is the most common age range for domestic abuse survivors seeking housing assistance.
- Among those supported, 57 were children aged 15 and under, highlighting the significant impact of domestic abuse on families.
- The majority of applicants were single females (15) or females with one (10) or two children (10), demonstrating a high need for family-oriented housing solutions.
- During this period, 63 "Something Not Right" cases were reported, raising concerns regarding domestic abuse.

- Nine tenancies were terminated due to domestic abuse in 2023/24. The geographical distribution across the borough was relatively even; however, due to the small sample size, definitive conclusions cannot be drawn.
- There are currently 137 active tenancies linked to a MARAC UDC (marker), further emphasizing the ongoing support required for victims of domestic abuse in the housing sector.

13 Recommendations

1. Develop an action plan with clear timescales to deliver interventions which target the areas for improvement highlighted through the JTAI assessment.
2. Include in the review of the domestic abuse strategy and identify as a risk, the financial barriers that specific cohorts face in accessing safe accommodation i.e., those who are working and not entitled to housing benefit or have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). Discuss with other stakeholders how we can collaboratively campaign for improvements and raise in relevant local/national forums.
3. Review the provision of family focussed work/counselling provision/mental health from April 2026.
4. Implementation of a complex needs refuge in Redcar and Cleveland for victims of domestic abuse who have multiple needs, such as drug and alcohol issues, ensuring a range of support is provided to meet the needs of the residents. To evaluate the impact of the refuge once it is in place.
5. Evaluate the adequacy of service provision for those people with vulnerabilities through a partnership approach with Harbour, With You, Intuitive Thinking Skills and Changing Futures.
6. Review safe accommodation and support provision, and ensure it is fit for purpose for those with protected characteristics who may experience barriers in accessing safe accommodation, including sex (male victims), physical disability, age (such as older victims), BAME victims, and gender identity.
7. Explore and identify new, discreet locations where domestic abuse support can be delivered in the community.