

St Mungo's
Ending homelessness
Rebuilding lives

Improving women's safety with Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation

Erasmus+ Łódź
November 2019



Women
and homelessness

St Mungo's Women's Strategy



Our core challenge is creating an environment of physical and psychological safety for our female clients, who face disproportionate risk of harm from people they love and trust as well as the dangers of homelessness.

We choose to prioritise women's safety. We will work hard to ensure that each of our female clients has a safe place to live and has every reason to feel safe in our services.

In year one of our Women's Strategy (2019/20) we are:

- **Improving our response to domestic abuse**
- Mapping our women-only service offer
- Reviewing our approach to sexual violence

Review of domestic abuse incident reports:

- Domestic abuse under-reported compared to national average
- Initial review of domestic abuse incident reports found that not all staff were adhering to the organisational policy
- Need to make sure that all staff are equipped to recognise, respond and report domestic abuse
- Missing risk assessment paperwork and few referrals to specialist domestic abuse support - need for training

What makes women feel safe and unsafe?

- **Looking out for each other** – clients support each other to keep safe. Sometimes there is too much pressure to support others or risk being labelled a complainer if raise issues with staff.
- **Risk from other client's partners** – perpetrators of domestic abuse may pose a risk or threaten other women as well as their partners
- **Using an emergency code word** – women liked the idea of having a secret word to let staff know there was an emergency

What makes women feel safe and unsafe?

- **Working with the police** – many clients had negative experiences reporting domestic abuse to the police and not being believed, particularly if they were selling sex
- **Communication between staff** – women felt safe when information was handed over when staff changed shifts. They felt unsafe when information was missed and led to delays
- **Keeping money safe** – women talked about financial abuse – partners taking their cards or demanding money. A practical solution was to request removing contactless payment

Securing support and funding from senior leadership

Encourage **shared responsibility**

- Involved senior safeguarding leads – safeguarding important issue for our Board of Trustees
- Monthly Task and Finish Group with colleagues from different teams

Make the case for **financial commitment**

- Presented business case for DAHA accreditation costs based on the joint work of the task and finish group

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)

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- Partnership between domestic abuse and housing organisations
- Mission to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse
- Developed a consistent set of standards for housing organisations
- Recognised by national government as the gold standard



daha

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance

Benefits of using the accreditation

- Leading the sector – first homelessness provider to go through the accreditation process
- Structure – eight priority standards gave us clear framework to review and improve our approach
- Support – worked closely with DAHA to help us apply the standards in a homelessness setting
- Appealed to Board and Executive Team – accreditation endorsed by national government

DAHA priority standards

Policies &
Procedures

Case
Management

Risk
Management

Equality &
Diversity

Perpetrator
Management

Partnership
Working

Staff
Training

Publicity &
Awareness

<http://accreditation.dahalliance.org.uk/>

Standard 1: Policy and Procedures

Standard 1 asks for evidence of:

- Domestic abuse policy and procedure for clients
- Domestic abuse policy and procedure for staff
- Support for staff working on domestic abuse cases
- Safeguarding adults and children policies and procedures

How we've improved:

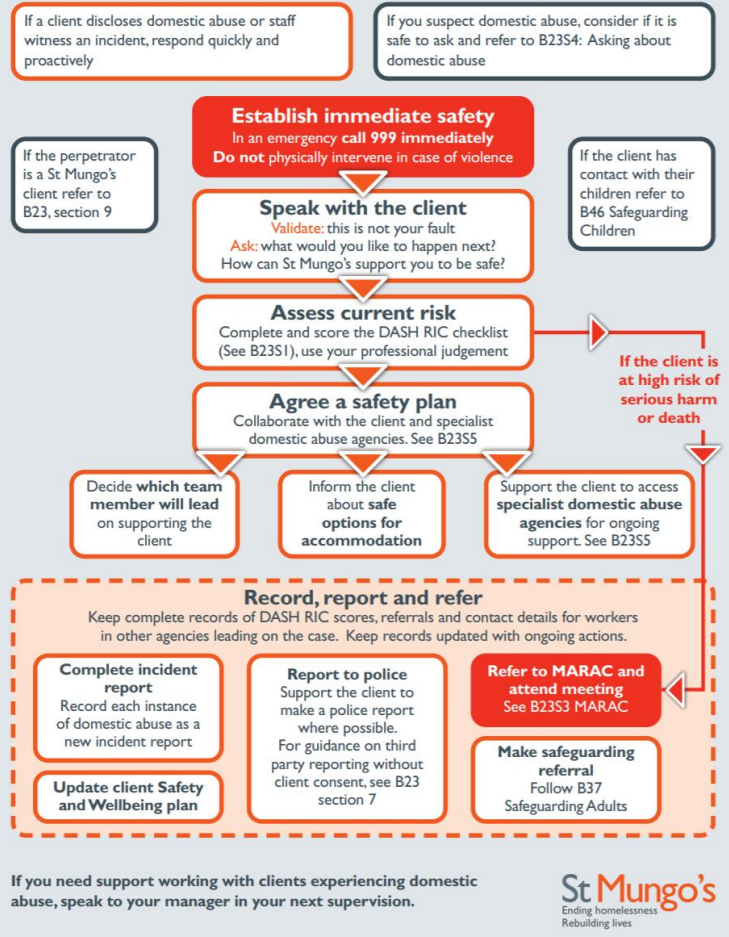
- Full review and update of domestic abuse P&P for client services
- New 'quick guides' for staff
- Developing new guidance for managers supporting staff

Standard 1: Policy and Procedures

Listened to staff and produced new 'quick guides' to help them use the policy and procedure:

- Responding to domestic abuse
- Asking about domestic abuse
- Completing the DASH RIC (risk assessment checklist)
- Domestic abuse support and services directory

Quick guide to domestic abuse



Standard 7: Staff Training

Standard 4 asks for evidence of:

- Training on domestic abuse available to all staff
- Enhanced training for staff who are supporting clients experiencing domestic abuse

How we've improved:

- New face to face training for 300 staff
- E-learning available for all staff and volunteers
- Materials designed and delivered by specialist domestic abuse agency Standing Together Against Domestic Violence
- But...low take up of male staff and high numbers failing to attend

Learning objectives

At the end of today's training you will:

- Know the definition of domestic abuse and be able to recognise key forms of domestic abuse and what this might look like in your service.
- Understand how domestic abuse interacts with other forms of disadvantage, and how this creates barriers to support.
- Feel more confident working out who is doing what to who, and have better awareness of perpetrators in your services/how to manage this.
- Feel more confident talking with survivors about abuse, identifying risk and taking action e.g. referring on, safety planning etc.

together

**STANDING
together**
against domestic violence

Standard 8: Publicity and Awareness

Standard 4 asks for evidence of:

- Publicity on display in communal areas for staff and clients experiencing domestic abuse
- Information on website and intranet
- Awareness raising events

How we've improved:

- Developed new posters and leaflets in consultation with women who have experienced domestic abuse
- Three workshop sessions in women's accommodation services
- Marking the 16 Days of Action with events

Standard 8: Publicity and Awareness

Survivors told us:

- There was a real need for more information about domestic abuse in services and in the community
- To make clear that domestic abuse involves families and children as well as partners
- That the signs of abuse can be subtle and difficult to spot – not all red flags are visible at the beginning of a relationship
- It can be easy to mistake control for kindness or romance
- It takes time to trust someone and share personal experiences

Standard 8: Publicity and Awareness

Find the support you need to be safe and free from abuse.

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Talk to a staff member about your relationships with your loved ones, or contact:

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247
National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0800 999 5428
Men's Advice Line: 0808 801 0327

Build positive relationships with your family and your partner.

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Talk to a staff member about your relationships with your loved ones, and ask about Outside In courses on self esteem and healthy relationships.

Standard 8: Publicity and Awareness

Are your loved ones taking...

Care of you?

Control of you?

"I'm proud of you doing so well."

"I know money is tight, let's talk about how we can make it work."

"That's a big commitment, let's decide together."

"I'll change the PIN - you're no good with numbers."

"You can't be trusted with money."

"I'll take care of it - you'll only spend it on silly things."

If your partner, ex-partner or family member is **controlling your access to money, work or getting you into debt**, that's a red flag for domestic abuse.

St Mungo's can help you find the support you need to be safe and free from abuse. Talk to a staff member, a manager or contact:

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 0808 2000 247
National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0800 999 5428
Men's Advice Line: 0808 801 0327

To learn more about economic abuse, visit endeconomicabuse.com

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Are your loved ones taking...

Care of you?

Control of you?

"Drop me a message when you get home safe."

"I trust you."

"Everyone needs their privacy sometimes."

"Let me set that up for you."

"Why shouldn't I check your texts? You must be hiding something."

"Let's swap passwords."

If your partner, ex-partner or family member is **controlling or monitoring your phone or tracking your location**, that's a red flag for domestic abuse.

St Mungo's can help you find the support you need to be safe and free from abuse. Talk to a staff member, a manager or contact:

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To learn more about tech abuse, visit refuge.org.uk

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Biggest challenges

Standard 6: Perpetrator Management

- Challenges in mixed homelessness services where perpetrators and survivors may be living in the same building
- Survivors may not feel safe to leave the perpetrator (or may not wish too)
- Not much established good practice in homelessness settings

Standard 2: Case Management

- Need to demonstrate clear and consistent records across all IT systems
- Work in progress – working to introduce more prompts for staff to complete risk assessment and referrals

Questions?

Policies &
Procedures

Case
Management

Risk
Management

Equality &
Diversity

Perpetrator
Management

Partnership
Working

Staff
Training

Publicity &
Awareness

Would the DAHA standards work in your organisation?

Is there anything similar in other?

What would be the biggest challenges?



Thank you!

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