



# **Domestic Abuse Training Plan Case Studies**

Case studies demonstrating different approaches local authorities have taken to develop training plans for staff on domestic abuse.

## Content

### Introduction

#### Case Study Areas:

1. London Borough of Hackney
2. Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Partnership
3. North Yorkshire Council
4. Durham County Council
5. Hartlepool Council
6. Wokingham Borough Council

#### Top Tips

#### With thanks to:

North Yorkshire Council, Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Partnership, Hartlepool Council, London Borough of Hackney Wokingham Borough Council and Durham County Council

**Produced by:** Women's Housing Movement - Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse, Shelter, Cranstoun, North Yorkshire Council, Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Partnership and Homeless Link.

**Published by:** The National Practice Development Team

## Introduction

Domestic abuse is a primary trigger of homelessness among women<sup>1</sup> and providing an effective response should be a key priority for local authorities across England.

Domestic abuse training is an essential ingredient to ensure that staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to spot the signs and respond appropriately.

Developing and sustainably embedding a plan to train all staff on domestic abuse may feel like a daunting task. To support this work, the Women's Housing Movement have gathered case studies from local authorities who have developed training plans for staff on domestic abuse. The case studies in this document demonstrate that there are many ways to approach developing a training plan. They may provide ideas of where to begin or how to improve a training plan. Training plans should be dynamic and subject to continued review and development.

### Acronyms

DA: Domestic Abuse

DASH: This stands for domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour'-based violence. The acronym usually refers to the Dash risk assessment, a checklist designed to understand risk.

MARAC: Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

DAHA accreditation: Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance created an accreditation framework as a as a UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse in the UK. You can find out more about DAHA accreditation using this link: <https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/membership-accreditation/what-is-daha-accreditation/>

---

<sup>1</sup> [Women, homelessness and health | Groundswell](#)

## London Borough of Hackney

Hackney have developed a mandatory training programme which is tailored to staff roles.

### **Why did you create a plan to provide training to staff on domestic abuse?**

The training programme has been developed to equip housing staff with the appropriate skills and knowledge to respond efficiently to domestic abuse and to enable early identification and intervention. It was developed once the local authority decided to work towards DAHA accreditation.

### **How did you develop a training plan for staff?**

The training programme was developed in coordination with management from across the housing teams within the local authority. The training programme was tailored to suit the roles and specific training needs within each team. There is flexibility built into the training programme so that it can remain relevant, up-to-date, and can reflect the feedback gathered from staff.

### **What are the key features of training that is currently or soon to be provided for staff?**

The mandatory domestic abuse training programme is rolled out annually for staff. It is structured across three levels and tailored to staff roles. Housing staff must attend core training every three years and attend brief refresher training sessions or lunch seminars every twelve months. The training is provided by Hackney Borough's domestic abuse intervention service and their domestic abuse and housing specialist worker.

The content is comprehensive and wide ranging. It starts by building an in-depth awareness and understanding of domestic abuse, including recognising the signs; understanding barriers and intersectionalities; how to respond and refer. It builds from this foundation to consider national and local policies and procedures related to domestic abuse; understanding risk, completing DASH and referring to MARAC; how to support clients (including in the case of joint tenancies).

Mandatory domestic abuse training structure:

#### **1. E-learning module Level 1**

*Mandatory for all housing staff, regardless of their role*

#### **2. In person training or webinar Level 1**

*Mandatory for all Building Maintenance/Repairs operative and their line managers*

#### **3. Online/in-person Level 2 "Domestic Abuse Awareness"**

*Mandatory for all customer-facing staff (teams: Homelessness, Lettings, TA, Income, Neighbourhood, ASB)*

#### **4. Online Level 2 "Domestic Abuse Awareness" for Customer Services**

*Mandatory for all customer-facing staff from Customer Services*

### **5. Online Level 2 for Managers**

*Mandatory for all managers (teams: Homelessness, Lettings, TA, Income, Neighbourhood, ASB)*

### **6. Online/in person Level 3 “Assessing Domestic Abuse Risks”**

*Mandatory for all customer facing staff (teams: homelessness, lettings, temporary accommodation, income, neighbourhood, ani social behaviour)*

Training on engaging perpetrators and trauma informed approaches have also been delivered to staff. Housing domestic abuse champions can access ad-hoc sessions on a variety of VAWG related topics. Housing staff can also access the generic training programme offered by Hackney’s in-house domestic abuse intervention service.

Hackney also offers training about housing pathways and support for survivors and perpetrators, which is free to access across the year for all staff and external professionals working with Hackney residents, including registered social landlords operating in the borough.

### **What have the outcomes and impact been?**

Attendance at training is tracked and monitored and staff feedback is gathered through training surveys. The training provided is also monitored through brief online tests, to ensure the main messages are conveyed adequately.

Over the past two years, Hackney have seen almost 90% of customer-facing staff being trained, a massive uplift in training being accessed. This is impacting on increased awareness of best practice and better responses to domestic abuse, as well as improved communication and collaboration both internally and externally. Through domestic abuse case audits, Hackney are seeing an improvement in risk management interventions and evidence of the local authority’s implementation of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse.

# Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Partnership

Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Partnership worked together to develop a consistent approach to domestic abuse training.

### **Why did you create a plan to provide training to staff on domestic abuse?**

Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Partnership works across six districts with numerous housing providers operating locally. The partnership includes Gloucestershire's District Councils; County Council; Integrated Care Board and Office for Police and Crime Commissioner. The partnership leads on actions from Gloucestershire's domestic abuse strategy, that relate to the local housing response to domestic abuse. The most recent strategy identified a need for workforce development, with a specific focus on a consistent approach to domestic abuse training.

The objective is to ensure professionals have access to training that enables them to feel confident and competent in identifying and responding to domestic abuse. The partnership is also supporting the roll out of DAHA accreditation across Gloucestershire.

### **How did you develop a training plan for staff?**

Before developing the training offer, the partnership sent out a survey to housing providers and district councils, to map out the current offer and carry out a 'gaps and needs assessment' and analyse missed opportunities. Colleagues developing the generic domestic abuse training pathway also carried out consultation work with professionals across agencies (including housing) to identify need.

Training provided from a mixture of local services and national specialist organisations. Advocacy training has been developed internally and delivered to agencies outside of housing to develop an understanding of housing pathways; however, an external domestic abuse and housing coordinator will be recruited to oversee the training pathway.

Learning sessions with experts by experience have been implemented for frontline officers, the use of lived experience and co-production are also key areas for development. This mixed approach to procurement provides opportunities to both build relationships and highlight pathways to support with local services, as well as exposure to national best practice from specialist organisations working outside of Gloucestershire, such as DAHA.

This work is funded through Gloucestershire County Council, allocated through their DLUHC funding for support in safe accommodation to the Strategic Housing Partnership. For the next three years, £100,000 per year will go towards the development of a specialist role, champions, and training.

### **What are the key features of training that is currently or soon to be provided for staff?**

The immediate training will focus on some of the key themes and priorities identified through monitoring practice and recurrent barriers, as well as the training gaps that were identified in the assessment completed. Some examples are:

**1. Trauma Informed Practice**

*For operational staff.*

**2. Trauma Informed Systems**

*For strategic staff.*

**3. Psychologically Informed Environments**

**4. Reflective Practice**

**5. Identifying and responding to domestic abuse**

*Designed for different housing roles/settings – e.g., repairs and estates operatives; contact centre staff/rough sleeping services; private rented sector etc.*

**6. DASH masterclass and train the trainer.**

**7. Domestic abuse policies**

*For local authorities and housing providers.*

**8. Accredited training**

*Domestic Abuse specialist roles within housing.*

**9. Domestic Abuse Champions scheme**

**10. Identifying and responding to domestic abuse when it is misidentified as Anti-Social Behaviour.**

To address these gaps in training, and create a trauma informed system, the partnership is looking at how we embed reflective practice at both strategic and operational levels. This includes:

- Considering how learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews is disseminated and acted upon, system-wide in Gloucestershire.
- Strategic Housing Partnership are looking at how we work across complex systems to drive forwards systems change and develop trauma informed organisations.
- Regularly meeting with colleagues from neighbouring areas to share good practice.
- Attending the DAHA regional group for the South-West, a great forum for learning what other local authorities are doing in terms of practice and training.

### **What have the outcomes and impact been?**

The training has not yet commenced so it is too early to measure impact and outcomes. Different ways of measuring the impact on practice will be included through group reflective sessions, service user feedback or by tracking referrals into MARAC and our domestic abuse support service.

## North Yorkshire Council

North Yorkshire are in the process of developing a domestic abuse training plan, with many of the available courses to be rolled out in late 2023 and 2024.

### **Why did you create a plan to provide training to staff on domestic abuse?**

North Yorkshire are working towards DAHA accreditation and want to improve staff knowledge with a consistent training package.

### **How did you develop a training plan for staff?**

Before developing the internal training offer, North Yorkshire met with several other local authorities to find out what they were delivering. They were made aware of the [Welsh Government Framework](#) and were informed that several local authorities in the northeast already use a similar training framework. To identify the needs of the service, they consulted with key staff and were guided by DAHA. They decided to create a version to meet their own needs.

North Yorkshire council have a large number of staff that need training, so decided it would be cost effective to employ a training officer. They used DLUHC new burdens funding to fund the training officer post for two years. The training officer worked for a neighbouring domestic abuse support agency so had a lot of experience. North Yorkshire also linked in with local partners and existing staff in the training and learning department who delivered safeguarding and domestic abuse training to other departments.

### **What are the key features of training that is currently or soon to be provided for staff?**

#### **1. Level 1 domestic abuse awareness**

*For customer services staff and a similar package for all staff in Housing which includes housing management and housing options teams.*

#### **2. Level 1 domestic abuse awareness**

*For team leaders and managers in Housing and Customer Services, which includes how to support staff who are working on cases featuring domestic abuse.*

#### **3. Level 2 domestic abuse awareness**

*For staff in housing who work regularly with tenants and residents for example neighbourhood managers, housing options officers, rough sleeping staff, housing support officers.*

#### **4. Level 3 domestic abuse awareness**

#### **5. DASH risk assessment and MARAC**

*A short 1-hour course aimed at managers in housing, neighbourhood managers, housing options officers, rough sleeping staff, housing support officers.*

#### **6. Introduction to Intersectionality**



*A short 10-minute video available on our e-learning platform (learningzone).*

### **7. Trauma-informed**

*We are working with partners towards offering this training.*

### **8. Housing Law and domestic abuse**

*Delivered by and independent expert to our housing options team.*

### **9. Domestic abuse champions scheme**

*The champions will meet quarterly and provide training as required.*

### **What have the outcomes and impact been?**

It is too early to measure the impact. We did send out a staff survey as recommended by DAHA and will repeat the survey at a later date to see the impact.

## Durham County Council

Durham county council worked in conjunction with the Durham Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG) to identify and respond to the training needs of local service providers as well as the local authority.

### **Why did you create a plan to provide training to staff on domestic abuse?**

Following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the additional responsibilities awarded to local authorities, the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group in Durham identified a need for consistent core domestic abuse training to be developed and delivered to local authority staff and multi-agency partners.

### **How did you develop a training plan for staff?**

To identify the needs of the service Durham carried out an audit of case files and a consultation with the key local stakeholders.

To procure the right training they worked closely with other workforce development officers from other local authorities and Northumbria violence reduction unit (VRU). They also utilised the local domestic abuse specialist service (Harbour) and experts including the academics Jane Monckton-Smith and Emma Katz. Durham is developing the training offer with a multi-agency development group and the mentioned academics.

### **What are the key features of training that is currently or soon to be provided for staff?**

Core Domestic Abuse Training – Domestic Abuse Practitioner Standards:

#### **1. Level 1 Basic Awareness**

*for all staff*

#### **2. Level 2 Ask and Action**

*for all staff who are front facing and could be in a position to receive a disclosure)*

#### **3. Level 3 Trusted Professional**

*for all practitioners who work with those subject to domestic abuse over long periods of time but who are not specialist domestic abuse practitioners*

#### **4. Coercive Control Workshop**

*For:*

- *Child and Young Person (CYP) and families*
- *Adult and Health Services*
- *Available to all staff*

### **Whole System Awareness Raising:**

*Available to all staff*

## **5. Support to Victims**

*Including:*

- *Victim focus training, Harbour Support briefing, WPC training*
- *Inclusive practice, including honour base abuse/forced marriage/female genital mutilation training, LGBT+ experiences of domestic abuse, Traveller Movement*
- *Different types of abuse, including digital stalking, coercive control, economic abuse, predatory marriage*

## **6. Working with those who cause harm**

*For those who work in child and young person's service/police/probation/drug and alcohol service only*

### **7. Respect young people's programme**

*For those who work in child and young person's service /youth justice system/domestic abuse specialist service only)*

### **8. Child and adolescent to parent violence and abuse (CAPVA) awareness**

*Available to all staff*

### **9. Domestic abuse recovering together (DART)**

*Early Help and domestic abuse specialist service only*

### **10. The impact of domestic abuse on children**

*Available to all staff*

### **11. Homicide timeline**

*Available to all staff*

### **12. Work based support**

*WPC training/Manager Briefings and further training*

### **13. Bespoke training on request**

*DASH, language, coercive control, and the impact on children*

All the training is available across a multi-agency platform at no cost.

Key practitioners from the local authority housing staff and some of the larger social housing providers have been trained to deliver domestic abuse practitioner level one basic awareness, and in future, level two. This is to enable the delivery of in-house training to all staff.

## **What have the outcomes and impact been?**

Feedback has been extremely positive, and Durham have started to see some indicators to changes in practice and suggestions from practitioners as to how they can change and adapt their practice. For example, a more consistent approach to using the DASH, the establishment of domestic abuse practice leads across the Early Help service, the commitment from the local authority housing service and some social housing providers to support the delivery of the core domestic abuse training and ensure their staff attend this training.

## Hartlepool Council

Hartlepool council have strengthened the training which was already in place for staff in adult and children's social care and extended availability to housing staff.

### **Why did you create a plan to provide training to staff on domestic abuse?**

Some training was in place, but this was reviewed following the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and associated new duties.

### **How did you develop a training plan for staff?**

Training needs were identified following a needs assessment and consultation with staff. The dedicated training team identify gaps and work in a progressive way to develop the offer, consulting with the local contracted domestic abuse provider. Following annual staff reviews, training needs are discussed, and a plan is prepared in consultation with Heads of Service and the training department.

### **What are the key features of training that is currently or soon to be provided for staff?**

#### **1. Domestic Abuse and Intimate Partner Violence**

*How to identify domestic abuse and coercive control, how victims can be protected.*

#### **2. Hidden Harm: Parental Substance Misuse, Parental Mental Ill-Health and domestic abuse**

*A detailed awareness of the toxic trio and how children are affected.*

#### **3. Safe and Together**

*Introductory one day course or four-day course dependent on job role – this is the practice model.*

#### **4. DASH Risk Assessment**

#### **5. Digitally Assisted Stalking Awareness**

#### **6. Domestic Abuse Awareness - Impact on the Child**

#### **7. Understanding Domestic Violence and Abuse**

*Level 1 and 2 eLearning - NICE guidance for social care practitioners*

### **What have the outcomes and impact been?**

Staff awareness is improving, and risk assessments are becoming normal practice. There is a constant push to improve understanding of domestic abuse. It is too early to understand the impact on victims and survivors, but feedback is positive from staff who have attended training.

## Wokingham Borough Council

Wokingham Borough council procured training from local services and partners to maximise training options.

### **Why did you create a plan to provide training to staff on domestic abuse?**

To ensure that all staff who may encounter anyone affected by domestic abuse have the confidence and skills to be able to appropriately respond.

### **How did you develop a training plan for staff?**

To identify the needs of the service, a review was undertaken of the training options available to staff.

Wokingham's domestic abuse commissioned service deliver the core sessions of the training plan. Having the locally commissioned domestic abuse service provider deliver sessions is found to be very beneficial in terms of building confidence in practitioners to refer clients to the commissioned service as well as building links between organisations and strengthen referral pathways.

In order to maximise training options, a lot of sessions are delivered with no cost, either by partner organisations or through organisations who have been awarded funding to deliver training (e.g. some Shelter courses) as well as many organisations opening up their training to multi agency partners.

### **What are the key features of training that is currently or soon to be provided for staff?**

Wokingham have developed a training programme for specific roles which details mandatory sessions relevant to the role as well as optional sessions which are recommended. There are also mandatory e learning for all staff on safeguarding, which includes domestic abuse.

The following training is seen as core, with a face to face (full day) and virtual session (half day) offered on a rolling basis:

1. Domestic abuse basic awareness
2. Supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse
3. The impact of domestic abuse on children
4. Working with perpetrators of domestic abuse

Other training sessions include:

1. Risk assessment and DASH
2. Safety planning
3. Trauma informed practice
4. Domestic abuse in the workplace training for managers

5. Intersectionality and cultural competency
6. Vicarious trauma, burnout and overload
7. One off sessions based on emerging issues.

Training sessions are delivered in house, by specialist domestic abuse services, specialist housing services (including Shelter) or other professionals based on the subject matter.

Training aims and objectives are developed for each training session to be relevant to the target audience but will always include best practice, recent research and practical application.

Gaps are identified through case dip sampling and staff feedback with sessions commissioned or developed to address these gaps.

A training plan is created annually for core training sessions detailed above and then developed to include sessions based on emerging needs.

### **What have the outcomes and impact been?**

An evaluation is completed after each training session and then three months post-training to gain feedback from attendees as to the impact of the training. Reports can be downloaded from our internal training site to collate feedback and inform future training.

By providing training, staff report increased confidence in supporting those affected by domestic abuse and referral routes into specialist services when appropriate.

## Top Tips

Based on the case studies, these are a few top tips for local authorities when developing training plans for staff on domestic abuse.

1. Develop core training modules on domestic abuse which are mandatory for all staff.
2. Tailor domestic abuse training to suit the roles and specific training needs within each team.
3. Work in partnership with organisations across the local area to develop a coordinated community response to domestic abuse.
4. Procure training from a range of providers, including local specialist domestic abuse providers.
5. Develop the use of co-production in training plans.
6. Consult with other local authorities and existing training frameworks i.e. [National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence | GOV.WALES](#)
7. Ensure there is a plan for continuous development of staff.

## What We Do

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for frontline homelessness services. We work to improve services through research, guidance and learning, and campaign for policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

## Homeless Link

Minories House  
2-5 Minories  
London  
EC3N 1BJ

[www.homeless.org.uk](http://www.homeless.org.uk)  
@HomelessLink

**Let's End Homelessness  
Together**

