

Appendix 2 – Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Part 4: Local authority support

Section 57: Support provided by local authorities to victims of domestic abuse

Section 57 (1) of the Act places a duty on the Greater London Authority (GLA) to assess the need for "accommodation-based support" for victims and their children within its area, to prepare and publish a strategy for the delivery of the support within its area, and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy.

"Accommodation-based support" is defined as meaning support, in relation to domestic abuse, for victims and their children who live in "relevant accommodation". Such support may include:

- Overall management of services within safe accommodation – including, the management of staff, payroll, financial management of services and maintaining relationships with the local authority (such functions will often be undertaken by a service manager);
- Support with the day-to-day running of the service, for example scheduling times for counselling sessions, group activities etc.;
- Advocacy support – development of personal safety plans, liaison with other services (for example, GPs and social workers, welfare benefit providers);
- Domestic abuse-prevention advice – support to assist victims to recognise the signs of abusive relationships, to help them remain safe (including online) and to prevent re-victimisation;
- Specialist support for victims with relevant protected characteristics and / or complex needs, for example, translators and interpreters, faith services, mental health advice and support, drug and alcohol advice and support, and immigration advice;
- Children's support – including play therapy and child advocacy;
- Housing-related support – providing housing-related advice and support, for example, securing a permanent home and advice on how to live safely and independently; and
- Counselling and therapy for both adults and children.

What constitutes "relevant accommodation" for these purposes is specified in Domestic Abuse Support (Relevant Accommodation and Housing Benefit and Universal Credit Sanctuary Schemes) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 (SI 2021/991).

The GLA must, in carrying out its functions, give effect to the strategy.

Prior to publication of a strategy the GLA must consult the domestic abuse local partnership board, the London Boroughs and any other persons considered appropriate (for example, local providers of domestic abuse services).

The GPA must keep the strategy under review. It may make any changes to or replace the strategy, and must publish any revised or replacement strategy. The GLA must also keep under review any effect of that strategy on the provision of other local authority support for victims of domestic abuse or their children that is provided or funded by the authority.

The London Boroughs are required to co-operate with the GLA in any way that the GLA considers necessary for the purpose of discharging its functions under section 57, so far as is reasonably practicable, for example, through the provision of information.

The Secretary of State has made the Domestic Abuse Support (Local Authority Strategies and Annual Reports) Regulations 2021, (SI 2021/990), which make provision about the preparation and publication of domestic abuse support strategies.

Section 58 Domestic abuse local partnership boards

Section 58 places a duty on the GLA to appoint a domestic abuse local partnership board for the purposes of advising it authority on the exercise of its functions under section 57 and the provision of other local authority support in the GLA's area.

In addition to a representative from the GLA, is expected to chair the board, the membership must include at least one person representing the interests of London Boroughs; victims of domestic abuse; children of domestic abuse victims; charities and other voluntary organisations that work with victims of domestic abuse; persons who provide or have functions relating to health care services; and policing and criminal justice agencies.

Section 59: places a duty on the GLA to submit an annual report to the Secretary of State on the exercise of the functions under this Part 4 of the Act. This is to help the Government and others to monitor how the new duties on local authorities are working, understand where there may be challenges and how the funding is being used, and help identify and disseminate good practice.

Section 60: places a duty on the Secretary of State to issue guidance to local authorities relating to the exercise of their functions under Part 4 and Local authorities are under a duty to have regard to the guidance when exercising functions under Part 4.