



Safe at Home Project  
Including Housing Providers in Tackling Domestic Violence

**Good Practice Collection**  
Providing better support to survivors of domestic violence



### *Background and introduction*

This collection of good practice aims at contributing to the dissemination of existing good practice on the early identification of signs of domestic violence (DV), particularly through the involvement of housing providers and other ‘unusual allies’. The collection contains 24 good practice projects / programs which were collected in the framework of the ‘Safe at Home’ project, mainly through expert interviews and an online survey which was conducted among social and public housing providers and homeless services in Europe.<sup>1</sup> The collection also contains good practice which was identified during the study visits. During the visits, *Safe at Home* project partners travelled to Ireland, Iceland and Portugal to visit innovative services that provide support to survivors of DV.

### *The ‘Safe at Home’ project*

The main aim of the ‘[Safe at Home](#)’ project is to strengthen the vital role that housing providers can play in responding to DV. Social and public housing providers are in a unique position to identify signs of DV at an early stage because they have so far underused their opportunity to see signs of DV behind closed doors and often have a close relationship with tenants. The project aims at building the capacity of staff working with housing providers (housing officers, repair staff) to identify DV and respond to tenants who are experiencing DV in an appropriate way. The project provided DV-specific training to 25 housing providers in the Netherlands and the UK, reaching out to 1320 members of staff.

This collection contains good practice projects / programs that **contribute to the early identification of the signs of DV and have a clear link to housing**. The collection provides housing providers, homeless services and generic social services with examples of good practice on how to recognize the early signs of DV and to contribute to more safety for tenants and persons accessing homeless services. The collection is also relevant for local policy makers with regards to the presented good practice examples of DV-specific local strategies (barring orders, sanctuary schemes, establishment of local housing providers networks etc.). The good practice collection has three different sections: Good practice in the housing provider sector, in DV-specific support services and in homeless services.

DV can become visible in very different ways, for instance through physical damages of a property (punch marks in walls, smashed doors, broken door locks), physical injuries, violent / anti-social behaviour (loud arguing/ shouting, noise nuisance which is actually domestic abuse), submissive/ frightened behaviour (by survivor of DV) or stalking. Rent arrears and specifically economic abuse might also be a sign of DV.

Persons who have experienced or are experiencing DV are referred to as ‘survivors’. This term wants to emphasize women’s strengths and capacity to overcome DV and lead a self-determined life (unlike the term ‘victim’ which conveys a passive, enduring perspective on women with experience of DV).

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<sup>1</sup> The online survey was conducted during May and June 2017. 234 respondents working with housing providers and homeless services all over Europe participated.



Women, men and children are affected by and survivors of domestic violence. However, as DV is deeply gendered, it disproportionately affects women and children.

HP stands for housing provider.

*General comment:*

It should be emphasized that each housing option has to be offered on a case-by-case basis, depending on the survivor's wishes and the various risk factors involved. The risk involved in each DV case needs to be continuously assessed, as risk is not static, also as life circumstances of a survivor might change. This particularly applies to measures like Sanctuary Schemes or Barring Orders.



#	Good practice	What makes it a good practice?	How does it work?	Country	Reference (if available)
<b>Good practices from housing providers</b>					
1	Priority ticketing of public / social HPs	get survivors housed more quickly	"Extra points" to move up on waiting list in PT; priority in NL	PT, NL	
2	Sanctuary schemes	allow survivors to stay in their homes with added measures of security. Allow women to keep their support networks (children can attend the same school etc.); important symbolic aspect that women can stay in their home.	Involve the installation of different physical features in survivor's home: extra door/windows locks, emergency button (direct connection to police), in most violent cases 'panic room' fitted into the property.	UK	
3	Barring orders	symbolic aspect that women stay in home whereas perpetrators have to leave; different modalities (1 <sup>st</sup> time short order, followed by longer order approved by court)		several countries (UK, IE, DE, AT, BE, FI, NL etc)	<a href="#">WAVE report 15 enlists countries with barring orders</a>
4	Supported transitional housing for survivors (Sonas)	Safe Ireland rolled out Sonas' model of 'supported transitional housing in a DV context' in whole Ireland; establish empowerment practice as core of DV staff training.	Safe IE provides informal and formal support to frontline DV services; does DV policy review for DV services	IE	<a href="http://www.safeireland.ie/about-us/what-we-do/">http://www.safeireland.ie/about-us/what-we-do/</a>
5	Safer Places	"drop-in" services are held every weekday in every area where clients can meet with DA Practitioner; peer support groups for different groups of survivors (incl. LGBTI, survivors w/ health issues...); extensive housing provision & floating	safe accommodations in different settings from private apartment to shared apartment/house w/ floating support covering all kinds of needs (psycho-social, debt ...); outreach team	UK	<a href="http://www.safeplaces.co.uk/">http://www.safeplaces.co.uk/</a>



		support covering all support needs (see next column)			
6	Local Housing Providers Network	individual referral network among 4 social HPs in the Nijkerk region (NL).	4 social HPs in Nijkerk region (exists in other regions)	NL	
7	Pan-London Housing Reciprocal (Safer London)	collaboration between local authorities and registered HPs in London to support DV survivors into housing and provide more options to survivors living in London.	alternative housing route that can be utilised if a local authority or HP cannot rehouse tenant from within own stock	UK (London)	<a href="https://saferlondon.org.uk/services/housing-policy/">https://saferlondon.org.uk/services/housing-policy/</a>
8	DAHA alliance - Peabody, STADV, Gentoo	The DAHA alliance developed a first accreditation which reviews an organisations whole response to DV (see good practice #9). The DAHA alliance advocates strongly for this accreditation model, among housing providers but also other services. DV-related training for staff plays a central role in the DAHA accreditation scheme (how to identify DV, sign post to specialist DV staff etc.).	DAHA Alliance is an alliance of 2 big HPs (Peabody & Gentoo) & one specialist DV 2 <sup>nd</sup> tier organization (STADV); accredits organizations based on DAHA model. DAHA does lobbying and is involved in research.	UK	<a href="https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/">https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/</a>
9	DAHA accreditation	First accreditation for housing providers that looks at an organisations whole response to DV. It looks at 8 priority areas (see next column) which are key in ensuring that the organisation is responding well and also there is standardisation across the UK.	DAHA accreditation reviews the whole organizations response to DV for 8 priority areas: Policies and Procedures, Case Management, Risk Management, Partnership Working, Equality and Diversity, Perpetrator Management, Staff Training and Publicity & Awareness.	UK	<a href="https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/">https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/</a>
10	Peabody Housing Association	Peabody are seen as best practice in the UK for the way they identify and respond to domestic abuse as a housing provider. They are one of the co-founders of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA). They have also trained over 50 Housing Providers internationally on domestic abuse and the vital role housing play and this work started in 2009. The training is mandatory for any front-line staff and as a result their specialist community safety team gets	The Peabody Group provides homes and services to more than 111,000 residents and 8,000 care and support customers.  They have a specialist Community Safety Team that deals with domestic abuse and 5 Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) who offer support to residents and any staff affected. There is	UK, London	<a href="https://www.peabody.org.uk/resident-services/safer-communities/domestic-abuse">https://www.peabody.org.uk/resident-services/safer-communities/domestic-abuse</a>



		a new case of domestic abuse every 3 days. Their policies and procedures are used as best practice examples by the rest of the UK housing sector and they have formalised partnerships w/ police, council & other local specialist services to support survivors.	an annual training programme for frontline staff and management which helps staff to identify signs/ raises awareness of DV & how to respond included an national risk assessment and onward referral to MARAC (see below)		
11	Gentoo	specialist team which exclusively works on DA; “make staff understand” as key element of DA awareness raising, all staff do yearly safeguarding and DA training; 25 specially trained Domestic and Sexual Violence Champions signpost staff to support. Gentoo are also part of UK Parliament Employers Initiative on Domestic Abuse.	housing provision (29 000 properties) & wrap-around support services for victims and perpetrators	UK	<a href="https://www.gentoo.org.uk/">https://www.gentoo.org.uk/</a>
12	County Durham Housing Group	specific focus on working w/ young people on DA (and ASB), awareness raising work on key social issues - DA, ASB, hate crime, involve wide range of actors (see next column)	Educate youths & raise awareness on key social issues associated with ASB, hate crime and domestic abuse; many actors involved (city council & Neighbourhood Wardens, ASB Officers, Children & Adult Services, Housing Solutions, Education, NHS Mental Health services & Substance misuse support services, Probation Service); DA support services 1-day time limit to establish initial contact for cases of DA	UK	<a href="https://www.countydurhamhousinggroup.co.uk/about-us/our-policies/">https://www.countydurhamhousinggroup.co.uk/about-us/our-policies/</a> <a href="#">ASB policy</a>
13	Riverside (social housing provider)	collaborates with ‘SeaChange’ organization which provides behaviour change programme for perpetrators; strong housing focus (support tenants to maintain housing or during rehousing).	collaboration with ‘SeaChange’ organization which provides behaviour change programme for perpetrators, support focuses on ensuring survivors have necessary skills to maintain their accommodation, provides support to maintain housing or accompaniment into rehousing support (and refuge).	UK	<a href="https://www.riverside.org.uk/">https://www.riverside.org.uk/</a>



Good practices from DV-specialist services					
14	Kadera	provides floating support for survivors with the main aim to stop violence at an early stage and with particular attention on integrating perpetrators in the support process.	Aim to identify and stop violence at an early stage - less often need for shelter, transitional, permanent housing. Perpetrator is conceived as part of the situation of DV and a possible solution, keeping victim(s) safe. Kadera has also developed a guideline on DV and provides DV-specific training to housing providers.	NL	<a href="http://www.kadera.nl/menu.php?menu=267">http://www.kadera.nl/menu.php?menu=267</a>
15	Signalenkaart	'Signalenkaart' ('signals card') is a checklist of indicators that could point to DV/ child abuse (for kids of different ages), addresses different types of abuse (derailed care, human trafficking, animal abuse) and violence.	easy to use online tool to do a first check on indicators of DV & other forms of abuse (available in English & Dutch)	NL	<a href="https://signalenkaart.nl/?lang=en">https://signalenkaart.nl/?lang=en</a>
16	Standing Together Against Domestic Violence (STADV)	establishes local partnerships and networks to create a coordinated community response to DV (which involves all relevant local services); provides training on how to support survivors, on mental health and DV related trauma.	STADV co-founded DAHA and currently coordinates a number of innovative projects around DV and housing.	UK, London	<a href="http://www.standingtogether.org.uk/">http://www.standingtogether.org.uk/</a>
17	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)	periodical meeting of all relevant key agencies to discuss high-risk cases in a specific local authority area (e.g. city district).	Victim focused information sharing and risk management meeting attended by all key agencies, where high risk cases are discussed; involves police, independent DV advisors & local specialist DV services, HPs, homeless services, health, substance misuse & mental health services, education, child protection etc.	throughout the UK	<a href="http://www.reducingtherisk.org.uk/cms/content/marac">http://www.reducingtherisk.org.uk/cms/content/marac</a>
18	Orange House (Oranje Huis), Blijfgroep	The Orange House is a shelter with a publicly known address, which offers a safe but open space that allows survivors to maintain contacts with which they break through the isolation, which is often so	The house aims at involving survivors and perpetrators ('the whole family') when women are living in the Orange House to	NL	<a href="http://www.blijfgroep.nl/oranje-huis">http://www.blijfgroep.nl/oranje-huis</a>



		characteristic of DV. Support is provided for and tailored to all involved persons/ family members.	facilitate a breakthrough in the support process.		
19	Ask me programme, (Women's Aid)	provides training to <i>any</i> community member on responding to DV and DV disclosure in a helpful and appropriate way. Aims at providing more support for survivors by involving the <i>whole</i> community.	Often, the first person that a survivor speaks to is a friend, family member or neighbour. But lack of understanding and fear can prevent people from responding in a helpful and appropriate way. The 'Ask me' programme offers free 2-day training course to inspire community members to become an 'ask me ambassador'. Professional staff follows up on the housing part.	UK	<a href="https://www.womensaid.org.uk/our-approach-change-that-lasts/askme/">https://www.womensaid.org.uk/our-approach-change-that-lasts/askme/</a>
20	Dutch Reporting Code on Domestic Violence and Child Abuse	national level DV guideline which addresses a wide range of professionals and aims at involving them in identifying DV. Provides detailed guidance on signs of DV, how to respond, whom to refer to etc. (see next column).	Provides guidance on signs to check on children and parents, specific signs for professionals working in healthcare or education, how to address suspected DV with the affected person, which expert services to contact once DV is identified, in which cases to arrange assistance yourself vs. when to file a report.	NL	<a href="https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2013/03/14/model-reporting-code-domestic-violence-and-child-abuse">https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2013/03/14/model-reporting-code-domestic-violence-and-child-abuse</a>
21	Together Against Violence  (joint project of Human Rights Office Reykjavik & Reykjavik Metropolitan Area Police)	community-based response to DV which involves police, city council, women shelters, health care services, social & child protection workers. Brings police officer, social worker, child protection worker to the DV scene who jointly assess the situation and provide support to survivor. The Police Prosecutors go through all the cases and ensure they have been classified accurately, follow up with the relevant police stations to recommend	The project has a Steering Group composed of Police, City of Reykjavik, The Women's Shelter and Health Care Centres (midwives). It aims at improving support for survivor and perpetrator by a strongly integrated response from relevant service. Evidence shows that reported DV cases to have risen (from 20 per month in year before project started to 50 in year 1).	IS	<a href="https://reykjavik.is/node/20157">https://reykjavik.is/node/20157</a>





		changes / actions. Involves expert DV prosecutor who revises the working procedures of the police.			
<b>Good practice from homeless service providers</b>					
22	St Mungo's	homeless service who took on gender- and trauma-informed approach in supporting women in situation of homelessness; joint up work with local DV services & MARACs ; currently developed Women's strategy	homeless service provider; supports homeless women in gender- & trauma-informed way; has been reviewed by AVA (see above)	UK	<a href="https://www.mungos.org/">https://www.mungos.org/</a>
23	Brighton Women's Centre (in collaboration w/ Werman church homeless services)	close collaboration between specialist DV & homeless services to provide survivor w/ both housing & floating support. Good example of collaboration between DV-specialist service and homeless service.	Women's center is specialized in supporting women with multiple vulnerabilities.	UK	<a href="http://www.womenscentre.org.uk/services/inspire/">http://www.womenscentre.org.uk/services/inspire/</a>
24	East London Women's Project	provision of support services & accommodation assistance for GBV survivors, gender-sensitive approach for women w/ multiple disadvantages	full wrap- around support & move-on and assistance to secure accommodation	UK London	<a href="http://newsite.elhp.org.uk/homelessness/east-london-womens-project/">http://newsite.elhp.org.uk/homelessness/east-london-womens-project/</a>