**To:** The Kent Housing Group

**Subject:** The Domestic Abuse Bill

**Classification**: Unrestricted

**Date:** 2nd December 2020

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| The KHG are asked to:* Consider the impact of the Domestic Abuse Bill on how we collect data on and manage accommodation-based support services
* how can we improve collection of data moving forward?
* Discuss the formation of the Local Partnership Board and how this Board may work with the Kent Housing Group in future.
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**The Domestic Abuse Bill**

The Domestic Abuse Bill is a piece of legislation which was first introduced in July 2019 and re-introduced in March 2020. The Bill has moved through the Commons and is currently awaiting a date for its second reading in the House of Lords. Subject to the Bill receiving Royal Assent it is expected that it will come into effect from April 2021.

The Bill establishes a domestic abuse commissioner (Nicole Jacobs) as a statutory office holder, the commissioner will prioritise a number of areas including mapping domestic abuse services nationally (to end the postcode lottery for survivors), increase the recognition of children as survivors, and improve the response to domestic abuse.

Among other duties the Bill creates a statutory definition of domestic abuse (which includes coercive and financial control), provides for a new domestic abuse protection notice and domestic abuse protection order (which replace DVPNs and DVPOs) and places a duty on local authorities to provide support to victims of DA and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation[[1]](#footnote-1).

It is also important to highlight that Domestic Abuse Bill will give priority housing status to all those fleeing home due to domestic abuse independently of other vulnerabilities. This may impact pressure on housing authorities to home those with priority status.

**Duties for local authorities**

Tier 1 and tier 2 local authorities have been asked to prepare for these new burdens, including through establishing a Local Partnership Board which will be created with Districts, the PCC, Police, CCG, Probation and Providers. This Board will be focused on accommodation-based support.

The Local Partnership Board will need to complete a needs assessment of accommodation-based support across voluntary sector, district, and county provision and through this needs assessment identify gaps in service provision and commission to meet these gaps. The MHCLG will shortly release a template instructing how this information should be collected however KCC with the help of district colleagues, have started to map available known provision.

 Responses have primarily been around sanctuary schemes (Appendix A) and known commissioned refuge, but as we extend these discussions to gain a better understanding of unmet need we will work together to collect information on when people are being rehoused due to/linked to DA, and understand aspects of housing such as “move on” accommodation which have currently not been included within data.

A scoping discussion was held at the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group around the formation of the Local Partnership Board. As shown in Appendix B, domestic abuse governance is complex however with the Bil’ls focus on accommodation-based support a link with the Kent Housing Group could be established.

We are at early stages of working to identify who will be represented at the Board and how this will feed into existing governance structures and ask for KHG’s thoughts on this.

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	+ how can we improve collection of data moving forward?
* Discuss the formation of the Local Partnership Board and how this Board may work with the Kent Housing Group in future.

Contacts:

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| Serine.annan-vetch@kent.gov.uk | Debra.Exall@kent.gov.uk | Chibuogu.nyananyo@kent.gov.uk  |

**Appendix A: information collected (outside commissioned contracts)**

* Maidstone Sanctuary Schemes (level of referrals)
* Swale Specialist Safe Accommodation
* Gravesham Sanctuary Schemes
* North Kent – specialist housing

**Appendix B – Current Governance Structures**



1. Accommodation based support includes emergency re-housing, refuge, specialist safe accommodation, disbursed accommodation, sanctuary and move on/secondary accommodation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)