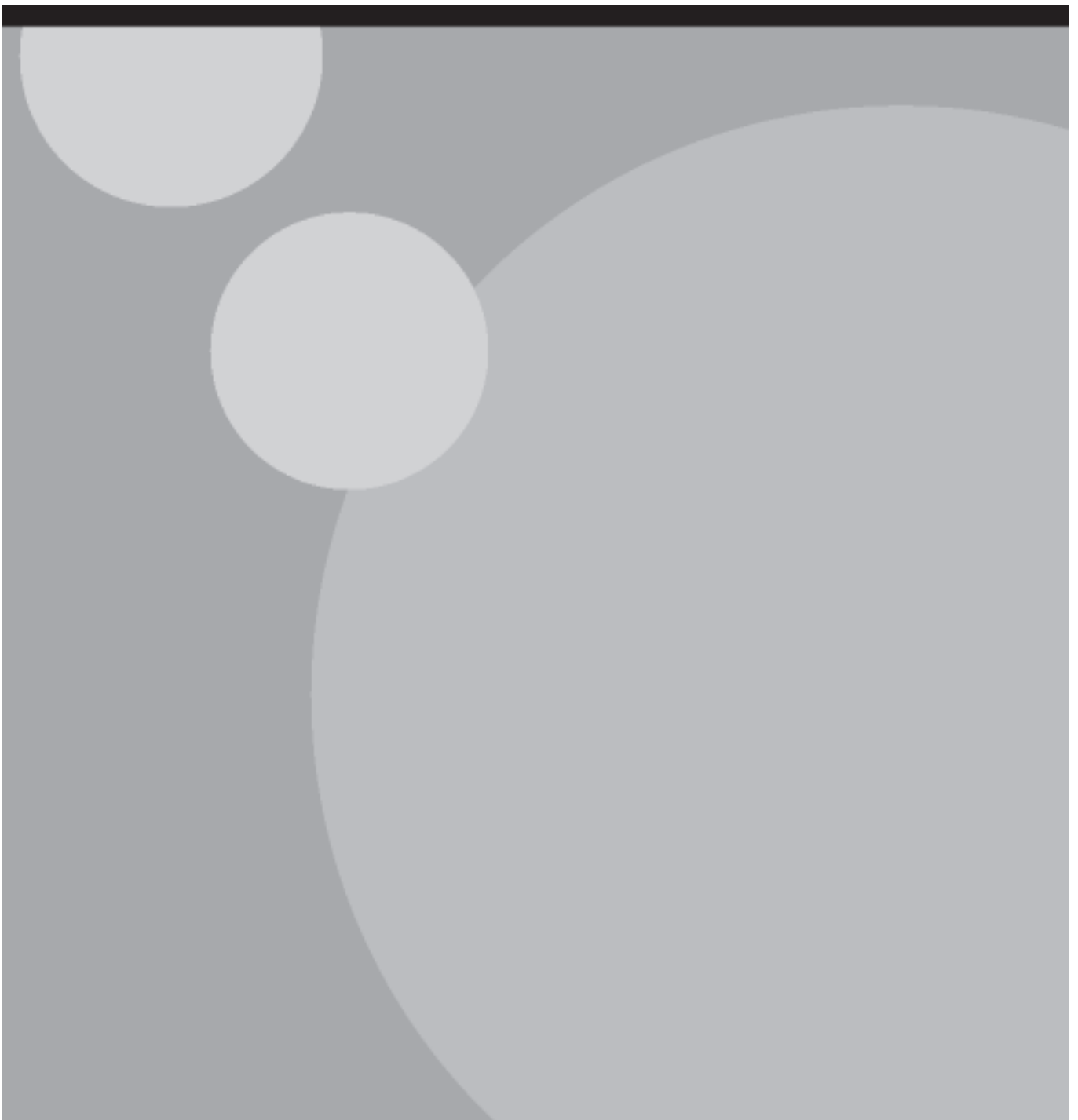




The effectiveness of schemes to enable households  
at risk of domestic violence to remain in their homes  
**Research report**





The effectiveness of schemes to enable  
households at risk of domestic violence to stay in  
their own homes

**Research report**

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## List of acronyms

**ALMO:** arms-length management organisation

**BAMER:** black, Asian, minority ethnic, and refugee

**BVPI:** best value performance indicators

**CAADA:** Coordinated Action against Domestic Abuse

**CCTV:** closed circuit television camera

**CDRP:** crime and disorder reduction partnership

**CLG:** Communities and Local Government

**CRU:** crime reduction unit

**DALO:** domestic abuse liaison officer (police)

**DASH:** domestic abuse, stalking and honour (based violence)

**DV:** domestic violence

**IDAP:** integrated domestic abuse programme

**IDVA:** independent domestic violence adviser

**LGA:** Local Government Association

**LSVT:** large scale voluntary transfers

**MARAC:** multi-agency risk assessment conference

**NSPCC:** National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

**Nis:** national indicators

**NIS:** national indicator set

**PSA:** public sector agreement

**PRS:** private rented sector

**RSL:** registered social landlord

**VAP:** violence against the person

**VEV:** visual evidence for victims

**VSO:** victim support officer

## Glossary of terms

**ALMO:** arms-length management organisation responsible for social housing management on behalf of a local authority.

**CAADA:** Coordinated Action against Domestic Abuse is a charity established to encourage the use of independent advocacy as a way to increase the safety of survivors.

**Domestic violence:** The government definition of domestic violence is: *“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality”<sup>1</sup>.*

**Floating support:** This is flexible support provided by workers who visit people in their own home.

**Freedom programmes:** Programmes which seek to increase understanding of domestic violence amongst those affected by it. Freedom programmes cover, for example: the behaviour of perpetrators; the effects of domestic violence on victims and children; and, how to recognise an abuser. Freedom programmes also work with survivors to develop their confidence and self-esteem; provide practical advice about sources of help and support; and provide an opportunity for survivors to share their experiences. Separate freedom programmes for abusers are available in some areas.

**Homelessness:** Broadly speaking, somebody is statutorily homeless if they do not have accommodation that they have a legal right to occupy, which is accessible and physically available to them (and their household) and which it would be reasonable for them to continue to live in. It would not be reasonable for someone to continue to live in their home, for example, if that was likely to lead to violence against them (or a member of their family)<sup>2</sup>.

**Home Link alarm:** a Home Link alarm connects directly to the police or to a care control centre.

**Housing options team:** Following the Homelessness Act (2002) there has been an increasing emphasis on the prevention of homelessness. Housing options teams, based within local housing authorities, are part of the preventative approach. These

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<sup>1</sup>Home Office Domestic Violence mini-site at: [www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/dv/dv01.htm](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/dv/dv01.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Communities and Local Government, (2006) *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities* London: Communities and Local Government, p. 10). Available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/homelessnesscode>

teams provide advice and assistance, including advocacy and mediation, to housing applicants on options for remaining in their current accommodation or finding alternative accommodation. This includes, for example, helping applicants to access rent deposit schemes to secure tenancies in the private rented sector. CLG is currently piloting 'Enhanced Housing Options Approach' which provides more holistic advice and support to a 'wider audience'<sup>3</sup>.

**IDAP:** integrated domestic abuse programmes are programmes for perpetrators of domestic abuse who have been convicted and are run by probation services.

**IDVA:** independent domestic violence advisers (IDVAs) are trained specialists whose goal is the safety of survivors of domestic violence, ultimately to help them and their children move safely towards living violence free lives. An independent domestic violence advocacy service involves the professional provision of advice, information and support to survivors of intimate partner violence living in the community about the range, effectiveness and suitability of options to improve their safety and that of their children. This advice must be based on a thorough understanding and assessment of risk and its management, where possible as part of a multi-agency risk management strategy or MARAC process.

**Injunction:** An injunction is a court order that requires someone to do or not to do something. The party that fails to adhere to the injunction faces civil or criminal penalties. There are two main types of injunction available under Part IV of the Family Law Act 1996:

- A non-molestation order: A non-molestation order is used to deter someone from causing or threatening violence to the applicant or to any children. The Act does not define molestation but it can include: intimidation, pestering, threats and harassment<sup>4</sup>.
- An occupation order: Its purpose is to protect people who experience violence in a familial type relationship. An occupation order regulates the occupation of the home shared by the couple and their children to protect any party or children from domestic violence. The order can exclude an abuser from the property altogether, or divide the property to exclude him/her from part of the accommodation. If a respondent has already left the property, an occupation order may, therefore, be used to prevent him/her from re-entering and/or coming within a certain area of the property<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> See: *Expanding Choice, Addressing Need: Addressing need through the Enhanced Housing Options Approach*. Available at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingmanagementcare/enhancedhousingoptions/>

<sup>4</sup> See: Ministry of Justice (2007) *Domestic Violence: A guide to Civil Remedies and Criminal Sanctions*, London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: [http://www.family-justice-council.org.uk/docs/DV\\_Guide\\_March\\_2007\\_-\\_English.pdf](http://www.family-justice-council.org.uk/docs/DV_Guide_March_2007_-_English.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> See Ministry of Justice (2007) above.



- More recently, with the implementation of the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007 in November 2008, it is now also possible to obtain a Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO). The court can make an order preventing someone from being forced into a marriage including being taken to another country and it can also initiate protective steps to help someone after a forced marriage has taken place.

**LSVT:** large scale voluntary transfers. It can also be called local stock voluntary transfers if the number of properties is relatively small. This is in reference to the movement of ownership of council housing stock from local authorities to housing associations.

**MARAC:** multi-agency risk assessment conference. A multi-agency risk Assessment conference (MARAC) is part of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse, incorporating representatives from statutory, community and voluntary agencies working with victims/survivors, children and the alleged perpetrator.

**NIS:** national indicator set. The national indicator set (NIS)<sup>6</sup> replaced BVPIs and all other existing sets of indicators in 2008.

**Osman Warning:** an official warning made to an individual by the police that they are at risk of being killed by someone who appears to have the 'capability to make good their threat'.

**P1E Data:** statistical returns made by local housing authorities about their activity under the homelessness legislation, including the number of homelessness acceptances, and the number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter, collated and published by central government as the official homelessness statistics.

**PSA:** public service agreement. The Government introduced public service agreements in 1998 and these are now a key step in the budget allocation process for Government departments and agencies, setting out the level of service delivery expected in return for the public investment made. PSAs are set out in documents called delivery agreements.

**Sanctuary:** A property where security measures have been installed in order that households at risk of domestic violence are able to remain safely in their own accommodation if they choose to do so.

**Sanctuary room:** a Sanctuary room is created by replacing a door to a main room, often the bedroom, with a solid core door. The Sanctuary room door is reversed to

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<sup>6</sup> See CLG (2007) *The New Performance Framework for Local Authorities & Local Authority Partnerships: Single set of National Indicators*, London: HM Government. Available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/doc/517909.doc>

open outwards; the frame is reinforced and additional locks and bolts and a door viewer are fitted. This provides a safe room where household members can call and wait safely for the police.

**Sanctuary Scheme:** A multi-agency victim centred initiative which aims to enable households at risk of violence to remain in their own homes and reduce repeat victimisation through the provision of enhanced security measures (Sanctuary) and support.

**Specialist Domestic Violence Courts:** Specialist Domestic Violence Courts represent a partnership approach to domestic violence by the police, prosecutors, court staff, the probation service and specialist support services for victims. Magistrates sitting in these courts are fully aware of the approach and have received additional training. These court systems provide a specialised way of dealing with domestic violence cases in magistrates' courts. They refer to the approach of a whole system, rather than simply a court building or jurisdiction. Agencies work together to identify, track and risk assess domestic violence cases, support victims of domestic violence and share information better so that more offenders are brought to justice.

**Visual evidence for victims<sup>7</sup>:** a new initiative which allows victims of abuse who are not yet ready to report attacks to the police to report them to a voluntary agency. This evidence can then be used at a later date to report a crime to the police should the client choose to.

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<sup>7</sup> For more information on VEV see: <http://www.vev.org.uk/>

# Executive summary

## Introduction

In November 2008 Communities and Local Government commissioned the Centre for Housing Policy, working in association with the Centre for Criminal Justice, Economics and Psychology, at the University of York to conduct research on the effectiveness of schemes to enable households at risk of domestic violence to remain in their own homes. Such schemes are usually called Sanctuary Schemes.

## Background to the research

The government definition of domestic violence is: *“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality”*.

Domestic violence accounts for between 16 to 25 per cent of all recorded violent crime and costs the various agencies that deal with it in excess of £23bn a year. It occurs across society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth and geography; however, it consists mainly of violence by men against women. On average, almost two women in England and Wales are killed by a current or former partner every week. Domestic violence also has an impact on children who witness it occurring, and these children are over-represented among those referred to statutory Children and Family teams because of concerns about child abuse and neglect.

The Government’s strategic approach to tackling domestic violence comprises three elements: prevention, protection and justice, and support. The Government has also set out its aims to ensure that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential. Domestic violence is no longer to be treated as a separate area but, rather, mainstreamed and integrated throughout the children’s agenda.

Domestic violence is a major cause of statutory homelessness. CLG statutory homelessness statistics show that domestic violence is consistently reported as the main reason for loss of last settled home for around 13 per cent of homelessness acceptances in England.

Households at risk of domestic violence often have to leave their homes because it is unsafe for them to remain there. Whilst women’s refuges or temporary local authority accommodation can provide safe places for households fleeing domestic violence, many women and children find living in such accommodation stressful. Further, households may have to spend long periods in temporary accommodation before being rehoused.

The move to new settled accommodation can also be disruptive. It can mean another change of school and health services as well as a move away from support networks. Households may then also live in fear of the perpetrator tracking them down to their new address.

Recent developments in countering homelessness due to domestic violence have occurred within the context of a wider drive towards a more pro-active, interventionist focus on preventing homelessness. All local authorities have been encouraged to develop interventions designed to enable households at risk of domestic violence, where appropriate and acceptable to the household, to stay in their own homes. These interventions are usually known as 'Sanctuary Schemes'.

Sanctuary Schemes are victim centred initiatives designed to enable households at risk of domestic violence to remain in their own accommodation, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice and where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation.

Although there are no current national figures on the number of Sanctuary Schemes in England, evidence suggests that they are widespread. A survey of homelessness prevention conducted in 2007 found that about half of England's councils (171 of 354) were operating such schemes (CLG, 2007).

## **Research aims and methods**

The main purpose of the research was to provide firm evidence on the effectiveness of schemes which are intended to enable households at risk of violence to remain safely in their homes. The key aims of the study were to:

- evaluate a range of schemes which enable households at risk of domestic violence to remain safely in their own homes
- identify, based on firm evidence, what factors are key to ensuring this is a safe and sustainable option for households at risk of domestic violence
- highlight examples of good practice in the provision of such schemes and gather evidence on their cost benefits; and
- update existing non-statutory guidance for local authorities on setting up a Sanctuary Scheme, and make recommendations to CLG as to good practice in the provision of these schemes

The research comprised five elements:

- interviews with key national stakeholders
- selection of case study areas
- interviews with service providers and relevant agencies in case study areas
- analysis of monitoring data and other relevant documentation and
- interviews with households (including children) using, and who had used, Sanctuary Schemes

# Key findings

## **The origins and operation of Sanctuary Schemes in the case study areas**

1. Across the case study areas similar reasons were given for introducing Sanctuary Schemes. These included:
  - housing pressures
  - homelessness prevention
  - a more effective response to significant levels of domestic violence
  - cost savings
  - the provision of more choice for households fleeing domestic violence and
  - to meet the expressed needs and preferences of households fleeing domestic violence, including the desire to remain in their homes, to minimise disruption and to avoid having to move to unfamiliar and possibly less desirable areas
2. Concerns about Sanctuary Schemes at the development stage included:
  - the cost of running the service and
  - the appropriateness of Sanctuary rooms
3. The lead agencies responsible for the Sanctuary Scheme were housing providers or specialist domestic violence services, sometimes working in partnership.
4. In some areas specialist domestic violence services or multi-agency domestic violence partnerships were responsible for co-ordinating the service whilst other Sanctuary Schemes employed a full time specialist Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator. In a few areas the Sanctuary Scheme was co-ordinated by housing officers.

## **Sanctuary as a housing option**

5. Across the case study areas, Sanctuary was offered as one housing option. Other accommodation options for households fleeing domestic violence included: a homelessness assessment; management transfers; refuge accommodation; emergency and temporary housing; private sector leases; rent deposit schemes, and mutual exchanges.
6. Service users across the case study areas learned about Sanctuary Schemes from a wide range of agencies, but mainly from the police and specialist domestic violence services.

7. In general, referral processes worked effectively and the criteria for referral to Sanctuary Schemes were very simple:
  - the household had to be resident in the local authority area (or about to be rehoused in the area because of domestic violence)and
  - the household had to be at risk of or experiencing domestic violence
8. There was no evidence that service users were pressured into accepting a Sanctuary. Some service users found it difficult to remember the accommodation options they were offered but all reported that they wished to remain in their homes.
9. Service users chose Sanctuary for several reasons, but key amongst these were:
  - the desire to stay in their homes and to minimise disruption
  - their negative perceptions of alternative options including hostels, refuges and temporary accommodation and
  - the possibility of being rehoused in a less desirable property and/or area

### **Risk assessment and installation of Sanctuary measures**

10. Sanctuaries were thought to be potentially appropriate for all groups and types of household which met the referral criteria. However, the suitability of a Sanctuary would be dependent on a full risk assessment and the needs and preferences of the household.
11. Risk assessments were usually undertaken by several agencies working together. These could include: Sanctuary Scheme workers and/or specialist domestic violence workers; police and fire services.
12. The risk assessment process varied slightly between areas and also differed depending on which agency referred the case but in general it comprised two main elements:
  - an assessment of the case including the needs and preferences of clients and the danger posed by the perpetrator (for example, the whereabouts of the perpetrator, the level of violence and nature of incidents) and
  - an assessment of the property and its suitability for Sanctuary
13. The time taken to install Sanctuary measures varied between a few days and 73 days. However, in most areas, interim security measures such as lock changes and extra locks and Home Link alarms could be installed within a few hours if necessary.

14. There was no 'typical' Sanctuary. The types of installation depended on the degree of risk, the needs of the service user and the type or condition of the property.
15. Sanctuary Schemes had varied experiences of working with private tenants and owner-occupiers, but most had done so successfully.

### **Support for households living in a Sanctuary**

16. Most agency respondents felt that Sanctuary should be one element in a package of measures to support households at risk of domestic violence. However, in practice this did not always appear to be the case. In some areas agency representatives were concerned that Sanctuary Schemes were not referring service users to support services.
17. Although most service users said that they had been offered support and appreciated this, there was evidence of unmet need among service users. A few service users in some case study areas reported that they had had no follow up contact from the Sanctuary Scheme once Sanctuary measures had been installed.
18. Agency respondents and service users reported varying levels of need amongst Sanctuary Scheme service users. While many required little support once they had Sanctuary installed, others required support with domestic violence related issues and a small number with complex needs required more intensive and extensive support.
19. It was clear that service users' needs should be fully assessed and that agencies should reassess these needs following installation of Sanctuary.

### **The effectiveness of Sanctuary**

20. Most agency respondents and service users felt that Sanctuaries were successful in meeting their main aim of providing a safe alternative for households. However, few Sanctuary Schemes were able to provide data beyond immediate outcomes.
21. The type of installations and security measures installed differed both between and within case study areas; in the absence of detailed data on outcomes associated with different types of installations it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the relative merits of different types of Sanctuary measures.
22. There was some variation in the way Sanctuary Schemes operated, in particular in terms of the support offered and provided to service users; the extent to which Sanctuary Schemes monitored service users' progress; and,

though to a lesser degree, the time taken to install Sanctuary measures. Nevertheless, respondents in all areas reported similar outcomes and, for the most part, service users reported positive experiences.

23. Sanctuaries were also perceived as a success in terms of the wider benefits for households, in particular minimising disruption and providing more choice.
24. Benefits reported by agency representatives included: cost savings; a reduction in homelessness caused by domestic violence; and, a reduction in repeat incidences of domestic violence.
25. Cost benefit analysis suggest that Sanctuaries can be cost effective and generate significant financial savings, in particular due to a reduction in incidents in domestic violence and from preventing homelessness related to domestic violence.
26. Across the case study areas, service users and agency respondents reported that perpetrators had made attempts to gain entry to Sanctuary properties. Only two Sanctuary Schemes and one service user reported cases where a Sanctuary had been breached. This suggests that Sanctuary measures were generally successful in preventing repeat incidents of domestic violence for individual households.
27. In cases where Sanctuary proved not to be safe and/or sustainable, agency respondents reported that households would be offered the full range of accommodation options available to any household at risk of domestic violence.
28. There were a number of barriers to the effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes across the case study areas. These included the problem of people feeling or being unsafe outside the home and a shortage of support services. Some agency respondents also felt that service users' reluctance to pursue legal remedies was a barrier to the effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes.

## Main conclusions

Overall Sanctuary Schemes were thought to have been successful in their main aim of providing a safe alternative for households at risk of domestic violence and preventing the disruption associated with homelessness. Most service users said they felt much safer following the installation of Sanctuary measures although there was evidence that a few households had moved from their Sanctuary because they did not feel safe. However, few Sanctuary Schemes were able to provide detailed information about the sustainability of Sanctuaries beyond immediate outcomes.



As the types of installation and security measures used differed both between and within case study areas, and in the absence of detailed information on outcomes for individual households, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the relative merits of different types of Sanctuary installation.

There was also some variation in the way Sanctuary Schemes operated following installation, in particular in terms of the support offered and provided to service users; the extent to which Sanctuary Schemes monitored service users' progress; and, though to a lesser degree, the time taken to install Sanctuary measures. Nevertheless, respondents in all areas reported similar outcomes and, for the most part, service users reported positive experiences.

## Good practice points

The key findings and recommendations from the research have been developed to produce a practice guide, *Sanctuary Schemes for Households at Risk of Domestic Violence: Practice Guide for Agencies Developing and Delivering Sanctuary Schemes* (CLG, 2010). Selected points are outlined below:

### **Developing and operating Sanctuary Schemes**

1. Local authorities, agencies and organisations wishing to develop a Sanctuary Scheme should nominate a Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator who should take overall responsibility for bringing together key agencies.
2. The Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator should have specialist knowledge of domestic violence.
3. Key agencies, for example, housing providers; specialist domestic violence services; the police; and fire service representatives, must be involved in all stages of the development of a Sanctuary Scheme. Setting up a service can take some time, but this is necessary to ensure that the views and concerns, in particular safety concerns, of all agencies responsible for delivering the service are considered and addressed.
4. Agencies developing Sanctuary Schemes must consider how the Sanctuary service will operate as part of a package of measures to support service users and to prevent further incidents of domestic violence.
5. Sanctuaries are relatively cheap and can be installed quite quickly and demand for the service is likely to be high. It is therefore most important to ensure that there is sufficient provision and that existing services have the capacity to support Sanctuary Scheme users.
6. There is a need for clarity about the responsibility for funding Sanctuary Schemes, and Scheme partners should consider which agencies may accrue benefits as a result of the Scheme. There are a number of options available in terms of funding Sanctuary Schemes including for example: the homelessness prevention fund or an 'invest to save' approach; area-based grants; crime and disorder reduction partnerships/community safety partnerships; and, the police.
7. Agency representatives involved in delivering Sanctuary services (including workers responsible for installing the Sanctuary measures) should undertake training in order to improve their understanding of domestic violence.

8. Attention must be paid to the assessment of support needs and safety planning at the development stage. It should be clear which agency will be responsible for conducting these assessments and for monitoring the progress of service users. It is recommended that all agencies adopt standardised tools for assessing need and developing personal safety plans.

### **SANCTUARY AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS**

9. Agencies must ensure that they fully explain all accommodation options to clients, including the options available should the Sanctuary prove inappropriate.
10. All households which might benefit from a Sanctuary should be referred to the service. The decision about the appropriateness of Sanctuary should be made by Sanctuary Scheme workers in conjunction with the client and key partners.
11. Sanctuary Schemes should accept self-referrals.

### **Risk assessment and installing Sanctuary Measures**

12. The risk assessment of the case should be co-ordinated by a Sanctuary Scheme worker and include input from all relevant agencies, in particular the police and specialist domestic violence services.
13. Property risk assessments should be undertaken jointly by a Sanctuary Scheme worker; a police officer (a crime prevention officer or equivalent) and a representative from the fire service. The risk assessment should also take account of the service user's needs and preferences.
14. The type of Sanctuary measures installed should depend on the level of risk, the needs of the service user and the type or condition of the property and be decided jointly by the key agencies responsible for assessing the property and the case.
15. In cases where the perpetrator is still living in the property, Sanctuary Schemes should work with the household to help remove the perpetrator or refer the client to an appropriate agency.
16. Sanctuary Schemes should have clear and achievable targets for the time taken to install Sanctuary measures. Where cases are urgent then security measures should be installed within a few days.
17. Where it is not possible to install the full Sanctuary measures quickly or where the service user is at risk but does not wish to leave the property, interim safety measures should be implemented.

18. Sanctuary Schemes should seek to promote their service to private landlords and registered social landlords in the area.

### **Support for households living in a Sanctuary**

19. Sanctuary Schemes should be part of a holistic package of measures to support households at risk of domestic violence. Although some service users may require minimal support beyond the safety measures Sanctuary Schemes can provide, needs will vary.
20. All Sanctuary Scheme service users should have a full needs assessment. Where possible, this should be undertaken by a specialist domestic violence worker. If this is not possible then the person responsible for conducting the needs assessment should have undertaken domestic violence training.
21. All Sanctuary Scheme users should have a personal support and safety plan, and this should be reassessed after the Sanctuary has been installed and at regular intervals thereafter.
22. Sanctuary Schemes should ensure that the needs of children are also assessed and should make referrals to specialist services as required.
23. Sanctuary Schemes must be aware that some service users will lack the self confidence to seek support and advice themselves and will require support and advocacy e.g. being helped to access services or being accompanied to appointments.

### **Ensuring the effectiveness of Sanctuary**

24. Sanctuary Schemes must have policies and procedures in place to deal with cases where service users continue to feel unsafe in their properties despite the installation of Sanctuary measures.
25. Sanctuary Schemes, in conjunction with other key partners, in particular the police and specialist domestic violence services, must work with service users to develop safety plans and strategies for keeping safe outside the home.
26. Sanctuary Scheme service co-ordinators must take overall responsibility for ensuring that all elements of the Sanctuary are in place and working correctly.
27. Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinators must also take overall responsibility for ensuring that the emergency services are aware of addresses where Sanctuary measures have been installed, and what these comprise (e.g. in case specialist equipment is required to gain entry in an emergency or to ensure that the police respond immediately to calls from the property).

## Monitoring and evaluation

28. In order to monitor and help evaluate their effectiveness, Sanctuary Schemes should collect routine data on, for example: the number of referrals to the service; any reasons why Sanctuaries were decided to be inappropriate; the number of Sanctuaries installed; the types of Sanctuary measures installed and the cost; the types of households using Sanctuary; and, the cost of providing support to Sanctuary users.
29. Wherever possible, services should seek to gather data on medium to longer term outcomes for households including the number of service users who were able to remain in their homes; any attempted breaches; and, any repeat incidents of domestic violence.
30. Sanctuary Schemes should also should seek to gain clients' views on the effectiveness of the Sanctuary Scheme service, including the support they receive.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction and policy context

### Introduction

This report presents the findings of a study conducted on behalf of Communities and Local Government (CLG) by the Centre for Housing Policy (CHP); working in association with the Centre for Criminal Justice, Economics and Psychology (CCJEP), at the University of York. The research explored the effectiveness of schemes to enable households at risk of domestic violence to remain safely in their own homes.

This chapter begins by setting out the background to the research, the history of Sanctuary Schemes and the potential benefits of such interventions. The chapter goes on to consider the views of key stakeholders from national level agencies and organisations, interviewed as part of the research to provide additional contextual background, on Sanctuary Schemes. The research aims and objectives and the methods employed to achieve these are then described. Finally, the chapter sets out the content of the chapters presenting the findings of the study.

### Background to the research

Domestic violence accounts for between 16 and 25 per cent of all recorded violent crime and costs the various agencies that deal with it in excess of £23bn a year (Home Office, 2005). Repeat victimisation rates are also high compared with other crimes (Mooney, 1993). Domestic violence occurs across society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth, and geography (Home Office, 2008). The government definition of domestic violence is: *“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality”*<sup>8</sup>.

Domestic violence consists mainly of violence by men against women and women are far more likely to report consequential loss of accommodation (Walby and Allen, 2004; Housing Corporation, 2008). Moreover, it is women who are at greatest risk of repeat victimisation and serious abuse. Statistics for 2008-09 reported that almost two women in England and Wales were killed by their current or former partner each

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<sup>8</sup> Home Office Violent Crime mini-site: <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/violentcrime/>

week (Smith et al, 2010), whilst 32 men were killed during 2008-09 by a current or former partner. Findings from the British Crime Survey (Kershaw *et al.*, 2008; Walby and Allen, 2008) show that separated females are amongst those most at risk of domestic abuse. This can be a particular problem when the victim has to meet with the perpetrator because of child contact arrangements. Of the female victims of domestic violence who had seen the perpetrator because of child contact arrangements following separation, 29 per cent had been threatened, 13 per cent had been abused in some way, two per cent had had their children threatened, and in one per cent of cases the perpetrator had hurt the children (Walby and Allen, 2008).

The presence of children in a household is associated with nearly double the risk of domestic violence for women (Walby and Allen, 2004). Domestic violence also has an impact on children who witness it (McGee, 2000; Mullender and Morley, 1994; Saunders *et al.*, 1995). According to the 1996 British Crime Survey, half of those who suffered domestic violence in the previous year were living with children aged 16 years or under (Mirlees-Black, 1999). A study conducted by NCH Action for Children (NCH, 1994) found that children who witnessed domestic violence also frequently experienced physical and sexual abuse. Children who witness domestic violence are over-represented among those children referred to statutory children and family teams because of concerns about child abuse and neglect. Between half (52 per cent) and two thirds of child protection cases involve domestic violence (Farmer and Owen, 1995; Sloan, 2003). Research with children suggests that domestic violence also has implications for education, health, welfare, civil and criminal justice (O’Keefe, 1995; Sternberg *et al*, 1995).

The Government’s strategic approach to tackling domestic violence was outlined in the consultation paper *Safety and Justice* (Home Office, 2003). Domestic violence was set to be tackled through three strands: prevention, protection and justice, and support. This paper culminated in the passing of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 which introduced new powers for the police and courts to deal with offenders. In 2009, the Home Office launched its strategy on ending violence against women and girls *Together we can end Violence against Women and Girls: A Strategy*. This strategy identified the way in which violence against women and girls (VAWG) was to be tackled across the three main areas of prevention, provision and protection<sup>9</sup>.

The *Every Child Matters* green paper (HM Treasury, 2003) set out the Government’s aims to ensure that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential by reducing

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/vawg-strategy-2009/end-violence-against-women?view=Binary>

levels of educational failure, ill health, substance misuse, teenage pregnancy, abuse and neglect, crime and anti-social behaviour among children and young people. The Children Act 2004 provides the legal underpinning for *Every Child Matters* and a series of documents have been published which provide guidance under the Act, to support local authorities and their partners in implementing new statutory duties, including a good practice guide on how to support children who have witnessed domestic violence (Mullender, 2004). Domestic violence was no longer to be treated as a separate area but, rather, mainstreamed and integrated throughout the children's agenda (Home Office, 2005).

Other actions to tackle domestic violence included the introduction of the Specialist Domestic Violence Court<sup>10</sup> programme in 2006 following a number of successful pilots (Cook *et al.*, 2004; Cook, 2003). These represent a partnership approach by police, prosecutors, court staff, the probation service and support services. Magistrates are given additional training and all agencies work together to bring the offender to justice in a way that is appropriate for the victim (CPS, 2008). Additionally, independent domestic violence advisor (IDVA) services<sup>11</sup> were established in order to provide specialist assistance to the victim. Their work is typically short to medium term and they work within a multi-agency setting to manage the risk that clients face. To facilitate this integrated agency approach, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences<sup>12</sup> (MARACs) have been introduced for those at high risk. In a MARAC, local agencies will meet to discuss the highest risk victims of domestic abuse in their area. Information about the victims, actions necessary to ensure safety and available resources are all shared.

Survivors of domestic violence and their children often have to leave their homes for fear of repeated violence, and although some may move in with relatives, or find accommodation elsewhere, these solutions are often unsustainable for longer than a brief interim period (Warrington, 2001). It can often then be the case that households at risk of violence will suffer the disruption and trauma of having to make a

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<sup>10</sup> See: Her Majesty's Court Service, Home Office and Criminal Justice Service *Justice with Safety: Special Domestic Violence Courts Review 2007-08*. Available at: <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/dv/dv018.htm>

<sup>11</sup> For more information on the role of IDVAs see Home Office (2005) *Domestic Violence: a national report*, London: Home Office. Available at: <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/domesticviolence/domesticviolence51.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is part of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse, incorporating representatives from statutory, community and voluntary agencies working with victims/survivors, children and the alleged perpetrator. For more information on MARACs see Robinson, A. (2004) *Domestic Violence MARACs (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) for Very High-Risk Victims in Cardiff, Wales: A process and outcome evaluation*, Cardiff: School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University.



succession of moves. For example, moving from the family home into a refuge or other place of safety, to temporary accommodation, and finally into settled accommodation. For their own safety, households are often rehoused in a new location but this may be away from important informal support networks, such as family and friends.

Women's refuges or temporary local authority accommodation can provide safe places for households fleeing domestic violence. Refuges can also offer the opportunity to connect to other people and access emotional and practical support that many women fleeing domestic violence require (Abrahams, 2007). However, research has also shown that the experience of living in a refuge or temporary accommodation can be stressful and stigmatising for both women and children (Abrahams, 2007; Fitzpatrick *et al.*, 2003; Jones *et al.*, 2002; Saunders *et al.*, 1995). Children, already traumatised by the violence they have witnessed or sometimes suffered, often have to move to new schools, and families may have to spend long periods in temporary accommodation until they can access more settled accommodation (this is especially so in London and in the south of England because of the greater housing supply constraints). The move to new settled accommodation can also be disruptive, potentially forcing another change of school and health services, as well as a move away from any recently developed support networks in temporary accommodation.

Previous research has noted the problems homeless families may experience when trying to settle in unfamiliar areas without the support of friends and family they would normally rely on. Further, families who are forced to flee violence often have to leave all their possessions, which adds to the difficulty of trying to resettle (Pleace *et al.*, 2008; Jones *et al.*, 2002). Households may live in fear of the perpetrator tracking them down to their new accommodation. Where this happens, it may lead to further episodes of homelessness and more disruption (Jones *et al.*, 2002).

Domestic violence is a major cause of homelessness among people accepted as owed the main homelessness duty ('homelessness acceptances'). Statutory homelessness statistics issued by CLG show that domestic violence is consistently reported as the main reason for loss of last settled home for around 13 per cent of homelessness acceptances in England<sup>13</sup>. Under the homelessness legislation (Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996), local housing authorities must secure suitable accommodation for applicants who are 'eligible' for assistance, 'unintentionally homeless' and in 'priority need'. Households with dependant children are a priority

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<sup>13</sup> This is reported as violent relationship breakdown with a partner. See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/homelessstatistics/livetables/>

need group, as are persons who are vulnerable<sup>14</sup> as a result of having to leave accommodation because of violence or threats of violence from another person that are likely to be carried out.

Recent developments in countering homelessness due to domestic violence in the UK have occurred within the context of a wider drive towards a more pro-active, interventionist focus on preventing homelessness (CLG, 2005; Pawson, 2007). All local authorities have been encouraged to develop interventions designed to enable households at risk of domestic violence, where appropriate and acceptable to the households at risk, to stay in their own homes (CLG, 2006a). These interventions, usually known as 'Sanctuary Schemes' have been promoted by government since 2005 when BVPI 225 (Best value performance indicators: Actions against domestic violence) was introduced. The aim of the BVPI was to assess the overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims of domestic violence and to prevent further domestic violence. The provision of a 'sanctuary type' scheme was one of the 11 domestic violence BVPIs. In 2008, BVPIs (and all other existing sets of indicators) were replaced by the national indicator set (NIS)<sup>15</sup>. The national indicators (NIs) are set out in seven outcomes categories:

- stronger communities
- safer communities
- children and young people
- adult health and wellbeing
- tackling exclusion and promoting equality
- local economy
- environmental sustainability

The two NIs relating directly to domestic violence, are NI 32<sup>16</sup> (repeat incidents of domestic violence) and NI 34 (domestic violence murder) and are contained in Public Service Agreement Delivery Agreement (PSA) 23 *Make Communities Safer*<sup>17</sup> which

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<sup>14</sup> The Statutory Homelessness Code of Guidance (CLG, 2006b) provides that when determining whether an applicant is vulnerable the local authority should consider whether, when homeless, the applicant would be less able to fend for him/herself than an ordinary homeless person so that he or she would suffer injury or detriment, in circumstances where a less vulnerable person would be able to cope without harmful effects.

<sup>15</sup> See CLG (2007) *The New Performance Framework for Local Authorities & Local Authority Partnerships: Single set of National Indicators*, London: HM Government. Available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/doc/517909.doc>

<sup>16</sup> This indicator is proposed as the percentage reduction in repeat victimisation of those domestic violence cases being managed by a MARAC.

<sup>17</sup> PSA Delivery Agreement 23 *Make Communities Safer*. Available at: [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/pbr\\_csr07\\_psa23.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/pbr_csr07_psa23.pdf)

describes the significant range of actions that will be taken to ensure safer communities including a reduction in domestic violence. Other relevant NIs and PSAs include:

- NI 141 (number of vulnerable people achieving independent living) and NI 142 (number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living)<sup>18</sup>
- NI 50 (emotional health of children)<sup>19</sup>; and
- PSA 2420 which covers the Criminal Justice System

## History of Sanctuary Schemes

The Sanctuary model was conceived in 1998 by the Crime Reduction Unit (CRU) at Harrow police station. Although a large amount of good work was being done to help victims of domestic violence and hate crimes, there was a recognition that people often felt isolated and lived in fear of repeat incidents whilst many fleeing violence experienced repeat episodes of homelessness. The police advised households about home security and personal safety but there were no provisions in place to provide the additional physical security measures to ensure the safety of households. In September 2002 the CRU, in partnership with the London Borough of Harrow Housing Department, launched the 'Sanctuary Project'. The aim of the project was to help households at risk of domestic violence and hate crime remain safely in their homes (Metropolitan Police and London Borough of Harrow, 2007).

The CLG non-statutory guidance document *Options for Setting up a Sanctuary Scheme* (CLG, 2006a) describes Sanctuary Schemes as offering people the prospect of staying safely in their own home by substantially enhancing their security and safety from direct or indirect attack. The guidance describes a Sanctuary model that comprises two elements: Sanctuary and Sanctuary Plus.

- The main element of this Sanctuary model is a Sanctuary room (often referred to as a 'panic room'). A Sanctuary room is created by replacing a door to a main room, often the bedroom, with a solid core door. The Sanctuary room door is reversed to open outwards; the frame is reinforced and additional

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<sup>18</sup> *Tackling Exclusion and Promoting Equality*, CLG Departmental Strategic Objective. Available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/finalnationalindicators>

<sup>19</sup> PSA Delivery Agreement 12: *Improve the Health and Wellbeing of Children*. Available at: [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/pbr\\_csr07\\_psa12.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/pbr_csr07_psa12.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> PSA Delivery Agreement 24: *Deliver a More Effective, Transparent and Responsive Criminal justice System for Victims and the Public*. Available at: [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/pbr\\_csr07\\_psa24.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/pbr_csr07_psa24.pdf)

locks and bolts and a door viewer are fitted. This provides a 'safe room' where household members can call and wait safely for the police.

- Sanctuary Plus includes a Sanctuary room and added security measures in the rest of the property. Reinforced front and back doors, fire safety equipment, smoke detectors, break glass hammers, emergency lights and fire blankets, and in extreme cases, window grilles, can be installed.

The CLG Sanctuary Scheme guidance also recommends that:

- Sanctuaries should be provided only where it is the clear choice of households and where it is safe and appropriate for them to remain in their own accommodation and where the perpetrator no longer lives at the property.
- A full risk assessment should be carried out by the police Crime Reduction Unit.
- Sanctuaries should be available to households at risk in all tenures.
- Sanctuaries should be clearly presented as one of a range of options open to those at risk of homelessness due to domestic violence.
- Addresses where Sanctuaries have been installed must be clearly flagged on the IT systems of partner agencies, so that in the event of an emergency call it is clear that an immediate response may be necessary.
- The Sanctuary should be part of a long term safety plan; all security options should include risk management measures in order to increase safety.
- Sanctuaries should be implemented in partnership with the police, the fire service and a specialist domestic violence service, with support provided throughout the process.

### **Potential benefits of Sanctuary Schemes**

The CLG (2006a) guidance on setting up a Sanctuary Scheme suggests that they can result in significant cost savings. It has been estimated that the cost of providing emergency accommodation and housing for victims of domestic violence is over £150m a year (Walby, 2004). There are also many important social benefits that can be realised when victims are able to stay in their own accommodation. Maintaining existing local support networks and access to health facilities, such as GPs, and enabling children to remain in their current schools can be crucial in mitigating the consequences of domestic violence. The financial burden on the household itself due to relocation can also be quite high and out of reach for some.

Evaluations conducted by local authorities operating Sanctuary Schemes suggest that they can be successful in preventing homelessness, in providing a secure environment for those at risk of domestic violence, and in producing substantial cost savings for local authorities (Nottingham City Council, 2007). Households who have

Sanctuary measures installed are reported to experience less disruption to their family life at a time of emotional crisis and physical threat. They also maintain greater degrees of stability for their children (London Borough of Barnet, 2005; Nottingham City Council, 2007).

Although there are no current national figures on the number of Sanctuary Schemes in England, evidence suggests that they are widespread. A survey of homelessness prevention conducted in 2007 found that about half of England's councils (171 of 354) were operating such schemes (CLG, 2007).

Sanctuary Schemes are a recent innovation and, with the exception of the few studies mentioned above, there is little evidence on the effectiveness of the Sanctuary model. In order to supplement the available literature and provide context for the study, key stakeholders from a range of national level voluntary and statutory organisations and agencies were interviewed in order to gain their views on Sanctuary Schemes. Specifically they were asked about the aims and potential benefits of Sanctuary Schemes; the appropriateness of such interventions and any concerns they might have about them.

### **National stakeholder views**

National stakeholders from a range of statutory and voluntary organisations were interviewed as the first stage in the research in order to 'sensitise' the research team to the range of views on Sanctuary Schemes.

### **THE AIM OF SANCTUARY SCHEMES**

The majority of stakeholders believed that the main aims of Sanctuary Schemes were to:

- reduce homelessness caused by domestic violence
- keep households safe in their homes
- produce cost savings for local authorities and other housing providers

*The main aim is to provide a way of increasing the safety of someone experiencing domestic violence – that is the best aim...the other aim is about reducing housing allocations and homelessness ...*

(Voluntary sector representative)

### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF SANCTUARY SCHEMES**

Most believed that that Sanctuary Schemes could have many positive benefits, particularly for households, but also for local agencies and services. These were:

- a reduction in homelessness (and the disruption this causes households)
- increased choice for households; and

- enabling families to remain in familiar areas and close to support networks, friends and family

*I think we would say to prevent homelessness and to give victims of DV the choice of remaining in their own homes that guarantees their safety and to avoid the disruption and upheaval of rehousing, including often the severing of community links...often people have to think about moving to another area altogether, emergency accommodation can often leave a lot to be desired so avoiding that and giving someone the opportunity to remain in their home.*

(Voluntary sector representative)

### **THE APPROPRIATENESS OF SANCTUARY**

Sanctuaries were thought to potentially be an appropriate option for all households at risk of violence. The main considerations should be the safety of the household and their needs and preferences. Respondents also stressed, as the CLG guidance on setting up a Sanctuary Scheme (CLG, 2006a) makes clear, that Sanctuaries should never be installed where the perpetrator was still living in the property. Respondents also made the point that it would not be appropriate to install a Sanctuary if the client was sharing a home with the perpetrator's family.

### **CONCERNS ABOUT SANCTUARY**

There were some concerns about Sanctuary amongst the national level stakeholders. The main concerns were about safety and whether Sanctuary would be offered as one choice among a range of options.

#### ***Safety of the Sanctuary***

Most respondents were concerned about the safety of Sanctuaries They stressed the need for thorough risk assessments and effective communication between relevant agencies to ensure that this was a safe option for households. Most felt that Sanctuaries were not an appropriate option for high risk cases and a couple of respondents cited cases where they felt Sanctuaries had been installed inappropriately.

*...it's supposed to be aimed at those that are low risk; there shouldn't be anyone that's high risk that's put in a Sanctuary ...*

(Statutory sector representative)

One of the main issues raised was the safety and appropriateness of the Sanctuary room. The main concern about Sanctuary rooms was that people could be trapped in them and that the perpetrator might set the property on fire. The CLG guidance on

setting up a Sanctuary (CLG, 2006a) is quite clear about fire safety and recommends that Sanctuary measures should be implemented in partnership with fire services to ensure safety and an appropriate response<sup>21</sup>. Some respondents felt that the safer option would be to install safety measures in the property such as extra locks, reinforced external doors, and an alarm, rather than a Sanctuary room. It was also felt that if the risk was so high that a Sanctuary room was required then the safest option might be for the household to move.

*... personally I would be more supportive of alarm schemes. I am supportive of Sanctuary Schemes but we do have some reservations... whereas with the alarm schemes there is more clarity about the nature and level of risk because we would suggest that risk assessment and management is clear and certainly in terms of risk assessing for alarm schemes it is quite clear the level of risk that we are dealing with – we think that the indication of having to have a [Sanctuary] room suggests quite a high level of risk ...*

(Voluntary sector representative)

### **Safety outside the home**

The main aim of Sanctuary is to keep people safe in their homes, however, as many respondents stressed, people have to be able to go about their daily lives and there were concerns about how people could be kept safe outside the home. Although the issue of safety outside the home is mentioned in the CLG guidance on setting up a Sanctuary Scheme (CLG, 2006a) a few respondents felt that this needed more emphasis and that local authorities and relevant agencies should work together to address this problem.

*If they were going to stay in their own homes then they were obviously going to keep a lot of other things stable as well – their children could stay in their school, they could stay in the same job, shop in the same supermarket etc – but these would all be routines that would be known to their former partner so therefore what they were interested in was not only the physical security of their own home although that was important but also how they could stay safe in their neighbourhood...*

(Voluntary sector representative)

A number of respondents also made the point that abuse can take different forms and that the physical elements of a Sanctuary alone could not protect households

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<sup>21</sup> There is evidence that a number of Sanctuary Schemes in London did not involve the fire service (ALG/GLDVP, 2006). <sup>21</sup> For more information on the Women's Safety Unit see <http://www.saferwales.com/default.asp?contentID=542>

from various forms of victimisation which could make people fear for their safety. Perpetrators could continue to victimise households in many ways, through telephone calls, text messages or by threatening relatives and friends.

*Abuse takes lots of forms – texting, abusive messages, ‘phone messages, threats and so on, indirect threats through a third party, abuse through the children – badmouthing the mother to children, turning up at the workplace, there are all sorts of things an abuser can do to maintain some power and control over the victim and make them fear for their safety but I guess that Sanctuary Schemes were never set up to address this but to keep victims safe at home – so they are just one piece of the puzzle.*

(Voluntary sector representative)

### **SANCTUARY AS AN OPTION**

Respondents believed that local authorities would find Sanctuary Schemes an attractive option because they would reduce costs at the same time as relieving pressure on social housing and temporary housing stocks, and help them reduce the number of homelessness acceptances. This led to concerns that service users would be pressured into accepting a Sanctuary, rather than having all accommodation options offered to them as the CLG guidance on setting up a Sanctuary Scheme recommended (CLG, 2006a). In particular, some respondents were concerned that local authorities would persuade people to accept Sanctuary rather than undertake a homelessness assessment<sup>22</sup>.

*It is very hard these days to get an appointment at homeless persons so when people present they go to Housing Options and there is a concern that once a survivor discloses at Housing Options that they are scared in their home then they might not be given all their options properly...we have been getting anecdotal evidence that this is happening...There are big targets around prevention of homelessness so they don't want to put people down as homeless, they don't want the homelessness numbers to go up...*

(Voluntary sector representative)

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<sup>22</sup> Under s184 Housing Act 1996 if the local authority has reason to believe that an applicant may be homeless or threatened with homelessness, they shall make such inquiries as are necessary to satisfy themselves as to whether the applicant is eligible for assistance, and if so, whether any duty, and if so what duty, is owed to the applicant under Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act.



## **SANCTUARY AS PART OF A PACKAGE OF INTERVENTIONS**

Respondents also stressed that Sanctuary should be one element of an overall package to help people at risk of domestic violence; a package that should include specialist domestic violence support as well as any other types of support required (e.g. general tenancy sustainment). They also felt it important that the behaviour of perpetrators should be tackled through the use of injunctions and the criminal law as well as perpetrator programmes.

*...we believe it is vital that the Sanctuary Service is – that it is a service - it is not the locks and bolts, it is a whole intervention and vital to it is the specialist professionals, the specialist DV professional who is making careful decisions about whether Sanctuary is appropriate in that case or not...*

(Voluntary sector representative)

*I think there needs to be more work done with the perpetrator in tandem with the Sanctuary Scheme and any measures that are put in place to protect the victim...*

(Statutory sector representative)

## **Research aims and objectives**

The main purpose of the study was to provide firm evidence about the effectiveness of schemes which are intended to enable households at risk of domestic violence to remain safely in their homes. The key aims were to:

- evaluate a range of schemes which enable households at risk of domestic violence to remain safely in their own homes
- identify, based on firm evidence, what factors are key to ensuring this is a safe and sustainable option for households at risk of domestic violence
- highlight examples of good practice in the provision of such schemes and gather evidence on their cost benefits; and
- update existing guidance for local authorities on setting up a Sanctuary Scheme, and make recommendations to CLG as to good practice in the provision of these schemes

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology comprised five elements:

### ***Telephone interviews with national stakeholders***

Key stakeholders from 12 national level statutory and voluntary organisations were interviewed by telephone. These agencies and organisations included: specialist

domestic violence services; the police service, Government departments, housing representatives and charities; organisations working with black and minority ethnic and refugee (BAMER) women; agencies working with male victims of domestic violence and perpetrators; and organisations representing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people. The findings from these interviews are discussed above and, as noted earlier, were used to inform the development of the more specific research questions.

### ***Selecting case studies***

Given the time constraints it was not possible to compile a sampling frame comprising all Sanctuary Schemes in England. Instead, in agreement with CLG, eight case study areas were purposively selected from a sample of 48 Sanctuary Schemes which had responded to a request for information from CLG in 2008. Few of the 48 Sanctuary Schemes had submitted detailed information and it was not possible to apply any strict selection criteria. The case study areas were selected in the main because the Sanctuary Schemes appeared to represent a range of different models and were led by various agencies and partnerships (these are discussed in the following chapter). They also differed in terms of the number of Sanctuaries they had installed. Finally, Sanctuary Schemes which had been operating for a year or more were selected in order that the sustainability of Sanctuary could be explored. The eight case study areas were:

- Tameside
- Southend
- Hull
- Middlesbrough
- Nottingham
- Greenwich
- Solihull; and
- Calderdale

### ***Interviews with service providers and relevant agencies***

In-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of the lead agencies responsible for coordinating the relevant Sanctuary Scheme in each area. Interviews were also conducted with key stakeholders from relevant agencies working in partnership to deliver the Sanctuary Scheme in each area. In total, across all eight case study areas, 63 agency and service provider representatives were interviewed. These included representatives from:

- local authority housing departments, registered social landlords, or the arms-length management organisation

- police domestic violence units; victim support and crime prevention units
- the fire service
- Women's Aid and other specialist domestic violence services; and
- workers responsible for installing Sanctuary measures

### ***Analysis of monitoring data and other relevant documentation***

Service providers were asked to provide any relevant documents relating to the Sanctuary Schemes in their area including: protocols; funding applications and details of funding mechanisms; and all available project monitoring data. Service providers were also asked to provide data on the costs of operating Sanctuary Schemes and on the costs of alternatives (such as stays in temporary accommodation in the local area). These data were to be used to inform the cost benefit element of the study (see Appendix 2 and Appendix 3).

### ***Interviews with households using, and who have used, Sanctuary Schemes***

Interviewees for this aspect of the research were recruited with the help of the projects or agencies working with the families. In total 49 interviews were undertaken with adult Sanctuary service users. These interviews employed a semi-structured technique to focus particularly on participants' views on the appropriateness and effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes and, most importantly, how safe household members felt.

As domestic violence clearly impacts on children and young people in affected households it was felt to be important to gain their views as well as those of the adult members of affected families. The research team hoped to speak to 15 children aged 11 – 18 across the case study areas but this was not possible. The main reason was that few households contained children within this age range. Of those that did, most parents did not want their children to take part, or the children themselves did not wish to. Two children living in a Sanctuary Scheme were interviewed.

### **The report**

Findings from the case study areas are presented in the following seven chapters. **Chapter 2** examines the origins and operation of Sanctuary Schemes in the case study areas. It sets out the reasons why agencies decided to develop Sanctuary Schemes and goes on to describe the operation of the schemes, including the key agencies involved. **Chapter 3** provides an overview of the accommodation options, including Sanctuary, available to households in the case study area and explores the reasons why service users opted for Sanctuary. **Chapter 4** describes the risk assessment process, options for removal of perpetrators, the types of security measures installed and the issues associated with installing a Sanctuary in private

rented or owner-occupied properties. **Chapter 5** discusses support for households living in a Sanctuary. It considers the extent to which Sanctuaries are part of a package of measures, including legal remedies and perpetrator programmes, to tackle domestic violence and help ensure the safety of households. **Chapter 6** examines the effectiveness of Sanctuaries and considers whether they meet their principal aim of providing a safe option for households at risk of domestic violence. It considers the benefits of Sanctuary services for service users and agencies before going on to discuss some of the problems experienced by service users and barriers to the effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes. Finally, **Chapter 7** presents the conclusions and good practice points from the research. The detailed research methodology is presented in **Appendix 1**; **Appendix 2** provides a summary of secondary data from the case study areas including the number of Sanctuaries installed. The cost benefit analysis is attached at **Appendix 3**.

# Chapter 2

## The origins and operation of Sanctuary Schemes in the case study areas

### Introduction

This chapter presents findings from interviews with agency representatives in the case study areas. It explores the reasons why agencies decided to introduce Sanctuary Schemes including the perceived need for, and the potential benefits of, Sanctuaries. Concerns about Sanctuary Schemes at the development stage are then discussed. The chapter goes on to describe the operation of Sanctuary Schemes and details the lead agencies typically responsible for Sanctuary Schemes and the key stakeholders involved in delivering the service. The chapter concludes with a consideration of agency respondents' views on the appropriateness of Sanctuary for different groups.

### Key findings

1. Across the case study areas similar reasons were given for introducing Sanctuary Schemes. These included:
  - housing pressures
  - homelessness prevention
  - to respond more effectively to significant levels of domestic violence
  - cost savings
  - to provide more choice for households fleeing violence
  - to meet the expressed needs and preferences of households fleeing violence; including the desire to remain in their homes, to minimise disruption and to avoid having to move to unfamiliar and possible less desirable areas
2. Concerns about Sanctuary Schemes at the development stage included:
  - the cost of running the service; and
  - the appropriateness of Sanctuary rooms
3. The lead agencies responsible for the Sanctuary Scheme service were housing providers or specialist domestic violence services, sometimes working in partnership. Not all Sanctuary Schemes had a dedicated worker.

4. Sanctuary was thought to be potentially appropriate for all groups and types of household.

### **Reasons for developing Sanctuary Schemes**

These findings are based on interviews with key agency representatives but it should be noted that not all respondents were in post at the time Sanctuary Schemes were first considered. Where possible, the data from the interviews have been supplemented with additional information from project evaluations, funding proposals and policy documents requested by the research team. However, few Sanctuary Schemes were able to provide detailed information on the process of setting up the service.

### **HOUSING PRESSURES**

In all areas, respondents reported a shortage of social housing, emergency accommodation, temporary accommodation, and refuge places. This made it difficult to offer choice to households fleeing domestic violence. A couple of respondents made the point that households were often reluctant to leave their homes when they might be rehoused in a less desirable area or property.

*... the stock [of social housing] is very low...and people are not being able to be rehoused in areas ...more desirable to them really and I think that that's...another reason,' let's try and get you safe where you are if that's what you want', you know, 'if you want to stay there' ....*

(IDVA and specialist Sanctuary worker)

### **HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PROBLEMS**

In some areas there were concerns about the standard of temporary accommodation offered to homeless households and Sanctuary Schemes were often part of a more general drive to improve homelessness provision. A number of respondents cited the need to improve on best value performance indicators and, in particular, to reduce homelessness (and repeat homelessness) and to develop homelessness prevention interventions following the 2002 Homelessness Act.

*[area] had an inspection in 2002 and to be honest it wasn't very good... homelessness services as a whole seemed to have gone backwards ...we had to get on top of the housing BVPIs, the council was pushing...we had to look at whole housing service and set out a programme of major restructuring with [LSVT].*

(Housing provider)

## **THE SCALE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE NEED TO RESPOND MORE EFFECTIVELY**

Although domestic violence was a significant cause of homelessness in the case study areas, as in the country as a whole, Sanctuaries were not only seen as a means of preventing homelessness. Sanctuaries were also perceived as a means of tackling domestic violence and preventing repeat episodes of abuse. One area reported having five hundred repeat domestic violence cases in a year with some individuals experiencing up to 25 incidents. Respondents explained that tackling domestic violence was seen as a priority from a police and crime and disorder reduction perspective.

*...the focus is primarily around reducing crime, reducing violent crime, reducing the number of repeats. So this fits very well with what Sanctuary's all about, because it's about securing properties so that women don't...become repeat victims, which is, fifty percent of domestic violence incidents are repeat.....*

(Sanctuary Scheme task group co-ordinator)

Whilst respondents reported high levels of domestic violence in their area, many made the point that these were cases that they were aware of and that levels of domestic violence in the area were probably even higher. Respondents felt that while specialist domestic violence services such as women's refuges provided a good service, provision was insufficient and in some areas there was no effective co-ordination of services.

*So two years ago we didn't have a Sanctuary Scheme, we had 11 alarms to lend to our thousands of victims... we had a forum that hadn't met in six months, and so things were pretty weak. We didn't have an IDVA... we didn't have a specialist court, we didn't have a MARAC... we just had a problem.*

(Domestic violence co-ordinator)

A number of other respondents explained the importance of the former best value performance indicator (BVPI) 225 (see Chapter 1), which specified that Sanctuary Schemes should be one of the components of local authority services designed to help victims of domestic violence.

*...[it was] seen by housing as a way to reduce homelessness, the DV Forum saw it as a way to protect survivors...What rolled it forward was the BVPI which actually specified that Sanctuary should be one of the components.*

(Housing strategy manager)

## **COST SAVINGS**

Respondents tended not to say that potential cost savings were the main reason for choosing to develop Sanctuary Schemes, but it was evident that this was an important consideration (among others) for many agencies. It was thought that providing Sanctuary would be far less expensive than the costs of providing temporary accommodation, the cost of voids (loss of rent and repairs to properties damaged whilst standing empty), and the expense of rehousing. It was also thought that a reduction in the number of incidents of domestic violence would result in savings for other agencies such as the police, social services and primary care trusts. One area had calculated the costs of domestic violence and the potential cost savings using formulae developed by Stanko *et al* (1996) and Walby (2004). The potential for cost savings was certainly attractive to agencies such as local authority housing departments and social landlords, and was in some cases used to promote the schemes to other agencies.

*...when we looked at the sort of, the cost benefit from a housing, purely housing point of view...there was the costs of rehousing someone, which are considerable when you add up void costs, repairs, all of that ... and the cost of temporary accommodation, bed and breakfast type accommodation, both of which are likely to be more than the cost of the Sanctuary installation, so. .. So that's where the impetus for it came*

(Chair Sanctuary Scheme steering group)

*Again we had some figures in terms of cost to the, to the police service, so again we could take that to the police, say we're saving you. ..*

(Homelessness prevention officer)

## **BENEFITS OF SANCTUARY FOR HOUSEHOLDS**

In all areas respondents cited the perceived benefits of Sanctuary for households (these are discussed more fully in Chapter 3). Research studies and surveys in the case study areas found that many women at risk of domestic violence would prefer to remain in their homes. They wished to stay close to support networks, their children's schools, and their friends and families. They felt it unfair that they should have to move especially when, as in many cases, they had been forced to flee more than once in the past.

Another study found that rehousing rarely solved the problem as perpetrators often discovered the whereabouts of the household. This was a particular problem where there were children in the household with whom the perpetrator continued to have contact.

Fundamentally, Sanctuaries were seen as an additional housing option that would increase choice for households and give them some control over their situation.



*...it's just another choice for people, just to give them a little bit of control over, over what's happening to them rather than the usual process of saying, 'right, OK, we'll pick you up and we'll put you in a refuge and then from there you'll go and live somewhere else'. It's kind of saying, well you can have a little bit of control and you can choose to stay where you are if you want and we can help you to do that.*

(Senior Housing Options officer)

## **The process of setting up a Sanctuary Scheme**

For the most part, one or two key agencies or individuals from local agencies championed the idea of Sanctuary Schemes and worked to promote their development. The lead agencies in the initial development of Sanctuary Schemes differed from area to area, but usually included a housing provider and a specialist domestic violence service or partnership (the types of agencies involved in the operation and delivery of Sanctuary services are described in the following chapter).

In some areas respondents explained that it took some time to develop their Sanctuary Scheme as many agencies were keen to shape and influence the service and to try to ensure that it was a success.

*...there were lots of meetings, lots of agencies involved, advice service, the council, housing – everybody. Everybody had their say and an agenda. From that it just developed, we kept going back time and time again looking at all the pitfalls, until we got something... It did take a long time. Even before the launch, the meetings were happening once a month...this went on for 12 months, because we wanted to get it right before we actually launched it, because we didn't want to be either inundated...or start if off and it be a non-flyer...do the wrong things.*

(Crime Prevention Officer)

These key individuals had usually undertaken some research on Sanctuary Schemes operating in other parts of the country and most tended to mention the Harrow and Barnet models which were the most established schemes. Others had conducted desk based research on innovation in homelessness prevention and domestic violence services. Only one area specifically mentioned consulting the CLG guide on setting up a Sanctuary Scheme (CLG, 2006a), although a few respondents made references to the 'national guidance'. Respondents in one area said they had undertaken detailed research including conducting their own survey, desk-based

reviews of good practice and visits to different projects such as the Bradford ‘Staying Put Scheme’ and to the Women’s Safety Unit<sup>23</sup> in Cardiff to learn about MARACs.

### **Concerns about Sanctuary Schemes at the development stage**

A few respondents in all areas reported having had some concerns about operating Sanctuary Schemes. These included concerns about the cost of installing Sanctuary measures, the demand for Sanctuary and how the Sanctuary Scheme service would be funded. There had also been some concern about what the installations would look like and how households would react to such measures and feel about living with them. Some respondents had thought that private landlords would not find Sanctuary installations, in particular Sanctuary rooms (commonly referred to as ‘panic rooms’), acceptable.

*... DV Forum members were wary about panic rooms, the cost and safety concerns and a problem persuading landlords to allow such major changes also the perception that we were creating an almost prison...*

(Housing strategy manager)

One of the main concerns about Sanctuary Schemes was the appropriateness of Sanctuary rooms. Agency respondents in the case study areas had similar concerns to those of national level stakeholders discussed in the previous chapter. First, many agency respondents felt that if a case was deemed such a high risk as to require an inner Sanctuary room then the safest option would be for them to move out of the property and to another area. Second, they also shared concerns about the safety of Sanctuary rooms, particularly if service users reconciled with the perpetrator.

*...the only concerns we had were, was when they reconcile with their perpetrator, and that’s purely for the fact is you’re putting... a panic room in some of these Sanctuaries... [they could] potentially, be ... held hostage, if you know what I mean, within there. That was the only concern we had.*

(Anti-social behaviour co-ordinator)

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<sup>23</sup> For more information on the Women’s Safety Unit see <http://www.saferwales.com/default.asp?contentID=542>

## **The operation of Sanctuary Schemes**

Sanctuary Schemes had been fully operational in the eight case study areas for between one and four years although most areas had piloted their scheme for periods of between three and 18 months. Six areas had installed over a hundred Sanctuaries (122 to over 336) whilst the remaining two had installed fewer than a hundred (47 and 68) at the time of the fieldwork.

### **LEAD AGENCIES AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

The lead agencies with overall responsibility for co-ordinating and operating the Sanctuary Scheme service included housing services (e.g. homelessness prevention teams and housing options teams) based within the local authority (or where stock was no longer owned or managed by the local authority, the major registered social landlord or the arms-length management organisation), or specialist domestic violence agencies and partnerships. Within the lead agency, in most cases, there was a dedicated individual with overarching responsibility for co-ordinating the Sanctuary Scheme. In most areas the Sanctuary Scheme lead had other roles and responsibilities in addition to co-ordinating the Sanctuary Scheme, for example, in one area the Sanctuary Scheme lead was the senior homelessness prevention officer. The co-ordinator was normally responsible for receiving referrals and acted as a link between all partner agencies.

In all the case study areas the lead agency was part of a multi-agency forum and in some areas agency respondents explained that their Sanctuary Scheme was directed and overseen by a steering group. The key stakeholders were broadly similar in all areas and included the police, specialist domestic violence services, the fire service, housing and social services. Although not exhaustive, the following list demonstrates the range of stakeholders, agencies and partnerships, involved to a greater or lesser degree in delivering and supporting Sanctuary Schemes:

- local authority: including housing and neighbourhood services, homelessness prevention and housing options, supporting people teams
- crime and disorder reduction partnerships/community safety teams
- specialist domestic violence support agencies
- large scale voluntary transfer<sup>24</sup> (LSVT) organisation
- arms-length management organisations<sup>25</sup> (ALMOs)
- registered social landlords (RSLs)

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<sup>24</sup> A large scale voluntary transfer (LSVT) occurs as a result of the transfer of over 500 units of housing stock by a local authority to a registered social landlord.

<sup>25</sup> An arms-length management organisation (ALMO) is a company set up by a local authority to manage and improve all or part of its housing stock.

- police: including community safety units, crime prevention units and various dedicated police domestic abuse teams
- fire and rescue services
- primary care trusts
- refuges
- social services
- children and young people's services
- multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) (only one area had not yet established a MARAC)
- domestic violence forums or partnerships
- independent domestic abuse advisers (IDVAs); and
- agencies responsible for undertaking Sanctuary Installations (sometimes based within the local authority or RSL or in some areas private contractors)

Agency respondents stressed the importance of regular meetings with key partners to discuss the operation of the Sanctuary Scheme, to resolve problems and to review individual cases. Agency respondents came together at various forums including local domestic violence forums and Sanctuary Scheme steering group meetings. As noted above all areas but one had a MARAC and these were seen as particularly useful arenas for information sharing and co-ordinating the work of various agencies involved in delivering Sanctuary Schemes.

*We have... regular meetings that are sort of...certainly six weeks / two monthly meetings where...the main parties get around the table and we talk things out and we just talk any problems out, and because we're a small group who know each other I think it's quite easy to, to resolve issues...*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

### **Appropriateness of Sanctuary for different groups**

Across the case study areas respondents explained that the Sanctuary Scheme was open to, and could potentially be an appropriate option for, all households and individuals at risk of domestic violence in any tenure (see Chapter 3 for referral criteria).

Whilst case study respondents recognised that there was a need for more specialist BAMER domestic violence services and a need to work more closely with some BAMER groups (for example, recent migrants were thought to be reluctant to report domestic violence), they felt that Sanctuary could still be an appropriate option.

As the CLG guidance on setting up a Sanctuary Scheme (CLG, 2006a) makes clear, Sanctuaries were not intended to be used in high risk cases or where the perpetrator was still resident in the property and agency respondents in all areas agreed that it

would not be appropriate to install a Sanctuary in these cases. They repeatedly stressed that the most important considerations in any case were the potential risk of domestic violence, the suitability of the property, and the needs and preferences of the client (see Chapter 4 on referral and risk assessment). However, as will be seen in the next chapter, Sanctuary Schemes often found that clients deemed to be at high risk simply refused to leave their homes.

It appeared that all the Sanctuary Schemes would accept women and men regardless of whether they were part of a heterosexual or same sex relationship (although in one area there was some confusion about whether the Sanctuary service was available to men). A couple of Sanctuary Schemes had worked with a small number of men.

As noted above, Sanctuary Schemes in all areas worked with households in all tenures and most had worked with owner occupiers and tenants in the private rented sector (see Chapter 4 for issues around installing Sanctuary measures in PRS and owner occupied homes). Again, whatever the tenure, the most important considerations were the client's needs and preferences and their safety (see Chapter 4 on risk assessment).

## **Conclusion**

Sanctuary Schemes were developed for similar reasons across the case study areas. These included the need to provide alternative solutions in the context of a high demand for social housing and a need to improve homelessness prevention services. Sanctuaries were thought to offer a number of benefits for households and agencies alike. They improved choice for households fleeing violence which met the expressed needs and preferences of many. These included: the desire to remain in their homes; to minimise disruption; and to avoid having to move to unfamiliar and possibly less desirable, areas. Agencies also wished to respond more effectively to the problem of domestic violence.

There had been concerns about Sanctuaries, most significantly about the safety and appropriateness of Sanctuary rooms, although there were also concerns about the cost of operating the service. The lead agencies responsible for the Sanctuary Schemes were housing providers or specialist domestic violence services, sometimes working in partnership but all Sanctuary Schemes worked in conjunction with a wide range of statutory, voluntary and private agencies to deliver the service. Sanctuaries were thought to be appropriate for all groups and types of households, in any tenure, as long as they met the referral criteria. The main considerations were the preferences of the client and their safety.

The following chapter describes how service users learned about Sanctuary Schemes and other accommodation options and their reasons for choosing Sanctuary.

# Chapter 3

## Sanctuary and other accommodation options

### Introduction

This chapter explores how potential service users first learned about Sanctuary and goes on to describe the referral process to Sanctuary Schemes. It then considers the other accommodation options available to service users in the case study areas, their views on these and, finally, why service users decided to opt for Sanctuary.

### Key findings

1. service users learned about Sanctuary Schemes from a wide range of agencies, but mainly from the police and specialist domestic violence services
2. referral criteria were for the most part clear and generally referral processes worked effectively
3. all accommodation options for households fleeing domestic violence were similar across the case study areas and included: a homelessness assessment; management transfers; refuge accommodation; emergency and temporary housing; private sector leases; rent deposit schemes, and mutual exchanges
4. there was no evidence that service users were pressured into accepting Sanctuary
5. service users chose Sanctuary for several reasons, but key amongst these were: the desire to stay in their homes and to minimise disruption; and their negative perceptions of alternative options such as hostels and temporary accommodation

### Learning about Sanctuary Schemes

In most areas Sanctuary Schemes had been widely advertised and promoted through presentations to relevant agencies, through the MARAC and domestic violence forums, and other local partnerships and forums. An open day for the general public was held in one area where the Sanctuary Scheme workers displayed information about Sanctuary, including photographs of the various security measures and a scale model of a Sanctuary door. In other areas agencies advertised the scheme through the media, leaflets, residents' magazines and websites. In one area a black cab was wrapped with an advertisement for Sanctuary and in another the

scheme was advertised on beer mats which were distributed to local pubs. Respondents generally felt that their Sanctuary Scheme had been well promoted and that key relevant organisations and agencies were aware of Sanctuary and what it entailed. In some areas, service users were also aware of Sanctuary because the Scheme had been advertised more widely in the ways just described.

How and when potential service users learned about Sanctuary Schemes depended on which agency they approached for help and advice, and at what stage. In many cases clients approached services for support because of a problem with an ex-partner, and Sanctuary would be offered as an option. In other cases they would learn about Sanctuary Schemes when they approached services for help whilst still living with the perpetrator. This could be following an incident in which the police were involved or, though less commonly, when another agency working with the household suspected or learned there was a problem and suggested Sanctuary as an option.

Sanctuaries have generally been seen as a means of enabling households to remain safely in their existing homes so that there is no need for them to move. However, Sanctuaries were also used to ensure that households could remain safely in their homes *following rehousing* because of domestic violence. In some cases Sanctuary service users had already fled domestic violence and were living in refuges or temporary accommodation when they learned about Sanctuary and had Sanctuary measures installed in their new homes deemed to be still at risk and Sanctuary was then proposed as a solution.

Not all service users could remember when and how they first heard about Sanctuary Schemes and were often confused about which agencies they had been in contact with. Of those who could remember, most had first heard about Sanctuary Schemes from specialist domestic violence police officers or police victim support officers. Others heard about Sanctuary from housing options teams, floating support workers, and specialist domestic violence services or, as noted above, from friends, neighbours or relatives, the media and the internet.

## **Referral to Sanctuary**

### **REFERRAL CRITERIA**

In most areas the referral criteria for Sanctuary were very simple, the household had to:

- be resident in the local authority area (or about to be rehoused in the area because of domestic violence)
- be at risk of or experiencing domestic violence; and
- to have consented to be referred to the Sanctuary Scheme



In one area, the Sanctuary Scheme service would not install a Sanctuary in cases where the household had already moved home because of domestic violence and where the perpetrator was unaware of the new address. Some Sanctuary Schemes would only accept referrals if the perpetrator had already left the property and did not provide support with removing the perpetrator. Other Sanctuary Schemes, which were operated by specialist domestic violence agencies and those that employed specialist workers, would accept referrals and begin to work with the client even when the perpetrator was still living at the property. They would work with the client to help keep them as safe as possible while they explored preferences, support needs and the options available, which included excluding the perpetrator and then having a Sanctuary installed.

*A lot of my work is meeting with women... So you may talk to them about their options and they need a lot of time to think about it, because it's such a big decision to make, and especially women who have been controlled and are not confident in making decisions. A lot of, quite a few of my cases it's just people that I'm seeing regularly, maintaining contact and just supporting them, just reiterating all the different options and allowing them to make a decision as and when they want to.*

(Specialist domestic violence worker)

One Sanctuary Scheme would only accept referrals assessed by the police as at high or very high risk of domestic violence. Respondents explained that this was simply because they did not have the resources to provide Sanctuaries for everyone who might need them. Respondents in a number of case study areas explained that there already existed some form of home safety scheme which provided extra security in the homes of residents who were at particular risk of being burgled. These schemes could also provide low level security measures for households at risk of domestic violence. If cases were not deemed a serious risk and did not require a Sanctuary then they could be referred to these schemes.

## **REFERRAL AGENCIES**

Referrals to Sanctuary Schemes were accepted from a wide range of agencies and most accepted self-referrals. In most areas police domestic violence units were the main referrers but in others the majority of referrals came from housing options or specialist domestic violence projects including one which had a telephone help line. Respondents in most areas explained that sources of referrals had widened to include for example, social services, refuge outreach teams, generic floating support workers, housing officers, health visitors and registered social landlords, independent domestic violence advisers (IDVAs) and the MARAC. This was attributed both to the promotional work undertaken by the Sanctuary Scheme workers and partner agencies and to the existence of MARACs which helped to

ensure that all relevant agencies were aware of the services available as well as cases that might benefit from a Sanctuary Scheme.

*...we had a referral from a school nurse recently – she might not have known about the MARAC or the IDVA but she knew about us... there is Housing Options at the council staffed by [the LSVT] – they will refer to Sanctuary... we have about 25 neighbourhood officers that go out on their patch...they will make sure that people are OK or get information and refer...*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

However, respondents in one area (which had undertaken a great deal of promotional work) were concerned that despite their efforts they were still not receiving direct referrals from some health services such as Accident and Emergency departments and GPs. The reasons for this were unclear although respondents felt that it was possibly due to the fact that those attending MARACs and other domestic violence forums were relatively senior officers and that knowledge of the Sanctuary Scheme service had not yet filtered down to those working directly with potential service users.

There were also some concerns that RSLs were not making referrals to Sanctuary Schemes when they clearly had problems with domestic violence among their own tenants.

A few agency representatives felt that some referrals were inappropriate because potential service users did not fully understand what a Sanctuary Scheme entailed; because the perpetrator was still in the property or had returned; or because the client wanted to move.

*...if people don't fully understand 1... what the scheme's about and 2 what the support element's about. It sounds great...we can make you safe in your own home. So they make a referral ... and actually it, it's not an appropriate referral so the woman hasn't fully understood what she's been referred into, so when she gets all the information it's like, 'well no that's not what I want, that's not what I'm doing', or well actually .. the, she's not ready for that step because actually she's having him back and you can't put things in place if, if there's a chance of him coming back into the family home... because you actually make her...less safe.*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

Overall, however, Sanctuary Scheme representatives tended not to feel that they received inappropriate referrals. Certainly following assessment some cases proved unsuitable for Sanctuary and/or potential users decided that they did not want this

option. However, most Sanctuary Scheme workers felt it was their role to explain the Sanctuary service fully to potential service users, including options for removing the perpetrator if this was what they wanted, to assess their suitability for the scheme and the appropriateness of a Sanctuary, and to refer on to other agencies as required.

It was clear that there was a need for referral agencies to balance an explanation of what a Sanctuary might entail without raising expectations. As will be seen in the following chapter, whether a Sanctuary was deemed necessary and/or appropriate and the type of security measures recommended, depended on the risk assessment as well as the needs and preferences of service users.

*We get the odd one where... perhaps somebody has spoken to a referring agent about Sanctuary and, to, to discuss it as an option and they said, 'oh like the Sanctuary Scheme puts like cameras in and stuff like that', and then when you go to somebody's house and, and you're measuring what you perceive the risk to be and... you go through what work you think is necessary and if cameras isn't on the list, they say to you, 'oh I got told I was having cameras and stuff'...that does cause a couple of words every now and again, not all the time by any means, but it's like they've been made a false promise by the agency...*

(IDVA)

### **Sanctuary as one of a range of accommodation options**

The options available to service users were similar across the case study areas, these included: management transfers (also referred to as emergency transfers or emergency applications); local women's refuges or refuges in another part of the country; mutual exchanges (but these could take too long); temporary accommodation including dispersed properties, private sector leases and hostel accommodation; rent deposit schemes or staying with relatives and friends.

As noted earlier in the report, one of the main concerns about Sanctuary Schemes, discussed in Chapter 1, was that households fleeing violence would be persuaded to accept a Sanctuary rather than being offered all their accommodation options. Agency representatives, including those not directly involved in delivering the Sanctuary Scheme service, believed that all options were offered and explained to potential service users, and that local authorities would always carry out a homelessness assessment<sup>26</sup> and provide temporary accommodation where this was appropriate.

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<sup>26</sup> Under s184 Housing Act 1996 if the local authority has reason to believe that an applicant may be homeless or threatened with homelessness, they shall make such inquiries as are necessary to

*...my women haven't been pressurised into taking one option over another. It has been, and at the Sanctuary launch it was very much said that... Sanctuary was a choice... it wasn't going to be this has got to be and you're not going to get your homeless application, you're not going get your move.*

(Specialist domestic violence worker)

However, it is important to note that service users did not always remember what other options were offered to them or who explained these. It was not always clear whether this was because they had not discussed alternatives or because they simply could not recall events. However, when prompted, most respondents seemed to remember that they had been offered the choice of leaving the property and some mentioned refuges and rehousing but could not recall the details.

*I don't remember if they suggested anything else because there was so much going on and my head was in bits – but I do know that I wanted to stay as I thought that would be best for my little boy...it would make things as normal as possible...*

(Service user)

Accommodation options were explored with potential Sanctuary Scheme users at different stages and by different agencies; again, this depended on the individual's circumstances. In emergency situations the police would discuss options such as staying with friends or relatives as an interim measure or moving into a refuge. Someone planning to end an abusive relationship might spend some time discussing their needs and preferences with a specialist domestic violence worker or Sanctuary Scheme worker who would raise Sanctuary as one of a range of options. In some areas housing options officers had received domestic violence training and training in risk assessment and the Sanctuary Scheme workers with domestic violence backgrounds had been trained in housing law so all were able to advise clients fully about their options.

*We do work very closely with [Sanctuary workers] and they have two workers who actually work in this office [Housing Options] for part of the week... we've all done the DV training, the DV awareness training, but you've got like confidence that you've got specialists there because obviously they're better qualified than we are.*

(Housing representative)

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satisfy themselves whether the applicant is eligible for assistance, and if so, whether any duty, and if so what duty, is owed to the applicant under Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act.

## Reasons for opting for a Sanctuary

Service users across the case study areas gave a number of reasons for choosing to have a Sanctuary installed and these were very similar to those described by agency respondents in Chapter 2. Whilst most did not want to have to disrupt the family by moving, many also felt it unfair that they should have to leave their home. This was particularly the case for households which had already moved more than once in the past and for those with children.

*Because we had to move previously, it wasn't fair on the children to keep having to be moving homes and moving schools because emotionally it's not good for children.*

(Service user)

A number of service users felt that there was little to be achieved by moving as they had done so in the past and the perpetrator had always found them. This was usually because the perpetrator had persuaded their children to reveal the new address or had been told by other family and friends. One respondent had lived in 13 different towns and cities and had decided to accept a Sanctuary Scheme and stay in the area when she moved out of the refuge.

*I've left mine 13 times and been to 13 different cities and he still found me...every single time... I even went to [...] and that was like ten and a half hours away on the train and he found me.*

(Service user)

A focus group of Sanctuary Scheme service users explained that they also felt safer living in a familiar place with the support of family and friends. They felt it would be far more difficult to move to a new area and live with the constant fear of the perpetrator discovering where they had moved to.

*Well it's... continually having to look behind your back... If you stay in the same place at least you can see it coming....It's not just that as well, I think it's family as well....I have a good family network, do you know what I mean, they really do look out for me. But if I was somewhere else I wouldn't have nobody and... I think I'm too old to start meeting new, do you know what I mean...I don't have to take the kids in school any more so I don't really associate with.. like the school people, you know...*

(Service user)

Others said they could not move because they had pets and/or because they were unwilling to leave all their possessions behind. Many service users explained that they not afford to pay for removals and storage for what might be a long period of time while they waited to be rehoused. A couple of women explained that they were unable to move into a refuge because they were employed and could not afford to pay both rent for the refuge and their mortgage.

Whilst most service users wanted to stay in their homes, a few felt that they had little choice. In one case a service user whose daughter had been attacked by an ex-partner, explained that the family could not move from their owner-occupied home as her husband was seriously ill. They had had their home adapted at great expense and they could not afford to move to another property and to have the new property adapted, and they did not wish to give up their home. In other cases where a member of the household had learning or physical disabilities or was unwell, agency respondents and service users explained that they wished to stay where they were both because the property had been adapted and because they had comprehensive support and care packages in place.

*...this house is good for me, four bedrooms upstairs...downstairs shower room I get support from the Asian women's centre, Sure Start...the police and the DV people... If I moved I'd have to change doctors, health visitors, hospital etc, it is too much things for me.*

(Service user)

Service users in all areas said they did not want to move to a refuge or temporary accommodation and wait for many months or, some feared, even years to be rehoused. Service users were also very concerned that they might be rehoused in an unfamiliar and possibly less desirable area and property and this was a major reason why many people chose to have a Sanctuary. The issue of where service users might be housed temporarily and/or permanently rehoused and how long this would take was repeated across the case study areas and was a concern shared by some agency representatives (see Chapter 2).

*My first instinct was to get away but when all they could offer me was to pack up my stuff and put myself in a women's refuge I just wasn't willing to do that ...It was quite frightening to know that that was all they could offer me – no idea how long I'd have to wait to be rehoused or where I'd end up...*

(Service user)

*...but what I do know is that some of our social housing is absolutely horrible. I mean we've got blocks of flats that terrify me... We're working hard on turning them around, but they are scary places... Oh you know your partner's being beating the shit out of you, we're going*

*to put you into the [...] block of flats and then you'll be surrounded by drug dealers and really scary people...*

(Specialist domestic violence worker)

Another reason for service users not wanting to move were their negative perceptions of refuges and temporary accommodation sometimes, although by no means always, based on their past experience of staying in such accommodation. A few, who had experience of staying in temporary accommodation and, particularly homeless hostels, said they would not wish to do so again. These respondents tended to complain about other residents' alcohol and drug use, and older women said they found it difficult to cope with the behaviour of young children. A couple of respondents also reported very poor conditions in temporary accommodation.

*I had to move to a hostel after the fire but I hated it...it was full of drunks and drug addicts...so I went to stay with friends for a couple of weeks then went back ...and they put me in a slightly better hostel – but it was still not very nice...*

(Service user)

## **Conclusion**

Sanctuary Schemes had been widely promoted and a wide range of agencies made referrals but most service users first learned about Sanctuary Schemes from the police and specialist domestic violence services. Referral criteria were for the most part clear and generally referral processes worked effectively but there was a clear need not to raise household's expectations of what the Sanctuary Scheme could and would provide. Accommodation options for households fleeing domestic violence were similar across the case study areas. There was little evidence that service users were pressured into accepting Sanctuary as some commentators and national level stakeholders feared (see Chapter 1). Although service users did not always remember the options discussed it was evident that they had wanted to remain in their homes. There were many reasons why service users chose to have a Sanctuary installed, the most common being: the desire to stay in a familiar area close to support networks; to minimise disruption for them and their children; and importantly, their negative perceptions of alternative options.

The following chapter describes the risk assessment process and the installation of Sanctuary and discusses the types of Sanctuary measures installed.

# Chapter 4

## Risk assessment and installing sanctuary measures

### Introduction

This chapter describes the risk assessment process undertaken by Sanctuary Schemes to ensure that Sanctuary was an appropriate option for households. It goes on to consider the process of installing Sanctuary measures including the removal of the perpetrator and interim safety measures taken before going on to describe the types of security measures installed. Service users' views on these processes are then considered. It concludes with a consideration of some of the issues and problems faced when installing Sanctuary in private rented and owner-occupied properties.

### Key findings

1. risk assessments were usually undertaken by several agencies working together. These could include: Sanctuary Scheme service workers and/or specialist domestic violence workers; police and fire services
2. Sanctuary Schemes in most areas had been successful in removing perpetrators from properties in all tenures
3. the time taken to install a Sanctuary varied between a few days and 73 days. However, in most areas, interim security measures such as lock changes and extra locks and Home Link alarms could be installed very quickly
4. there was no 'typical' Sanctuary installation, the types of security measures depended on the degree of risk, the needs of the service user and the type or condition of the property
5. service users were generally happy with the installation process but not all felt that they had been fully consulted about their needs and preferences
6. Sanctuary Schemes had varied experiences of working with private tenants and owner-occupiers, but most had done so successfully

### Risk assessment

The risk assessment process varied slightly between areas and also differed depending on which agency referred the case but in general it comprised two main elements:



- an assessment of the case including the needs and preferences of clients and the danger posed by the perpetrator (for example, the whereabouts of the perpetrator, the level of violence and nature of incidents); and
- an assessment of the property and its suitability for Sanctuary

### **RISK ASSESSING THE CASE**

Once a referral was received the Sanctuary Scheme workers would normally start to assess the case, checking that the referral criteria had been met and contacting the service user to discuss their situation, to confirm their housing tenure (e.g. whether they were a social or private tenant or home owner and whether they were living in a joint tenancy or were a joint owner); and discuss their needs and preferences, including whether they wished to remain in their home.

In most areas the Sanctuary lead or team would also gather additional information about the case from relevant agencies. For example, if the referral came from an agency other than the police, they would check with the police to see whether the perpetrator had previous convictions; gather information about recent incidents and their nature; talk to the referring agency to clarify details and collate information about the case. Where cases were referred by the police this type of information would normally be included in the referral form. Whilst most Sanctuary Scheme workers said they were able to collect additional information almost immediately, others reported delays because of staff shortages, heavy workloads and poor communication (see Chapter 6).

In many cases the police would already have undertaken a risk assessment and provided information about the perpetrator, other adult household members and the appropriateness of Sanctuary.

*...that's actually done by the DALOs, the Domestic Abuse Liaison Officers. If they think it's suitable then we just go ahead with it basically.*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

Most agency respondents across the case study areas stressed the need for effective information sharing between various agencies in order to conduct full and effective risk assessments. In the following example, Sanctuary Scheme workers had accepted a referral for Sanctuary and following an initial assessment had decided that the case was appropriate for Sanctuary. However, once they contacted the police to gather more information about the case they discovered that it was not an appropriate option.

*... we sent the referral off and the police came back saying no this is not suitable for Sanctuary... fortunately the police have got more information about the perpetrator and the victim and...there was Social*

*Service involvement and... there was more to it than what we got told by the resident...*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

## **RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS**

Most Sanctuary leads reported that they used a CAADA risk assessment tool or a tool based on this form. One Sanctuary Scheme service had recently adopted the new CAADA-DASH MARAC<sup>27</sup> risk assessment tool and one scheme was about to introduce the CAADA tool. Respondents in one area emphasised the importance of using a standard tool that all agencies understood.

*We use the CAADA risk assessment...which is...what the Home Office is telling you we should use... the CAADA one's for support services to use so everybody gets a CAADA risk assessment... And that again is sort of a multi-agency tool in that certainly in [area] most of the partners that are involved in the MARAC understand the CAADA risk assessment and would understand if we said this is very high, high or standard risk....*

(Sanctuary Scheme worker)

Respondents highlighted the value of the CAADA risk assessment tool when risk assessing the case with clients who often underplayed the risks they faced or the abuse they had suffered.

*What you usually find with DV is that they, they don't up the risk to themselves, they very much minimise the risk...And sometimes they, it's easier remembering the better times of that relationship than, than the abusive times, and sometimes they just don't recall them. Sometimes when we're doing the risk assessment though... the CAADA one with them, it'll bring up a lot more stuff because you're asking direct questions about it...*

(Specialist Sanctuary Scheme worker)

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<sup>27</sup> Co-ordinated Action against Domestic Abuse - Domestic Abuse Stalking and Honour Based Violence Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference. See: [http://www.caada.org.uk/practitioner\\_resources/090428%20Risk%20Indicator%20Checklist%20severity%20of%20abuse%20grid%20and%20practice%20guidance.pdf](http://www.caada.org.uk/practitioner_resources/090428%20Risk%20Indicator%20Checklist%20severity%20of%20abuse%20grid%20and%20practice%20guidance.pdf)

## PROPERTY RISK ASSESSMENT

In most areas the property risk assessment was conducted by a police officer based within a domestic violence team, a crime prevention officer or victim support officer who would visit the client at an agreed time. The assessments were often undertaken jointly with the Sanctuary lead and in some areas with a domestic violence support worker (as noted earlier the Sanctuary lead was not always a specialist domestic violence worker). These visits could be used to reassess the client's needs and preferences, show them what Sanctuary installations will look like and give the clients an opportunity to ask further questions, discuss options and possibly to change their minds.

*I visit the property with [Sanctuary VSO] – she briefs me about the case, then we examine the premises, do a risk assessment, look at what security measures that might be needed and discuss all this with the victim and then commission the work..*

(Crime Prevention Officer)

A few respondents who were responsible for risk assessing properties and deciding on what security measures were required explained the importance of discussing what could be done to secure the property with the client. Some also felt it was important to take into account what the client thought was required to ensure their safety. In some cases properties were already quite secure and there was no need to install extra measures, however, it was important to explain this carefully to service users so that they felt safe.

Service users also thought it important that their needs and fears were discussed (see below) although not all service users said they had been consulted in this way.

*Sometimes the victim will have an idea of what they want and this might not always be practical so we will sit down and discuss this and what I feel they need because the fear of crime is just as important...I always sit down with them and discuss what's going to be done to make sure that they are happy about it... I have visited properties where the security was good, the property had outside lighting and safe doors and windows so I explained why security measures were unnecessary – that reassured the woman and she was quite happy...*

(Crime prevention officer)

In some areas the property would also be assessed by the fire service and one fire service representative explained that fire safety concerns and risk assessments differed from those of other agencies, notably the police. One fire service representative expressed serious concerns about the safety and security of Sanctuary and believed it most important that property risk assessments should be undertaken jointly.

*...it's a balance between security and safety. So while the police want to... lock the people up...what we want to do is leave the doors wide open so they can escape in case of fire. Now there is a balance, and that's the balance that we try to get within the fire service. The guys that go inspecting ... have had this explained to them...What I like to do is send my guys in with the Crime Reduction Officer...and then they discuss what the balance is.*

(Fire service representative)

Not all service users remembered having fire safety checks although many mentioned having smoke alarms installed and a few were able to explain other fire safety measures such as arson proof letter boxes. They also explained that the fire service would be aware that Sanctuary measures had been installed and would be able to break into the property in case of emergency, although it will be seen later that this was not always the case (see Chapter 6). A few service users said that they had been asked to contact the fire service to arrange a convenient time for the safety check but a couple said that they 'hadn't bothered' to reply to the letter and had heard no more about this from the Sanctuary Scheme service or the fire service.

## **Process of installing Sanctuary measures**

### **REMOVAL OF PERPETRATOR**

As noted earlier, Sanctuary measures would not be installed whilst the perpetrator was still living in the property. If the client wished to proceed with the installation of the Sanctuary then, in most areas, Sanctuary workers would refer them to IDVAs or solicitors who would advise on legal remedies such as occupation orders<sup>28</sup> to remove or exclude the perpetrator. In some cases it was possible to take action to remove a perpetrator from the property very quickly so that the Sanctuary could be installed and the service user could return to the property within a few days.

*... if people have additional needs, need some legal advice etc I refer them to [IDVA] who then refers them to the legal surgery - this solicitor who is absolutely fantastic, she is brilliant, and we have a lot more success going down the civil route than the legal route... if she thinks it serious enough she will take them to court the next day and she is usually successful in obtaining an Injunction - an occupation order...or whatever she decided is appropriate – in the absence of the*

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<sup>28</sup> An Occupation Order is a type of injunction. An injunction is a court order to do or not to do something. In the case of an Occupation Order (Part IV of the Family Law Act 1996) the perpetrator can be ordered to leave a property and/or not to occupy the property or part of the property. See [http://www.family-justice-council.org.uk/docs/DV\\_Guide\\_March\\_2007\\_-\\_English.pdf](http://www.family-justice-council.org.uk/docs/DV_Guide_March_2007_-_English.pdf)

*perpetrator usually, it is served on them by a bailiff on the same day so it is a brilliant service – within 24 hours they have the protection they need.*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

### **INTERIM SAFETY MEASURES**

The first consideration for agencies in all areas was the safety of the household. If the service user was deemed to be in imminent danger then the first step would be to explore the options for emergency accommodation in a refuge (if necessary in another area); other temporary accommodation (e.g. dispersed housing or a hostel); or with family or friends. Some clients would be referred to the Sanctuary Scheme from a refuge, in these cases they would remain there until the Sanctuary measures had been installed. Agency representatives suggested that most service users preferred to remain in their homes or to stay with relatives or friends but that the offer of temporary accommodation remained open to them should they change their minds.

A few respondents explained that they had moved into temporary accommodation or refuges but then returned home before the Sanctuary had been installed. The main reasons given included having to return home to care for pets and wanting to be closer to their families and/or their children's schools. A couple of older women explained that they found it difficult to cope while living in a hostel or refuge and preferred to return to their homes.

*...I couldn't stay there because there were people drinking, people on drugs and I suffer from depression and it was making me ill so I decided to come back...*

(Service user)

Although the CLG guidance on setting up Sanctuary Schemes (CLG, 2006a) states that a Sanctuary should not be seen as an emergency response, agency respondents in most areas explained that they often had to install interim emergency measures to help keep service users safe. As noted above, many service users wished to return to their homes before full Sanctuary measures could be installed, or did not wish to move out of their homes even for a short period of time. The Sanctuary Scheme worker could arrange to install security measures such as new door locks, window locks or in some areas, alarms that connected directly to the police or to a care control system (similar to systems used in sheltered accommodation). Security measures could also be installed in a relative's home if

necessary<sup>29</sup> and one Scheme reported that they had installed security measures in bed and breakfast accommodation as a temporary safety measure.

*The [Home Link] alarms are expensive – they are monitored by the police. This really helps reassure people – it is a wonderful piece of equipment – although it is only an alarm - we put them in for a short time – until the Sanctuary has all been set up – then we reassess to see if it is still needed. It is a bit of a quick fix really.*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

It was clear that these interim measures were appreciated by service users. In particular, service users valued alarm systems that linked directly to the police or a call centre, these made them feel much safer but, as noted above, they were expensive and were normally removed once other Sanctuary measures had been installed (see Chapter 6).

#### **TIME TAKEN TO INSTALL A SANCTUARY SCHEME**

The time taken from referral to installation of a Sanctuary varied between a few days and a few weeks, in one area a respondent reported that it had taken 73 days from referral to installation. There were disagreements in this area about the time taken to install a Sanctuary with some respondents reporting an average time of only two weeks and others an average of six weeks. Delays in this area were attributed to staff shortages, heavy workloads, the time taken to make a risk assessment and to assess properties, and the time taken to submit priced work schedules. Further delays were due to the fact that many of the security features, for example window grilles, were made to measure and this could take several weeks. There was some concern in this area that households who would have benefited from having a Sanctuary had to move from their homes because they were unsafe and then, because of the long delays, lost interest in the service.

*...they lose interest because when the process takes a long time, and I've tried to get them to really tighten up how quickly it will take to put a Sanctuary in, but one of the gaps has been the police providing information, and that's what I mean by partners... the police have to risk assess the case. So if, if I wanted a Sanctuary they'd check who my partner was, how scary my partner was. Well if that takes six weeks then the woman may well have made other choices in the meantime.*

(Sanctuary Scheme partner)

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<sup>29</sup> One Sanctuary Scheme would install Sanctuary measures in a service users' relatives' homes if they too were at risk from the perpetrator.

In all other areas Sanctuaries were installed within a few days to three weeks following referral depending on the level of risk. Again, in most areas, where cases were deemed urgent or high risk and/or where the client refused to move out of the property whilst waiting for Sanctuary to be installed then the work would be done as quickly as possible or, as noted earlier, interim security measures could be installed almost immediately.

The time taken to install a Sanctuary also depended on the work required (in some areas Sanctuary doors were specially made). Sometimes the installation was delayed because the Sanctuary worker could not contact the client or they were out when the workmen arrived at the appointed time (a problem reported by many agency respondents). In other cases it was difficult to contact the landlord to gain permission to undertake work (see below).

### **Types of Sanctuary measures installed**

As noted in Chapter 1, the CLG guidance on setting up a Sanctuary Scheme (CLG, 2006a) suggests that the main feature of a Sanctuary is the creation of a Sanctuary Room which provides a safe place from where service users can call and wait for the arrival of the police. However, as mentioned in Chapter 2, agencies involved in the development of Sanctuary Schemes in the case study areas had some concerns about installing Sanctuary rooms. For the most part it was decided not to install Sanctuary rooms as standard. Instead it was decided to focus efforts on what the CLG guidance on setting up a Sanctuary Scheme (CLG, 2006a) referred to as 'Sanctuary Plus', that is, measures to improve the security and safety of the property as a whole.

Although promotional material for the Sanctuary Schemes often described different levels of Sanctuary for high, medium or low risk cases, in practice these were not strictly adhered to. Rather, the security measures installed were individual packages which were informed by the risk assessment, the type and condition of the property and the client's needs and preferences. Sanctuary Schemes in a few areas would undertake work outside the property such as cutting back hedges and improving lighting, erecting fences and installing gates whilst Schemes in other areas did not. Some of the security measures such as window locks were very basic whilst others were far more sophisticated, for example video entry systems and battery operated police alarms where there was no landline (this was quite common). In a number of areas measures such as police alarms, CCTV and lighting could not be provided by the Sanctuary Scheme itself but could be requested from or funded by another agency such as the police or the CDRP.

In three areas agency representatives explained that certain measures were installed as standard, for example, one Scheme always installed a Sanctuary room (none of the others installed a Sanctuary room as standard and many had never

installed one – this is discussed below). In another two areas the standard packages for low and medium risk cases were very comprehensive but did allow for some flexibility depending on the risks (e.g. fire retardant paint was only used when arson had been identified as a risk).

*...so we will look at intruder alarms, security lighting for outside of the property, video entry systems. .. We also look at window grilles, which are concertina type shutters on windows... just so that somebody can again just shut those window grilles whilst they wait for the police to come... and with the panic room we would look at, again, reinforced doors, spinning them round, extra locks, fire safety equipment, things like that.*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

As noted earlier some service users refused to leave their property despite being advised to do so. A client in one area had been issued with an Osman Warning<sup>30</sup> by the police who believed her life was in danger but she would not leave her home partly because she feared the perpetrator would retaliate by abusing her parents. In this case the Sanctuary Scheme went to great lengths and expense to try to ensure her safety, and the Sanctuary measures had proved successful.

*...she has maximum security in that property, she has a police Home Link alarm that she has had for 18 months, we have cut down all the bushes and trees in her garden so that there is nowhere to hide, she has six foot fencing, an intruder alarm, a panic button to alert the neighbours, CCTV, she has a panic room in the bedroom - she even has a standalone sprinkler system that we bought for £2,500 from the fire service – she has that disguised as a lamp...that is because the police were worried about a petrol bomb attack – there have been a few incidents but all the measures have worked so that the police have had time to get there and arrest him...he has actually been quiet for a few months now....*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

## **SANCTUARY ROOMS**

As noted earlier (see Chapters 1 and 2) there were concerns about the safety of Sanctuary rooms if the perpetrator managed to gain entry to the property. Most agency respondents, in particular specialist domestic violence workers, recognised

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<sup>30</sup> An Osman Warning is an official warning made to an individual by the police that they are at risk of being killed by someone who appears to have the 'capability to make good their threat'.



that there was always a possibility that the perpetrator would find a way back into the home and often into the relationship.

*... if they reconcile after they've had Sanctuary installed the perpetrator is inside that property with them... it's just that he's so persistent, he's very plausible, then I really ask a woman to think so hard about whether Sanctuary's going to be the right option for her. And I'm not wanting to sort of take the wind out of her sails, and I always say... I'm hoping... this is going to be your time, but I just really, really worry that a woman will be inside a Sanctuary and the chap will be inside with her.*

(Specialist domestic violence worker)

Sanctuaries were not thought to be suitable for people who could not manage the complicated series of locks and bolts. An agency respondent explained that a woman who had seven children would have found it almost impossible to gather all of them together in an emergency whilst a service user had decided against having a Sanctuary room in addition to other Sanctuary measures (including external Sanctuary doors) for similar reasons.

*...they did talk about having a safe room but we decided against it as it would take time to collect the kids...and the dogs and... I'd be flapping...*

(Service user)

Service users appeared to appreciate the extra security provided by Sanctuary rooms and a few said they always locked themselves in at night, but one or two said they had never locked the Sanctuary door (in one case because the service user had a young child who slept in another room) but none reported having used the Sanctuary room in an emergency. There were problems with Sanctuary rooms; some service users did not like the appearance of the door which, with extra bolts and locks and often a spy-hole, looked very different from a normal interior door. Service users tended to worry about what visitors and their children's friends would think, and in some cases children objected to them. A number of service users also said that their children had locked themselves in the Sanctuary room.

*I think sometimes that the doors look – well I feel a bit depressed sometimes because the bed room door is like a prison cell but really it is better to be safe...I don't think you could get anything safer...*

(Service user)

Agency representatives in the one area where Sanctuary rooms were installed as standard had mixed views about the appropriateness of this. Some agency respondents had experience of setting up Sanctuary Schemes in other areas where

Sanctuary Schemes offered different levels of security and felt that these offered more choice to service user who might not require (or indeed want) Sanctuary rooms. Anecdotal evidence from support group users and evidence from an agency representative suggested that a couple of service users retreated to their Sanctuary room and spent most of their time locked in there.

*She had a lot of support provided for her...and she did speak to me numerous times, and I was concerned about her at some point because I felt that... she was using Sanctuary and making herself more of a victim, she was making herself a prisoner, because instead of enjoying the whole of her property she was taking herself off upstairs and locking herself into that room, and I felt she was becoming a prisoner within her own home...*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

### **Service user experiences of installation**

In some areas service users explained how much they had appreciated the opportunity to discuss their needs and concerns and the types of Sanctuary measures which could be installed. They also valued having the extra precautions and safety measures explained fully. They found it reassuring that the worker/s assessing their case listened to them and understood their situation and what was required, as this respondent explained.

*[Victim Support Officer] said they could put reinforced double glazing in and because of the history he said he thought it was appropriate – he had kicked in the windows before to get in while I was at work and he was waiting for me when I got in – I also told him that I wasn't happy with the front door because it was just a normal door and he said he'd try to get me a special new door and he got that sorted as well... the police and fire station have this address so they know I have this door as they will need special equipment to get in – they explained everything about what to do in an emergency or if I was ill...My carer has a spare set of keys....*

(Service user)

Not all service users felt that they had been consulted about their needs although there appeared to be differences even within areas. For example, participants in a focus group of service users in one area described very different experiences with some saying that they had been asked what security measures they required whilst others said they had not.

Whilst most service users were happy with the Sanctuary measures quite a few said they would have liked extra security such as CCTV, intercom systems, alarm systems that connected directly to the police and in some instances, new windows.

Others were disappointed with the equipment provided and a number complained about over sensitive alarms that were too easy to set off by accident (especially when a number of police officers responded to the false alarm) whilst others complained that alarms did not work and in one case a service user explained that she did not know how to use the alarm provided.

*I expected a bit more than what we actually got, to be honest, because them bloody window locks are a total waste, them window alarms are a waste of time.*

(Service user)

Sanctuary Scheme installations were undertaken by private contractors, RSLs' in-house maintenance teams or various local authority-based home security schemes. In some areas the workers responsible for installing Sanctuary measures had received domestic violence training. Although some women said they had been nervous about having workmen in their home, for the most part they found the workers polite and unobtrusive, and more sensitive than other maintenance workers they had met in the past.

*I was really concerned about these men coming to my property to install these measures but actually they were heaven sent, they were such nice gentlemen, polite...considerate of my situation...They didn't infringe on me at all.*

(Service user)

A couple of respondents in two case study areas, however, complained that workers did not show their identification, that they turned up without notice and in one case a service user complained that the worker had asked intrusive questions about her situation.

*I wasn't very happy with the worker – he must have known why the work was being done but he was asking questions and I didn't want to talk about it – he was asking personal questions – I told my case worker about it. He was only there to fit the door – he asked what happened and whether it was an arranged marriage.*

(Service user)

In some cases Sanctuary rooms had been installed before panic alarms or mobile telephones had been provided and in a couple of cases service users explained that they had Sanctuary rooms installed but were not provided with either an alarm or a mobile telephone (see Chapter 6).

*I asked the safety person what to do if I had to use the panic room but it was my idea to keep my old mobile 'phone in there – and making*

*sure it was always charged up. A panic button would have been a good idea.*

(Service user)

Almost all service users were satisfied with the time taken to install Sanctuary although, as noted above, there were sometimes delays in supplying certain pieces of equipment or items such as telephones. Perhaps surprisingly in the area where service users had to wait for six to eight weeks for Sanctuary to be installed, service users appeared to have been quite happy with this, in fact many remarked that they thought the process was quite quick and that it had gone smoothly with no delays. However, as noted earlier, there was some concern amongst agency representatives in this area that some households that would have benefited from a Sanctuary Scheme had moved out of the property because they were unsafe or had lost confidence in the service because of the delay.

### **Installing Sanctuary measures in owner occupied properties and the private rented sector**

#### **OWNER-OCCUPIERS**

As noted earlier, all Sanctuary Schemes would work with residents in all tenures and most had some experience of working with owner-occupiers and private tenants. In a couple of areas it was thought that about half of all Sanctuaries had been installed in the private rented sector or in owner-occupied homes whilst in others most of the work was thought to have been undertaken in RSL properties. All but one Sanctuary Scheme had some experience of working with owner-occupiers and agency respondents from different Sanctuary Schemes reported varied experiences. In some areas the installation of Sanctuary in owner-occupied properties was not perceived to be a problem but this was often because the client was the sole owner of the property and/or the perpetrator was an ex-partner who was not living at the property. In other cases Sanctuary Scheme workers would refer clients to the IDVA or a local solicitor for advice on legal measures to remove the perpetrator.

*[we]...don't have any issues at all...for the most part those people would already be separated... or there would be legal, you know an occupation order, so the woman can remain there and the courts have actually removed him.*

(Specialist Sanctuary co-ordinator)

However, a number of respondents reported that some clients who were in employment were not entitled to public funding and simply could not afford the cost of an Injunction<sup>31</sup>.

A further problem, reported by agency representatives and service users in two areas, was that perpetrators would ignore court decisions and simply refuse to pay the mortgage leaving the client at risk of losing their home. Some respondents saw this as another way for the perpetrator to 'get back' at the ex-partner.

*I've been in and out of court, the police, [domestic violence support project]... I've lost two stone, my son has lost ten pounds – he is only 15 – he is having counselling at school. It has just been a nightmare...He hasn't paid the mortgage for a year because he wants to get me out so he can have the money...but I have been awarded it for a year or another three years depending on my son's education...but I will get two thirds and he will get a third...*

(Service user)

One problem mentioned by a couple of respondents in two areas was that some service users were concerned about the appearance of their property as they did not want doors that looked different from all the others on the estate and were worried about what their neighbours would think.

*I completely quivered in the sense that I live on a new housing estate so everyone's front doors match. My front door is going to look out of place, so I wanted the alarm but not the front door.*

(Service User)

## **PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR TENANTS**

Sanctuary Schemes also had varied experiences of working in the PRS. In many cases landlords were quite happy to have Sanctuary measures installed as they felt the extra security would add value to the property. This was particularly the case where Sanctuary Schemes fitted expensive doors which were very secure but which looked like normal front doors (something that would have been appreciated by service users in other areas). Again, permission had to be gained before any work could be undertaken and this often slowed the process down as it could be difficult to contact landlords, especially those who lived in another area.

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<sup>31</sup> People on a low income or welfare benefits and who have little or no money in savings may be eligible for public funding or Community Legal Services funding. Others may have to pay part or all the costs themselves. The Community Legal Services website has information about applying for this funding and eligibility. See: <http://www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk/gateway/family.jsp>

*... sometimes it's quite awkward if it's private landlords because we need their permission, especially for target hardening... we've got an accredited landlord system, so there's, there's obviously landlords that we work with ...they're quite good. You know, they've got offices and you can fax them something and they fax it straight back [but] a lot of landlords don't live here ...you ask a woman 'who's your landlord?', they say, and it's, 'ooh I've just got a name and a mobile', and they're the ones we have a bit of difficulty, you know... sometimes they're a little bit more difficult to get in contact with...*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

In one area the crime prevention unit felt that security measures should be installed as quickly as possible without the permission of the landlord, especially in urgent cases but this was not a view shared by other respondents who felt it important that proper procedures should be followed.

*... we have to inform the landlord ...because we'd need their permission, because it's their property that we're making the changes to. But we have... I would guess maybe 40 to 50 per cent of the ones that we've done if not more, have been in private rented properties. So landlords are pretty much OK about it.*

(Housing options representative)

The main concern with PRS tenants was that the landlord might not be aware of the problems the tenant was experiencing and some potential service users refused to have a Sanctuary because they were worried that the landlord would evict them once they found out about the domestic violence. One service user explained that she had always paid for any repairs to damage caused by the perpetrator herself for the same reason.

*So some clients turn it down because... they were concerned that they would be kicked out of their tenancies.... and that's quite a difficult one because the client doesn't want you to take that up on her behalf.... So in that case you'd simply, quite simply have to walk away and just, your hands are tied because her choice is that*

(Specialist domestic violence worker)

A small number of respondents, including service users, explained that landlords sometimes wanted to undertake security work themselves and then claim the cost from the Sanctuary Scheme. Others wished to oversee the work or made demands about the installations, for example, requesting new doors and windows, in one case this had meant that a Sanctuary could not be installed.

*I know one private landlord did refuse any works being carried out on his property...or "OK, well you can put all new windows in the property if you like."...Well it's not quite what we had in mind. They said "Well it's that or nothing." You know, just ridiculous things "We'd like to strengthen the door" "No you can put a new door on it." Well, you know, so, and, and those we just, we just have to pull out, you know, because that's just misuse... So we've, we've had some difficult landlords...*

(Sanctuary scheme co-ordinator)

In some areas efforts were being made to educate PRS landlords, both about domestic violence and the role of Sanctuary.

*And I'm actually going to actually go in to present the Sanctuary Scheme to our Landlords Forum shortly as well, so that they're aware that, you know, about the Sanctuary Scheme and, you know, we're going to keep women safe and everything else. So that they don't automatically go, 'oh my property's going to be damaged, etc, because, you know, X bloke is going to go round there and smash, and smash the windows', so we are doing sort of Landlord forums as well, we're going to address that because some landlords do.*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

## **Conclusions**

It was evident that risk assessments should focus on the needs and preferences of the service user as well as the risk posed by the perpetrator and the security of the property. It was sometimes the case that a Sanctuary Scheme was not an appropriate option as the property was unsuitable. It was also important that risk assessments were undertaken jointly by key agencies but it appeared that in one area in particular, there were sometimes delays caused by ineffective information sharing procedures. The importance of effective risk assessment tools was also stressed. Agencies used different risk assessment tools but most Sanctuary Schemes used, or were planning to use, CAADA tools. However, it was quite often the case in all case study areas that service users did not wish to move out of their homes even when the risk assessment suggested that they would be at a relatively high risk if they remained in their homes.

Not all Sanctuary Schemes would accept referrals where the perpetrator was still living in the property but in other areas Sanctuary Schemes had been successful in helping clients seek legal advice and to take action to remove perpetrators so that a Sanctuary could be installed. There was no 'typical' Sanctuary installation, the types of installations depended on the degree of risk, the needs of the service user and the type or condition of the property. Sanctuaries were usually installed within a fortnight and could be installed more quickly for those at highest risk. Most Sanctuary

Schemes would install interim safety measures as required until full Sanctuary measures could be fitted. These measures, in particular, Home Link alarms, were greatly appreciated by households who did not wish to move out even temporarily. Service users also appreciated being consulted about their needs, in particular, what would help to make them feel safe.

The following chapter discusses the support needs of Sanctuary Scheme service users and the types of support provided.



# Chapter 5

## Support for households living in a Sanctuary

### Introduction

The chapter presents findings on the support provided to Sanctuary Scheme users. The chapter begins with a discussion of needs assessment and the types of support required and provided, before going on to consider the views of respondents on the provision of support. The chapter then describes some of the more specific types of help and advice provided, such as support for households seeking legal remedies, support for children and peer support. The role of perpetrator programmes is briefly considered.

### Key findings

1. Most agency respondents felt that Sanctuary should be one element in a package of measures to support households at risk of domestic violence. However, in practice this did not always appear to be the case. In some areas agency representatives were concerned that Sanctuary Schemes were not referring service users to support services.
2. Although most service users said that they had been offered support and appreciated this, there was evidence of unmet need among service users. A few service users in some case study areas reported that they had had no follow up contact from the Sanctuary Scheme once Sanctuary measures had been installed, and a number said they did not know where to go or who to contact for help, should they need it at a later date.
3. Agency respondents and service users reported varying levels of need amongst Sanctuary Scheme service users. While many required little support once they had Sanctuary installed, others required support with domestic violence related issues and a small number with complex needs required more intensive and extensive support.
4. It was clear that all service users' needs should be fully assessed and that agencies should reassess these needs following installation of Sanctuary. The types of support required included: general support, such as tenancy sustainment and debt management; support with domestic violence related problems; and, in a few cases, support with mental health problems and substance misuse.

5. In most areas there was a shortage of specialist services, in particular for children, and a lack of capacity in existing services such as specialist domestic violence services and counselling. Police domestic violence teams and IDVAs were also said to be under great pressure.
6. Peer support groups and other more structured activities were popular with, and beneficial to, most of those that had used them.
7. There were significant differences in agency respondents' views about perpetrator programmes. Some had little confidence that perpetrators would change their behaviour, whilst others believed they could and that the lack of perpetrator programmes for all (and not just those who had been convicted for a domestic violence offence) was a barrier to tackling domestic violence.

### **Supporting Sanctuary Scheme users**

The majority of service users said they had been offered some form of support and most appeared to have received the help they required. It appeared that their immediate problems had been resolved once Sanctuary measures had been installed, and in many cases, service users reported that they were managing well and had no problems. However, it was evident that there was unmet need amongst a significant minority of service users and a few said they could not remember being offered support.

The following sections explore findings on the provision of support to Sanctuary Scheme service users.

#### **SANCTUARY SHOULD BE PART OF A PACKAGE OF MEASURES**

Key national level stakeholders felt that it was important that Sanctuary Schemes should be part of a package of interventions that should include: specialist support with domestic violence related problems, legal remedies, and work with perpetrators. This is in line with government policy on tackling domestic violence which consists of three strands: prevention, protection and justice, and support. Many agency respondents in the case study areas also stressed that Sanctuary should be just one part of a range of such measures although, as will be seen, this did not always appear to be the case in practice. One agency respondent described the package of interventions as a “*layered approach*” using a “*coordinated community response*”.

*Sanctuary... in its most basic sense, i.e. physical modifications to the property, you know, locks and security measures like that, I think it's really important that that's not...in isolation and women are kind of left to fend for themselves then. I think there's all sorts of other schemes that you need to add onto that to layer it up appropriate to what her*

*particular situation is, be that work with the perpetrator, be it other, you know, legal remedies to try and keep him away from the property anyway .. be it support for her... to know where else to go if things go wrong or if, you know, there're other conditions other problems occurring at the same time...*

(Specialist domestic violence worker)

Many service users also shared the view that Sanctuary had to be part of a package of measures and a number explained the importance of additional emotional and practical support if they were to move on with their lives.

*It's the initial thing of safety, in your home, if you stay in your own home, but then you can't be locked away, you need to move out, and try and get on with your life. As they've told me, you've got to try and pick the pieces up, I mean I've got this massive problem here that never goes away, and it's not going to go away for a long time. But somehow I've got to detach myself a little bit, and do what I'm now doing for myself and move down the lane of my life as well , because this problem is going to be solved at some stage, but then I've still got to be able to function and cope and move on, and I still need all those things in place to do that.*

(Service user)

### **AGENCIES PROVIDING SUPPORT TO SANCTUARY SCHEME SERVICE USERS**

Agency respondents explained that some, though by no means all, service users were already being supported by various agencies before becoming Sanctuary Scheme users. These agencies included police domestic violence units or liaison teams, police victim support officers, Women's Aid and women's refuges and a host of generic services such as floating support, Sure Start, social services, health services and children's services.

As noted in Chapter 2 some Sanctuary Schemes were co-ordinated by specialist domestic violence services whilst others were co-ordinated by an individual or team based in the local authority, ALMO or RSL where the Sanctuary Scheme leads had varying degrees of knowledge about domestic violence.

Those Sanctuary Schemes delivered by specialist projects or domestic violence partnerships and those that employed dedicated Sanctuary Scheme workers were able to provide support to service users themselves (although they also referred clients on to other support providers as necessary) and the support package was an integral part of the Sanctuary Scheme service. Other schemes, in particular those led by housing officers for whom the Sanctuary service was only one part of their overall responsibilities, could provide only limited support. In these latter cases agency respondents reported that they would refer service users to relevant support

projects or at least make them aware of the support available. However, as will be seen below, it appeared that at least in one area, service users were not always referred to relevant support services or made aware of such services. Agency respondents in most areas stressed the need to link in with other agencies and in one area all clients reporting domestic violence were referred to a local women's project, whether they had accepted a Sanctuary or not.

*...Well we link in with the other agencies, and that's the key, you see. So when we're having that initial discussion with that woman on the phone around what she's wanting, if she's already engaged with [Sanctuary provider] then we will pass back to the women's centres, or with Women's Aid, we will make sure that does pass back. .. So it's about not being precious, it's about, you know...not about 'our' cases - it's about linking in with the other partners really... and then making sure that that's OK with that woman and then we'll ring Women's Aid and share that information and ask Women's Aid to ring them, or the women's centres to ring them.*

(Specialist Sanctuary Scheme service worker)

#### **INTER-AGENCY WORK**

Most agency representatives described effective referral procedures and partnership working with domestic violence forums, partnerships and MARACs. This meant that Sanctuary Schemes were usually aware of other agencies involved in a case and providing support. However, this was not always the case and there was some evidence of a lack of communication between key agencies. There was also some concern that Sanctuary Scheme users were not receiving support or were not being made aware of the services available to them. A couple of respondents from a specialist domestic violence project in one area found it strange that they had not received more than a couple of referrals from the Sanctuary Scheme.

*I'm not sure that women are always aware of what support there is... And it's, and it's certainly not been an automatic thing that, you know, women that have got Sanctuary Rooms...have got any support to go with that, and I think that, you know, that's perhaps one of the failings really.*

(Specialist domestic violence worker)

Other agency representatives in this area recognised that there was a problem in respect of providing support to Sanctuary users. They explained that existing domestic violence services were under a great deal of pressure and had to operate waiting lists. Sanctuary workers and other key agencies including the domestic violence co-ordinator were planning to make support a more central part of their service.

*And one of the things we're trying to develop through our Sanctuary Scheme at the moment is we're trying to change the process a little bit. So if somebody's accepting Sanctuary, they also, when they sign their agreement, are accepting a support service as well, or accepting an initial contact.*

(Domestic violence co-ordinator)

Agency respondents and some service users in all areas reported that there was insufficient provision and that existing services often lacked the capacity to meet demand. Some services such as Women's Aid, floating support and counselling services had to operate waiting lists. Police domestic violence teams, IDVAs and services for children were all said to be under great pressure.

As noted in Chapter 3, service users often found it difficult to remember what they had been advised about the support available to them at the time of referral. One Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator was in the process of developing more comprehensive and accessible information packs for service users.

*I mean we've got leaflets at the moment...but I wanted them to get some information about the legal remedies that they could take. So it's not vast amounts of information but just a few lines to say what it is and how to go about it...there's so much for them to take in and it'd be nice to, for them to take away something. So if they picked it up they could have a little read of it and think well yes I wouldn't mind doing that, and then, you know, we can signpost them in the right direction..*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

## **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Many agency respondents, in particular specialist domestic violence workers, stressed the importance of conducting a needs assessment. However, it was not always the case that service users had their needs fully assessed by specialist domestic violence workers, and interviews with service users suggested that there was unmet need among a significant minority. In one area all service users were referred to a specialist domestic violence service by the Sanctuary Scheme, in another two areas all Sanctuary Scheme service users were encouraged to accept a referral to the Scheme's floating support service. In other areas specialist Sanctuary workers conducted needs assessments. In addition, in some cases, service users were already receiving support from specialist agencies when they were referred to the Sanctuary Scheme service. However, as will be seen, there were concerns in some areas that needs were not being fully assessed. This appeared mostly to be the case where Sanctuary Schemes were led by non-specialist workers who had other roles and responsibilities in addition to co-ordinating the Sanctuary Scheme.

## **THE TYPES OF SUPPORT REQUIRED**

Sanctuary service users had varying levels of need and agency respondents explained that these differed from case to case. A few service users, in particular those who had spent some time living in refuges or temporary accommodation, required practical support. This could include: support with setting up and managing a home; claiming benefits, finding schools and health services and generally settling into a new area; and, support into education and/or training. It appeared that service users who were able to stay in their own homes had less of a need for practical support than those who had been rehoused after leaving a refuge or temporary accommodation. However, as a few agency respondents and service users explained, service users who remained in their homes sometimes required practical help with managing a home (including basic maintenance) and dealing with finances and debt because the perpetrator had always controlled finances and other household matters.

Many of those requiring support needed help and advice with issues and problems related to their experience of domestic violence. This might include assistance with injunctions, support through the criminal justice system; divorce proceedings; and help and advice about child contact resolution. A few required fairly intensive specialist support to help them through a relationship breakdown and to recover from the abuse they had suffered. These service users sometimes required counselling, assertiveness training or confidence building. Others also required help and support because of problems their children were experiencing as a result of the domestic violence.

## **ENGAGING SERVICE USERS WITH SUPPORT SERVICES**

It appeared from service user interviews, that a few service users did not feel ready to engage with support services at the time Sanctuary was installed or that they experienced problems some time afterwards and would have benefited from follow up contact from the Sanctuary Scheme or a specialist domestic violence service to check on their progress. Service users also thought it was important to know who to contact and where to go for help and advice if they experienced further problems, and importantly, that they felt confident about seeking help, as this woman explained.

*I've had support from the solicitor...and from [Sanctuary workers] and I don't need anything else... as long as I feel safe and can sleep at night – but I've got the number and I can 'phone them if needs be.... It doesn't matter how long they offer support for because I know where they are and I can always call in if I need something...*

All Sanctuary Schemes reported that they attempted to check up on service users. This was generally done through a telephone call or, less usually, a home visit. A few agency representatives reported that it was often difficult to contact service users. A

few service users said they could not remember anyone contacting them following installation of the Sanctuary and/or could not remember being told who they should contact if they had any problems.

*Luckily I was fine but if I hadn't of been there was no follow up by the police or anybody...I am fortunate that I have been safe but they didn't bother to ask...if there had been trouble I would just have to 'phone the police...it would be good if there was somebody – even just over the 'phone – to ask every three to six months 'is everything all right?' I heard nothing from nobody...*

(Service user)

Not all Sanctuary Schemes, in particular those where the lead person had other responsibilities and those that had a large number of Sanctuary Scheme users, were able to follow up clients regularly. Some Sanctuary Schemes would contact the client once to check that they were happy with the Sanctuary measures and then invite them to contact the Sanctuary lead if they had any further problems (or contact the police if appropriate). Only a couple of Sanctuary Schemes reported that they stayed in regular contact until the client felt that support was no longer required.

*They [Sanctuary workers] ring me and visit every three months to make sure I am getting on OK – she rang me yesterday – and I can always pop in there if I need some help...*

(Service user)

Agency representatives stressed that it took some time to develop relationships with clients and felt that trust and a rapport had to be established before clients could express their needs and problems or make decisions about the types of support they required. Many agency representatives and service users emphasised the need for ongoing contact and support.

*...there's a whole range of things that they can take up over a period of time. ...there's no point in whizzing in and whizzing out again and expecting to make it all right, actually...you need to engage and there needs to be a period of engagement ...I'll visit within a week of the works being completed, I'll visit them a month later. Three months, which is quite an intense visit at that point, where they've usually settled down again, so then we'll go through all the other information. Do they need referrals for money advice, do they need counselling? Look at all the different options... do they want to go on self-awareness courses?*

(Specialist Sanctuary Scheme service worker)

Another problem reported by many respondents, including service users, was a lack of confidence and low self esteem which made it difficult for people to make choices and decisions for themselves. A number of service users felt that they would have benefited from a more proactive approach from service providers and would have preferred advocacy rather than signposting to other services.

## **Specialist support**

### **SUPPORTING SANCTUARY USERS WITH MORE COMPLEX NEEDS**

Although most service users required minimal support once Sanctuary had been installed, agency respondents reported that a few had complex problems and multiple needs. Agency representatives and service users explained that these were often long standing, in some cases resulting from abuse in childhood as well as more recent experiences. A few agency representatives, in particular, specialist domestic violence workers, and a few service users reported problems with drug and alcohol misuse; mental ill health; depression; anxiety; and problems with or concerning children (including behavioural problems and child protection issues). As will be seen, it could be difficult to support service users with multiple needs and they often required intensive support. Although such complex cases were not typical, they did highlight the need for thorough needs assessments and specialist support if Sanctuary was to be a sustainable solution.

*I've got a woman at present where she's got Sanctuary installed...she's got loads and loads of mental health problems, I think a lot probably linked to the abuse... lost her sort of job but wasn't paying her rent anyway. So she got Sanctuary installed but then there was a Repossession Order. .. Didn't go to the court cases, she'd got no money and then her...Statutory Sick Pay was stopped and things just were escalating...I worked with her for quite a while, did a lot of hand holding and a lot of stuff about maximising her income, and all of a sudden, you know, we sort of researched it, and we found out that she was eligible for DLA, ...she's paying her rent now and everything's running quite smoothly. But had she not had that support she would have lost the Sanctuary Service because she hadn't paid the rent...*

(Specialist domestic violence floating support worker)

A number of agency respondents explained that service users with complex needs were at great risk but they were not always easy to support and keep safe. As noted earlier, some insisted on staying in their homes even though agencies felt it would be safer to move but then would refuse to engage with support services. Agency respondents also reported that a few service users found it difficult to work with support services because of mental health problems, substance misuse and often a



host of other problems such as child protection issues that appeared to simply overwhelm them.

*Some people have lots of other problems, alcohol, drugs...you do what you can to help keep someone safe but they might not be together enough to go through the court process etc. If someone doesn't want to go to the police then there isn't a lot we can do – in this case the children have already been removed so we can't rely on children's services...she won't talk to anyone else about the violence – although she talks to us about it sometimes - so there is not a lot we can do....she has been abused in other ways – people take advantage of her, take her money etc...it can be very difficult...*

(Sanctuary scheme co-ordinator)

### **SUPPORT FOR HOUSEHOLDS SEEKING LEGAL REMEDIES**

Most, though not all, agency representatives stressed the importance of legal remedies as part of the package of interventions to help tackle domestic violence and keep people safe. As will be seen, service users were often reluctant to go through civil and criminal justice processes but many agency respondents felt they should be encouraged and supported to do so.

*I think there does need to be more done to encourage women to go through the criminal justice process rather than having these interventions fitted and hoping that that's it and that's going stop it, because whilst it will make them feel more secure it's not going to stop a perpetrator coming round and trying to get into the house, or harassing that individual. So we would try and encourage, as much as possible, the individual to go through, as well as Sanctuary, to go through the criminal justice process and report to the police.*

(Domestic violence co-ordinator)

Those service users who wished to pursue legal remedies often needed fairly intensive support through the process (from legal advice through to being accompanied to court). In most areas Sanctuary workers would support clients through legal processes or refer them to a specialist domestic violence service and/or a solicitor. At the time of the research most of the case study areas had Specialist Domestic Violence Courts<sup>32</sup> and independent domestic violence advisers (IDVAs) who could support people through the court process (if they had the

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<sup>32</sup>For more information on Specialist Domestic Violence Courts see:

<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/domesticviolence/domesticviolence59.pdf>

capacity) but these were relatively recent additions. Although many respondents talked about the role of the IDVA, neither agency respondents nor service users tended to mention Specialist Domestic Violence Courts. In some areas all cases going through the criminal justice system received support from an IDVA whilst in others the IDVA could only work with high risk cases. However, similar support could be provided by those Sanctuary Schemes which employed specialist workers or the case could be referred to other specialist agencies.

This type of support was greatly appreciated by many service users who explained how long it had taken them to build up the confidence to go to court. Service users and agency respondents said that in some cases service users changed their minds and retracted statements a number of times before deciding to follow the process through.

*In the end I agreed to give evidence in court....they [support workers] took me to court so that I'd know what to expect – an usher explained all the procedures and everything ...they explained that I didn't have to face him and that they would come with me if I wanted – I was really scared and intimidated...I've never been in court before...but on the day I asked them to remove the screens so's I could see him – mind ...[the support worker] was there with me...*

(Service user)

Despite the existence of Specialist Domestic Violence Courts in the majority of the case study areas and the support provided by IDVAs and other agencies, many service users were reluctant to go through the criminal justice process. There were various reasons for this, service users thought that such actions would 'anger' the perpetrator and were fearful of being intimidated in court. Many agency respondents felt that this was a barrier to ensuring service users' safety as some were unwilling to report incidents to the police. These problems are discussed in Chapter 6. In one area, however respondents from the CDRP and Women's Aid described a new initiative called *Visual Evidence for Victims*<sup>33</sup> (VEV) which would allow victims of abuse who are not yet ready to report attacks to the police to report them to a voluntary agency. This evidence could then be used at a later date to report a crime to the police should the client choose to.

## **SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN**

A number of respondents mentioned various projects working to support children. These were often based within specialist domestic violence services, in particular Women's Aid and refuges which employed children's workers, but a range of other

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<sup>33</sup> For more information on VEV see: <http://www.vev.org.uk/>

agencies also provided support or were in the process of developing projects that would work with children. These included: local family projects, children's services, the NSPCC, family intervention projects and other local initiatives.

However, across the case studies, agency respondents reported a shortage of specialist domestic violence services for children. Where there were services available there were often long waiting lists, for example, for counselling. This was something that agency representatives in a few areas were trying to address.

*...one of the things that we are looking at in [case study area] is that there is a lack of service provision specifically for children who have been affected by domestic violence, and that is something that is in my role now. We are looking at trying to get more funding. I think nationally, to be honest, it's an issue, there's not enough service provision...*

(Specialist domestic violence worker)

Some parents said they preferred to support their children by themselves whilst others said they were able to manage with the help of family and teachers. Only two children participated in the research but both said that they could talk to their mother and to friends and teachers if they were worried about anything.

*[the children] talk to their grandparents, uncle, and we all talk as a family although my son is quiet and does not say much. If they want to talk to anyone then that is fine – they talk to their teachers – they know what happened.*

(Service user)

However, it was clear that many service users were struggling to cope and that their children were experiencing problems, in some cases even where they were receiving support.

*My daughter's nervous, she's jittery, she daren't go out the house without somebody with her. She's ...just a mess... There is not, do you know, she's got a worker, she's got the Women's Aid workers because she really does need them .. but I don't see a change; I can't see no change in her.*

(Service user)

*My son isn't coping, he has fits of temper – I asked [Sanctuary provider] for help...but I can't make him get in the car to take him to counselling and he got really angry when I suggested a counsellor that could come to the house...his father used to hit him and be nasty to him too...He hates the counselling but I've tried to explain to him that it*

*is painful but then it will get better – he goes mad, hitting and kicking walls ...*

(Service user)

Child contact caused many service users problems as they often had no choice but to meet with the perpetrator when he came to collect the children (see Chapter 6). A few respondents mentioned the contribution made by contact centres where children could meet safely with their estranged parent and this was seen to benefit all concerned.

*They're all supervised contacts, so there's always someone, either, either the social worker and a member of staff or a volunteer that sits in with them ... and of course, you know, you have the two entries of the building, one for the men and one for the women...*

(Specialist domestic violence worker)

### **Peer support and activities**

Agency representatives in one area explained that they had set up a group for Sanctuary Scheme users following consultation with service users. This was run by the Sanctuary lead and the IDVA for a few hours once a month. This group had only been running for a few months at the time of the research but it seemed popular and most users seemed to think it was helpful to share their experiences with others. One support group user felt that the meetings should be more pro-active. This view was reflected in the accounts of many service users across the case study areas who said they lacked the confidence to contact agencies themselves and would have appreciated more practical support and advocacy.

*I could do with more help... it should be more constructive... I just don't think the support group does enough.... We had a speaker from MIND and everyone thought that was great but no-one would actually make themselves an appointment – it has to be more...pro-active because we...the women lack confidence. We don't want someone to come and talk to us about assertiveness – we want to actually learn to be more assertive.*

(Service user)

In other areas a small number of service users said they attended various programmes and groups such as Freedom Programmes or educational classes organised by specialist domestic violence services, where they met with other people in similar situations. Again they found it helpful to learn more about the support available to them and to share experiences with other survivors.

*They tell you about what is out there to help you – I've been today, I've been before and I'll go again – I've learned things that I didn't know about services and so on - but it was interesting that there were women there asking questions I've asked myself – and I know exactly how they feel - they are scared because they don't know – just like I was....*

(Service user)

Not all service users wanted to join such groups or become involved in activities provided by specialist domestic violence services but they appeared to appreciate having been offered these and knowing that they were open to them should they change their minds.

### **Duration of support**

Different agencies across the case study areas offered support for varying periods, for example, service users in some areas explained that the counselling service was limited to six sessions. For the most part, specialist domestic violence services would support clients for as long as both thought necessary. As noted earlier, most Sanctuary Schemes tried to follow up service users and check on their progress at least once, usually by telephone whilst others asked users to complete a questionnaire on the service provided and outcomes. A few Sanctuary Schemes did attempt to stay in regular contact with service users for at least six months or until such time that support was no longer required. It was clear, however, that Sanctuary Scheme workers who had other roles and responsibilities had far less time to follow service users' progress. They did, however, encourage users to contact them at any time if they needed help or advice and also provided contact information for other support services. One problem reported by many Sanctuary workers was that it could be difficult to contact service users who often did not respond to letters or telephone calls. In a couple of areas all Sanctuary Scheme users would always be invited to any events or service user groups and workers could stay in contact with service users that way.

A few service users explained the importance of knowing that support would be available as long as it was required but one also made the point that it was not always clear which agency should be providing different types of support. Again, many respondents found it difficult to remember what, if any, support they were offered, which agency offered this support and who to contact if they wished to take up the service.

*I think you do need to know that the support's there for much longer and be clearer about each support, what that... actually is supporting you in, what are their, what their remit is .. and also knowing that you know, you can go back, all those things are really important.*

(Service user)

## Perpetrator programmes

There were marked differences of opinion among agency respondents both within and between the case study areas about the role and effectiveness of perpetrator programmes. Few believed that integrated domestic abuse programmes, run by the Probation Service for perpetrators of domestic violence who had been convicted, were successful in helping men change their behaviour. However, other agency respondents, like some national level stakeholders (see Chapter 1), believed that perpetrator programmes<sup>34</sup> could have an important role to play in tackling domestic violence. One area had a newly established voluntary perpetrator programme<sup>35</sup> open to all men who wanted to change their behaviour, and thirteen men had started the perpetrator course on a voluntary basis, within a couple of months of its launch<sup>36</sup>.

## Conclusion

For the most part, agency respondents believed that Sanctuaries should be one element in a package of measures to support households at risk of domestic violence. However, in practice, this did not always appear to be the case. In some area agency representatives were concerned that Sanctuary Schemes were not referring service users to support services and inter-agency work and information sharing were not always effective, and there was evidence of unmet need amongst service users. Not all service users required support beyond the safety measures Sanctuary Schemes provided. However, most needed some support with domestic violence related problems, child contact resolution, safety planning or legal remedies, whilst a few required general support, for example, with setting up a new home or managing money. A small number had more complex needs and required specialist help, with, for example, substance misuse and mental health problems.

There were problems in providing support in some areas. Inter-agency work and information sharing were not always effective and it appeared that some Sanctuary Scheme users were not being referred to specialist support agencies. Few

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<sup>34</sup> There are currently 42 probation areas and five prison sites offering probation run court mandated perpetrator programmes. Few services exist for perpetrators who are not engaged within the criminal justice system and of these, few meet the minimum standards of Respect (see below) (Williamson and Hester, 2009).

<sup>35</sup> For voluntary programmes see for example:

<http://www.respect.uk.net/pages/domestic-violence-perpetrator-programmes-uk.html>

<http://www.strengthtochange.org/#/home>

<sup>36</sup> See Williamson and Hester (2009) for a recent evaluation of a voluntary perpetrator programme in South Tyneside.

Sanctuary Schemes maintained regular contact with service users or checked on service users' progress at regular intervals although some service users would have appreciated ongoing contact particularly when they were not receiving support from other agencies.

Overall, service users appreciated being offered support, even if they did not require it. It was also important that service users knew where to go or who to contact for help should it be needed at a later date. Support and advice on civil remedies and support through the criminal justice system were particularly appreciated but it was evident that many did not wish to pursue civil remedies or to go through the criminal justice process.

In most areas respondents reported a shortage of specialist services, in particular for children and a lack of capacity in existing services. Peer support groups and other more structured activities were popular with, and beneficial to, most of those that had used them. There were significant differences between agency respondents about the role of perpetrator programmes, some felt that they were ineffective whilst others believed they could have an important role in tackling domestic violence.

# Chapter 6

## The effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes

### Introduction

This chapter discusses the effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes in meeting their main aim of providing a safe alternative for households at risk of domestic violence. The chapter begins by discussing the benefits of Sanctuary Schemes for households and agencies. The chapter then goes on to report findings on incidences where perpetrators attempted to breach Sanctuaries. Next, it considers what options would be available if a Sanctuary proved unsustainable, before going on to discuss some barriers to the effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes. Finally the question of what happens when Sanctuaries are no longer required is considered.

### Key findings

1. Most agency respondents and service users across the case study areas felt that Sanctuary Schemes were successful in meeting their main aim of providing a safe alternative for households. However, few Sanctuary Schemes were able to provide data on the sustainability of Sanctuaries beyond immediate outcomes.
2. Sanctuary Schemes were also perceived as a success in terms of the wider benefits for households, described in earlier chapters, in particular minimising the disruption associated with having to move from their homes, and providing more choice to the household.
3. Benefits reported by agency respondents included: cost savings; a reduction in homelessness caused by domestic violence, and a reduction in repeat incidences of domestic violence.
4. Cost benefit analysis suggests that Sanctuary Schemes can generate significant financial savings.
5. Across the case study areas, service users and agency respondents reported that perpetrators had made attempts to gain entry to Sanctuary properties. However, only two Sanctuary Schemes and one service user reported cases where the Sanctuary had been breached. This suggests that Sanctuaries in the main had a positive impact on rates of re-victimisation for individual households.



6. In cases where Sanctuaries proved not to be safe and/or sustainable, agency respondents reported that households would be offered the same accommodation options as those offered to any household at risk of domestic violence (see Chapter 3).
7. There were a number of barriers to the effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes across the case study areas including the problem of people feeling or being unsafe outside the home. Some agency respondents also felt that service users' reluctance to pursue legal remedies was a barrier to the effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes.
8. Few Sanctuary Schemes had considered what would happen if the household's circumstances changed and Sanctuaries were no longer required or appropriate. However, a few agency respondents said it would be important to remove any security measures that could place people at risk if, for example, the perpetrator returned to live in the property.

## **The benefits of Sanctuary for households**

### **PROVIDING A SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION**

One of the main aims of Sanctuary Schemes was to provide a safe option for households who wished to remain in their homes. For the most part, Sanctuary Schemes in all areas appeared to be successful in meeting this aim as most service users said they felt safer in their homes. Agency respondents across the case study areas also reported that Sanctuary provided a safe and sustainable alternative for the majority of service users. However, only a few Sanctuary Schemes made regular checks on the progress of service users or the safety of the Sanctuary. Other Sanctuary Schemes contacted service users at least once by letter, by telephone or visited them at home, and most asked service users to complete a client satisfaction survey. Few Sanctuary Schemes collected data on longer term outcomes so it is unclear whether, and for how long, Sanctuary Scheme service users remained in their homes following installation of the Sanctuary or after the case had been closed. In some cases this was unavoidable, for example, where a Sanctuary Scheme could not make contact with the service user or where the household moved without informing the Sanctuary Scheme. In most cases, however, it appeared that Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinators simply did not have the capacity to contact people in person or to make repeated attempts to make contact by other means (by telephone or letter). This was particularly the case in areas where a large number of Sanctuaries had been installed (200 or more).

Available data from the two Sanctuary Schemes that were able to provide recent information on outcomes showed that the majority of households had remained in their homes. One Sanctuary Scheme reported a success rate of 77 per cent. Of the

159 households accepted for Sanctuary, 26 service users either disengaged or changed their minds, four moved home and seven could not be contacted for the follow up survey. Of the remainder, 75 cases (47 per cent) were still living in the same property when they were contacted six months after having Sanctuary measures installed and the cases had been closed. The remaining 47 cases (30 per cent) remained open and were also still living in the same property. Another Sanctuary Scheme reported that they had installed 271 Sanctuaries and that 257 service users (95 per cent) remained in their homes; nine households (3 per cent) had moved because they did not feel safe and the remaining five households (2 per cent) had moved for other reasons.

### **FEELING SAFE – SERVICE USER VIEWS**

Most, though not all, service users said they felt much safer in their homes since having Sanctuary installed. One respondent described Sanctuary as ‘life changing’ whilst others remarked that they were able to relax in their homes and sleep properly for the first time in years.

*Because I mean from, this all started, happened in 2005, so from 2005 until August 2008... I was extremely vulnerable at home and I was aware of it. I used to leave lights on, used to leave music playing at night... to kind of make it look as if well somebody's up and someone's going to dial 999 if you try and get in sort of thing. But now I'm totally safe, I can sleep at night, and that's really important.*

(Service user)

Not all service users felt safe in their homes even though no attempts had been made to breach the Sanctuary. A few respondents explained that they felt nervous and anxious if they heard noises outside and a few complained about the behaviour of neighbours or young people.

In other cases, there had been attempted breaches (see below) but service users explained that Sanctuary measures such as reinforced doors, window locks and grilles had prevented perpetrators from forcing their way into the property. It was clear that whilst physical security measures made people feel safe the added reassurance of an immediate police response was equally important. Home Link alarms, or other systems that connected directly to the police or to a care control centre, appeared to enhance feelings of security. However, as noted earlier, these systems were expensive and were usually removed after a few weeks or once other Sanctuary measures had been installed. A few service users explained that they had been told that if the perpetrator was going to reoffend it was likely that they would do so within a few weeks. As noted earlier where perpetrators were thought to pose a serious risk then these alarm systems would not be removed.

*They took away the Home Link alarm that went straight to the police – because they take so long to respond otherwise – they did explain that if someone is going to reoffend they do it within six weeks to two months. I do feel safe but I am always checking that the windows and doors are locked – I am very security conscious... I felt better with the Home Link Alarm.*

(Service user)

A small number of service users explained that they had moved from their property after Sanctuary had been installed. One service user explained that she had to move from her rented property because, although she felt very safe inside her flat, she was scared that her neighbour would let the perpetrator into the block. Another service user moved after being attacked by the perpetrator who broke into the property when she was out. As the service user did not wish to move away from her family and support networks her PRS landlord offered her another property in the area and Sanctuary measures were installed in her new home. In the third case the service user left her property to set up home with a new partner. In all three cases, service users found alternative accommodation themselves.

### **INCREASING CHOICE AND MINIMISING DISRUPTION**

As noted in Chapters 1 and 2 both national level stakeholders and agency respondents felt that Sanctuary would increase the options for households at risk of domestic violence and minimise the disruption and upheaval of moving home. It was evident that Sanctuary Schemes were a very welcome intervention which suited service users' needs and preferences, in particular, not having to leave their homes and move into temporary accommodation. The Sanctuary Scheme, as intended, had meant that they were able to avoid the disruption of having to change jobs and children's schools, and of leaving formal and informal support networks.

*Twenty-four years ago when I left my first husband...I took my little boy and a carrier bag and went to my sister's [in another area] The only thing that was available then was the battered wives home as they called it then, they had a really bad name didn't they? No-one wanted to go in one of them – like hostels now....*

(Service user)

Some service users had moved many times in the past and they felt that Sanctuary had given them the opportunity to settle safely in one area for the first time. One agency respondent described the difference Sanctuary had made to one such woman.

*... it was a woman who had moved, I think she was an owner/occupier and she'd moved three times, each time he came out of prison he found her...she said to Women's Aid "I'm not moving again, I just can't*

*go through all of that again.” But she was living in fear, and after we fitted, at the cost of, you know, £500 or whatever, the Women’s Aid worker contacted me again and said “I have never seen anyone’s life change so much through one little tiny bit of intervention” she said “the woman and her kids are different people, they just look different, they’re, you know, visibly happier and more confident.” And, you know, and I just thought that’s amazing, isn’t it, this is so easy, this is such a very simple...intervention.*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

### **THE VALUE OF SUPPORT IN HELPING PEOPLE MOVE ON**

In addition to the physical elements of Sanctuary Schemes many service users valued the support they had received from Sanctuary workers and other agencies. Whilst many service users said they felt better just knowing that they had someone to talk to others felt that the combination of security and support had helped them move on with their lives.

*In that situation... domestic violence...your head’s all over the place... you can’t think straight and it’s like you do need somebody there to give you that helping hand to try and get you to where you want to go.*

(Service user)

The support of various agencies working with Sanctuary users also appeared to enhance feelings of safety and more general well-being. A few agency respondents and service users also believed that increased feelings of security encouraged greater engagement with the wider community and personal development through activities such as employment and training.

*If I’d have had the upheaval that I might have had to face had these measures not been available to me, I definitely would not be at University now, I know that.*

(Service user)

### **THE ATTITUDE OF AGENCIES AND WORKERS**

Service users also commented on the non-judgemental approach of Sanctuary Scheme workers who they felt recognised and understood their problems and treated them with respect and without judgement. Others remarked on the attitude of the police who they felt were more sympathetic and understanding than they had been in the past. Some remarked that, for the first time, they were being taken seriously by agencies and felt comfortable receiving help and support.

*...they were absolutely fantastic. It might sound silly but it was like they were the only ones that believed me...I think they are brilliant (Service user)*

## Benefits of Sanctuary for agencies

### REDUCING HOMELESSNESS

Agency representatives in all the case study areas believed that Sanctuary Schemes had been successful in reducing the number of households accepted as homeless and in priority need on the grounds of loss of last settled home because of a violent relationship breakdown with a partner. Whilst analysis of the CLG P1E<sup>37</sup> statistics (see Appendix 3 for details) shows that homelessness acceptances on these grounds had reduced, the evidence on the impact of Sanctuary Schemes was inconclusive. For England as a whole, the number of homelessness acceptances for all reasons has been falling over recent years; and the percentage of acceptances on the grounds of loss of last settled home because of a violent relationship breakdown with a partner has remained fairly constant at around 13 per cent of all acceptances. As noted in Chapter 1, it is thought that around half of all local authorities in England are operating Sanctuary Schemes and it is likely that Sanctuary Schemes are one of a number of preventative measures adopted by local authorities that have had an impact on the number of households accepted as homeless where the reason for loss of last settled home was a violent relationship breakdown with a partner.

Sanctuaries were also thought by respondents to have been effective, as part of a package of measures, in meeting the aim of reducing repeat incidents of domestic violence. A reduction in repeat incidents would clearly benefit service users but some agency respondents also made the point that, as they had hoped when developing the service, Sanctuaries provided an option which helped agencies such as the police and CDRPs meet their responsibilities in tackling crime.

*I think they're very glad to have something...concrete to offer victims, which also reduces re-victimisation and it does. I mean that's what the evidence, that's what our evaluation has showed they did, it does reduce re-victimisation.*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

None of the Sanctuary Schemes were able to provide reliable recent data on incidents of domestic violence amongst Sanctuary users (but see below on breaches and attempted breaches). Police forces in two of the case study areas provided data on domestic violence offences over the period 2004-05 – 2008-09 (see Appendix 3 for details) but this did not offer any conclusive evidence as to the impact of

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<sup>37</sup> Local authorities complete quarterly P1E returns which provide details (including reasons for homelessness) for households dealt with under the homelessness provisions of the 1985 and 1996 Housing Act and the Homelessness Act 2002.

Sanctuary Schemes on the evolution of the overall rate of domestic violence offences in the case study areas.

### **COST SAVINGS**

Although potential cost savings had not been one of the main reasons for introducing Sanctuary Schemes it had been anticipated that their introduction would produce significant savings. Although few areas could provide detailed breakdowns of the costs and benefits of Sanctuary Schemes (see Appendix 2 for details), local authority housing departments and housing associations were thought by interview respondents to have saved thousands of pounds on voids, loss of rent, homelessness investigations, refuge costs, repairs, storage and rehousing.

*In terms of, you know, finances it's much cheaper, it costs us something like £5,500 we think each time we re-house someone on a transfer, if you add up all the different parts of the costs, whereas this costs us £600...So I think there's a big practical...advantage there in terms of how easy it is to provide this provision compared to how easy it is for someone to move to another property.*

(Housing provider)

It was also thought that the introduction of Sanctuary Schemes had resulted in savings for a wide range of partner agencies. These included the police and other emergency services; primary care trusts; social services; and education departments. Sanctuary was also thought to have reduced the need for community care grants, storage and removal costs.

*...we refer obviously to Education and Social Services when we have to put a family into temporary [accommodation], assist with them with storage, it's the schooling, it's...a range of things, GPs, it depends where you're moving them to, they might need to change their doctors' surgeries. Community Care grants, because quite often they do leave everything, can just flee with the clothes on their back. .. there'll be a large amount of savings...with the amount of work that goes into moving one family and then to have to move them again...*

(Housing provider)

Cost benefit analysis suggests that Sanctuary Schemes could produce significant savings for housing providers and other agencies. The average cost of installation of Sanctuary measures across the case study areas was £636 per property, but the range extended from two case study areas where the cost was 'less than £100' to two where the cost exceeded £1,000. This variation in part reflected the different types of security measures installed. As seen in Chapter Three, some Sanctuaries involved simple target hardening work such as installing bolts and fireproof letterboxes to more elaborate equipment including for example, specially made

Sanctuary doors and CCTV equipment. It should also be noted that the cost of Sanctuary could vary considerably within case study areas as the security measures installed depended on the level of risk. However, detailed breakdowns on the number of high, medium or low level Sanctuaries installed in each case study area were not available. Nevertheless, cost benefit analysis, based on a model that used data from case study areas where possible plus working assumptions where data were not available (see Appendix 3), suggested that, for the average outlay of approximately £47,000 across case study areas, Sanctuary Schemes could have generated benefits of around £89,000 from a reduction in homelessness and associated re-housing costs, and in the number of domestic violence offences, thus representing potential savings of around £42,000 across the case study schemes.

### **Breaches and attempted breaches**

Agency respondents across the case study areas reported that perpetrators had made attempts to gain entry to Sanctuary properties but in only two areas were agency respondents aware of any breaches. Again, no recent or detailed data on breaches and attempted breaches were available. However, one Sanctuary Scheme service reported that police checks on outcomes in 2007-08 found that, 89 (85 per cent) of the 105 households that had a Sanctuary installed were protected from further incidents. Agency respondents in this area suggested that there had been only one or two breaches of a Sanctuary and that the remainder of the incidents reported by the police were attempted breaches.

Agency respondents explained that incidents had occurred under circumstances that had not been considered. In some cases it appeared that the behaviour of the perpetrator had changed and/or had become more determined and, in some cases, repeat incidents were far more serious than the risk assessment had suggested.

*There's only a couple that have come under attack I think that I can think of... I mean the arson one obviously that was very serious, the guy who went in through the roof. But I mean, God, you wouldn't have expected anybody to lift the roof tiles would you?*

(Specialist Sanctuary Scheme worker)

A number of service users also said that the perpetrator had attempted to gain entry but had failed. Many service users felt that the Sanctuary measures alone had deterred the perpetrator from even attempting to enter the property, in some cases they had tried to breach the security once and failed then did not try again. In other cases it appeared to be the combination of extra security and an Injunction or bail conditions that deterred the perpetrator.

*After they put the alarm on the house, my husband stopped coming round. He also knows that if he breaks the Injunction he will be put in prison...*

(Service user)

In other cases the perpetrator could be very persistent and some service users felt that the only solution would be for the perpetrator to be imprisoned.

In some cases perpetrators had managed to gain entry to the property by persuading the service user or children to allow them in. Whilst Sanctuary did offer people security it was clear that service users had to be very careful and always be aware that the perpetrator might turn up. For example, in one area a Sanctuary user had been stabbed when she opened the door to her ex-partner. She had no idea that her ex-husband knew her whereabouts and because she was expecting a visitor opened the door without using the spy-hole to check who was outside. Despite the severity of the attack she declined to move and additional security measures were installed in the property. In another case the perpetrator gained entry to the property by breaking an alarmed window when the service user was out.

For the most part, service users who had experienced attempted breaches had been very satisfied with the response from the police and many said they had arrived within minutes. However, a few said they had to wait some time for the police to arrive, in one case the police did not visit until the next day. Although this was not a common experience, service users and agency respondents explained that Sanctuary measures were futile if the police did not respond quickly to call outs. Sanctuary measures would hold for some time but they were designed to keep the client safe until the police arrived. If the police took too long to respond then there was a danger that the perpetrator could breach the Sanctuary. There was no evidence that Sanctuaries had been breached because the police took a long time to respond, however, their failure to do so undermined the work of the Sanctuary Scheme service and service users' feelings of security.

*I had me own mobile... they said ring the police and let them know, you know, inform the police straightaway... but I'm not being funny, sometimes on a Saturday night they're ultra busy and they can't get out.*

(Service user)

### **Options if Sanctuary proved unsustainable**

Most agency respondents explained that if service users were not safe and wished to move then they would be offered the same options as they would have been prior to having the Sanctuary installed. Some agency respondents explained that there



would have to be evidence of further incidents whilst others said that they would try to help the client move home if they felt unsafe.

*We would assess their circumstances, see whether or not there have been any incidences since Sanctuary was put in, and we would obviously liaise with the police... I mean even if we didn't feel that there was that risk, if they were coming to us saying that they were in fear and they wanted to make a homeless application, we wouldn't prevent them from doing that...*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

Not all service users felt safe in their homes and some had been attacked. However, many still wished to remain in their homes and had had extra security measures installed. The main reasons for not wanting to move were the same as those discussed in Chapter 3 for opting for Sanctuary in the first place.

*I am trying to get a management transfer, [IDVA] was honest with me and told me that I might not get as nice a house – he also explained the pluses of staying put – nice house, neighbours who look out for me... I did go and see [housing options] and they told me about bidding...I think she explained about the management transfer as well. I think you can also do an exchange but I don't really understand... If I do move I'd like to have Sanctuary again.*

(Service user)

For the most part service users were unsure what their options would be if they were no longer safe or did not feel safe. A few remembered being told that they could be re-housed if necessary and others assumed that they would have to move if there were further incidents of domestic violence. It appeared that most service users believed that there would have to be some evidence of repeat incidences in order for them to be eligible for rehousing although no one said that this had been explained to them.

## **Barriers to the effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes**

### **ENSURING SAFETY OUTSIDE THE HOME**

One of the concerns about Sanctuary Schemes raised in Chapter 1 was that whilst security measures could keep people safe inside their homes they were unable to ensure safety outside. Although agency respondents, including police officers and specialist domestic violence workers, explained that many perpetrators were very unlikely to attack people in public areas, they were aware of highly publicised incidents where this had happened in other parts of the country. Where the risk of attack outside was assessed as high, then most agencies would recommend that

households move. However, as has been seen, many service users did not wish to move despite being advised that this might be a safer option.

A few service users said that they were afraid of leaving their homes and a small number reported having been attacked or harassed outside the home. A few would not go out alone whilst others said they would always drive even short distances because they felt safer in the car. Some users were also anxious or concerned because the perpetrator could access the building in which their flat was located and were afraid that the perpetrator would lie in wait for them. This was a problem mentioned on a number of occasions by agency representatives but installing added security in communal areas was deemed problematic and Sanctuary Schemes would recommend that in such cases it might be safer for the household to move. However, as noted above, many service users did not wish to move home despite these risks. These households would have appreciated extra security measures outside the property in particular CCTV and intercom systems, but not all Sanctuary Schemes could provide these. One service user explained that she had to move from the property where Sanctuary had been installed because, although she felt very safe inside, she was scared that her neighbour would let the perpetrator into the block.

Some agency respondents felt there was little that Sanctuary Schemes could do beyond providing service users with personal alarms whilst others clearly saw safety in the wider locality to be outside of the remit of the Sanctuary Scheme as both agency respondents and service users explained.

*Outside the property...I don't know, there really isn't, I don't know the answer for that...I mean we do give them panic alarms...*

(Housing provider)

*I did tell them [about feeling unsafe outside] but they are not really interested about that – it is about keeping safe inside your house, not about going outside...it was all about pack up and move if you can't live in the area...They gave me a mobile 'phone and he told me that when I dial 999 my details will come up on the system. He told me that 'phone is to stay in the house...that is not for any panic outside the house...*

(Service user)

Others, including specialist domestic violence workers and police officers, felt that helping people stay safe outside the home should be part of an overall package of security measures which should include safety planning, the use of injunctions, criminal prosecution, and the provision of personal alarms. In one area the Sanctuary Scheme service was able to provide service users with expensive GPS (global positioning system) alarms.

In some areas Sanctuary Scheme workers, specialist domestic violence workers, IDVAs and the police advised service users about personal safety outside the home. They worked with service users to develop safety plans or strategies for keeping safe if they were approached by the perpetrator. These included, for example, changing routes to work and school, changing routines, shopping in different areas and using different branches of banks and the Post Office. People were also advised to inform school teachers, employers and colleagues and even security guards at shopping centres about the problem (if they wished to do so). One woman described putting the safety measures she had discussed with the IDVA into action:

*I was actually shopping in the [...] high street...he seen me, started shouting and I just went into a shop and got out of the way because I knew he couldn't do nothing in front of other customers [IDVA] told me 'always keep your 'phone charged at all times, never let the battery run low' which I don't...and also if I see him call the police straight away and if he does approach me in the shops or whatever, just go to the staff and say, 'look, I need help'...don't feel embarrassed because you're asking someone to help you...*

(Service user)

Agency respondents and service users also explained that perpetrators could continue to harass and abuse people in different ways, for example just by being in the area, through children, other relatives or friends. One woman explained the problems she had been having with her ex-partner who repeatedly broke the terms of his Injunction and her disappointment with the response of the police.

*They had me, had me meeting him every Saturday morning at nine o'clock to hand the children over outside McDonalds, because it's the best place for CCTV ...he was making threats to me... all sorts, and they still didn't pick it up, they didn't, they just ignored the facts...he was slapping me and pushing me...and they didn't do anything about it. As I said he breached six times, but what I mean about breach is he'd come straight up to me in the street...the day I moved into my house...I panicked, and he was down the street, a hundred yards away, but I still saw him and he's stood there waving at me.*

(Service user)

## **INFORMATION SHARING AND INTER-AGENCY WORK**

Whilst respondents in most areas felt that information sharing and inter-agency working had improved, especially since the introduction of MARACs in some areas respondents felt that there were still problems in ensuring that partner agencies 'work seamlessly'. There was concern that communication between services was poor and/or slow and that this could have serious consequences for the safety of

service users. A number of agency respondents explained that even where there were information sharing protocols in place some agencies were not sharing information about cases as had been agreed. This was attributed to a lack of understanding rather than unwillingness on the part of certain agencies.

*I know that some agencies have had problems with social services not sharing information but we haven't found that to be a problem and we always have the safety net of ...well it is a bit of a misuse of it really but we can always refer a case to the MARAC then agencies have to come along and share information...so one way or another we can find out what we need to know.*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

It was clear that in some areas a lack of co-ordination and ineffective information sharing was a serious problem. In one area there had been a case where the emergency services were unaware that Sanctuary had been installed at an address and there were other examples where a lack of communication could have had serious consequences. There were also cases where Sanctuary rooms had been installed without an alarm or telephone being supplied.

*As well as that, because of the security issues within the...house, outward opening doors, my, our guys could be kicking the hell out of a door, thinking it's inward opening, and it's actually outward opening.*

(Fire service representative)

*Been a bit of an issue in terms of ...the co-ordination of the, the various elements of it as well have, there's, there's been a bit of a problem with I think. So the panic room, Sanctuary Room might have been set up but it might then take ages for the 'phone to get installed in it.*

(Specialist domestic violence worker)

## **SHORTAGE OF SUPPORT SERVICES**

Across the case study areas a wide range of support was available for service users and many respondents described the excellent work undertaken by the agencies they worked with. The main problem reported by agency representatives in all areas was insufficient provision and that existing services lacked the capacity to meet demand which meant that services, such as counselling, Women's Aid and specialist floating support services, had to operate waiting lists. Police domestic violence teams, IDVAs, and services for children were all said to be under great pressure. While several Sanctuary Scheme services had worked successfully with individuals and households from the BAMER community many agency respondents felt that more work needed to be done to encourage BAMER clients to report domestic violence and to engage with support in general as well as with Sanctuary Schemes services.

*There is massive problem of underreporting and that is the same everywhere – there is a massive drive on to encourage reporting but saying that we still we get loads of reports from the Asian community.*

(Police domestic violence officer)

As noted in Chapter 1, there is a general need to recognise and address the specific needs of BAMER groups. One respondent, a member of the local BAMER forum and the domestic violence forum, explained that it was difficult for anyone to seek help with domestic violence but much more so for those from BAMER communities and felt that there needed to be more specialist BAMER services or at least that domestic violence services should employ more BAMER staff.

### **SERVICE USERS' RELUCTANCE TO SEEK LEGAL REMEDIES**

Many agency respondents stressed that Sanctuary had to be part of a package of interventions and felt it was important that the behaviour of perpetrators should be tackled through the use of injunctions and the criminal law. However, as noted earlier, service users were not always willing to pursue legal remedies. There were a number of reasons for this; some were worried about how the perpetrator would react and were scared that such actions would make the situation worse, whilst others felt that the perpetrator would simply ignore any sanctions.

*My last ex was scared of going to prison – but my first husband would not have been worried at all, he would just have been angry with me – he had no respect for the law.*

(Service user)

There were other reasons why service users did not wish to report abuse to the police, some service users explained that they had been to court in the past and found the process very difficult. Whilst many service users appreciated being accompanied to court others made the point that they still had to stand up in court and give evidence. It was clear that some service users had felt under pressure to take legal action and a few said they no longer reported incidents to the police because of this.

*The police get annoyed as well...I want him gone and if I didn't want to press charges, which I didn't want to do, they'd get annoyed with you. So I tend not to, to wish I'd never even bothered with that...That stopped me from ringing the police at the time...I don't even press the button now... I've got a panic button...I suppose, I don't know, I didn't want to be dragged into court again*

(Service user)

A couple of agency respondents made the point that some clients would not engage with the criminal justice system because of their own criminal behaviour or because of a general mistrust of statutory services. In other cases, service users were unwilling to report incidents to the police because they had been dissatisfied with their response in the past.

*And I think sometimes it depends...about the sort of survivor's own background. .. If they themselves have been involved in criminal activity then the police aren't particularly people they want to be involved with.*

(Specialist domestic violence worker)

## **REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE**

Service users in some case study areas highlighted a number of instances where repairs were needed to doors, alarms, intercom systems and external lighting. Some service users in a few areas complained that they did not know which agency was responsible for maintenance and repairs or who to contact to report problems. This tended to be less of a problem in those areas where service users were in regular contact with Sanctuary Scheme service workers. In other cases when repairs were reported to the appropriate person or agency it took a very long time for them to be rectified. Part of the reason for this, service users believed, was due to a lack of awareness of the existence of the Sanctuary Scheme by those that undertook repairs.

*The door's all playing up...expanding really bad... I've reported the door twice now and no-one's been out to have a look....I've heard nothing back from anyone...You try and lock the door and you can't lock it...and to try and unlock the door to get out, you can't get out.*

(Service user)

In one area, where the local authority was responsible for repairs and maintenance, private tenants and owner occupiers felt that they were receiving a poorer standard of service simply because they were not social housing tenants. However, social housing tenants in other areas said that they had not bothered reporting faulty Sanctuary Scheme installations to the council because they felt that they had received a poor service in the past. These service users felt that Sanctuary Scheme service providers should be more proactive in following up cases and ensuring that installations were working. Although most Sanctuary Schemes did contact service users at least once to check that the installation had been completed satisfactorily there appeared to be a case for follow up checks. Others suggested that there should be a direct line to the Sanctuary Scheme for them to report repairs.

*That's the only thing I could fault it. There's no after care. No-one's ever been to see if it's all still working. (Service user)*

## FUNDING

Funding for Sanctuary Schemes came from various agencies and a range of sources in different areas. These included the crime and disorder reduction partnership or community safety unit, the homelessness prevention grant and housing associations. One Sanctuary Scheme had applied for charitable status. There was a lack of agreement about which agencies should be responsible for funding Sanctuary Schemes, in some areas respondents felt that local authorities should provide more money for the Schemes as they appeared to benefit most from the savings made in terms of reduced cases of homelessness and repeat homelessness.

Many respondents (and some service users) in some areas mentioned the issue of funding and the lack of resources available to Sanctuary Schemes. None of the Sanctuary Schemes had had to refuse any referrals but, as noted earlier, one Sanctuary Scheme service reported that it could only work with high risk cases because demand was high and funding limited. In some areas funding cuts had been made and these had an impact on the level and type of security measures provided. For example, in one area, house alarms that were once fitted as standard were no longer installed. In other areas, as noted earlier, the demand for the Sanctuary Scheme service was increasing as the service became more widely known; agency respondents did not wish to limit their service but were finding it increasingly difficult to fund the Sanctuary Scheme. In one area, agency respondents believed that demand for Sanctuary Scheme services would fall over time as the Sanctuary Scheme responded effectively to pent-up demand.

Some agency respondents felt that the pressure of having to rebid annually for Sanctuary funding was having a negative impact upon the successful operation of the Scheme as Sanctuary leads had to spend so much time making bids. Agency respondents in most areas, although not all, expected demand for Sanctuary to increase as more people became aware of the Scheme. This led to concerns about both current and future levels of funding.

*I'm sure that the, the demand is going up and up and up, and if they don't get further...funding then they're going to have to stop at some stage. But it would be a sad day if they stop because it's, it's an excellent scheme.*

(Specialist domestic violence worker)

Sanctuary Schemes in a few areas were considering whether it would be feasible to ask for owner occupiers to make a contribution to the cost of Sanctuary whilst others were looking at ways to increase the contributions made by RSLs (see below).

## **THE CONTRIBUTION OF RSLs**

A number of agency respondents in some case study areas felt that in order for Sanctuary Schemes to operate effectively local RSLs had to be encouraged or persuaded to take a more active role. Some agency respondents felt that whilst many RSLs were content to refer their tenants to Sanctuary Schemes, they were not willing to make a financial contribution to the cost of the service.

*We have tried very hard and are still trying to get other RSLs to contribute, there might be a couple that have made a contribution it has been more difficult and challenging than we thought to get RSLs involved... We don't have a problem selling it; it is just getting them to buy into it...*

(Housing strategy officer)

## **LACK OF PERPETRATOR PROGRAMMES**

A small number of agency respondents believed that the lack of perpetrator programmes was a barrier not only to the successful operation of Sanctuary Schemes but also to tackling domestic violence and repeat victimisation more generally. Whilst some service users, like many agency respondents, also appeared to believe that perpetrators would not change their behaviour a few believed that they could. These service users made the point that changing the perpetrator's behaviour was the only way to stop abuse towards them, their family and others. One respondent explained that she hoped her daughter's ex-partner would be given a custodial sentence and that he would receive some help to change, otherwise she feared he might become even angrier and that the abuse would continue for ever.

*...hopefully he will get a sentence and he will get some sort of counselling or something to help him get over why he feels like that ...*

*He might be even worse when he comes out if it is all pent up – he needs help to stop him – or to stop him doing it to somebody else – there must be something wrong with him if he thinks he can behave like that, it might be something in his past that is making him like that but it needs sorting whatever it is...she might never get rid of him...*

(Service user)

## **What happens if Sanctuary is no longer required or appropriate?**

In general agency respondents were unclear about what they would do if Sanctuary was no longer required. A couple of areas reported that they flagged social rented properties which had Sanctuary installed in the same way as other adapted properties were flagged so that if the household moved for any reason the property could be easily identified and used for another household at risk of domestic violence. Little thought had been given as to what would be done if the client decided



they no longer wanted the Sanctuary measures in their home. However, as noted earlier, there was some concern that the service user might reconcile with the perpetrator and that Sanctuary measures could then pose a danger. There was a fear that clients and children could be locked in to the property and that emergency services would find it difficult to gain entry quickly because of the enhanced security.

*We have actually raised some concerns and we're going to try and look at what other areas are doing... when people who have had the Sanctuary... maybe then invite the partner back into the home and the risk that that might pose if, for example, the partner was in the home and actually could shut children or...the females... into the panic room.*

(Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator)

Almost all agency respondents felt that it would be far too expensive to remove Sanctuary measures such as Sanctuary doors and window grilles whatever the circumstances but a couple explained that they would remove some security measures, in particular the locks on Sanctuary doors, if these posed a danger to households.

One owner-occupier who had been in fear of her life, whilst most appreciative of the security measures installed in her home, explained that it would be very difficult to sell her property if she decided to move and that this limited her options.

*I mean it's actually devalued the house by thousands. So if we put the house on the market, I mean this is kind of an old Victorian cottage...very attractive, you know, wooden floors, beams on the ceiling ... all that kind of oldy-worldy charm really, and then you look at the window, there's Victorian beautiful windows and all the leaded light and everything else and suddenly there's huge sheet, sheet metal bars fixed at the window and, so yeah, it devalues it...and of course the door of the Sanctuary room is grotesque. So if you actually had a viewer what are you going to say?*

(Service user)

## **Conclusion**

Overall Sanctuaries were thought to be successful in meeting their main aim of providing a safe alternative for households. Most service users said they felt much safer following the installation of Sanctuary measures although there was some evidence that a few households had moved from their Sanctuary because they did not feel safe. However, few Sanctuary Schemes or other agencies were able to provide detailed information about the sustainability of Sanctuaries beyond immediate outcomes.

Sanctuaries were also deemed to be a success, by agency respondents and service users alike, in that they met a number of other aims, described at length in earlier chapters, including minimising disruption, responding to preferences, and providing more choice. The support offered by Sanctuary Schemes and other agencies also enhanced feelings of security and well being.

Benefits for agencies were thought to include: cost savings; a reduction in homelessness caused by domestic violence; and a reduction in repeat incidences of domestic violence. Again, Sanctuary Schemes were unable to provide detailed information on these outcomes although secondary data on homelessness acceptances shows that homelessness acceptances on the grounds of domestic violence had fallen in all but one case study area.

It also appeared that Sanctuaries had been successful in preventing repeat incidents of domestic violence amongst service users. Across the case study areas perpetrators had made attempts to gain entry to Sanctuary properties but in only two areas were agency respondents aware of breaches and only one service user reported a breach (which happened when she was out). However, there were incidences of repeat victimisation where perpetrators had managed to gain unforced entry.

In cases where the Sanctuary could not ensure safety, then households would be offered the same accommodation options as they would have been at the time Sanctuary was first discussed (see Chapter 3).

Although Sanctuary Schemes were on the whole successful in meeting their main aims, respondents in all areas felt that there were a number of barriers and problems which could undermine the effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes. These included people feeling or being unsafe outside the home; problems with information sharing and inter-agency working; the reluctance of some service users to pursue legal remedies; funding issues; and, a lack of commitment on the part of some RSLs. A small number of agency respondents and service users felt that the absence of perpetrator programmes was a barrier to the effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes.

Few Sanctuary Schemes had considered what would happen if a Sanctuary was no longer required or if households moved. In some areas Sanctuary properties in the Social Rented Sector were flagged in the same way as other adapted properties. A few agency respondents felt that it would be important to remove any security measures that could place people at risk if they reconciled with the perpetrator. However, it seems unlikely that any service user who reconciled with a perpetrator would inform the Sanctuary Scheme of the change in circumstances.

# Chapter 7

## Conclusions and good practice points

### Introduction

This final chapter presents summary conclusions and points for good practice for the development and operation of Sanctuary Schemes.

#### **The origins and operation of Sanctuary Schemes**

Sanctuary Schemes were envisaged as an intervention that had a number of potential benefits for households at risk of domestic violence. In addition, there was also a need to improve homelessness prevention services. Sanctuary Schemes also appeared to offer the potential for significant cost savings. The main reasons for developing Sanctuary Schemes across the case studies included:

- housing pressures
- homelessness prevention
- to respond more effectively to significant levels of domestic violence
- cost savings
- to provide more choice for households fleeing violence
- to meet the expressed needs and preferences of households fleeing violence including the desire to remain in their homes, to minimise disruption and to avoid having to move to unfamiliar and possibly less desirable areas

While agency respondents believed that Sanctuary Schemes offered many potential benefits, there had been some concerns about introducing Sanctuary Schemes during the set up period and these were similar across the case study areas. Most significantly, agency representatives shared the concerns of national level stakeholders, about the safety and appropriateness of Sanctuary rooms, and most decided that these would not be a feature of their Sanctuary. The other main concern related to the cost of running the scheme.

The lead agencies responsible for the Sanctuary Schemes were housing providers, specialist domestic violence services and domestic violence partnerships. All Sanctuary Schemes worked with a wide range of statutory, voluntary and private agencies. These included, amongst others, local authority housing and homelessness services; specialist domestic violence services; emergency services; primary care trusts and the agency responsible for the installation of security measures.

Sanctuaries were thought to be appropriate for all types of household, including single men and women, in all tenures, which met the referral criteria. However, the suitability and appropriateness of Sanctuary was always dependent on a full risk assessment and the needs and preferences of the service user.

### **Sanctuary and other accommodation options**

Sanctuary Schemes had been widely promoted and a wide range of agencies made referrals to the service. However, in some areas it was felt that more could be done to raise awareness of the Sanctuary Scheme amongst workers likely to have direct contact with people at risk of domestic violence, for example, hospital accident and emergency staff and GPs.

Most service users first learned about Sanctuary Schemes from the police and specialist domestic violence services, but this depended to a large degree on which agency they first approached for help.

Referral criteria were, for the most part, clear, and generally referral processes worked effectively. There were however, delays in some areas and this could have implications for the safety of the household. There was a clear need for referral agencies not to raise household's expectations of what types of security measures the Sanctuary Scheme would provide, for example, CCTV or alarm systems that might not prove to be necessary.

Accommodation options for households fleeing domestic violence were similar across the case study areas. These included: making a homelessness application; management transfers; refuge accommodation; emergency and temporary housing; private sector leases; rent deposit schemes, and mutual exchanges. There was no evidence that service users were pressured into accepting a Sanctuary as some national level stakeholders had feared. Although service users did not always remember the options discussed, it was evident that they had wanted to remain in their homes.

There were many reasons why service users chose to have a Sanctuary installed, but key amongst them were the following:

- the desire to stay in a familiar area close to support networks
- to minimise disruption for them and their children
- service users' negative perceptions of alternative options, particularly hostels and refuges
- a fear of being re-housed in a less desirable area; and
- a reluctance to move to another area when the perpetrator had always discovered their whereabouts in the past

## **Risk assessment and installing Sanctuary measures**

It was evident that risk assessments should focus on the needs and preferences of the service user, as well as the risk posed by the perpetrator, and the security of the property. It was sometimes the case that Sanctuary was not an appropriate option as the property was unsuitable. However, it was quite often the case that service users would not move out of their homes even when the risk assessment found that this would be the safest option.

It was also important that risk assessments were undertaken jointly by key agencies but it appeared that there were sometimes delays caused by ineffective information sharing procedures. The importance of effective risk assessment tools was also stressed. Agencies used different risk assessment tools although most Sanctuary Schemes used or were planning to use, CAADA<sup>38</sup> risk assessment tools. Not all Sanctuary Schemes would accept referrals where the perpetrator was still living in the property. However, other Sanctuary Schemes had been successful in helping clients seek legal advice and to take action to remove perpetrators so that Sanctuary measures could be installed.

There was no 'typical' Sanctuary. The types of installations depended on the degree of risk, the needs of the service user and the type or condition of the property. Sanctuary was usually installed within a fortnight and could be installed more quickly for those at highest risk. Most Sanctuary Schemes would install interim safety measures as required until full Sanctuary measures could be fitted. These measures, in particular, Home Link alarms, were greatly appreciated by households who did not wish to move out even temporarily. Service users also appreciated being consulted about their concerns and needs, and having the security measures explained to them.

## **Support for households living in a Sanctuary Scheme**

For the most part, agency respondents believed that Sanctuaries should be one element in a package of measures to support households at risk of domestic violence. However, in practice, this did not always appear to be the case. In some area agency representatives were concerned that Sanctuary Schemes were not referring service users to support services and inter-agency work and information sharing were not always effective, and there was evidence of unmet need amongst service users. Not all service users required support beyond the safety measures Sanctuary Schemes provided. However, most needed some support with domestic violence related problems, child contact resolution, safety planning or legal

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<sup>38</sup> For more information on assessment and service plans see:  
[http://www.caada.org.uk/practitioner\\_resources/IDVAresources.htm](http://www.caada.org.uk/practitioner_resources/IDVAresources.htm)

remedies, whilst a few required general support, for example, with setting up a new home or managing money. A small number had more complex needs and required specialist help, with, for example, substance misuse and mental health problems.

It was clear that all service users' needs should be fully assessed and that agencies should reassess these needs following installation of Sanctuary but Sanctuary Schemes were not always able to follow service users' progress or maintain contact with them. Most service users said they had been offered support and appreciated this, however, a few service users in some case study areas reported that they had no follow up contact from the Sanctuary Scheme once Sanctuary measures had been installed and a number said they did not know where to go or who to contact for help, should they need it at a later date.

Most Sanctuary Schemes reported a shortage of specialist services, in particular for children, and a lack of capacity in existing services such as specialist domestic violence services and counselling. Police domestic violence teams and IDVAs were also said to be under great pressure.

Overall, service users appreciated being offered support, even if they did not require it, and knowing where to go or who to contact for help should they need it at a later date. However, many service users would have appreciated a more proactive approach from Sanctuary Scheme workers and would have benefited from follow up visits. Support through the criminal justice system was particularly appreciated but it was evident that many service users did not wish to pursue criminal justice remedies.

Peer support groups and other more structured activities were popular with, and beneficial to, most of those that had used them. Agency respondents had very different views on the role of perpetrator programmes. Some had little confidence in their effectiveness whilst others thought the lack of programmes for perpetrators was a barrier to tackling domestic violence.

### **The effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes**

Overall Sanctuary Schemes were thought to be successful in meeting their main aim of providing a safe alternative for households at risk of domestic violence. Most service users said they felt much safer following the installation of Sanctuary measures although there was some evidence that a few households had moved from their Sanctuary because they did not feel safe. However, few Sanctuary Schemes were able to provide detailed information about the sustainability of Sanctuaries beyond immediate outcomes.

As the type of installations and security measures differed both between and within case study areas, and in the absence of detailed data on outcomes for individual

households, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the relative merits of different types of Sanctuary Scheme installations.

There was some variation in the way Sanctuary Schemes operated, in particular in terms of the support offered and provided to service users; the extent to which Sanctuary Schemes monitored service users' progress; and, to a lesser degree, the time taken to install Sanctuary measures. Nevertheless, respondents in all areas reported similar outcomes and, for the most part, service users reported positive experiences.

Sanctuary Schemes were also deemed to be a success, by agency respondents and service users alike, in that they met a number of other aims. These included: minimising disruption; responding to preferences; and improving choice for households. The support offered by Sanctuary Schemes and other agencies, in most areas, also enhanced feelings of security and well being.

Benefits for agencies were thought to include: cost savings; a reduction in homelessness caused by domestic violence; and a reduction in repeat incidences of domestic violence. Whilst cost benefit analysis suggested that Sanctuary Schemes could result in substantial savings for agencies there was little evidence that Sanctuary Schemes had an impact on the overall number of domestic violence offences in an area. However, qualitative evidence suggests that they did have an impact on re-victimisation rates for those living in a Sanctuary.

Across the case study areas perpetrators had made attempts to gain entry to Sanctuaries but in only two areas were agency respondents aware of breaches. However, there were incidences of repeat victimisation where perpetrators had managed to gain unforced entry. In cases where Sanctuaries proved not to be safe then households would be offered the same options as they would have been offered before they opted for Sanctuary.

There were a number of barriers to the effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes. These included:

- people being/feeling unsafe outside their homes
- problems with information sharing and inter-agency working
- a reluctance on behalf of service users to pursue legal remedies
- funding issues
- a reluctance amongst some RSLs to make a contribution to the costs of Sanctuary Schemes; and
- poor maintenance and repair services

Few Sanctuary Schemes had considered what would happen if a Sanctuary was no longer required or if households moved. In some areas Sanctuary properties were

flagged in the same way as other adapted properties. Some Sanctuary Scheme service providers believed it was important to remove any security measures that could place people at risk if they reconciled with the perpetrator. However, it seems unlikely that any service user who reconciled with a perpetrator would inform the Sanctuary Scheme of the change in circumstances.

### **Points for good practice**

#### **DEVELOPING AND OPERATING SANCTUARY SCHEMES**

1. Local authorities, agencies and organisations wishing to develop Sanctuary Schemes should nominate a dedicated Sanctuary co-ordinator who should take overall responsibility for bringing together key agencies. The Sanctuary Scheme coordinator should have specialist knowledge of domestic violence.
2. Key agencies, for example, housing providers; specialist domestic violence services; the police; and fire service representatives, must be involved in all stages of the development of Sanctuary Schemes. Setting up a service can take some time, but this is necessary to ensure that the views and concerns, in particular safety concerns, of all agencies responsible for delivering the service are considered and addressed.
3. Regular meetings involving all key partners should be held. These provide an opportunity to develop working relationships; agree information sharing protocols; and clarify the roles and responsibilities of all agencies.
4. Agencies developing Sanctuary Schemes must consider how the Sanctuary Scheme will operate as part of a package of measures to support service users and to prevent further incidents of domestic violence.
5. Sanctuaries are relatively cheap and can be installed quite quickly and demand for the service is likely to be high. It is therefore most important to ensure that there is sufficient provision and that existing services (for example, specialist domestic violence services and children's services) have the capacity to support Sanctuary Scheme service users.
6. Sanctuary Scheme partners need to ensure clarity around responsibility for funding Sanctuary Schemes, taking into account the agencies that may accrue benefits as a result of the Scheme – including, for example, local housing authorities, RSLs, and the police. There are a number of options



available in terms of funding Sanctuary Schemes including for example: the homelessness prevention fund or an 'invest to save' approach; area-based grants<sup>39</sup>; the neighbourhood renewal fund; local area agreements; crime and disorder reduction partnerships/community safety partnerships; and, the police.

7. Agency representatives involved in delivering Sanctuary Schemes (including workers responsible for installing the schemes) should undertake training in order to improve their understanding of domestic violence.
8. Attention must be paid to needs assessment and safety planning. These assessments should be undertaken by specialist domestic violence workers.
9. It is recommended that all agencies adopt standardised tools for assessing risk and need, and for developing personal safety plans.
10. Sanctuary Schemes should consider how they will monitor and evaluate their service from the outset.

#### **SANCTUARY AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS**

11. Sanctuary Schemes services should be widely promoted by Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinators and workers to all relevant agencies and to the general public.
12. Sanctuaries should be presented as one accommodation option. Agencies must ensure that they fully explain all accommodation options to clients, including the options available should the Sanctuary prove inappropriate.
13. All households which might benefit from a Sanctuary should be referred to the service. The decision about the appropriateness of Sanctuary should be made by the Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinator in conjunction with the client and key partners (in particular the police and fire service).
14. The responsibility for explaining Sanctuary, and what it might entail, should lie with the Sanctuary Scheme to avoid raising expectations. The limits of Sanctuary, as well as the benefits, should be explained.

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<sup>39</sup> For more information on area-based grants, see:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/localgovernmentfinance/areabasedgrant/>

15. In order to help keep the household safe it may be necessary to install interim safety measures (see below) or for the household to move out temporarily.

16. Sanctuary Schemes should accept self-referrals.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT AND INSTALLING SANCTUARY MEASURES**

17. Risk assessments should comprise two main elements:

- an assessment of the case, including the needs and preferences of the service user, and the circumstances (e.g. Sanctuary rooms might be inappropriate where there are a number of very young children in a household) and the risk posed by the perpetrator; and
- an assessment of the property

18. The risk assessment of the case should be co-ordinated by a Sanctuary Scheme worker and include input from all relevant agencies, in particular the police, and specialist domestic violence services.

19. Property risk assessments should be undertaken jointly by a Sanctuary Scheme worker; a police officer with the crime prevention officer (or equivalent officer with specific expertise, for example, crime reduction officer or victim support officer) and a representative from the fire service. The risk assessment should also take account of the service user's needs and preferences.

20. The type of Sanctuary measures installed should depend on the level of risk, the needs of the service user and the type or condition of the property and be decided jointly by the key agencies responsible for assessing the property and the case.

21. Sanctuary Schemes should undertake work outside the property, for example, cutting back hedges; erecting fences; and improving lighting if this is necessary to enhance the security of the household.

22. In cases where the perpetrator is still living in the property, Sanctuary Schemes should work with the household to help remove the perpetrator or refer the client to an appropriate agency for support.

23. Sanctuary Schemes should have clear and achievable targets for the time taken to install Sanctuary. Where cases are urgent then security measures should be installed within a few days.

24. Where it is not possible to install the full Sanctuary quickly, or where the service user is at risk but does not wish to leave the property, then interim safety measures should be taken. Lock changes, extra locks and bolts and, in particular, alarms that link directly to the police or control centre, are simple and effective measures.
25. Sanctuary Schemes should seek to promote their service to private landlords and registered social landlords in the area.

### **SUPPORT FOR HOUSEHOLDS LIVING IN A SANCTUARY**

26. Sanctuaries should be part of a holistic package of measures to support households at risk of domestic violence. Although some service users may require minimal support beyond the safety measures Sanctuary Schemes can provide, needs will vary. Many service users will require specialist domestic violence support whilst others may have complex needs and will require support from a range of agencies.
27. All Sanctuary Scheme service users should have a full needs assessment. This should be undertaken by a specialist domestic violence worker. It is recommended that all Sanctuary Schemes use a standardised needs assessment and personal safety planning tool (see above).
28. All Sanctuary Scheme service users should have a personal support and safety plan, and this should be reassessed after the Sanctuary has been installed and at regular intervals thereafter.
29. Sanctuary Schemes should ensure that the needs of children are also assessed and should make referrals to specialist services as required.
30. Support services should be clearly signposted. Sanctuary Schemes must ensure that service users know who to contact should they require further advice or support at any time.
31. Sanctuary Schemes must be aware that some service users will lack the self confidence to seek support and advice themselves and will require support and advocacy e.g. being helped to access services or being accompanied to appointments.
32. Sanctuary Schemes should consider setting up service user groups. Peer support can benefit service users who otherwise might feel isolated.

## **ENSURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SANCTUARY SCHEMES**

33. Sanctuary Schemes must have policies and procedures in place to deal with cases where service users continue to feel unsafe in their properties despite the installation of Sanctuary.
34. Sanctuary Schemes, in conjunction with other key partners, in particular the police and specialist domestic violence services, must work with service users to develop safety plans and strategies for keeping safe outside the home<sup>40</sup>.
35. Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinators must take overall responsibility for ensuring that all elements of the Sanctuary, including alarms and mobile telephones, are in place.
36. Sanctuary Scheme co-ordinators must also take overall responsibility for ensuring that the emergency services are aware of addresses where Sanctuaries have been installed, and what measures have been installed (e.g. in case specialist equipment is required to gain entry in an emergency or to ensure that the police respond immediately).
37. Sanctuary Schemes must ensure that all installations have been properly fitted and working correctly. Service users should be able to report any faults to the Sanctuary Scheme service co-ordinator who should be responsible for ensuring that faults are repaired quickly.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

38. There is a need for local agencies, in particular the police and local authorities to monitor Sanctuary Schemes more effectively and to collect data on:
  - the number of referrals to the Sanctuary Scheme service, the numbers accepted and reasons why the Sanctuary Scheme was inappropriate
  - the number of Sanctuary Schemes installed and the costs of different levels of intervention as well as the cost to the Sanctuary Scheme service of providing support to service users
  - repeat incidences of domestic violence at addresses where Sanctuary Schemes have been installed, including breaches and attempted breaches

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<sup>40</sup> See the CAADA Individual Service Plan. Available at:  
[http://www.caada.org.uk/library\\_resources/CAADA%20ISP.doc](http://www.caada.org.uk/library_resources/CAADA%20ISP.doc)

- longer term outcomes, for example: the number of service users remaining in their homes six – 12 months after having Sanctuary Schemes installed); and, if possible, reasons why households leave their homes following installation of Sanctuary Schemes and any other change in circumstances (for example, reconciliation with the perpetrator); and
- the costs of alternative accommodation options such as rehousing, refuge places and temporary accommodation

39. Sanctuary Schemes should also seek to gain clients' views on the service, including, for example, their views on the support provided and how safe they have been since having the Sanctuary installed.

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## Appendix 1: Methodology

As noted in Chapter 1, the research methodology comprised five elements:

- telephone interviews with key stakeholders at national level
- the development of a typology of schemes, and selection of case studies
- in-depth and focus group interviews with relevant service providers and stakeholders in case study schemes
- analysis of monitoring data and other relevant documentation from case study schemes
- in-depth interviews with adults and children, who were using, or who had used, case study schemes; and
- analysis of the relative costs of different types of schemes and assessment of their relative benefits

### **Telephone interviews with national stakeholders**

The first stage in the research was to ‘sensitise’ the research team to the range of views on Sanctuary Schemes via telephone interviews with key national level stakeholders. The main aim of these interviews was to explore issues and concerns about the operation of Sanctuary Schemes in order to develop more detailed research questions for the main stages of the study.

Key stakeholders from 12 national level statutory and voluntary organisations were interviewed by telephone. These agencies and organisations included: specialist domestic violence services; the police service, Government departments, housing representatives and charities; organisations working with black and minority ethnic and refugee (BAMER) women; agencies working with male victims of domestic violence and perpetrators; and organisations representing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people.

### **Selecting case studies**

The research team had originally proposed developing a typology of existing Sanctuary Schemes in England and to select case study schemes reflecting the key categories within this typology. However, time constraints and the lack of readily available data on Sanctuary Schemes in England meant it was not possible to compile a sampling frame comprising all such schemes in the country. Instead, in agreement with CLG, eight case study areas were purposively selected from a sample of 48 Sanctuary Schemes which had responded to a request for information from CLG in 2008. Few of the 48 Sanctuary Schemes had submitted detailed information and it was not possible to apply any strict selection criteria. The case study areas were selected in the main because the Sanctuary Schemes appeared to

represent a range of different models and were led by various agencies and partnerships. They also differed in terms of the number of Sanctuaries they had installed. Finally, Sanctuary Schemes were selected that had been operating for a year or more in order that the sustainability of Sanctuary Schemes could be explored. The eight case study areas were:

- Tameside
- Southend
- Hull
- Middlesbrough
- Nottingham
- Greenwich
- Solihull; and
- Calderdale

### **Interviews with service providers and key agencies**

In-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of the lead agencies responsible for coordinating the relevant Sanctuary Scheme in each area. Interviews were also conducted with key stakeholders from other key agencies working in partnership to deliver the Sanctuary Scheme in each area. In total, across all eight case study areas, 63 agency and service provider representatives were interviewed. These included representatives from:

- local authority housing departments, registered social landlords, or the arms-length management organisation
- police domestic violence units; victim support and crime prevention units
- the fire and rescue service
- Women's Aid and other specialist domestic violence services; and
- workers responsible for installing Sanctuary measures

These interviews were used to explore interviewees' perceptions of the effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes in meeting key objectives, in particular, providing a safe and sustainable alternative to homelessness and moving home for those at risk of domestic violence. These interviews gathered evidence on:

- the development of the Sanctuary Scheme, the lead agency, reasons for choosing the model adopted and the other key agencies involved
- the referral process, criteria for considering Sanctuary, and reasons why Sanctuaries might be inappropriate or unsuitable
- risk assessment procedures
- housing options for households at risk of domestic violence and interim arrangements to keep the household safe

- perceived outcomes for all household members, both adults and children
- other benefits of the Sanctuary Scheme, including costs savings, reduction in homelessness and use of temporary accommodation
- demand for the scheme and the capacity of the Sanctuary Scheme to respond; and
- gaps in provision (e.g. shortage of specialist domestic violence support services)

### **Analysis of monitoring data and other relevant documentation**

Service providers were asked to provide any relevant documents relating to the Sanctuary Schemes in their area including: protocols; funding applications and details of funding mechanisms; and all available project monitoring data. It had been hoped that the project monitoring data and other documentation would include information about: the number of households using/who had used the Sanctuary Scheme service and outcomes for these households; households which were deemed suitable for Sanctuary but refused it; reasons why households were deemed unsuitable for the service; other housing options available to households at risk of domestic violence in the area; use of interim/emergency accommodation whilst awaiting installation of the Sanctuary; and risk assessments (e.g. what risk assessment tools are employed). Service providers were also asked to provide data on the costs of operating Sanctuary Schemes and on the costs of alternatives (such as stays in temporary accommodation in the local area). These data were to be used to inform the cost benefit element of the study. However, Sanctuary Schemes were unable to provide the full range of monitoring and other data requested. A summary of case study data is provided in Appendix 2 and the cost benefit analysis is presented in Appendix 3.

### **Interviews with households using, and who had used, Sanctuary Schemes**

Interviewees for this aspect of the research were recruited with the help of the projects or agencies working with the families. In total 49 interviews were undertaken with adult Sanctuary service users, these included interviews with a small number of service users who had left their homes since having a Sanctuary installed. These interviews employed a semi-structured technique to gather information on participants' experiences of the Sanctuary Scheme service and any previous experiences of homelessness and specialist domestic violence support, including refuges. The interviews focused on participants' views on the appropriateness and effectiveness of Sanctuary Schemes and how safe household members felt. They also explored the perceived benefits and disbenefits of Sanctuary Schemes and whether Sanctuaries were a sustainable longer term solution. The interviews also covered participants' views on:

- the referral process
- initial risk assessment
- information, advice and support provided at the initial stage including other housing options offered to them (e.g. interim arrangements to keep household safe)
- the appropriateness and effectiveness of ongoing support and advice (where provided)
- how the Sanctuary Scheme service compared with any previous experience of domestic violence provision/experiences of fleeing home because of domestic violence; and
- any gaps in provision

### **Interviews with children and young people**

As domestic violence clearly impacts on children and young people in affected households it was felt to be important to gain their views as well as those of the adult household members. The research team hoped to speak to 15 children aged 11 – 18 across the case study areas but this was not possible. The main reason was that few households contained children within this age range. Of those that did, most parents did not want their children to take part, or the children themselves did not wish to. Two children living in a Sanctuary were interviewed. These interviews explored:

- children's views on living in a Sanctuary
- how safe they felt
- how they perceived the support offered to the household
- their experiences of previous episodes of homelessness and/or having to move out of the family home temporarily
- the benefits of being able to remain in the family home; and
- any concerns about remaining in the family home

### **Analysis of interview data**

The interviews with project staff, key national and local stakeholders and households were recorded and transcribed. The qualitative data was analysed using a thematic framework based on the key research questions.

## Appendix 2: Summary of study site secondary data

	Population '000 <sup>1</sup>	Number of households '000 <sup>2</sup>	2004- 05	2005- 06	2006- 07	2007- 08	2008-09 (unvalidated)
<b>Case Study Site 1</b>	202	81					
Recorded offences of VAP <sup>3</sup>			4,532	5,318	3,933	3,718	
DV related recorded VAP <sup>4</sup>			739	847	638	958	
Total number of households accepted as homeless <sup>5</sup>			..	347	171	115	
DV related homelessness acceptances <sup>6</sup>			..	64	43	27	
Sanctuaries installed							
<b>Case Study Site 2</b>	223	93					
Recorded offences of VAP			7,847	7,698	7,329	7,135	6,750
DV related recorded VAP			1,989	2,063	2,127	2,165	2,007
Total number of households accepted as homeless			1,157	970	610	373	
DV related homelessness acceptances <sup>6</sup>			70	80	64	31	
Sanctuaries installed					96		
<b>Case Study Site 3</b>	259	104					
Recorded offences of VAP			10,182	9,405	9,692	8,485	
DV related recorded VAP							
Total number of households accepted as homeless			996	640	630	959	709
DV related homelessness acceptances <sup>6</sup>			83	55	96	131	106
Sanctuaries installed						261	
<b>Case Study Site 4</b>	139	55					
Recorded offences of VAP			3,653	4,560	5,119	4,721	
DV related recorded VAP						1,227	
Total number of households accepted as homeless			454	277	134	95	30
DV related homelessness acceptances <sup>6</sup>			91	93	47	45	6
Sanctuaries installed				110			
<b>Case Study Site 5</b>	292	116					
Recorded offences of VAP			9,067	9,516	9,865	9,150	
DV related recorded VAP							
Total number of households accepted as homeless			1,755	1,184	820	823	633
DV related homelessness acceptances <sup>6</sup>			179	157	89	72	53
Sanctuaries installed							
<b>Case Study Site 6</b>	206	81					
Recorded offences of VAP			2,974	3,480	3,149	3,399	
DV related recorded VAP							

	Total Number of Households accepted as homeless			774	583	314	283	263
	DV related homelessness acceptances <sup>6</sup>			125	91	57	61	67
	Sanctuaries installed							
<b>Case Study Site 7</b>		164	71					
	Recorded offences of VAP			3,318	3,111	2,989	2,920	
	DV related recorded VAP							
	Total number of households accepted as homeless			236	199	127	50	68
	DV related homelessness acceptances <sup>6</sup>			39	23	11	3	3
	Sanctuaries installed						14	35
<b>Case Study Site 8</b>		216	90					
	Recorded offences of VAP			4,599	5,714	4,765	4,004	3,492
	DV related recorded VAP			661	787	843	704	683
	Total number of households accepted as homeless			575	162	140	122	39
	DV related homelessness acceptances <sup>6</sup>			101	39	51	43	6
	Sanctuaries installed					66	114	140
<b>All 8 sites</b>		1,701	691			229	549	241

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Population data taken from Resident Population Estimate: All Persons, June 2008, Office of National Statistics, Neighbourhood Statistics. Available at: [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> Data on the number of households taken from number of people living in households (UV51), Office of National Statistics, Neighbourhood Statistics. Available at: [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)

<sup>3</sup> Notifiable Offences Recorded by the police: Violence against the Person, Office of National Statistics, Neighbourhood Statistics. Available at: [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)

<sup>4</sup> Data from individual police forces indicating the number of Violence against the Person offences flagged as related to domestic causes.

<sup>5</sup> Data on Total Number of Households accepted as homeless taken from CLG P1E Homelessness Returns. For further discussion of definitions see Appendix 3 below.

<sup>6</sup> Data on DV as main cause of homelessness ("Relationship breakdown with partner: violent") taken from: CLG P1E Homelessness Returns. For further discussion of definitions see Appendix 3 below.

## Appendix 3: Cost benefit analysis

This appendix reports findings on the estimated costs and benefits associated with Sanctuary Schemes. For information about costs, it relies on information from the case study sites and (limited) project documentation provided by individual Sanctuary Schemes. For estimates of benefits, an illustrative model has been constructed based, wherever possible, on information about the impact and outcomes of Sanctuary Scheme services. This model treats the reduction of homelessness acceptances on the grounds of domestic violence (homeless households in priority need where the reason for loss of their last settled home was a violent relationship breakdown with a partner) as the central outcome. The extent to which Sanctuaries may prevent further incidents of violence is also examined. First, the cost-benefit framework is described; second, the relatively limited evidence provided by the case study sites is considered; third, the available secondary sources of data available about the case study areas are explored; and, finally, an analysis of the benefit-cost ratios is presented which reveals that on average the Sanctuary Schemes studied offer positive net returns.

### **The cost-benefit framework**

The analysis of costs and benefits is based on the premise that the principal objective of the programme is to reduce the number of households becoming homeless as a result of partner violence. For convenience in the rest of the Appendix we use the following shorthand expressions:

- The term ‘homelessness acceptances’ is used to refer to the category: ‘households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falling within a priority need group, and consequently owed a main homelessness duty by a local housing authority’ in CLG P1E Homelessness Returns<sup>41</sup>.
- The terms ‘violence-related homelessness acceptances’ and ‘households accepted as homeless due to domestic violence’, are used to refer to ‘homeless households in priority need where the reason for loss of their last settled home was a violent relationship breakdown with a partner’.

In simple terms (i.e. because there are a lot of other potential factors at work), achieving a reduction in violence-related homelessness acceptances relies on reducing the risk of a recurrence of domestic violence, thereby making survivors of

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<sup>41</sup> Please see:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/homelessstatistics/publicationshomelessness/>



domestic violence safer in their homes and thus able to stay on in a property they would otherwise have had to leave. This can improve the survivor household's quality of life by:

- preventing physical and emotional harm
- reducing the fear of violence; and
- avoiding the emotional and financial costs of moving to a new property, possibly in another area

## **COSTS**

The costs of a Sanctuary Scheme service range from the costs of setting up a system for referral, risk assessment and monitoring through to the costs of installing target-hardening measures in properties and providing support to households. Referral and assessment arrangements are needed to identify and prioritise potential recipients. The multi agency arrangements to support this process may be costly both to set up initially and to maintain. Target hardening, in the form of Sanctuary installation, is then provided to households identified as being at risk.

The benefits from installation of Sanctuary measures may accrue to the household experiencing violence, to the local authority and to other housing providers. For the household the benefits may include a saving in the costs associated with violence and the costs associated with moving house. For the local authority there are likely to be benefits in the form of savings which accrue from a reduction in the number of homelessness acceptances. This includes the costs to local authorities of providing emergency and temporary accommodation; the cost of voids; and, the costs to landlords of preparing a vacated property for re-occupation. There will be further benefits to individuals and to wider society (including the Exchequer) as a result of any reduction in violent incidents. These might include, for example, savings to the health service; social services; criminal justice agencies; and, to education services.

## **ESTIMATING NET BENEFITS**

Estimating these costs and benefits so as to be able to infer the net benefits delivered is, in practice, a complex task. In particular it is the estimation of benefits that represents a challenge. Three methods are considered.

## **IDEALISED METHOD**

The ideal way of capturing net benefits would have been to build up a household-by-household analysis of the costs and benefits to (a) households and (b) local authorities and others. For each household receiving a Sanctuary installation an estimate would have been needed of the outcomes for them in terms of (any continuing) violence and of any changes in their accommodation status. These outcomes would then have been compared with those for a 'control' group of households with similar characteristics but receiving no Sanctuary measures. In an experimental trial design, households at risk would have been allocated randomly

between an 'intervention' group receiving a Sanctuary installation and a 'control' group that did not.

In a cruder variant a 'before and after' approach could have been used, based on an individualised risk assessment for each household (constructed from a documented history of past violence), followed by regular monitoring of any recurrence in violence and any changes in accommodation status. Details of the type and cost of Sanctuary measures installed (for example the cost of various security measures such as alarm systems, reinforced doors, video entry systems etc) would have been needed, as well as the costs of providing support services to Sanctuary Scheme service users. From this case level data it would have been possible to estimate both the degree of violence reduction the Sanctuary was delivering to each household and the associated cost savings (for both households and authorities) from a reduction in the number of homelessness acceptances. The benefits of a Sanctuary Scheme comprise the aggregate value of these improved outcomes to households and local authorities.

In the event the data collected at sites could not support such investigation and monitoring at household level. Data collection had not been given high priority and the result was that only limited evidence could be assembled about the effectiveness of measures and the benefits they delivered.

A number of the Sanctuary Schemes produced cost-benefit calculations but these relied on crude methods to estimate the benefits of schemes. Typically they compared the average cost of installation works undertaken with the average cost of rehousing a household. It is of course true that any savings in rehousing costs may be significant but this is not a good measure of project benefits. It cannot be assumed that this cost would otherwise have arisen in all households where a Sanctuary is installed: even if the household is at risk of future violence it is rarely absolutely certain that violence would have continued and that the household would be accepted as homeless and have to be rehoused in the local authority area. Furthermore, it fails to recognise changes in domestic violence that might occur as a result of installation; for instance there may be benefits from violence reduction arising as a result of the installation of a Sanctuary, or it may be that a small number of households may be victimised in any event even with a Sanctuary installed.

In the absence of a database documenting the risks confronting each household individually (with and without, or before and after, intervention) it was not possible to estimate costs and benefits for each household and then to aggregate across households. This left two options.

## SITE-LEVEL ANALYSIS

An alternative to a household-level analysis is a site-level analysis that uses area-level data to estimate project benefits to compare with costs. This uses changes in domestic violence rates and in homelessness acceptance rates as a proxy for project benefits. It has the disadvantage that there will be impact on these rates from influences other than the installation of Sanctuary measures. It is less demanding from a data collection perspective since it does not entail tracking individual households but does still require substantial data from all case study areas.

## MODELLING APPROACH

In the event the quality of data was neither sufficiently good nor consistent across sites to support separate cost-benefit calculations to be done for each and every site. This left the possibility of a modelling approach to estimating costs and benefits. Using assumptions, based where possible on evidence from sites, it relies on constructing illustrative estimates of costs and benefits. The advantages of this method are that it can be based on a model that captures the underlying structure of costs and benefits and that it enables numerical parameter estimates to be updated as new evidence is collected. The disadvantage is that information on critical parameters may be missing and thus the results may contain a large element of conjecture.

## Evidence on costs and benefits from case study sites

We consider first the evidence about costs and benefits collected from the case study areas.

Table A3.1 summarises key data from sites on the number and cost of Sanctuaries installed. It illustrates the variation in both the provision and cost of Sanctuary Schemes.

**Table A3.1 Provision and cost of Sanctuaries**

Site	Number of Sanctuaries installed	Average cost per Sanctuary installation	Start date of local Scheme
1	183	£163	2006-07
2	96	£728	December 2005
3	261	£100	2005
4	119	£129	2007
5	67	£2,720	2007
6	45	£1,203	June 2006

7	49	£453	2008
8	338	£700	June 2005
All 8 sites	1,158	£636	

Sources: project documentation; CLG-compiled data on homelessness applications from P1E returns

## **COSTS**

Costs data were collected from the eight pilot sites. The basis on which these data had been compiled varied across sites because of differences in practice and in the local provision of support for victims of domestic abuse. For some, but not all, areas the cost data included, and distinguished between, the capital cost of installing measures in properties and the recurrent costs of providing assessment, monitoring and support measures. In other areas cost measures are limited to the cost of Sanctuary measures installed. Because of this variation in the basis of the measure used it is not appropriate to compare average cost with the scale of operation to draw inferences about possible economies of scale.

The average cost of installation of Sanctuary measures across the sites was £636 per property, but the range extended from two sites where it was 'less than £100' to two where it exceeded £1,000. This large variation reflects the different approaches taken by sites, ranging from a basic standard installation to more elaborate protection and greater support. There are other complications in producing an average cost figure that help account for some of this variation. Some areas show average costs falling significantly after the Scheme has been running for a year or two, with the implication that the length of time in operation is a significant influence.

## **BENEFITS**

The principal benefit of installing Sanctuary measures is to enable a household to remain in their own home and avoid having to move. It does this by reducing the risk of violence when the household continues to reside at their current property. If the Schemes have succeeded then we would expect two things, namely:

- violence-related homelessness acceptances to be falling in the case study areas relative to areas where Sanctuary Schemes have not been implemented (all other things being equal); and
- a fall in the number of violent offences recorded by the police as domestic in the case study areas sites relative to areas where Sanctuary Schemes have not been implemented (again, all other things being equal)

An important limitation of this approach is that the sites covered in this study represented only a fraction of the total number of areas where a Sanctuary Scheme

had been implemented. Sanctuary Schemes are operating in the majority of local authorities, and so the scope for drawing inferences from differences between trends at study sites and trends for the whole of England is correspondingly constrained.

### **ANALYSIS OF HOMELESSNESS ACCEPTANCES**

An indicator of homelessness outcomes at site level can be derived from Communities and Local Government data on homelessness acceptances.

Table A3.2 shows that the number of 'homelessness acceptances', or more precisely 'households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falling within a priority need group and consequently owed a homelessness duty by a local housing authority' fell by more than 50 per cent in England between 2003-04 and 2007-08. This period is used to give a baseline figure for 2003-04, the year before the first of the sites included in the study implemented a Sanctuary Scheme. The year 2008-09 is excluded because complete data for it were not available at the time of data compilation.

Within this total number of households accepted as homeless, the proportion accepted as homeless due to domestic violence as published in the P1E Tables<sup>42</sup>, fell slightly. The proportion accepted as homeless due to domestic violence at the eight case study areas fell slightly from 14.6 per cent in 2003-04 to 14.3 per cent in 2007-08. This proportion remained above the average for England as a whole, for which it stayed at around 12 per cent. The stability of both proportions means, however, that there was no evidence of a difference between developments in the case study areas and those across England sites as a whole. In any event, Sanctuary Schemes have been widely implemented, so even if the proportion had fallen relatively at project sites, this would not by itself have provided evidence as to the effectiveness of the programme. There remained substantial variation across study sites, however, in the proportion of homelessness acceptances accounted for by partner violence, the proportion ranging from 6 per cent at Site 7 to 37 per cent at Site 4.

For purposes of making comparisons across sites it is helpful also to express acceptances in terms of rates per thousand households, rather than in terms of absolute numbers. The data from Table A3.2 are the source for the data in this format displayed in Fig. A3.1

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<sup>42</sup> Data for 2007-08 from Table 622 at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/homelessstatistics/livetables>.

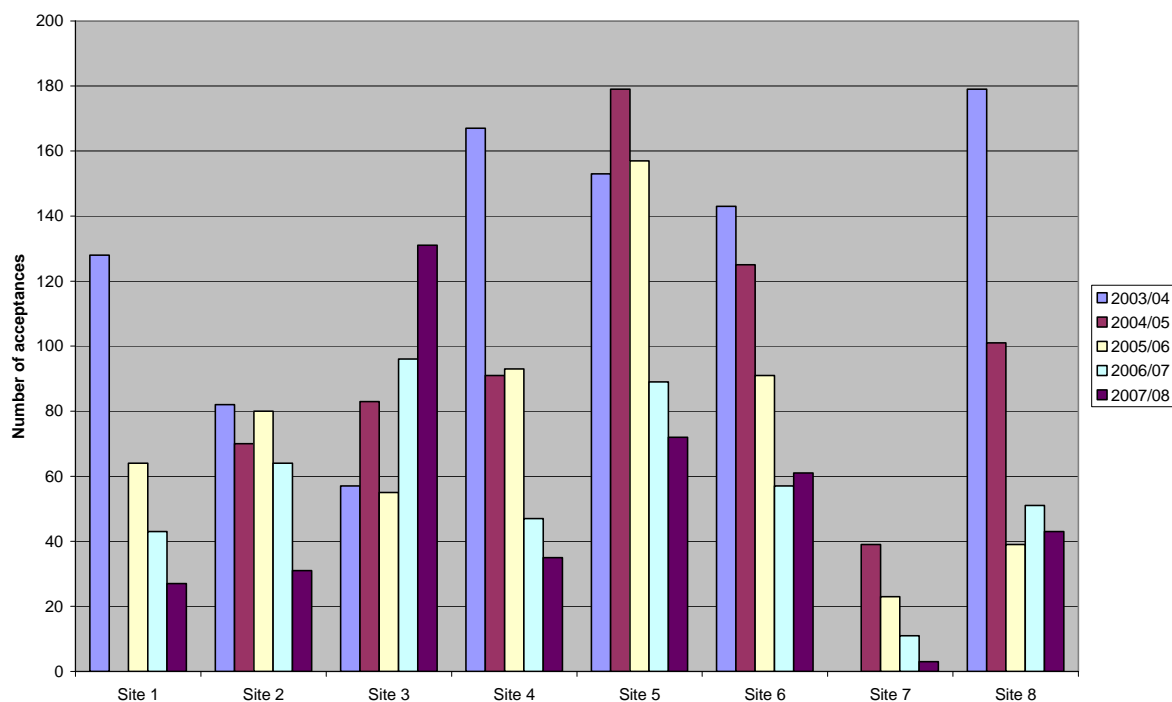
For years prior to that, comparable data at local authority level were provided in an answer to a Parliamentary Question <http://www.parliament.uk/deposits/depositedpapers/2008/DEP2008-2739.xls>

**Table A3.2: Evolution (2003-04 to 2007-08) of Homelessness Acceptances in Case Study Areas**

	FY2003/04		FY2004/05		FY2005/06		FY2006/07		FY2007/08	
	Violence-related	Total (all causes)	Violence-related	Total (all causes)	Violence-related	Total (all causes)	Violence-related	Total (all causes)	Violence-related	Total (all causes)
Site 1	128	502	n.a.	526	64	347	43	171	27	115
Site 2	82	1,246	70	1,157	80	970	64	610	31	373
Site 3	57	814	83	996	55	640	96	630	131	959
Site 4	167	462	91	454	93	277	47	134	35	95
Site 5	153	1,648	179	1,755	157	1,184	89	820	72	823
Site 6	143	820	125	774	91	583	57	314	61	283
Site 7	-	-	39	236	23	199	11	127	3	50
Site 8	179	722	101	575	39	162	51	140	43	122
Total project sites	909	6,214	688	5,947	602	4362	458	2,946	403	2,820
<b>ENGLAND</b>	16,295	126,263	14,103	111,003	10,257	81,408	9,018	69,103	7,263	58,759
Project sites as % England	5.58%	4.92%	4.88%	5.36%	5.87%	5.36%	5.08%	4.26%	5.55%	4.80%

Source: P1E data from CLG: <http://www.parliament.uk/deposits/depositedpapers/2008/DEP2008-2739.xls>

**Figure A3.1: Homelessness Acceptances on Grounds of Domestic Violence**



A number of observations are made on the homelessness findings:

1. From Table A3.2 it can be seen that the project sites collectively account for about 4.8 per cent of homelessness acceptances and about 5.6 per cent of the acceptances where violent breakdown of relationship (with partner) is the reason for loss of last settled home nationally. These proportions fluctuate from year to year however so there is not firm evidence that violence is playing a less prominent role in the case study areas.
2. Between the years 2006-07 and 2007-08 the number of violence-related homelessness acceptances on the grounds of domestic violence fell in all the case study areas except Site 3, where they increased from 96 to 131. Since Site 3 had, in 2006-07 and in 2007-08, the largest number of violence-related acceptances amongst the case study areas. This unexplained reverse had the effect of offsetting many of the gains experienced at other sites<sup>43</sup>.
3. Table A3.2 also shows that at Site 7 the reduction in domestic violence related acceptances was very marked. From 39 in 2004-05 (17 per cent of the total acceptances in the area) they fell to just 3 in 2007-08 (6 per cent of the total for the area).

<sup>43</sup> We note that Sanctuary measures were in some cases installed in households where the domestic violence at issue may not have met the definition used for purposes of the CLG homelessness data.

## OFFENCES OF VIOLENCE

It is, ultimately, a reduction in the number of offences of violence committed within households that can ease pressure on applications for homelessness on grounds of partner violence. Since it is known (from the British Crime Survey and other sources, for example, Walby, 2004) that domestic incidents contribute significantly to the total volume of violent crime it might be expected that rates of violent crime would be falling in areas where Sanctuary Schemes were implemented.

However, Violence against the Person (VAP) offence rates in an area would not provide a good basis for measuring the impact of the Sanctuary programme. Firstly, VAP offence rates do not provide a breakdown enabling those offences of violence with a domestic cause to be identified. Only some fraction (perhaps 20 per cent) of all VAP offences that are reported to the police will be domestic violence-related: the remainder result from other sorts of violent incidents. Furthermore, only a low proportion of domestic violence incidents are reported to the police. The proportion is known to vary and it may increase when survivors become more confident that reporting is safe and will not leave them vulnerable to further abuse. So changes in the VAP offence rates within an area may be attributable to many influences other than changes in domestic violence policy and provision. A fall in violent offences following the introduction of Sanctuary Scheme services may be suggestive of a positive outcome, but it would not be definitive evidence of effectiveness. Arguably the service user might be more likely to report incidents after having Sanctuary measures installed if support services and structures are in place. However, as noted in the main body of the report, it was not always the case that Sanctuary Scheme service users reported repeat incidents of domestic violence after they had had Sanctuary measures installed.

A more appropriate source is data collected by the police on incidents of domestic violence to which they are called. Closer co-operation between agencies at local level, as a result of explicit agreement and closer partnership working, has resulted in greater awareness of the potential benefits from better recording and sharing of data on domestic violence. Domestic violence calls account for a significant amount of police time, with the result that monitoring and preventive actions have become increasingly important<sup>44</sup> and VAP offences with a link to domestic abuse are flagged as such in police data. This enables many police forces to be able to produce VAP offence statistics that distinguish between domestic violence and non-domestic violence offences. The police in each project area were asked to supply such a breakdown. The results, documented in Table A3.3, are potentially valuable for analysing the impact of policy such as the provision of Sanctuary Schemes.

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<sup>44</sup> For a summary of police recording practice guidelines see:  
[http://www.acpo.police.uk/asp/policies/Data/Domestic\\_Abuse\\_2008.pdf](http://www.acpo.police.uk/asp/policies/Data/Domestic_Abuse_2008.pdf)



**Table A3.3: Violence against the Person and Domestic Violence Related (DV) Offences, 2004-05 to 2008-09**

Evolution of violence against the Person offences with domestic link

	FY2004/05		FY 2005/06		FY 2006/07		FY2007/08		FY2008/09	
	DV-related violence offences	Total VAP (all causes)	DV-related violence offences	Total VAP (all causes)	DV-related violence offences	Total VAP (all causes)	DV-related violence offences	Total VAP (all causes)	DV-related violence offences	Total VAP (all causes)
Site 1	739	4,532	847	5,308	638	3,933	958	3,718		2,950
Site 2	1,989	7,847	2,063	7,698	2,127	7,329	2,165	7,135	2,007	6,749
Site 3		10,182		9,405		9,692		8,485	1,233	7,372
Site 4		3,653		4,560		5,119	1,227	4,721		4,230
Site 5		9,067		9,516		9,865		9,150		8,599
Site 6		2,974		3,480		3,149		3,399	1,732*	3,152
Site 7		3,318		3,111		2,989		2,920		2,752
Site 8	661	4,599	787	5,714	843	4,765	704	4,004	683	3,492
Total at project sites	3,389	46,172	3,697	48,792	3,608	46,841	5,054	43,532	2,690	39,667
<b>ENGLAND</b>										841,082
DV as a proportion of all VAP: project sites where comparable data available only							25.8%		22.3%	

Source: Home Office recorded crime data, Neighbourhood Statistics data on Notifiable Offences Recorded by the police plus data on domestic violence from police force at project sites

\* This refers only to the last three quarters of 2008-09

For purposes of illustration the results from the two sites for which time series data were available, namely sites 2 and 8, are discussed. The Scheme at both these sites began in 2005, in December and May respectively. From data on the volume of recorded offences in the area, A3.3 indicates that over the past five years there has been a steady fall in the total number of Violence against the Person offences. The number of these offences for 2008-09 is 18 per cent below its level in 2004-05.

For the domestic violence component of these offences the trend increased for the first two years, with increases of 7.6 per cent from 2004-05 to 2005-06 and 4.2 per cent from 2005-06 to 2006-07. However this increase was reversed when in 2007-08 it fell by 3.4 per cent as compared with 2006-07 and in 2008-09 when it fell by a further 6.2 per cent compared with 2007-08. The result was that by 2008-09 the number of violent offences with a domestic link was nearly back down to its 2004-05 level. Unfortunately it was not possible to collect data for a comparable set of local areas where Sanctuary Schemes had not been implemented. So, although the reduction in domestic violence offences in the case study areas in 2007-08 and 2008-09 is suggestive, it cannot be demonstrated that it represents a better outcome than could have been achieved without installation of Sanctuary Schemes.

Our conclusions from this analysis of secondary data on the number of offences of violence against the person (VAP) recorded in case study areas are as follows:

- in two of the eight case study areas there are police data which can support an analysis of how VAP offences, including those with a domestic link have evolved
- these data show the number of domestic incidents of recorded violence falling over the years 2007-08 and 2008-09, indicating at least the possibility that Sanctuary Schemes have contributed to a reduction in violent crime
- as more police forces develop the capacity to distinguish the domestic component of violent offending in their databases the scope for them to contribute to the multi-agency analysis of domestic violence increases<sup>45</sup>
- these developments open up increasing scope for using secondary data on domestic violence in analysis of the impact of Sanctuary Schemes

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<sup>45</sup> National Indicator 32 *Repeat Incidents of Domestic Violence* will be drawn from reported domestic violence incident data from the police and MARAC data.

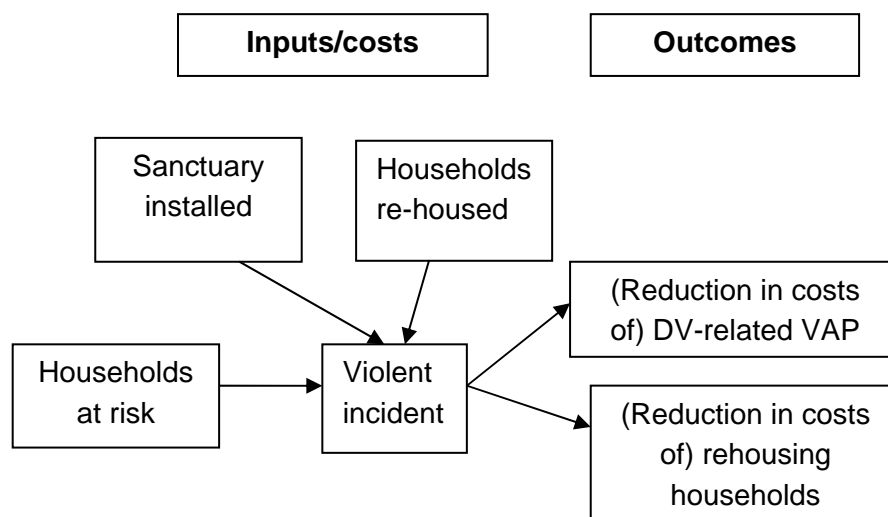
## Analysis of benefit-cost ratios

Having reviewed evidence from both primary and secondary sources as to the benefits of Sanctuary Schemes the cost-benefit picture for project sites is now reviewed. Some outline estimates of the benefit-cost ratio are derived but data limitations are such that these must be treated with great caution. They should be treated as illustrative rather than definitive.

The outcomes (or 'benefits') include the sum of the savings from the value of a) any reduction in the number of violence-related homelessness acceptances plus b) the value of any crime reduction impact. These benefits are compared with the costs being incurred both from installing Sanctuary measures at properties and, in some cases, operating and maintaining the infrastructure to support households with measures installed. Account is also taken of the costs of rehousing those accepted as homeless because of domestic violence.

Figure A3.2 below is based on the idea that the number of households where Sanctuary measures have been installed and the number of households which have been accepted as homeless because of domestic violence will both influence the outcomes to be expected in terms of both a reduction in violence-related costs and the number of households accepted as homeless. The mix of outcomes is mediated by both the number of households at risk and the policy mix used. We consider the two sources of benefit in turn.

**Figure A3.2: Summary of costs and benefits**



## **Reduction in violence-related homeless acceptances**

In the absence of a Sanctuary Scheme the only realistic option left to a household remaining under threat of continued violence may be to seek to be re-located to a property elsewhere. This can be costly for both the household itself and for the local authority. For the household there may be a transition period in temporary accommodation as well as the costs of adjusting to a new location. For the authority there will be costs associated with orchestrating a change in tenancy (including the costs of providing temporary accommodation), of having a property empty for some time and also costs of redecoration. A number of funding applications developed by Sanctuary Schemes present comparisons of the cost of a Sanctuary installation in a property with the costs of rehousing a household accepted as homeless.

Estimates of the benefits from reducing the number of homelessness acceptances varied across case study areas. In some areas, estimated costs included costs not only to the local housing authority, but also to health and education services. The average cost of a homelessness acceptance over the four areas where Sanctuary Schemes made estimates was £3,375. For purposes of the outline cost-benefit estimates below, we rounded this figure down to £3,000 for simplicity. We used the figure of £600, derived from one Sanctuary Scheme's practice, as an estimate of the cost to the *household* of having to leave their home.

## **Violence reduction benefits**

The standard methodology for estimating the benefits from crime reduction programmes is outlined in Dhiri and Brand (1999). It relies on estimating the number of offences of each type that have been prevented and valuing each at the economic and social costs of the respective offence types, as estimated at around the same time by Brand and Price (2000). The Home Office has since updated this work, the latest estimates being those in Dubourg and Hamed (2005).

The Dubourg approach entails making estimates of the costs of various categories of violence to the victims and also to the wider community<sup>46</sup>. The cost estimates, as indicated in Table A3.4 below, are broken down in Dubourg and Hamed (2005) into the costs experienced by victims themselves and those attributable to society more widely such as health care and the costs to the Criminal Justice System of dealing with perpetrators.

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<sup>46</sup> In order to make best use of these data it would be useful to be able to identify the types of injury involved in domestic abuse cases, since the cost consequences vary widely as between 'assaults', 'serious wounding' and so on. We have not, however, been able to obtain such a breakdown.

**Table A3.4: Home Office Estimates of the Costs of Violent Offences**

<b>Offence category</b>	<b>Average cost</b>
Homicide	£1,458,975
Serious wounding	£21,422
Other wounding	£8,056
Common assault	£1,440

Source: Dubourg and Hamed (2005), Table 2.1

A conservative approach would be to take the average cost of a common assault as the relevant figure, even though it is known that this will be an under-estimate and will ignore, for example, the fact that a proportion of offences each year will involve more costly types, including homicides.

### **Model parameters**

One further issue that remains is the time horizon over which the calculations are done. If a household stays safely for some years in a property where a Sanctuary has been installed, benefits may continue to be enjoyed for a number of years. Likewise if a family is re-housed, the benefits may continue for quite some time. In both cases there is an investment today that is designed to deliver benefits to the household not just in the immediate term but also into the future. The benefits of a Sanctuary will depend upon a number of factors, including maintenance and also levels of on-going risk. The benefit horizon may stretch to several years, in which case it would be desirable to take account of the length of the horizon over which improved outcomes are expected to extend. In some cases the precautions may become redundant because there is no longer any threat of violence. In these instances, the benefits will not last as long as the life of the equipment.

For a household, installation of Sanctuary measures may prevent not just one incident but multiple incidents spread over one or more years. In the absence of more detailed monitoring data from each Sanctuary Scheme it is not possible to make reliable estimates of the time profiles of these benefits at household level. For simplicity these calculations assume that the benefits of a Sanctuary will mostly be experienced within a single year. Any benefits in terms of lower-than-expected levels of domestic violence incidents are thus attributed to households receiving a Sanctuary installation during that same year. This is a comparatively cautious approach that, if anything, will result in an under-valuation of benefits. However, as will be shown, despite this caution we have estimated that Sanctuary Schemes can result in significant cost savings.

## Benefit-cost ratio

Table A3.5 summarises our estimate of the benefit-cost ratio for a typical Sanctuary Scheme. It is based on the operations of a site with characteristics based on those of the eight sites covered by the study. It computes the benefit-cost ratio by making estimates of the annual gross benefits from a typical Scheme in an area based, as outlined above, on the savings that derive from a reduction in the number of homelessness acceptances, plus the savings from violence reduction, and comparing these benefits with the costs of the Scheme.

**Table A3.5: Benefit-Cost ratio estimates**

	Parameter (various units)	Source
Number of households where Sanctuary measures installed	74	Average number of properties where a Sanctuary is installed per site per year (8 sites)
Number of households accepted as homelessness <sup>47</sup> because of DV (no Sanctuary Scheme)	52	Estimate. Equals the average number of violence-related homelessness acceptances per site per year.
Number of households accepted as homeless because of DV (with Sanctuary Scheme in operation)	42	Estimate. Assumes Sanctuary Scheme reduces number of homelessness acceptances due to domestic violence by 20%
Number of violent incidents (no Sanctuary Scheme )	1,263	Average per site per year (2007-08 data) from the 4 sites for which police data were available
Number of violent incidents ( Sanctuary Scheme operating)	1,226	Estimate: assumes each Sanctuary Scheme prevents 0.5 incidents per household with Sanctuary measures installed
Average cost to household of becoming homeless because of DV	£600	Average: 1 site
Average cost to LA of a homelessness acceptance due to domestic violence	£3,000	Approximate average: 4 sites
Average cost to LA of installing Sanctuary measures at a property	£636	Average spend per property where Sanctuary installed: 8 sites
Average economic and social cost of a DV incident	£1,440	Home Office Cost of Crime estimate: per incident (common assault only)
Expenditure on Sanctuary measures in area	£47,064	Number of properties where Sanctuary installed (74)*average cost of measures (£636)
Total cost of homelessness acceptances due to DV (to LA and household) – no Sanctuary Scheme	£187,200	Estimate. Assumes 52 households accepted as homeless at cost of £3,600 per household
Total cost of homelessness acceptances due to DV (to	£151,200	Estimate. Assumes 42 households

<sup>47</sup> Households accepted as homeless and in priority need where the reason for last settled home was a violent relationship breakdown with partner.

LA and household) – Sanctuary Scheme in operation		accepted as homeless at total (LA + household) cost of £3,600 per household
Homelessness acceptances prevented by use of Sanctuary Schemes	10	Estimate: based on assumption above
Number of DV incidents prevented by Sanctuary Schemes	37	Estimate: based on violent incident assumptions above
Value of DV reduction benefits of Sanctuary Schemes	£53,280	Estimate: 37 incidents at £1,440 per incident
Value of benefits from the reduction in homelessness due to domestic violence as a result of Sanctuary Schemes	£36,000	Estimate: based on assumption of 10 fewer homelessness acceptances
Gross benefit of Sanctuary Schemes	£89,280	Estimate: value of DV reduction benefits + value of rehousing cost reductions
Costs of Sanctuary Schemes to LA	£47,064	Average spend per Scheme p.a. across 8 sites
Net benefit of Sanctuary Schemes	£42,216	Estimated average gross benefit less average cost per Scheme
<b>Net benefit-cost ratio of Sanctuary Schemes</b>	<b>0.897</b>	<b>Estimate: Estimated net benefit/cost</b>

The benefits from a reduction in homelessness result from a hypothesized reduction in the number of households accepted as homeless in an area as a consequence of Sanctuary measures being installed in an average of 74 properties per year. The assumption made is that these installations result in a reduction of 20 per cent in the number of households (i.e. 10 of the observed average of 52 per area) who are accepted as homeless in the area each year on the grounds of violent relationship breakdown with a partner. This saving is estimated as the product of the (10) households for whom homelessness was prevented and the cost per household of becoming homeless (£3,000 on average to the local authority plus £600 to the household itself). On the cautious assumption made, this represents a saving of £36,000.

The assumption made in some site-led evaluations of a Sanctuary Scheme is that this reduction might be expected to be nearly 100 per cent, and not just 20 per cent. This seems much too optimistic an assumption. Indeed in some cases it would be unachievable because the number of properties where a Sanctuary is installed exceeds the number of households making applications for homelessness on the grounds of violent relationship breakdown. The assumption that the proportion is 20 per cent is somewhat arbitrary and is claimed to be no more than illustrative. If it were put higher, at say 50 per cent, then the gross and net benefits would increase and the net benefit ratio would rise to more than 2. At that point the savings in housing relocation costs themselves would be sufficient to justify the spending on a Sanctuary Scheme. The point being made here is that even with quite low, more realistic estimates of savings in rehousing costs the Sanctuary Scheme is still offering net positive returns because of its positive impact in reducing the economic and social cost of violent offending.

The violence-reduction arises because it is assumed that a smaller proportion of the households with Sanctuary measures installed will be injured in renewed episodes of violence. The assumption made is that there is an average of 0.5 common assaults prevented per set of Sanctuary measures installed. Evidence from the sites about the proportion of Sanctuary properties where violence recurred was very sparse. None of the sites had been able to establish a comparison between the proportion of Sanctuary households experiencing a recurrence of violence and an estimate for households who had relocated. The one site that did refer to a recurrence of violence put the proportion of Sanctuary households experiencing a recurrence at a low level. But, as we observed above, it is difficult to assess how much lower this risk is than the risk which would have remained had the measures not been installed. On the assumption that 0.5 common assaults are prevented per Sanctuary installed and that the average benefit per assault prevented is £1,440, the violence reduction benefits from the installation of Sanctuary measures in 54 properties would be £53,280. We note also that we have used the cost of a common assault for valuing benefits, even though some attacks involve more serious types of violence<sup>48</sup>. Again, this represents a cautious assumption that, if anything, will underestimate project benefits<sup>49</sup>.

The gross benefits of the Sanctuary Scheme are given as the sum of the rehousing cost reduction benefits and the violence reduction benefits, namely a total of £36,000 + £53,280 = £89,280. Against these gross benefits have to be set the costs of the Sanctuary Scheme itself, namely £47,064, giving net benefits of £42,216. The 'return' on the original investment of £47,064 is thus £42,216 or 86 per cent.

This is a very high rate of return that passes very comfortably the normal Treasury Greenbook test of project returns. It differs from the estimates made by analysts at some of the pilot sites in two important respects. First, it makes less optimistic assumptions about the rehousing savings. Given that the number of properties where measures are installed is typically much higher than the number of violence-related homelessness acceptances we believe this greater caution is warranted. Secondly, it introduces the idea of savings (to households and the wider community) resulting from the lower incidence of violence following installation of Sanctuary measures. To omit this benefit item is surely to under-estimate the benefits of effective violence reduction measures. It is also worth noting that the model is based on a conservative estimate of the amount of domestic violence related offences prevented, and that there are also likely to be other savings that have not been

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<sup>48</sup> The costs of more serious offence types are much higher than for common assault, as was shown in Table A3.4.

<sup>49</sup> A further source of possible under-estimation of benefits is limiting attention to benefits during the first twelve months following Sanctuary installation. This omits benefits from violence reduction beyond that horizon. Benefits will continue as long as measures remain secure, and so may stretch into the longer term.



quantified by this study, such as a reduction in police time as a result of attending fewer domestic violence incidents (see above), and savings as a result of improvements to the quality of life of victims after Sanctuary measures have been installed.

The estimates made refer to an illustrative area. Although the parameters of the model were based on estimates drawn from the pilot sites, it is clear that the benefit-cost ratio represents an 'average' view of Sanctuary Schemes. It does not capture local variation and so may be masking important differences between sites.

As can be seen from the data in Table A3.1 at the start of the section, there is substantial variation across sites in spending per Sanctuary Scheme, which ranges from £100 per installation in Site 3 to £2,720 in Site 5. This reflects what the Sanctuary service actually includes; inputs range from simple target hardening work such as installing bolts or letter box seals, fencing and specially made Sanctuary doors, to the provision of much more elaborate equipment such as CCTV cameras, intercom and alarm systems; and then further, to a wider package of ancillary support. In some areas households receive different packages of measures depending on the risk assessment. A closer analysis of variation in spending within a site across household risk categories lies beyond the remit here.

Limitations in the cost information available make it difficult to distinguish whether Sanctuary Scheme services are being compared 'fairly' because some Sanctuary Scheme services may be more heavily supported by existing provision than others. It seems likely that some measures and interventions may offer a better return for the investment made, but the quality of data available from sites was not sufficient to support an application of the cost-benefit model to all sites independently.

## **Conclusions**

In the cost-benefit model adopted, the key empirical issue was how to estimate the benefits that Sanctuary Schemes can deliver. In practice estimating the extent of the reduction in the violence risk proved difficult. There seemed to be little monitoring of Schemes to establish the frequency of attacks following installation compared with the frequency prior to installation. The police have an interest in reducing the number of domestic incidents to which they are called, and their data systems have the capacity to track violent incidents with a domestic flag. But it proved very difficult to compile data locally at sites about the amount of domestic-related violence or its relation to households in properties with and without Sanctuary Schemes.

In addition, other data needed to produce a full assessment of the costs and benefits of Sanctuary Schemes were not available, including the proportion of households accepted as homeless because of domestic violence, and subsequently re-housed, experiencing a recurrence of domestic violence; the types of offences involved

where there was a recurrence of domestic violence; and, the proportion of Sanctuary Scheme service referrals assigned to different risk categories.

It was found that there is wide variation across sites in the average spending on Sanctuary Schemes, with some of the variation being due to target hardening work being more elaborate in some areas and some variation in spending on the provision of support to households.

However, despite the limitations of the data, the model used suggests that the returns from Sanctuary Schemes may be quite high. It was found that for an average outlay of around £47,064, Sanctuary Schemes generate benefits from a reduction in the costs of offences of domestic violence of about £53,280 plus a further £36,000 or so from the reduction in the number of homelessness acceptances. However, better monitoring data would be needed to confirm that this is a reliable characterisation.

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