

Dacorum BC Community Impact Assessment (CIA)

Policy / service / decision

Domestic Abuse Review and Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation

Description of what is being impact assessed

What are the aims of the service, proposal, and project? What outcomes do you want to achieve? What are the reasons for the proposal or change? Do you need to reference/consider any related projects?

Stakeholders; Who will be affected? Which protected characteristics is it most relevant to? Consider the public, service users, partners, staff, Members, etc

It is advisable to involve at least one colleague in the preparation of the assessment, dependent on likely level of impact

A review of Dacorum Borough Council's organisational domestic abuse response was initiated in response to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and a Domestic Abuse Project Group and project plan were put together. A Domestic Abuse Project Officer was appointed to oversee the project plan, and later, to lead Dacorum Borough Council to achieving accreditation from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA).

The aim of this review and accreditation process is to improve Dacorum Borough Council's organisational response to domestic abuse, in line with DAHA's model for a housing response 'which is nationally recognised as best practice, through the Domestic Abuse Act Statutory Guidance 2022, and is endorsed by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England & Wales, Nicole Jacobs' (DAHA, 2022).

This assessment considers the impact of the project and accreditation. The review and accreditation will affect the Dacorum community, including residents, tenants and members/councillors. It will also impact Dacorum Borough Council employees, because for the first time, a separate domestic abuse policy has been created for employees.

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service/decision might impact on protected groups?

(Include relevant national/local data, research, monitoring information, service user feedback, complaints, audits, consultations, CIAs from other projects or other local authorities, etc.). You should include such information in a proportionate manner to reflect the level of impact of the policy/service/decision.

The accreditation framework that steers the review direction is informed by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and the direction agreed by the current Domestic Abuse Commissioner. Additionally, the DAHA framework includes the priority area, 'Intersectional and anti-racist practice'. Achieving the standards in this section in particular is likely to positively impact those from protected groups. See attached framework for more detail.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? *If you have not consulted other people, please explain why? You should include such information in a proportionate manner to reflect the level of impact of the policy/service/decision.*

The action plan's progress and actions is regularly discussed at the project group meetings, which are attended by a broad selection of staff from across Dacorum Borough Council (including those from Housing and Community Safety) and Hertfordshire County Council (aligning with their Domestic Abuse Strategy). Diversity and Community Inclusion Lead Officer, Cybele Fernandes, is also part of this group, and will continue to assist in maximising accessibility and inclusivity, especially for those from protected groups.

The policies created as part of this project were consulted on by members of the Domestic Abuse Project Group, Hertfordshire County Council and our local DAHA Regional Lead (South). Efforts were also made to gain a 'survivor voice': employees and volunteers with lived experience of domestic abuse (kindly facilitated by local support service, Cherished) also provided feedback on the policies.

Analysis of impact on protected groups (and others)

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires Dacorum BC to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service/decision will achieve these aims. Using the table below, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of these using the evidence that you have collated and your own understanding. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, **before** you have implemented any mitigation.

- The PCs of *Marriage and Civil Partnership* and *Pregnancy and Maternity* should be added if their inclusion is relevant for impact assessment.
- Use “insert below” menu layout option to insert extra rows where relevant (e.g. extra rows for different impairments within Disability).

Protected group	Summary of impact <i>What do you know? What do people tell you? Summary of data and feedback about service users and the wider community/public. Who uses / will use the service? Who doesn't / can't and why? Feedback/complaints?</i>	Negative impact / outcome	Neutral impact / outcome	Positive impact / outcome
Age	<p>*For all characteristics*</p> <p>Domestic abuse can affect victim/s differently depending on the intersection of their protected characteristics, and the DAHA ‘Intersectionality and Anti-Racist practice’ focuses specifically on recognising the barriers that those with protected characteristics may face in accessing support, and making concerted efforts to reduce them where possible.</p> <p>Whilst our interaction with tenants is likely to be limited to those 18+, our residents may be under 18. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises that children can be victims of domestic abuse in their own right when they ‘see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse’ and they are ‘related to the person/s being abused or the</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	<p>person/s acting abusively. In any interaction with those under 18, we will uphold our Safeguarding responsibilities.</p> <p>Age will be especially relevant when targeting communications and awareness raising for the tenants in our sheltered housing schemes.</p> <p>All age groups are likely to benefit from the changes made organisationally in response to this work.</p>			
<p>Disability (physical, intellectual, mental)</p> <p><i>Refer to CIA Guidance Notes and Mental Illness & Learning Disability Guide</i></p>	<p>The intersectional lens of this project’s aims prioritises promoting ‘by and for’ services, which is likely to positively impact those with disabilities.</p> <p>‘Disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse, but the rate of support referrals are much lower than those for able bodied victims. Disabled victims also typically experience abuse for a longer period of time before accessing support’ (Safe Lives, 2022).</p> <p>There are also often concerns about mental health linked to domestic abuse, not least because of the impact that it can have on a person.</p> <p>Increasing awareness of and strengthening our response to domestic abuse is likely to positively impact those with disabilities.</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>☒</p>
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<p>Domestic abuse can be experienced by anyone, and our work around the topic will not be specifically relevant to those who have undergone gender reassignment. With that being said, the intersectional lens of this project will consider how domestic abuse is experienced by those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>Increased awareness of and focus on how LGBTQ+ experiences can impact a person’s experience of domestic abuse will likely have</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>☒</p>

	a positive impact on those who have undergone gender reassignment.			
Race and ethnicity	The 'Intersectional and Anti-Racist' priority of the DAHA framework is likely to have an especially positive impact for this characteristic. A lot of the focus of this work is about reducing barriers to support for those experiencing domestic abuse, and recognising how race and ethnicity can impact ease of access. It also focuses on broadening the understanding of what domestic abuse is, and increased focus on 'honour based abuse' may be linked to other factors of ethic or cultural significance.	☐	☐	☒
Religion or belief	<p>This work is likely to have less of an impact related to religion or belief, but it is also unlikely to have a negative impact, so I have classified this as neutral.</p> <p>However, one aspect that I believe we need to be mindful of, is to avoid any encouraging assumption that 'honour based abuse' or certain types of domestic abuse are only enacted by to those of particular religious or cultural beliefs (or race or ethnicity), or that they are linked to said religion/s or beliefs. This can be managed by applying the intersectional lens that this work commands.</p>	☐	☒	☐
Sex	Women are currently more likely to be victims of domestic abuse: the majority (approximately 73%) of all domestic abuse related offences recorded by the Police between April 2020 and March 2021 were against female victims, compared to 26.9% of male victims (Office for National Statistics, 2021). Male perpetrated, female victim domestic abuse is in some instances related to misogynistic ideology, and increasing awareness of domestic abuse is therefore	☐	☐	☒


	<p>relevant to our efforts to address Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in this context, thus having a positive impact on addressing sex discrimination.</p> <p>It is also relevant to note that whilst this work acknowledges that women are currently more likely to be victims of domestic abuse than men (and often in an intimate partner relationship), it seeks to broaden the public perception of domestic abuse by recognising the DA Act definition of domestic abuse, and confirming (in Comms and awareness and through our guidance etc) that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse.</p>			
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>Increased awareness of and focus on how being LGBTQ+ can impact a person's experience of domestic abuse will likely have a positive impact on this group.</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>☒</p>
<p>Not protected characteristics but consider other factors, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, loneliness, rurality etc.</p>	<p>This work is likely to have a positive impact on many of these factors.</p> <p>Domestic abuse is often cited as a reason for homelessness, and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 gives automatic priority need to <u>'a person who is homeless as a result of that person being a victim of domestic abuse'</u>.</p> <p>Domestic abuse may also be present in relationships between carer and patient, especially where those concerned are also related.</p> <p>External stressors such as financial pressures (perhaps aggravated by low income or cost of living concerns) can increase the risk of domestic abuse. This may be linked to economic/financial abuse, which is recognised as a form of domestic abuse.</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>☒</p>

	<p>Rurality is also often a concern in relation to domestic abuse. Victims are often isolated from their support networks by those who abuse them, and this can be compounded by the physical isolation of living in a rural area.</p> <p>The work associated with this assessment will consider all of these factors as they relate to domestic abuse.</p>			
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Negative impacts / outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative impacts / outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken <i>(copy & paste the negative impact / outcome then detail action)</i>	Date	Person responsible	Action complete
	Select date		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date		<input type="checkbox"/>

	Select date		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date		<input type="checkbox"/>
If negative impacts / outcomes remain, please provide an explanation below.			
Completed by (all involved in CIA)	Jodie Bartlett, Domestic Abuse Project Officer		
Date	04/10/2022		
Signed off by (AD from different Directorate if being presented to CMT / Cabinet)	 Matt Rawdon – Assistant Director (People)		
Date	3 January 2023		
Entered onto CIA database - date			

To be reviewed by (officer name)	
Review date	