

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

SAFER - Domestic Abuse Sanctuary and Home Safety Service

Responsible Officer

Sam Wright - AH AIC

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqlA must be completed within the EqlA App)

Victoria Tovey - AH AIC

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

Commissioning/Procurement

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Strategic and Corporate Services

Responsible Service

Public Health Commissioning

Responsible Head of Service

Victoria Tovey - AH AIC

Responsible Director

Anjan Ghosh - AH Public Health

Aims and Objectives

This Equality Impact Assessment (EqlA) considers the recommissioning of the SAFER Scheme, a domestic abuse sanctuary and home safety service. The recommissioning activity will determine the future service model, including provider requirements, access routes, eligibility criteria and delivery approach.

The purpose of the recommissioning is to secure a consistent, equitable, countywide service that supports survivors of domestic abuse to remain safely in their own homes where appropriate, while improving access for underserved groups and meeting the Council's statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced new statutory duties for Local Authorities to meet the support needs of survivors of domestic abuse residing in 'safe accommodation'.

A sanctuary scheme meets the definition of 'safe accommodation' under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and involves the provision and installation of property security measures alongside the offer of support for all survivors living within the property.

The SAFER Scheme, first procured in 2023, was developed in response to these duties. The refreshed Kent

& Medway needs assessment, undertaken in 2023, highlighted the disparity of sanctuary provision across Kent and identified that underserved groups face barriers in accessing domestic abuse support within safe accommodation.

Underserved groups are survivors who may be less likely to access traditional domestic abuse safe accommodation or support, or who may face additional barriers to being identified, referred, assessed or supported safely. This may include the following cohorts:

- Owner occupiers, private renters or people with secure tenancies who cannot easily relocate, where sanctuary measures may be a practical safety option.
- Male survivors, who may face stigma, limited specialist provision or lower recognition as victims/survivors.
Disabled people, including people with physical, sensory, learning disabilities, neurodivergence or long-term health conditions, particularly where the perpetrator is also a carer or controls access to support.
- Older people, including those experiencing long-term hidden abuse, abuse by adult children or family members, or barriers linked to dependency, isolation or health needs.
- Trans and non-binary survivors, who may face barriers accessing gendered services or fear discrimination.
- LGBTQ+ survivors, including those experiencing abuse in same-sex relationships or family-based abuse linked to identity.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic survivors, including those facing racism, language barriers, cultural stigma, community pressure or lack of trust in statutory services.
- Survivors with no recourse to public funds, insecure immigration status or dependency on spousal visas, who may have limited options for refuge or alternative accommodation.
- People with mental health needs, including trauma-related needs, anxiety, depression, self-harm or suicidal thoughts.
- People with substance use needs, who may face barriers to accessing accommodation-based support.
- Pregnant women and people with infants, where remaining safely at home may prevent disruption to health, maternity care and support networks.
- People with larger families or families with older male children, who may struggle to access suitable refuge accommodation.

The SAFER scheme was developed to address these identified gaps and enable the council to meet its statutory obligations under the Act. It provides a countywide, preventative offer that enables survivors, and their children, to remain safely in their own homes while improving accessibility for underserved groups and reducing the risk of harm.

The scheme will;

- provide an equitable, countywide offer for survivors of domestic abuse,
- improve accessibility for underserved groups,
- enable people to remain in their own homes, within their local support networks,
- improve safety, health, and wellbeing of survivors,
- prevent/reduce the risk of harm or serious injury to survivors.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Not Applicable

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Direct consultation with DA victims about data collection and processing has not been undertaken. This is because it is not appropriate for KCC to consult with data subjects as this could inadvertently compromise their safety and confidentiality, putting them at additional risk.

The EqIA is informed by:

- Kent & Medway needs assessments
- Evidence from existing commissioned domestic abuse services
- Data collected through existing service provision and monitoring
- Engagement with partners, stakeholders and the market including specialist organisations

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

Yes

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

Staff/Volunteers

Residents/Communities/Citizens

Residents/communities/citizens

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

The SAFER Scheme will improve the councils offer to underserved groups, including older, male, transgender and disabled survivors, providing the option to access safety and support when experiencing domestic abuse from their own homes, in their own communities and retain existing support networks.

Enabling individuals to remain in their own homes, when it is safe and where it is their choice will improve the ability for survivors to retain jobs, social circles, friends, family networks. It will put the survivor in control of their journey and have a positive impact on health and well-being outcomes.

Children are now identified as victims in their own right under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The SAFER Scheme will support families to be able to remain together safely and reduce the need to with less need to flee to a new area.

Through the provision and installation of security measures to homes with the aim to delay/deny access to the property by the perpetrator will provide positive impacts to survivors of domestic abuse as the risk of harm or serious injury will be reduced.

Providing sanctuary will see an increase in the requirement of community staff such as IDVAs and outreach support workers, working to support those are experiencing domestic abuse therefore providing job opportunities within local communities.

The recommissioning process is expected to have positive impacts by:

- Improving consistency of provision across Kent
- Maintaining equitable access to sanctuary provision countywide
- Strengthening expectations on providers to deliver inclusive and accessible services
- Ensuring the service remains aligned with national guidance and best practice
- Improving clarity of service pathways for survivors and professionals

Failure to recommission or weakening the service offer could disproportionately affect underserved groups who are less able to access alternative safe accommodation.

The recommissioned service will include requirements for:

- Collection and reporting of equality and access data
- Monitoring uptake across protected and underserved groups
- Identifying and addressing gaps in access
- Reporting to commissioners on actions taken to improve equity

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

No

Details of negative impacts for Age

Not Applicable

Mitigating Actions for Age

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Not Applicable

20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

No

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Disability

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Disability

Not Applicable

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

Are there negative impacts for Sex

No

Details of negative impacts for Sex

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable