

**Protocol between**  
**MCC Homelessness Services**  
**MCC Independent Domestic Violence Advice Service**  
**Manchester Womens Aid**  
**Independent Choices (Womens Domestic Abuse Helpline)**

**Schedule 1**

**The Services**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Protocol details arrangements between the above named services in relation to ensuring women escaping domestic abuse access a range of housing and advice services that enable them to secure a safe and sustainable housing solution.
- 1.2 It also specifies the pathway to ensure the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

**2. Purpose and Common Objectives**

- 2.1 This Protocol recognises that the partner services have common objectives in ensuring that:
- Women escaping domestic abuse are able to access a range of housing and advice services
  - Women receive consistent and comprehensive advice about these services from partner services
  - Women are able to make an informed choice about the services available to enable them to secure a safe and sustainable solution
  - These services and options include, but are not limited to:
    - Legal remedies, both Civil and Criminal
    - Sanctuary schemes
    - Womens refuges and other supported housing, including respite and temporary accommodation
    - Rehousing by existing landlord
    - Making a homeless application
    - Access to private and social rented sector housing
    - Face to face support
  - Women in need of refuge places are able to access them when they need to.
  - Services take account of the views of children and young people, together with their right and need to be safeguarded.
- 2.2 By working in the spirit of partnership, the services can better deliver the objectives through working together. Therefore, the parties agree to:

- Recognise each others' needs, constraints, limitations, capabilities, roles and responsibilities to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes;
- Develop openness and trust, a swift and informal approach to resolving any differences, with a focus on problem solving.

### **3. Scope**

- 3.1 This protocol will apply to women with children, or who are pregnant, who are resident in Manchester refuges having escaped domestic abuse and who are seeking a safe and sustainable housing solution.
- 3.2 At this time, it is not possible for the Independent Domestic Violence Advice (IDVA) service to work with women who do not have children or are not pregnant within the remit of this protocol. The Homelessness Advice and Assessment Service (HAAS) will provide advice to these women about their housing options.
- 3.3 Partners will consider how this protocol may be extended to include women with a Manchester connection who wish, and are able, to return safely to the city, who are resident in refuges outside the city.
- 3.4 In applying this protocol, Manchester City Council (MCC) will consider issues of local connection where it would be safe for a woman to return to another local authority with which she has a connection.
- 3.5 It is not the intention of this protocol to prevent women escaping domestic abuse from making a homeless application, but to provide a range of solutions from which the woman is able to choose the option that achieves the best outcome for her.
- 3.6 Advice on making a homeless application will form part of the range of options discussed with women and support with making an application will be provided where appropriate.
- 3.7 The safeguarding aspects of this protocol must be viewed within the wider context of other Manchester Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) and Manchester Safeguarding Adults Board (MSAB) protocols.

### **4. Review and continual improvement**

- 4.1 The parties agree that good management of this Protocol requires constant review supplemented by good working relationships.
- 4.2 Parties will meet every six months to maintain good relationships, review performance under this protocol and discuss performance standards and any other matters which both parties agree require discussion.
- 4.3 From the date on which this Protocol comes into effect the parties agree to keep under continual review the service for the purposes of:
  - (a) The operation of the Protocol and the manner in which services are provided.

(b) Agreeing any amendments, which are required for the development and improvement of the service delivery.

(c) Reviewing performance standards together with any other matters agreed between the parties.

4.4 Any amendments to this Protocol shall be made in writing by the persons detailed in Schedule 2.

4.5 An annual monitoring report will be submitted to the Domestic Abuse Management Group and MSCB/MSAB who will provide high level management and guidance to partners.

## 5. Service obligations

5.1 Each service has specific obligations within this protocol. This will ensure clear referral pathways for women.

<b>Homelessness Advice and Assessment Service Obligations</b>	
<b>HAAS will:</b>	<b>When:</b>
Ensure the customer is dealt with by an appropriately trained member of staff	At all stages
Provide an appointment with a same gender officer upon request and resources allowing	At all stages
Where a woman is resident in a refuge arrange an appointment for the customer and refuge worker to attend our offices	At point of contact
Make appropriate referrals to MCC Children's Service Department where concerns about safeguarding or eligibility are identified. In every case where there are children and domestic abuse is alleged establish if the case is already known to CSC, if a CAF has been done and inform the lead professional or if no lead professional the health visitor/school nurse of the presentation due to domestic violence.	On the day concerns are identified
Staff will use the CAADA DASH Risk indicator checklist to inform the risk assessment process. Where new risks are identified or there is a change in circumstances that increase the risk to high, staff will make a referral to MARAC.	As soon as the risk is identified
If the homelessness application is closed due to the return of the family to the alleged perpetrator inform CSC, the lead professional or the health visitor/school nurse  Where the applicant returns to an address outside MCC boundaries, staff will notify the Children's Services department of the relevant local authority.	On the day the information is received
Arrange an interview with an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor for women who have children or are pregnant (See IDVA obligations)	At point of contact
Make appropriate referrals to MCC Adult services where there are concerns about a vulnerable adult as defined within local/National guidance	On the day concerns are identified
Provide information on a range of housing options including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making a statutory homelessness application</li> <li>• Accessing supported housing, including refuges and respite accommodation</li> </ul>	At appointment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal remedies</li> <li>• Advice on reporting to GMP</li> <li>• Sanctuary schemes</li> <li>• Rehousing in the social and private rented sector</li> <li>• Refer to FST/Husing Support services</li> </ul>	
Confirm the outcome of the meeting in writing and, with the customer's consent, where the woman in a refuge, confirm the outcome with the refuge.	At conclusion of appointment
Where the woman chooses to make a statutory homelessness application, or where prevention is not possible or appropriate, HAAS will process the application	At appointment
Assess all applications from survivors who have no recourse to public funds and refer to appropriate support services.	At appointment
Flag MARAC cases on casefiles/database	As soon as identified

### MCC Homelessness Temporary Accommodation/Support Services

Temporary Accommodation/Support services	When:
<p>Provide information on a range of housing options including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status of the statutory homelessness application</li> <li>• Accessing move on accommodation, including supported housing, refuges and respite accommodation</li> <li>• Legal remedies</li> <li>• Sanctuary schemes</li> <li>• Rehousing in the social and private rented sector</li> </ul>	At point of referral & during early stages of engagement
Staff will use the CAADA DASH Risk indicator checklist to inform the risk assessment process. Where new risks are identified or there is a change in circumstances that increase the risk to high, staff will make a referral to MARAC.	As soon as the risk is identified
Make appropriate referrals to MCC Children's Service Department where concerns about safeguarding or eligibility are identified. In every case where there are children and domestic abuse is alleged establish if the case is already known to CSC, if a CAF has been done and inform the lead professional or if no lead professional the health visitor/school nurse of the presentation due to domestic violence.	At point of referral & during early stages of engagement
Address housing issues at early stage of engagement and feed these into Needs Assessment and Support Plan	Within 5 days of engagement at initial key work session
Make referral to Letwise for private sector housing	Within 2 weeks of engagement
Where the service user indicates that they will be returning home to the perpetrator or there are concerns about ongoing child contact TA/Support staff will inform CSC, the lead professional or the health visitor/school nurse.	On the day the information is received
In cases where the referral is from outside Manchester TA/support staff will inform the appropriate Children's services agency in the local authority the woman is fleeing from.	
Flag MARAC cases on casefiles/database	As soon as identified

## Independent Domestic Violence Advice Service Obligations

IDVA will:	When:
<p>Provide housing options advice and support to families presenting due to domestic abuse. This will include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency and long term safety planning</li> <li>• Access to Oak Lodge</li> <li>• Advice on options available through the Civil Court</li> <li>• Advice on options available through the Criminal Justice System</li> <li>• Access to the Sanctuary scheme</li> <li>• Accessing temporary accommodation whilst accessing legal and/or safety remedies to enable a return home</li> <li>• Access to temporary or refuge accommodation</li> <li>• Advice about rehousing through existing landlord</li> <li>• Access to the private rented sector via Letwise</li> <li>• Advice on making a homeless application</li> <li>• Advice on MWA support</li> </ul>	At appointment
Provide an appointment with a same gender officer upon request and resources allowing	Within 24 hours
Provide advice and support to survivors of domestic abuse who are at high risk of repeat victimisation and homelessness	At appointment
Provide an information sheet on the advice given where it is safe to do so when refuge accommodation is used as part of a prevention measure or to give the client time to review their options	At appointment
Where the survivor does not reach threshold for ongoing support from the IDVA service provide information on MWA outreach service	At appointment
Complete CAADA DASH risk indicator checklist and refer to MARAC and/or MCC Children's Services or Adult Services where it felt this is appropriate In every case where there are children and domestic abuse is alleged establish if the case is already known to CSC, if a CAF has been done and inform the lead professional or if no lead professional the health visitor/school nurse of the presentation due to domestic violence.	At point of referral & during early stages of engagement
Assess all referrals from women who have no recourse to public funds and take appropriate action	At appointment
Where the client does not accept any of the options available and indicates that they will be returning home to the perpetrator or there are concerns about child contact IDVA will inform CSC, the lead professional or the health visitor/school nurse	As soon as identified
Flag MARAC cases on casefiles/database	As soon as identified

## Womens Domestic Abuse Helpline Obligations

WDAH will:	When:
<p>Inform women of options that may be available to them, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice on options available through the Civil Court</li> <li>• Advice on options available through the Criminal Justice</li> <li>• Advice on the Sanctuary scheme</li> <li>• Advice on making a homeless application</li> <li>• Referral to a refuge</li> <li>• Rehousing by existing landlord</li> <li>• Accessing temporary accommodation whilst accessing legal and/or safety remedies</li> <li>• Accessing temporary accommodation with a view to accessing safe social or private sector housing</li> <li>• Face to face support options, including MWA and IDVA</li> </ul>	At point of telephone contact
Signpost women to relevant agencies	At point of telephone contact
<p>Make appropriate referrals to MCC Children’s Service Department where concerns about safeguarding or eligibility are identified and the information is known. In every case where there are children and domestic abuse is alleged establish if the case is already known to CSC, if a CAF has been done and inform the lead professional or if no lead professional the health visitor/school nurse of the presentation due to domestic violence.</p>	WDAH can only do this where the relevant information has been given by the caller, as calls cannot be traced.

## Manchester Womens Aid Obligations

MWA Services will:	When:
<p>Advise service users about housing and safety options so that they make an informed choice, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency and long term safety planning</li> <li>• Advice on the Sanctuary scheme</li> <li>• Advice about Target hardening</li> <li>• Advice about IDVA support</li> <li>• Advice about other supported housing</li> <li>• Advice about private sector housing</li> <li>• Advice about accessing temporary accommodation whilst legal remedies are put in place</li> <li>• Advice about rehousing through existing landlord</li> <li>• Advice about making a homeless application</li> </ul>	At point of referral & during early stages of engagement
<p>Complete CAADA DASH risk indicator checklist and refer to MARAC and/or MCC Children’s Services/ Adult Services where it felt this is appropriate In every case where there are children and domestic abuse is alleged establish if the case is already known to CSC, if a CAF has been done and inform the lead professional or if no lead professional the health visitor/school nurse of the presentation due to domestic violence.</p>	At point of referral & during early stages of engagement
Address housing issues at early stage of engagement and feed these into Needs Assessment and Support Plan	Within 5 days of engagement at initial key work session
Provide support to access housing appointment	Within 2 weeks of engagement
Make referral to HAAS for preventative work or homeless	Within 2 weeks of

application	engagement
Make referral to Letwise for private sector housing	Within 2 weeks of engagement
Arrange solicitors appointment	Within 2 weeks of engagement
Assess all referrals from women who have no recourse to public funds and take appropriate action	At early stage of engagement
Where the service user does not accept any of the options available and indicates that they will be returning home to the perpetrator or there are concerns about child contact MWA will inform CSC, the lead professional or the health visitor/school nurse. In cases where the referral is from outside Manchester MWA will contact appropriate agencies in the area the woman is fleeing from.	On the day of notification
Flag MARAC cases on casefiles/database	As soon as identified

## 6. Standards of Service

All partner services are committed to working together in partnership to ensure that women escaping domestic abuse are enabled to secure safe and sustainable housing solutions.

Best practice in service delivery will be highlighted at review meetings and in training sessions. All partners commit to ensuring that their staff receive appropriate training and support to enable them to deliver an excellent service.

## Schedule 2

### Performance Management Framework

#### 1. Performance Measures and Targets

##### 1.1 Performance Measures and Targets for HAAS

Performance Measure	Performance Target
Women in refuges are offered an appointment within 3 working days	95%

##### 1.2 Performance Measures and Targets for IDVA

Performance Measure	Performance Target
All families referred to IDVA by HAAS will be seen on the day of presentation or on the next working day	95%

##### 1.3 Performance Measures and Targets for WDAH

Performance Measure	Performance Target
Women contacting the service are signposted to other appropriate services	100%

##### 1.4 Performance Measures and Targets for MWA

Performance Measure	Performance Target
Women are given options advice at point of referral	90%
Women have a move-on plan within 2 weeks of moving into the refuge	90%

##### 1.5 Performance Measures and Targets for all partner agencies

Performance Measure	Performance Target
Key identified staff are briefed and receive appropriate training on providing housing advice and safeguarding those escaping domestic abuse.	100%

#### 2. Contacts & Liaison

2.1 The lead officers and responsible managers are responsible for monitoring the effective working of this protocol to ensure a comprehensive, robust, efficient and effective service is both offered and delivered. The lead officers and responsible managers will be expected to establish and maintain close working relationships.

#### 3. Dispute resolution

3.1 Partners will endeavour to resolve any dispute arising from the operation of this protocol informally. The relevant responsible managers should deal with disputes in the first instance. If they cannot resolve the matter it should be referred to the relevant lead officer.

3.2 Complaints should be dealt with using each agency's complaints procedure.

3.3 Women may seek advice or advocacy from an independent agency such as Shelter or a Community Legal Advice Service or Family Law Solicitor.

**For Homelessness Services:**

Lead Officer	Gareth Clarke
Responsible Manager	David Davies

**For IDVA:**

Lead Officer	Jane Davies
Responsible Manager	Delia Edwards

**For Independent Choices (WDAH):**

Lead Officer	Sam Priestley
Responsible Manager	Karen Harrison

**For MWA:**

Lead Officer	Helen Perry
Responsible Manager	TBC