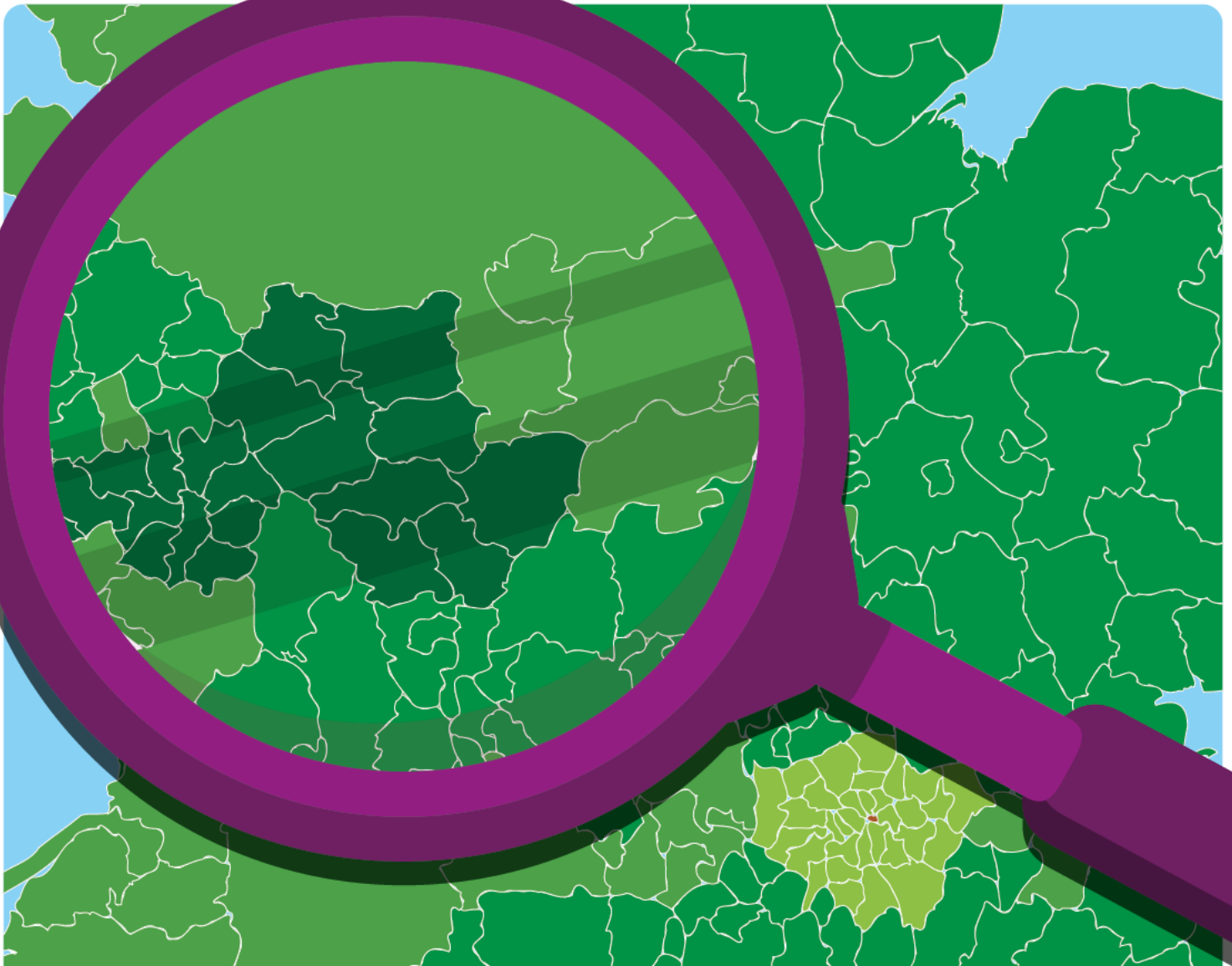


Sanctuary Schemes Survey

September – October 2025



Research report

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Summary

Background

Following the [independent evaluation](#) on the implementation of Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, commissioned by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), which highlighted the need for further research into Sanctuary Schemes, the Local Government Association (LGA), MHCLG and Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse (STADA) are working in partnership to understand how Sanctuary Schemes are currently being delivered. As part of this, in September 2025, the LGA sent an online survey to all 296 single-tier and district authorities in England, and to the 22 unitary authorities in Wales. Responses were not actively sought from county councils as the survey was initially targeted at directors of housing or equivalent, and housing responsibilities are usually held at a district level. However, two counties which implemented schemes in their areas on behalf of their districts provided responses. A total of 126 local authorities responded to the survey, including 39 per cent of single tier and district councils.

[Additional, in-depth research](#) is underway, commissioned by MHCLG, to understand how Sanctuary Schemes are working in practice. This includes case studies with eight areas and interviews with professionals and survivors, to conclude in Spring 2026, with publication to follow.

Key findings

- Almost all (90 per cent) of respondents reported that there was a Sanctuary Scheme operating in their council's area.
- Nearly half (48 per cent) indicated that their council operates a Sanctuary Scheme, whilst 42 per cent reported a scheme run by another organisation.
- Just over half (53 per cent) said their local provision offers the full Sanctuary Scheme, including security measures and ongoing domestic abuse support.

- Two-thirds (66 per cent) said that victim survivors at all risk levels were eligible to access the scheme.
- Three-quarters (75 per cent) of respondents reported that their Sanctuary Scheme was initiated before the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- A majority (59 per cent) of respondents reported that their Sanctuary Scheme is delivered as part of a [Whole Housing Approach](#) to domestic abuse.
- A large majority (86 per cent) of respondents considered the Sanctuary Scheme effective in enabling survivors to remain safely in their homes.
- Almost two-thirds (65 per cent) planned to maintain their Sanctuary Scheme as it is over the next 18 months, while 20 per cent planned to expand it.
- A minority (15 per cent) of respondents said they have sufficient resources to meet demand for the Sanctuary Scheme to a great extent, whilst 45 per cent said to a moderate extent.

Introduction

Following the [independent evaluation](#) on the implementation of Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, commissioned by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), which highlighted the need for further research into Sanctuary Schemes, the Local Government Association (LGA), MHCLG and Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse (STADA) are working in partnership to understand Sanctuary Schemes are currently being delivered. As part of this, in September 2025, the LGA sent an online survey to councils. The survey explored the type of support provided by Sanctuary Schemes, as well as access requirements, funding, and external organisations involved in the delivery of schemes. In addition, the survey explored how effective the schemes are, as well as plans for the scheme over the next 18 months.

Methodology

The online survey was distributed by the Local Government Association's Research and Information Team and was open between 3 September and 3 October 2025. The survey was distributed to directors of housing across all 296 single-tier and district authorities in England and the 22 unitary authorities in Wales, with respondents encouraged to forward it to a colleague who might possess greater expertise in the subject area.

Since the survey was targeted at directors of housing, a role specific to single-tier and district councils, other types of local authority which may also be involved in delivering Sanctuary Schemes, such as county councils, combined authorities and the Greater London Assembly (GLA), were not invited to respond. Two county councils that requested to participate were provided with access to the survey. This means that some Sanctuary Schemes may not be captured in the responses. This limitation was accepted to avoid double counting, which would have occurred if multiple authorities covering the same area were invited to respond.

Of the 315 local authorities asked to take part, 124 responded – a response rate of 39 per cent. This excluded the additional two county councils which requested to take part. This level of response means that these respondents should not necessarily be taken to be widely representative of the views of all local authorities. Rather, they are a snapshot of the views of this particular group of respondents.

Table 1 shows the response rate by council type. The table shows that more than half of English unitary authorities (51 per cent) and metropolitan districts (58 per cent) responded to the survey, whilst around a third of shire districts (36 per cent) and London boroughs (33 per cent) responded. The lowest level of response was from Wales, at 9 per cent. In all, 122 English single-tier and county councils (42 per cent of the total) responded to the survey, and 124 English councils responded including the two county council respondents.

Table 1: Response rate by type of council

Type of council	Number of questionnaires	Number of responses	Response rate
District	161	58	36%
London borough	33	11	33%
Metropolitan district	36	21	58%
English unitary	63	32	51%
Welsh unitary	22	2	9%
County	2	2	-

Note: the number of district councils reflects shared-service authorities who submitted one response on behalf of two authorities. A response rate has not been provided for county councils as they were not originally in scope for the survey.

Table 2 displays the response rate by region, and shows that the survey received representation from all English regions. This table excludes county councils as they were not originally invited to participate in the survey. The highest level of response

was received from Yorkshire and the Humber (67 per cent), followed by the North East (58 per cent) and the East of England (50 per cent). The lowest level of response among English authorities was received from the North West (31 per cent).

Table 2: Response rate by region

Region	Number of questionnaires	Number of responses	Response rate
Eastern	44	22	50%
East Midlands	35	13	37%
London	33	11	33%
North East	12	7	58%
North West	35	11	31%
South East	64	26	41%
South West	27	10	37%
West Midlands	28	12	43%
Yorkshire and Humber	15	10	67%
Wales	22	2	9%

Note: this table does not include the two county councils that responded, as they were not originally in scope for the survey.

The following should also be considered when interpreting the findings of this survey:

- Where tables and figures report the base, the description refers to the group of people who were asked the question. The number provided refers to the unweighted number of respondents who answered each question. Please note that bases can vary throughout the survey.
- Numbers and percentages are provided for any questions where the base was less than 50. To calculate the number of respondents who provided a

certain response for other questions, simply multiply the percentage provided by the base.

- Throughout the report, per centages may not appear to add up to exactly 100 per cent due to rounding.

Sanctuary Schemes Survey

This section contains the full results from the survey.

Operation, responsibility, and support

Respondents were asked whether there was a Sanctuary Scheme programme in their area, and if it was run by their council or by another organisation. The vast majority (90 per cent) indicated that there was a scheme in their area. Nearly half (48 per cent) indicated that the programme was run by their council, while a slightly smaller proportion (42 per cent) said it was run by another organisation. Nine per cent reported that there was not a Sanctuary Scheme, and a further 1 per cent said they did not know. Results for this question are shown in Table 3.

It is possible that the figure of 90 per cent currently operating a Sanctuary Scheme is an overestimate compared with the situation for all councils, as councils which do not have a Sanctuary Scheme operating locally would be less likely to be interested in and respond to the survey.

Table 3: Is there currently a Sanctuary Scheme operating in your council's area?

	Per cent
Yes – Run by my council or another organisation	90%
Yes – Run by my council	48%
Yes – Run by another organisation	42%
No	9%
Don't know	1%

Base: all respondents (121).

When asked about the type of support provided, just over half (53 per cent) said they offer the full Sanctuary Scheme, which includes both security measures and ongoing domestic abuse support. Around one in five (22 per cent) reported providing security measures only, without additional support. A further 22 per cent selected ‘other’, while 3 per cent said they did not know. Table 4 contains the results for this question.

Table 4: Which of the following best describes your local provision?

	Per cent
We provide the full Sanctuary Scheme (security measures and ongoing domestic abuse support)	53%
We provide security measures only (without ongoing domestic abuse support)	22%
Other, please specify	22%
Don't know	3%

Base: asked to respondents who have a Sanctuary Scheme operating in their council's area (109).

Those who answered ‘other’ had the opportunity to detail their local provision. A number of respondents explained that Sanctuary Schemes are not always formally defined in their area, but that target hardening is delivered through other coordinated arrangements. Several authorities emphasised that while security measures are available, safe rooms are not currently provided, though some are exploring this option.

Some councils reported that domestic abuse support is offered separately by commissioned providers, while others integrate both security and support services. A few respondents mentioned collaboration with external partners such as specialised private contractors, and examples of practical measures such as ring doorbells,

alarms, and door braces. Overall, responses reflected a varied approach, dependent on local structures, available funding, and existing partnership arrangements.

Service responsibility within the council

Table 5 presents the departments identified by respondents as being responsible for delivering the Sanctuary Scheme. Each respondent was able to select as many departments as were applicable. The majority of respondents (60 per cent) reported that their council’s housing department was responsible for delivery. Twenty-two per cent stated that responsibility lay with their council’s community safety department. A very small proportion (2 per cent) indicated that their council’s adult social care department was responsible, while none identified the children’s social care department. Sixteen per cent of respondents said that another department within their council was responsible for delivering the scheme.

Table 5: Who is responsible for delivering the Sanctuary Scheme (when run by the council)?

	Per cent
Your council’s housing department	60%
Your council’s community safety department	22%
Your council’s adult social care department	2%
Your council’s children’s social care department	0%
Another department at your council	16%

Base: asked to respondents who have a Sanctuary Scheme run by their council (58).

Service responsibility – run by external organisation

Table 6 shows the organisations identified as responsible for delivering the Sanctuary Scheme when it is run by another organisation. Nearly half of respondents (47 per cent) stated that a Specialist Domestic Abuse Service was responsible for delivery, while 43 per cent reported that another organisation was responsible.

Smaller proportions identified the police (6 per cent) and registered social landlords (4 per cent). No respondents said they did not know who was responsible.

Table 6: Who is responsible for delivering the Sanctuary Scheme (when run by an organisation other than the council)?

	Per cent
Specialist Domestic Abuse Service	47%
Police	6%
Registered social landlords	4%
Other, please specify	43%
Don't know	0%

Base: asked to respondents who have a Sanctuary Scheme run by another organisation (51).

Respondents who selected 'other, please specify' provided comments referencing the county council overseeing their district area (with three specific county councils, distinct from and in addition to the two county council respondents, being mentioned), partnerships with the police, Safer Partnerships, and community safety initiatives. One respondent also highlighted multi-agency collaboration, noting that all organisations take an active role in delivering their Sanctuary Scheme.

Support for delivery of the scheme

As shown in Table 7, respondents were asked who is involved in supporting the delivery of the Sanctuary Scheme. The most frequently ticked supporter was the council's housing department (60 per cent), followed by the police (45 per cent) and registered social landlords (38 per cent). Thirty-four per cent of respondents reported that the community safety department was involved, while smaller proportions cited private businesses (12 per cent), private landlords (12 per cent), the council's adult social care department (10 per cent) and the council's children's social care

department (10 per cent). Seventeen per cent mentioned another department in the council, and 29 per cent identified other organisations. Two per cent did not know, and 7 per cent reported that no one else was involved in supporting the scheme.

Table 7: Who else, if at all, supports the delivery of the Sanctuary Scheme?

	Per cent
Your council's housing department	60%
Police	45%
Registered social landlords	38%
Your council's community safety department	34%
Private businesses (e.g., security firms)	12%
Private landlords	12%
Your council's adult social care department	10%
Your council's children's social care department	10%
Another department at your council, please specify	17%
Other, please specify	29%
Don't know	2%
N/A – there is no one else involved in supporting the delivery of the Sanctuary Scheme	7%

Base: asked to respondents who have a Sanctuary Scheme operating in their council's area (107). Respondents could select more than one option.

Respondents who provided comments on behalf of other departments within their councils represented a range of services, including Building Services, Children and Family Services, City and Construction teams, Homelessness departments, and

Public Health. Other stakeholders included a range of third sector organisations and third party contractors.

Access, whole housing approach and initiation

Access to Sanctuary Schemes

Respondents were asked who can access a Sanctuary Scheme in their area. Two-thirds of respondents (66 per cent) reported that victim survivors at all risk levels were eligible to access the scheme. A smaller proportion (21 per cent) stated that access was limited to victim survivors assessed as being at high and medium risk of harm, whilst 17 per cent reported that only those at high risk of harm were able to access the scheme. Around two-thirds of respondents each reported that private rented sector tenants (66 per cent), social housing tenants (65 per cent), and owner-occupiers (65 per cent) were able to access the scheme. Eleven per cent mentioned other eligibility criteria, and 2 per cent said they did not know who could access the scheme. Table 8 displays these results.

Table 8: Who can access a Sanctuary Scheme in your area?

	Per cent
Victim survivors at all risk levels	66%
Private rented sector tenants	66%
Social housing tenants	65%
Owner-occupiers (living in their own home)	65%
Only victim survivors assessed as at high and medium risk of harm	21%
Only victim survivors assessed as at high risk of harm, e.g. those referred to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)	17%
Other, please specify	11%
Don't know	2%

Base: asked to respondents who have a Sanctuary Scheme operating in their council's area (109). Respondents could select more than one option.

The figures in Table 8 were adjusted because some respondents erroneously selected mutually exclusive options: some respondents reported both that victim survivors at all risk levels could access their Sanctuary Scheme and that only those at high and medium risk of harm, and/or only those at high risk of harm, could access it. In these cases, the more restrictive of the mutually exclusive options selected was assumed to be the case, and the less restrictive options also selected were removed. For example, if a respondent indicated both that victim survivors at all risk levels could access their Sanctuary Scheme, and that only those assessed as at a high risk of harm could access it, their indication that those at all risk levels could access the Sanctuary Scheme was omitted.

Among those who indicated another answer, when asked who can access Sanctuary Schemes in the area, respondents commonly mentioned victim-survivors, vulnerable adults, and people already engaged with commissioned support services.

Whole Housing Approach

As shown in Table 9, respondents were asked whether their Sanctuary Scheme was delivered as part of a [Whole Housing Approach \(WHA\)](#) to domestic abuse. The majority (59 per cent) reported that their scheme operated within a WHA framework, while just under a quarter (24 per cent) said it did not. Seventeen per cent of respondents indicated that they did not know whether their Sanctuary Scheme was delivered as part of a Whole Housing Approach.

Table 9: Is your Sanctuary Scheme delivered as part of a ‘Whole Housing Approach’ approach to domestic abuse?

	Per cent
Yes	59%
No	24%
Don't know	17%

Base: asked to respondents who provide security measures only or security measures and ongoing domestic abuse support (82).

Sanctuary Scheme initiation

Respondents were asked when their Sanctuary Scheme was initiated; this is shown in Table 10. The majority (75 per cent) reported that their scheme began before the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (pre-April 2021). Smaller proportions indicated that the scheme was initiated within a year of the Act – 2 per cent within the first six months (April to September 2021) and 4 per cent within a year (October 2021 to March 2022). Eleven per cent stated that their scheme was initiated between one and three years after the Act (April 2022 to March 2024). No respondents reported that their scheme began more than three years after the Act or that it had not yet been initiated. Eight per cent of respondents said they did not know when the scheme started.

Table 10: When was the Sanctuary Scheme initiated?

	Per cent
Before the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (pre-April 2021)	75%
Within 6 months of the Act (April to September 2021)	2%
Within a year of the Act (October 2021 to March 2022)	4%
1-3 years after the Act (April 2022 to March 2024)	11%
More than 3 years after the Act (April 2025 to present)	0%
The Sanctuary Scheme has not yet been initiated	0%
Don't know	8%

Base: asked to respondents who have a Sanctuary Scheme operating in their council's area (109).

Table 11 shows the measures that respondents reported as operating alongside their Sanctuary Scheme. Sixty-two per cent said that non-molestation or occupation orders were used in conjunction with the scheme, while 54 per cent mentioned other protective orders, including Domestic Abuse Protection Notices or Orders (DAPN/Os). Community protection notices were identified by 43 per cent of respondents, and 19 per cent cited other measures. Smaller proportions indicated that none of these measures operated alongside their Sanctuary Scheme (14 per cent) or that they did not know (11 per cent).

Table 11: Which if any, of the following operate alongside your Sanctuary Scheme?

	Per cent
Non molestation or occupation orders	62%
Other protective orders (including Domestic Abuse Protection Notices/Orders (DAPN/Os)	54%
Community protection notices	43%
Other, please specify	19%
None of the above	14%
Don't know	11%

Base: asked to respondents who have a Sanctuary Scheme operating in their council's area (107). Respondents could select more than one option.

Respondents who selected 'other' when asked which measures operate alongside their Sanctuary Scheme described a range of additional approaches. These included case-by-case assessments by commissioned domestic abuse services, referrals to specialist or therapeutic support, and coordination with partners such as the police, fire service, and legal teams. A few highlighted strong multi-agency working, while others noted limited awareness or engagement from some partner departments. As such, these comments related predominantly to wider support measures beyond protective orders.

Current security measures in place

Table 12 summarises the types of measures typically provided through the target hardening or physical security aspect of Sanctuary Schemes. Under fire risk protection, 79 per cent reported using fireproof letterboxes, whilst 58 per cent used fire retardant letterboxes. Fifty-five per cent used smoke alarms, whilst 25 per cent used hard-wired smoke alarms, and 28 per cent had fire safety equipment (for

example, fire blankets or extinguishers). For Sanctuary room security, 39 per cent mentioned London/Birmingham bars, whilst 35 per cent had solid core Sanctuary doors.

In the category of door and window security, 86 per cent reported improved, new, or extra door or window locks, whilst 15 per cent reported used reinforced double glazed windows, 24 per cent had laminated windows, 14 per cent had window grilles, and 66 per cent had window alarms.

Under alarms and monitoring, 64 per cent used alarms (panic, personal, or monitored), whilst 17 per cent had panic alarms which alerted neighbours, and a further 17 per cent had alarm systems that connected directly to the police or care control system. In addition, 71 per cent used video doorbells.

Considering lighting and visibility measures, 66 per cent of respondents used security lighting, whilst 57 per cent had lighting installed outside the property to improve visibility and deter threats.

Under perimeter security measures, 52 per cent had padlocking gates, whilst 51 per cent had gate improvements, and 39 per cent had fencing. Thirty per cent had anti-climb topping for fences, walls, gates and flat roofs, and 28 per cent had cut back hedges or removed tree branches.

Finally, under other measures, 25 per cent of respondents mentioned property marking, and 31 per cent mentioned other security interventions.

Table 12: What types of measures are typically provided through the target hardening/ physical security aspect of your Sanctuary Scheme?

	Per cent
Fireproof letterboxes	79%
Fire retardant letter boxes	58%
Smoke detectors	55%
Fire safety equipment (fire blankets, extinguishers; domestic sprinkler systems)	28%
Hard wired smoke alarms	25%
London/Birmingham bars (metal door frame reinforcements to prevent forced entry)	39%
Solid core Sanctuary doors	35%
Improved/new/extra door/window locks	86%
Window alarms	66%
Laminated windows	24%
Reinforced double glazed windows	15%
Window grilles	14%
CCTV or video doorbells	71%
Alarms (panic, personal, or monitored)	64%
'Panic alarms' which alert neighbours	17%
Alarm/battery operated systems that connect directly to the police or care control system (also useful for gathering evidence about incidents)	17%

Intercom/video entry systems	14%
Security lighting	66%
Lighting (installed outside the property to improve visibility and deter potential threats)	57%
Padlocking gates	52%
Gate improvements	51%
Fencing	39%
Anti-climb topping for fences, walls, gates and flat roofs	30%
Cutting back hedges/removing branches	28%
Securing shared entrances (for example, fixing communal doors so that they close automatically)	19%
Property marking	25%
Other, please specify	31%

Base: asked to respondents who have a Sanctuary Scheme operating in their council's area (108). Respondents could select more than one option.

The respondents who provided comments for 'other' when asked about the types of security measures that are typically provided listed police and domestic abuse support services, and signposting to other professional services, including emotional and therapeutic support services. There were also many comments surrounding financial support advice and assistance. As such, these comments related predominantly to wider support measures beyond target hardening and physical security, which are dealt with in full in the following question. These wider support measures were only mentioned by respondents who, as shown in Table 4, reported that their scheme combined physical security and wider support measures.

Measures typically provided through ongoing domestic abuse support

Table 13 summarises the types of measures typically provided through the ongoing domestic abuse support aspect of Sanctuary Schemes. The most frequently reported measure was referral or signposting to other services (82 per cent), followed by advice on housing options and legal rights (77 per cent). Around two-thirds of respondents cited advocacy with housing providers or landlords (69 per cent), initial safety planning advice at the point of installation (68 per cent), ongoing safety planning and risk assessment (67 per cent), emotional support for the survivor (66 per cent), and support to access benefits, debt advice, or financial assistance (64 per cent). Fifty-nine per cent cited cultural or language specific support, whilst 56 per cent cited support with criminal or civil justice processes, and 53 per cent cited support for children and young people in the household. Forty-three per cent cited practical support to help with facilitation, whilst 34 per cent provided counselling or therapeutic support. Nineteen per cent cited other measures not listed, whilst 6 per cent reported being unsure.

Table 13: What types of measures are typically provided through the ongoing domestic abuse support aspect of your Sanctuary Scheme?

	Per cent
Referral or signposting to other services	82%
Advice on housing options and legal rights	77%
Advocacy with housing providers or landlords	69%
Initial safety planning advice only (at point of installation)	68%
Ongoing safety planning and risk assessment	67%
Emotional support for the survivor	66%
Support to access benefits, debt advice, or financial assistance	64%
Cultural or language-specific support	59%
Support with criminal or civil justice processes (e.g. attending court, obtaining protective orders)	56%
Support for children and young people in the household	53%
Practical support to help with facilitation (e.g., moving furniture or belongings)	43%
Counselling or therapeutic support	34%
Other, please specify	19%
Don't know	6%

Base: asked to respondents who provide security measures and ongoing domestic abuse support (88). Respondents could select more than one option.

When asked what other types of measures are typically provided through the ongoing domestic abuse support aspect of the Sanctuary Scheme, key themes

included access to a range of domestic abuse support services such as counselling, therapeutic support, financial assistance, and services for children and young people, provided on a case-by-case basis according to the specifics of the situation being addressed.

Reason for not having a Sanctuary Scheme

As shown in Table 14, the 9 per cent of respondents who reported not having a Sanctuary Scheme were asked why there is not one in their area. Eighteen per cent reported funding issues, lack of capacity, or that their council already funds community support services for victims. Nine per cent of respondents indicated lack of support among senior decision makers, that victims do not ask for support to remain in their home, that it is not a priority, or that they did not know. Fifty-five per cent of respondents indicated another option not listed.

Table 14: Why is there not a Sanctuary Scheme in your area?

	Number	Per cent
We fund community support services for victims	2	18%
Lack of funding (incl. lack of startup costs)	2	18%
Lack of capacity	2	18%
Lack of support among senior decision makers	1	9%
Victims do not ask for support to remain in their home	1	9%
Not a priority	1	9%
Safety concerns	0	0%
No suitable support services	0	0%
Other	6	55%
Don't know	1	9%

Base: asked to respondents who do not have a Sanctuary Scheme operating in their council's area (11). Respondents could select more than one option.

Of the six respondents who answered 'other', four mentioned that their authority is in the process of commissioning or piloting a new scheme, with dedicated budgets allocated and wider domestic abuse strategies. There were also a couple of comments surrounding changes in police processes or staffing, resulting in a pause in referrals.

Funding and resources

Respondents were asked how their Sanctuary Scheme is currently funded, with separate reporting for expenditure on security measures and expenditure on ongoing domestic abuse support.

For security measures, funding most commonly came from local authority core funding (50 per cent, followed by domestic abuse duty funding (27 per cent), and the housing revenue account (26 per cent). Nineteen per cent reported that funding for security measures came from housing associations, whilst 11 per cent reported that it came from the police and crime commissioner, and a further 2 per cent reported that it came from the Home Office. Twenty per cent indicated another source of funding, whilst 8 per cent were unsure how security measures were funded.

For ongoing domestic abuse support, more than half of respondents who offer this (56 per cent) reported that it was funded by domestic abuse duty funding. This was followed by local authority core funding, indicated by 38 per cent of respondents, and the police and crime commissioner, reported by 23 per cent of respondents. Thirteen per cent indicated that this was funded by the housing revenue account, 8 per cent indicated the Home Office, and 4 per cent indicated housing associations. A further 8 per cent indicated another source of funding not listed, and 6 per cent were unsure how ongoing support was funded. The results for this can be seen in Table 15.

Table 15: How is your Sanctuary Scheme currently funded?

	Expenditure on security measures (per cent)	Expenditure on ongoing domestic abuse support within the Sanctuary Scheme (per cent)
Local authority core funding	50% (48)	38% (18)
Housing revenue account (HRA)	26% (25)	13% (6)
Domestic abuse duty funding	27% (26)	56% (27)
PCC (Police and Crime Commissioner)	11% (11)	23% (11)
Home Office	2% (2)	8% (4)
Housing associations	19% (18)	4% (2)
Other, please specify	20% (19)	8% (4)
Don't know	8% (8)	6% (3)

Base: respondents who fund security measures (96); respondents who fund ongoing domestic abuse support (48). Respondents could select more than one option, and respondents were only asked about ongoing support if their scheme offered this.

The most frequently mentioned additional source of funding was the homelessness prevention grant (HPG), mentioned by nine respondents, with others mentioned including the housing support grant, disabled facilities grant, and funding from police and crime commissioners (PCCs).

Sufficiency of resources to meet demand

As shown in Table 16, respondents were asked about the extent to which they have sufficient resources to meet demand for the Sanctuary Scheme in their area. In total, 60 per cent reported having sufficient resources to a great or moderate extent, including 15 per cent who said 'to a great extent' and 45 per cent who said 'to a moderate extent'. Just under a third of respondents (32 per cent) felt they had sufficient resources to a small extent, and a very small proportion (2 per cent) indicated they did not at all have sufficient resources to meet demand. Six per cent of respondents said they did not know whether their resources were sufficient.

Table 16: To what extent, if at all, do you have sufficient resources to meet demand for the Sanctuary Scheme in your area?

	Per cent
To a great extent	15%
To a moderate extent	45%
To a small extent	32%
Not at all	2%
Don't know	6%

Base: asked to respondents who have a Sanctuary Scheme operating in their council's area (109).

Effectiveness and support

Table 17 presents respondents' views on how effective the Sanctuary Scheme is at enabling survivors to remain safely in their homes. In total, 86 per cent said that their Sanctuary Scheme was effective, including 40 per cent who said it was very effective and 46 per cent who said it was fairly effective. Two per cent said their scheme was not very effective, and no respondents said that their scheme was not at all effective. Twelve per cent said that they did not know the effectiveness of their scheme.

Table 17: How effective is the Sanctuary Scheme at enabling survivors to remain safely in their homes?

	Per cent
Very or fairly effective	86%
Very effective	40%
Fairly effective	46%
Not very effective	2%
Not at all effective	0%
Don't know	12%

Base: asked to respondents who have a Sanctuary Scheme operating in their council's area (107).

Table 18 summarises the support or guidance respondents said would help their Sanctuary Scheme operate more effectively or assist in launching a scheme. The most frequently cited need was advice on funding options and sustainability (62 per cent), followed by best practice guidance (54 per cent) and template policies and procedures (45 per cent). Forty-two per cent of respondents mentioned monitoring and evaluation tools, online hub or knowledge sharing platform, and training for staff or teams, whilst 41 per cent mentioned guidance for roles and responsibilities of organisations leading the scheme, and 40 per cent mentioned case studies of successful schemes. Other support needs included regional peer support or networking opportunities (37 per cent), example referral forms or assessment tools (34 per cent), legal guidance (29 per cent), support with survivor engagement or co-production (23 per cent), or technical guidance (22 per cent). Eighteen per cent indicated other support needs, and a further 3 per cent were unsure.

Table 18: What support or guidance would help your Sanctuary Scheme operate more effectively, or help your local area launch a scheme if one is currently not in place?

	Per cent
Advice on funding options and sustainability	62%
Best practice guidance	54%
Template policies and procedures	45%
Monitoring and evaluation tools	42%
Online hub or knowledge sharing platform	42%
Training for staff or teams involved in the scheme	42%
Guidance for roles and responsibilities of organisations leading the scheme	41%
Case studies of successful schemes	40%
Guidance for roles and responsibilities of organisations working together to deliver the scheme	38%
Regional peer support or networking opportunities	37%
Example referral forms or assessment tools	34%
Legal guidance (e.g. on tenancy rights, protective orders, GDPR/Data protection)	29%
Support with survivor engagement or co-production	23%
Technical guidance on security installations	22%
Other, please specify	18%
Don't know	3%

Base: all respondents (119). Respondents could select more than one option.

The respondents who provided comments for what support or guidance would help their Sanctuary Scheme operate more effectively mentioned additional funding, ongoing running/maintenance as certain items and costs are expensive. There were also a couple of mentions of having more appropriate contacts within Housing Associations and national standards and qualification requirements for Sanctuary to assure quality assurance benchmarking.

Future plans and further feedback

Table 19 summarises respondents' plans for their Sanctuary Scheme over the next 18 months. The majority (65 per cent) intend to maintain the scheme as it is, while 20 per cent plan to expand it. No respondents indicated plans to decrease or close the scheme. Fifteen per cent of respondents said they did not know their plans.

Table 19: What are the plans for the Sanctuary Scheme in the next 18 months?

	Per cent
Expand it	20%
Maintain it as it is	65%
Decrease it	0%
Close it down	0%
Don't know	15%

Base: asked to respondents who have a Sanctuary Scheme operating in their council's area (109).

Table 20 highlights the methods respondents reported using to collect feedback from domestic abuse survivors to inform their Sanctuary Scheme. The most commonly reported method was indirect feedback from specialist domestic abuse services (49 per cent), followed by surveys (39 per cent). Smaller proportions reported in-person forums or meetings (14 per cent), lived experience panels (13 per cent), and online

forums (3 per cent). Sixteen per cent of respondents selected other methods, and a further 16 per cent said they used none of the above. Thirteen per cent of respondents said they did not know.

Table 20: What methods if any, of collecting feedback from domestic abuse survivors do you use to inform your Sanctuary Scheme?

	Per cent
Indirect feedback from specialist DA services	49%
Surveys	39%
In person forums/meetings	14%
Lived experience panels	13%
Online forums	3%
Other, please specify	16%
None of the above	16%
Don't know	13%

Base: asked to respondents who have a Sanctuary Scheme operating in their council's area (109). Respondents could select more than one option.

Among those who described another method of gathering feedback from domestic abuse survivors to inform their Sanctuary Scheme, there were numerous references to direct input from recipients. This included the use of feedback forms and other data collection methods, such as survivor panels and monthly reports from specialist services.

Final comments

At the end of the survey, respondents could provide additional comments on Sanctuary Schemes. The feedback highlights four main areas, including: funding and resourcing, with current budgets often insufficient to meet demand or expand the scheme; partnerships and multi-agency collaboration, emphasising the role of police, housing, and domestic abuse services while noting coordination gaps; scheme delivery and accessibility, including variable uptake, awareness, and postcode-based inconsistencies; and guidance and best practice, with a need for clearer standards, consistent training, and oversight.

Annex A: Questionnaire

LGA Sanctuary Schemes Survey

Q1: Is there currently a Sanctuary Scheme operating in your council's area? This may include schemes run by your council, or by another organisation.

- Yes – Run by my council
- Yes – Run by another organisation
- No
- Don't know

Asked to those with a Sanctuary Scheme:

Q2: The statutory definition of a Sanctuary Scheme includes both security measures (sometimes referred to as 'target hardening') and ongoing domestic abuse support.

Which of the following best describes your local provision?

- We provide security measures only (without ongoing domestic abuse support)
- We provide the full Sanctuary Scheme (security measures and ongoing domestic abuse support)
- Other, please specify
- Don't know

Asked to those with a Sanctuary Scheme run by their council:

Q3: Who is responsible for delivering the Sanctuary Scheme?

- Your council's housing department
- Your council's community safety department
- Your council's children's social care department

- Your council's adult social care department
- Another department at your council, please specify

Asked to those with a Sanctuary Scheme run by another organisation:

Q4: Who is responsible for delivering the Sanctuary Scheme?

- Police
- Registered social landlords
- Specialist Domestic Abuse Service
- Other, please specify
- Don't know

Asked to those with a Sanctuary Scheme:

Q5: Who else, if at all, supports the delivery of the Sanctuary Scheme? *Select all that apply*

- Your council's housing department
- Your council's community safety department
- Your council's children's social care department
- Your council's adult social care department
- Another department at your council, please specify
- Police
- Registered social landlords
- Private landlords
- Private businesses (e.g., security firms)
- Other, please specify
- Don't know

- N/A – there is no one else involved in supporting the delivery of the Sanctuary Scheme

Asked to those with a Sanctuary Scheme:

Q6: Who can access a Sanctuary Scheme in your area? *Select all that apply*

- Only victim survivors assessed as at high risk of harm, e.g. those referred to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)
- Only victim survivors assessed as at high and medium risk of harm
- Victim survivors at all risk levels
- Social housing tenants
- Private rented sector tenants
- Owner-occupiers (living in their own home)
- Other, please specify
- Don't know

Asked to those with a Sanctuary Scheme, and who provide security measures only (indicated at Q2):

Q7: Is your Sanctuary Scheme delivered as part of a 'Whole Housing Approach' (WHA) approach to domestic abuse?

The Whole Housing Approach is a framework that brings together all housing options and services to ensure survivors of domestic abuse can access safe, stable housing and support. It includes early intervention, coordinated partnerships across housing, domestic abuse services and other sectors, and a focus on long-term recovery and housing stability.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Asked to those with a Sanctuary Scheme:

Q8: When was the Sanctuary Scheme initiated?

The following time frames relate to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which received Royal Assent on April 29, 2021 and included provisions for Sanctuary Schemes, designed to enable domestic abuse victims to remain in their homes by enhancing security measures. Part 4 of the Act also placed a duty on local authorities to provide support within safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and their children.

- Before the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (pre-April 2021)
- Within 6 months of the Act (April to September 2021)
- Within a year of the Act (October 2021 to March 2022)
- 1-3 years after the Act (April 2022 to March 2024)
- More than 3 years after the Act (April 2025 to present)
- The Sanctuary Scheme has not yet been initiated
- Don't know

Asked to those with a Sanctuary Scheme:

Q9: Which if any, of the following operate alongside your Sanctuary Scheme?

- Protective orders (including Domestic Abuse Protection Notices/Orders (DAPN/Os))
- Non molestation or occupation orders
- Community protection notices
- Other (please specify)
- None of the above
- Don't know

Asked to those with a Sanctuary Scheme:

Q10: What types of measures are typically provided through the target hardening/ physical security aspect of your Sanctuary Scheme? *Select all that apply*

Fire Risk Protection

- Fireproof letterboxes
- Fire retardant letter boxes
- Smoke detectors
- Hard wired smoke alarms
- Fire safety equipment (fire blankets, extinguishers; domestic sprinkler systems)

Sanctuary Room Security

- Solid core Sanctuary doors
- London/Birmingham bars (metal door frame reinforcements to prevent forced entry)

Door and Window Security

- Improved/new/extra door/window locks
- Reinforced double glazed windows
- Laminated windows
- Window grilles
- Window alarms

Alarms and Monitoring

- Alarms (panic, personal, or monitored)
- 'Panic alarms' which alert neighbours

- Alarm/ battery operated systems that connect directly to the police or care control system (also useful for gathering evidence about incidents)
- CCTV or video doorbells
- Intercom/video entry systems

Lighting and Visibility

- Security lighting
- Lighting (installed outside the property to improve visibility and deter potential threats)

Perimeter Security

- Fencing
- Gate improvements
- Anti-climb topping for fences, walls, gates and flat roofs
- Cutting back hedges/removing branches
- Securing shared entrances (for example, fixing communal doors so that they close automatically)
- Padlocking gates

Other

- Property marking
- Other, please specify

Asked to those with a Sanctuary Scheme and who also provide ongoing domestic abuse support (indicate at Q2):

Q11: What types of measures are typically provided through the ongoing domestic abuse support aspect of your Sanctuary Scheme? *Select all that apply*

- Initial safety planning advice only (at point of installation)

- Ongoing safety planning and risk assessment
- Emotional support for the survivor
- Counselling or therapeutic support
- Support for children and young people in the household
- Advice on housing options and legal rights
- Support with criminal or civil justice processes (e.g. attending court, obtaining protective orders)
- Support to access benefits, debt advice, or financial assistance
- Advocacy with housing providers or landlords
- Practical support to help with facilitation (e.g., moving furniture or belongings)
- Cultural or language-specific support
- Referral or signposting to other services
- Other, please specify
- Don't know

Asked to those without a Sanctuary Scheme:

Q12: Why is there not a Sanctuary Scheme in your area? *Select all that apply*

- Safety concerns
- Lack of support among senior decision makers
- Victims do not ask for support to remain in their home
- We fund community support services for victims
- Lack of funding (incl. lack of startup costs)
- Lack of capacity
- No suitable support services

- Not a priority
- Other, please specify
- Don't know

Asked to those with a Sanctuary Scheme:

Q13: How is your Sanctuary Scheme currently funded? *Select all that apply*

Columns:

- Expenditure on security measures
- Expenditure on ongoing domestic abuse support within the Sanctuary Scheme

Rows:

- Local authority core funding
- Housing revenue account (HRA)
- Domestic abuse duty funding
- PCC (Police and Crime Commissioner)
- Home Office
- Housing associations
- Other, please specify
- Don't know

Asked to those with a Sanctuary Scheme:

Q14: To what extent, if at all, do you have sufficient resources to meet demand for the Sanctuary Scheme in your area?

- To a great extent
- To a moderate extent

- To a small extent
- Not at all
- Don't know

Asked to those with a Sanctuary Scheme:

Q15: How effective is the Sanctuary Scheme at enabling survivors to remain safely in their homes?

- Very effective
- Fairly effective
- Not very effective
- Not at all effective
- Don't know

Q16: What support or guidance would help your Sanctuary Scheme operate more effectively, or help your local area launch a scheme if one is currently not in place?

Select all that apply

- Best practice guidance
- Training for staff or teams involved in the scheme
- Case studies of successful schemes
- Guidance for roles and responsibilities of organisations leading the scheme
- Online hub or knowledge sharing platform
- Template policies and procedures
- Example referral forms or assessment tools
- Guidance for roles and responsibilities of organisations working together to deliver the scheme
- Advice on funding options and sustainability

- Technical guidance on security installations
- Monitoring and evaluation tools
- Legal guidance (e.g. on tenancy rights, protective orders, GDPR/Data protection)
- Support with survivor engagement or co-production
- Regional peer support or networking opportunities
- Other, please specify
- Don't know

Asked to those with a Sanctuary Scheme:

Q17: What are the plans for the Sanctuary Scheme in the next 18 months?

- Expand it
- Maintain it as it is
- Decrease it
- Close it down
- Don't know

Asked to those with a Sanctuary Scheme:

Q18: What methods if any, of collecting feedback from domestic abuse survivors do you use to inform your Sanctuary Scheme? *Select all that apply*

- Surveys
- Indirect feedback from specialist DA services
- Online forums
- In person forums/meetings
- Lived experience panels
- Other, please specify

- None of the above
- Don't know

Q19: MHCLG are running a series of case studies relating to Sanctuary Schemes involving interviews with council staff, police, commissioned and non-commissioned services and survivors. Would you be interested in taking part in a Sanctuary Schemes case study? If you select 'yes' your contact details will be passed on to MHCLG, who may contact you about a case study.

- Yes
- No

Q20: Do you have any other comments on the topics covered by this survey?

End of survey



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