

# Sanctuary Scheme Referral Procedure

## 1. Introduction

Dartford Borough Council's (DBC) Sanctuary Scheme is a victim centred initiative which aims to make it possible for victims of domestic abuse and/or harassment, to remain in their own homes, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice, and where the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation. This is done by providing additional security to the victim's property or perimeter.

The scheme is tenure neutral and is therefore available to:

- DBC tenants
- Housing association tenants
- Private rented sector tenants
- Owner-occupiers

DBC works in partnership with the police to implement the scheme and any organisation working with a person they deem suitable for sanctuary measures can make a referral to the scheme.

## 2. Objectives of the sanctuary scheme

- To prevent homelessness by providing additional security measures to victims of domestic abuse.
- To increase choice for people experiencing domestic abuse and/or harassment who are at threat of homelessness.
- To enable people to remain in their own homes and feel safe.
- To reduce repeat victimisation and the fear of attack.
- To enable people to keep in touch with many of the "protective" factors in their lives such as family, friends, social networks, GPs and schools.

## 3. Context

DBC's Domestic Abuse Housing Strategy 2008 believes that 'no one should live in a home where they fear domestic abuse. Victims of domestic abuse will be aware of services that can help; and will be supported as they choose to leave abusive relationships'.

People who experience domestic abuse are one of the groups of households who may be at particular risk to homelessness if they decide to break the cycle of abuse and leave an abusive relationship.

DBC's Housing Options and Private Sector service is responsible for allocating social housing in the borough and for providing housing advice and assistance to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The service is open to provide housing advice and assistance to anyone between 8:45am and 5:15pm Monday to Thursday, and 8:45am to 4:45pm on Friday. An appointment is usually made, but emergency cases are seen without an appointment. The out of hours service can be contacted on 0845 634 1212.

The overarching Strategic direction of DBC's Housing Options and Private Sector service is outlined in the Homelessness Strategy 2011-2014, which includes measures to:

1. Prevent homelessness within the borough, wherever possible.
2. Provide a range of accommodation for homeless households, making innovative use of solutions in the private sector alongside more traditional methods.
3. Ensure there is sufficient and appropriate support to meet the needs of various client groups, particularly those who are vulnerable.
4. Work with local organisations to provide a co-ordinated approach to tackling and preventing homelessness.
5. Keep up to date with homelessness trends, customer satisfaction, Government policy, legislation, and good practice in the area of homeless prevention.

The procedure for households likely to be eligible and in priority need for homelessness assistance is operated as a two stage process, with options and prevention considered first, but with safeguards in place where a person is eligible for and requires assistance under homelessness legislation.

The Sanctuary Scheme is one of a range of options available through DBC Housing Options and Private Sector service, to assist people who are experiencing domestic abuse and/or harassment and are at risk of homelessness. Other options for victims of domestic abuse include management transfer moves, use of temporary accommodation, refuge accommodation, assistance with finding private rented accommodation, and floating support. All of these options will be fully explored to determine the most suitable solution/s for the victim.

#### **4. Security measures available**

The following security measures are available under the Sanctuary Scheme:

- Fire proof letter box
- Double locking night latch
- Mortice lock
- Mortice bolt
- Door chain
- Mirror tile
- Window lock
- Door viewer
- London bar
- Birmingham bar
- PAS 24 door
- Security lighting

- Trellis toppings
- 2m fencing
- Defensive planting (Pyracantha, Gorse, Climbing roses, Hawthorn)

## **5. When the scheme is available**

Sanctuary referrals can be made between 8:45am to 5:15pm Monday to Thursday and 8:45am to 4:45pm on Friday. If the person requiring the Sanctuary Scheme contacts DBC through the out of hour's facility and it is unsafe for them to remain in their present accommodation, emergency temporary accommodation will be arranged.

## **6. Funding**

There is no cost to the victim for using the sanctuary scheme. For DBC tenants, the scheme is funded within existing budgets. For private sector tenants or owner-occupiers, the scheme is funded from Communities and Local Government Preventing Homelessness Grant. For housing association tenants, the Council will request the RSL resources the works, but will cover this cost if this is not possible.

## **7. Eligibility criteria**

If the person requiring extra security is not a DBC tenant, permission will have to be asked from the landlord for the works to go ahead.

The following criteria must be met before sanctuary measures are approved:

- The landlord agrees to the works.
- The victim must live in the Dartford borough.
- The victim must have the right to occupy the property as either a sole owner or tenant.
- The perpetrator must not be living in the accommodation.
- The victim must agree to the works.
- The victim must intend to remain in their present accommodation for the foreseeable future.
- It is considered safe for the victim to remain living in the property with the security measures.
- Without the work, the victim would likely to become homeless.

## **8. Referral procedure**

All referrals must be made to DBC's Housing Options and Private Sector service. A referral form should be emailed to [housingadvice@dartford.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvice@dartford.gov.uk) (see Appendix A). The form is generic and can be used by any referring agency, including advice and support agencies, social care and health.

To discuss any element of the referral, the Housing Options and Private Sector service can be contacted on 01322 343114.

## **9. Assessment and timescales**

Once a referral is made, DBC will ask the Police within 3 working days, to carry out an assessment in the form of an inspection at the victim's property to establish what additional security is required.

Once the inspection is complete, the Police will fax their recommendations to DBC, who will make arrangements for the works to be carried out within 24 hours of receiving the assessment back. The timescales for the completion of the works should be according to contractor timescales, however in some cases this may need to be treated as an emergency.

The details of each case are then logged onto DBC's Customer Service Module (CSM) database.

## **10. Temporary accommodation**

If it is unsafe for the victim to remain in their current accommodation during the process of carrying out the works, DBC will place the person into emergency temporary accommodation until it is safe for them to return.

## **11. Monitoring and Review**

The success of the scheme is monitored through customer satisfaction surveys, which will be sent out by DBC after each sanctuary is completed.

## **12. Further information**

For further information about the Sanctuary Scheme, please contact the Housing Options and Private Sector service on 01322 343114 or email [housingadvice@dartford.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvice@dartford.gov.uk).

To view DBC's Homelessness Strategy 2011 – 2014, visit: [www.dartford.gov.uk/housing/HousingStrategiesandPolicies.htm](http://www.dartford.gov.uk/housing/HousingStrategiesandPolicies.htm) or contact the Housing Policy Officer on 01322 343625.

A list of useful organisations is also attached at Appendix B.

## Sanctuary Scheme Referral Form

This form is to be used to make a referral to Dartford's sanctuary scheme. Please email this completed form to [housingadvice@dartford.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvice@dartford.gov.uk) or fax it to 01322 343619.

Person being referred					
<b>Name</b>					
<b>Address</b>					
<b>Telephone number</b>					
<b>Date of birth</b>					
<b>Property type</b>	Flat <input type="checkbox"/>	Maisonette <input type="checkbox"/>	House <input type="checkbox"/>	Bungalow <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/> .....
<b>Tenure</b>	Council tenant <input type="checkbox"/>	RSL tenant <input type="checkbox"/>	Private sector tenant <input type="checkbox"/>	Owner-occupier <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Landlord name</b>					
<b>Please give a brief a brief description of the victims circumstances and suitability for the scheme</b> (please refer to the eligibility criteria under section 7 of the procedure when completing this part)					

Referrer details	
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Position</b>	
<b>Organisation</b>	
<b>Telephone number</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	

## Useful contacts

<b>Age Concern</b> Advice and assistance on any matter affecting the elderly or disabled	Tel: 01322 226496 <a href="http://www.ageconcern.org">www.ageconcern.org</a>
<b>Broken Rainbow</b> Information and support for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender victims of domestic abuse	Tel: 07812 644914 <a href="http://www.broken-rainbow.org.uk">www.broken-rainbow.org.uk</a>
<b>Darent Valley Hospital</b>	Tel: 01322 428100
<b>Dartford Borough Council – Housing Options and Private Sector Service</b> Advice on housing options available to victims of domestic abuse	Tel: 01322 343114 Emergency out of hours 0845 634 1212
<b>Dartford Citizens Advice Bureau</b>	Tel: 01322 220448
<b>Domestic Violence Police Unit</b>	Tel: 01622 690690 Domestic Violence Officer 01474 565153
<b>Foreign and Commonwealth Office</b> Advice on forced marriages	Tel: 0207 0080135/0230
<b>24 hour National Violence Domestic Violence Helpline</b> A free phone number for women victims of domestic abuse. Text phone and Language Line available	Tel: 0808 2000247
<b>Kent Council on Addiction (KCA)</b> Providers of community drug and alcohol services in Kent	Tel: 01795 590635
<b>Kent Domestic Abuse Information Line</b> Provides local information of service for victims of domestic abuse. Open 24 hours 7 days a week. Provides call back translation service.	Tel: 0845 6036813
<b>Minor Injuries Unit (Gravesend)</b>	Tel: 01474 574217
<b>North Kent Women’s Aid</b>	Tel: 0800 917 9948 Email <a href="mailto:admin@nkwa.org.uk">admin@nkwa.org.uk</a>
<b>Respect Phone Line</b> Information and advice line for those who are abusive towards their partners. Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10am – 1pm and 2pm – 5pm	Tel: 0845 1228609 <a href="http://www.respect.uk.net/pages/respect_phoneline">www.respect.uk.net/pages/respect_phoneline</a>
<b>Rethink Sahayak</b> Free and confidential Asian Counselling Service	Tel: 01474 364837 Asian language speaking helpline 0808 8002073 Email: <a href="mailto:asiancounselling@rethink.org">asiancounselling@rethink.org</a>
<b>The Male Advice and Enquiry Line</b> A helpline offering information and advice for male victims of domestic abuse	Tel: 0845 0646800
<b>Victim Support (Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley)</b> Support and practical advice for anyone affected by crime	Tel: 01634 401733 <a href="http://www.victimsupport.org.uk">www.victimsupport.org.uk</a>