

DOMESTIC ABUSE HOUSING ALLIANCE (DAHA)

BUSINESS CASE





Why should your organisation invest in DAHA accreditation?

DAHA accreditation is designed for social housing associations, local authorities (with or without stock), and arm's length management organisations (ALMOs).

By investing in DAHA accreditation your organisation will work towards meeting your safeguarding and statutory duties, you will save lives, and you will save money. You will improve staff wellbeing and safety and enhance partnerships and collaboration, reducing the pressure on you and your staff to meet all the needs of your customers, service users, and tenants.

The Accreditation Framework works well for local authorities that do not have housing stock as well as those that do. At every touchpoint in a survivor's journey to seek housing support, they must receive an effective and safe response from those housing services. This includes when they may seek out their housing options from local authority housing teams. For local authorities with no stock but with these housing functions, embedding standards of good practice in response to domestic abuse will ensure that survivors do receive the right response every time and that the local authority will comply with their statutory duties too.



Under new legislation, social housing providers and local authorities have a statutory duty to evidence an effective response to domestic abuse

Through new legislation set out in the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill¹, social housing providers and local authorities will have a statutory duty to proactively evidence to the Social Housing Regulator, how they effectively respond to residents/tenants experiencing domestic abuse.

These new duties will build on statutory obligations set out in the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#), for tier-one local authorities to provide support within safe accommodation, to give priority need status to victims made homeless due to domestic abuse, and to maintain secure tenancy status for victims who must flee a secure social tenancy due to domestic abuse.

By investing in DAHA accreditation, you will be working towards a set of standards already recognised by the UK Government as best practice. DAHA is a nationally recognised charter mark, endorsed by the [Domestic Abuse Commissioner](#) and named as best practice within the [National Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) Strategy](#). It is also named within the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Guidance](#) as an effective means for local authorities to meet their new statutory duties.

¹ Social Housing White Paper: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-charter-for-social-housing-residents-social-housing-white-paper/the-charter-for-social-housing-residents-social-housing-white-paper>
Guidance on Regulatory Standards- Consumer Standards: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards>
Regulator of Social Housing-Consumer Standards Review: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rsh-publishes-review-of-its-2022-social-housing-consumer-regulation>



By investing in DAHA accreditation, you will save lives

“The culture of the organisation has changed thanks to the wonderful work of the DAHA accreditation team. We have improved 100% and this is down to the DAHA accreditation framework. This improvement has been recognised by customers, residents, partner agencies, and elected members of the council.” (DAHA Accredited Provider)

Social housing providers and local authorities who have housing responsibilities are best placed to identify and respond to domestic abuse early, before victims, including children, are placed at risk of further harm, homelessness, and homicide.

Domestic abuse impacts an estimated 2.3 million adults aged 16 to 74 ([CSEW](#)), many of whom are tenants and residents. It is the leading cause of homelessness amongst women², and the primary barrier to victims and survivors leaving an abuser³.

Domestic abuse is most likely to be perpetrated in the home, behind closed doors⁴. Tragically, home is where victims are most likely to be killed by their abuser⁵. Two women are killed a week by a partner, ex-partner, or family member⁶.

DAHA accreditation has been proven to improve responses to domestic abuse, save lives and prevent homelessness. DAHA accreditation has been independently evaluated by the University of York and proven to enable housing providers and local authorities to identify and respond to domestic abuse sooner, reduce the escalation of harm, and prevent homelessness.

² DLUHC. Statutory Homelessness April-June 2022 (Q2) England [Live tables on homelessness - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

³ Women's Aid. (2020) The Domestic Abuse Report 2020: The Hidden Housing Crisis. Bristol: Women's Aid.

⁴ Women's Aid. (2020) The Domestic Abuse Report 2020: The Hidden Housing Crisis. Bristol: Women's Aid.

⁵ ONS (2016) Compendium – Homicide (average taken over 10 years). Retrieved from

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2015/chapter2homicide>. Ingala Smith, K. and Women's Aid (2017) The Femicide Census Report 2016. Ret

⁶Office of National Statistics: Homicides in England and Wales Year Ending March 2022:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/homicideinenglandandwales/march2022>



By investing in DAHA accreditation, you will save money

“...the costs of the problems that DAHA Accreditation can help stop are often very high. The Accreditation process ...is rapidly offset as soon as evictions, repairs and rent arrears associated with domestic abuse are reduced..... the potential for Accreditation to effectively pay for itself through reducing housing management costs appears to be a real one.” (York University Evaluation of DAHA, 2021)

The cost of domestic abuse to the housing (and homelessness) sector is estimated at [£1.8 billion per year](#).

In a previous [study](#), residents experiencing domestic abuse were seven times more likely to be in rent arrears of £1,000. Research also found that domestic abuse accounted for 13% of housing repairs, and 21% of maintenance, costing the provider a total of £8 million (out of £40 million in total costs) over the course of one year across 29,000 properties⁷.

This does not calculate the additional costs incurred through legal fees, void property costs, and anti-social behaviour responses often associated with domestic abuse.

It is well-evidenced through [York University’s independent evaluation](#) of DAHA accreditation, and based on testimonies from our accredited providers, that investing in DAHA accreditation will significantly reduce the economic costs of domestic abuse.

It achieves this by enabling housing providers to identify and respond to domestic abuse early and effectively to prevent further harm and homelessness, and costs related to domestic abuse such as rent arrears, repairs, and void costs. Researchers calculated the rate for DAHA Accreditation per home to be an average of £5 including the investment in training and resourcing the project.

Please see Appendix 2 for more about the investment needed to achieve DAHA accreditation.

“Accreditation need not have to make a financial saving, nor necessarily pay for itself, to be seen as an efficient and necessary use of public money. The human costs of domestic abuse are enormous and while social and economic costs are also important, the basic case that accreditation has the potential to reduce human suffering, trauma, and mental and physical illness, with negative effects that can last a lifetime, has to be at the core of the decision to commit to implementing the accreditation framework.” (York University Evaluation of DAHA, 2021)

⁷ Safe at Home: https://safelives.org.uk/Safe_at_Home



By investing in DAHA accreditation, you will improve staff wellbeing and safety

DAHA accreditation has been proven time and again to promote a positive workplace culture, provide opportunities for staff development, and enhance job satisfaction and so can have significant benefits for staff well-being.

Equipping staff with the skills, knowledge, and the tools that serve to build their confidence to work more effectively with their most vulnerable customers or tenants leads to increased job satisfaction. Importantly, too, DAHA accreditation ensures that members, as employers, are equipped to safely identify and support employees who are experiencing domestic abuse and manage those who may be perpetrating abuse too.

By investing in DAHA accreditation, you will enhance partnership and collaboration

Embedding standards of good practice of DAHA accreditation will enhance collaboration and strengthen partnerships with local domestic abuse support services, statutory agencies such as police and social care, and other services that have the specialism and expertise needed to meet the needs of individuals and families experiencing or perpetrating abuse.

Regular communication and coordination will enable better support for survivors of abuse and ensure a holistic approach to addressing domestic abuse, thus reducing the pressure on housing providers and the professionals who deliver housing services, to meet all the needs presented that are, often, beyond their remit and beyond their expertise.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Description of DAHA Accreditation

Our History and Purpose

The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) was established in 2014 originally as a partnership between Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse, Gentoo, and Peabody housing associations. Our purpose remains to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse through policy influencing, education, and domestic abuse accreditation for social housing providers and local authorities including those with housing functions but no stock. We have used our influence to raise the status of housing as part of the coordinated community response to domestic abuse believing that housing has a vital role to play in identifying domestic abuse early and providing an effective response that holds perpetrators to account & reduces harm to victims/survivors, including children.

In 2021 we became a membership model to move away from reliance on charitable funding, become independent, and enable much-needed development of the programme. Our 100+ members of housing associations, ALMOS, and local authorities with and without stock who now form the Alliance receive a suite of benefits and, crucially, contribute to the future of the programme.

The Accreditation

The DAHA accreditation is our principal activity in the programme. The accreditation framework consists of eight priority areas of good practice, underpinned by a set of values and principles that our members commit to adhere to. Our expert team of Regional Leads works with Alliance members to guide them through the framework to succeed in achieving accreditation. Access to a portal with a suite of resources, workshops, and peer support, are among many other membership benefits outlined in our membership pack.

DAHA Accreditation is designed for social housing associations, local authorities with and without stock, and arms length management organisations (ALMOs). For local authorities without stock the accreditation serves to embed standards of good practice across the housing options and statutory homelessness directorate/team, fundamentally embedding a culture of belief and non-judgment toward victims/survivors who will approach the service seeking housing support and guidance. Inevitably, depending on the current culture within the organisation which so often comes from the top, accreditation requires less investment and time but has no less impact on all who benefit.

“There is much to praise in what has been achieved by DAHA Accreditation and the scale and importance of what has been achieved to date must be clearly and unambiguously acknowledged.”
(York University Final Evaluation 2021)



Appendix 2: [DAHA Accreditation & Membership Investment](#)

Your investment in DAHA Membership: an annual fee that is calculated on stock size. See our current fee structure [here](#). For this moderate annual fee, you receive the services of your allocated Regional Lead who will work closely with your DAHA project lead to guide you through the accreditation process. They will provide intense support to get you started on the accreditation journey and empower you to embed the standards into your practice. Your membership fee buys access to our Members Portal on our website with numerous resources to support adoption and embedding of good practice; you will also get exclusive access to expert-led webinars, regular workshops and you will have the opportunity to work with us to inform future developments of the DAHA project in member-exclusive roundtables.

Accreditation Assessment Fee: now a one-off payment (re-accreditation assessment will no longer incur an additional fee for Members from April 2023) calculated upon the geographic spread of the housing provider, or stock size for local authorities. Please note that the accreditation is also suitable for non-stock holding authorities with housing functions. The assessment process takes place over time as we work with you to gather evidence against each standard. Please see the new Assessment Handbook for Members.

Workforce investment:

- **DAHA Coordinator/Lead:** this role is not a requirement or essential but is recommended. Fully resourcing the project has been shown to reduce the time it takes to achieve accreditation thus reducing annual membership fees & expediting the financial benefits that improving your response to domestic abuse brings.
- **Training/upskilling staff:** “Average spending on training was £9,975” ([DAHA Evaluation 2021](#)). We would recommend allowing a realistic budget for training as upskilling all staff is the key to good practice and successful accreditation. We would be happy to talk to you about all your [training needs](#).
- **Funding opportunities:** There are significant funding opportunities through the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation (DASA) provided to tier-one local authorities, which can be invested in DAHA Accreditation for LAs and Housing Providers, including costs of membership, assessment, DA Leads/Coordination, and training.

From a public policy and public expenditure perspective, the potential for DAHA Accreditation to be seen as a public good, as something that should be systematically invested in on the basis that it helps reduce domestic abuse, is a powerful argument. If domestic abuse is being reduced, that in itself is an argument for wider investment in the membership and accreditation, the potential for cost savings only reinforces what should already be seen as socially important because it reduces domestic abuse.” DAHA Evaluation 2023

