



daha

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance

---

---

## Guidance

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)  
accreditation

---

---

# Contents

---

---

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Why get involved?
- 3 The accreditation
- 4 Assessment process
- 5 Additional benefits to participating in the national standards accreditation process



daha

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance

---

---

# Introduction

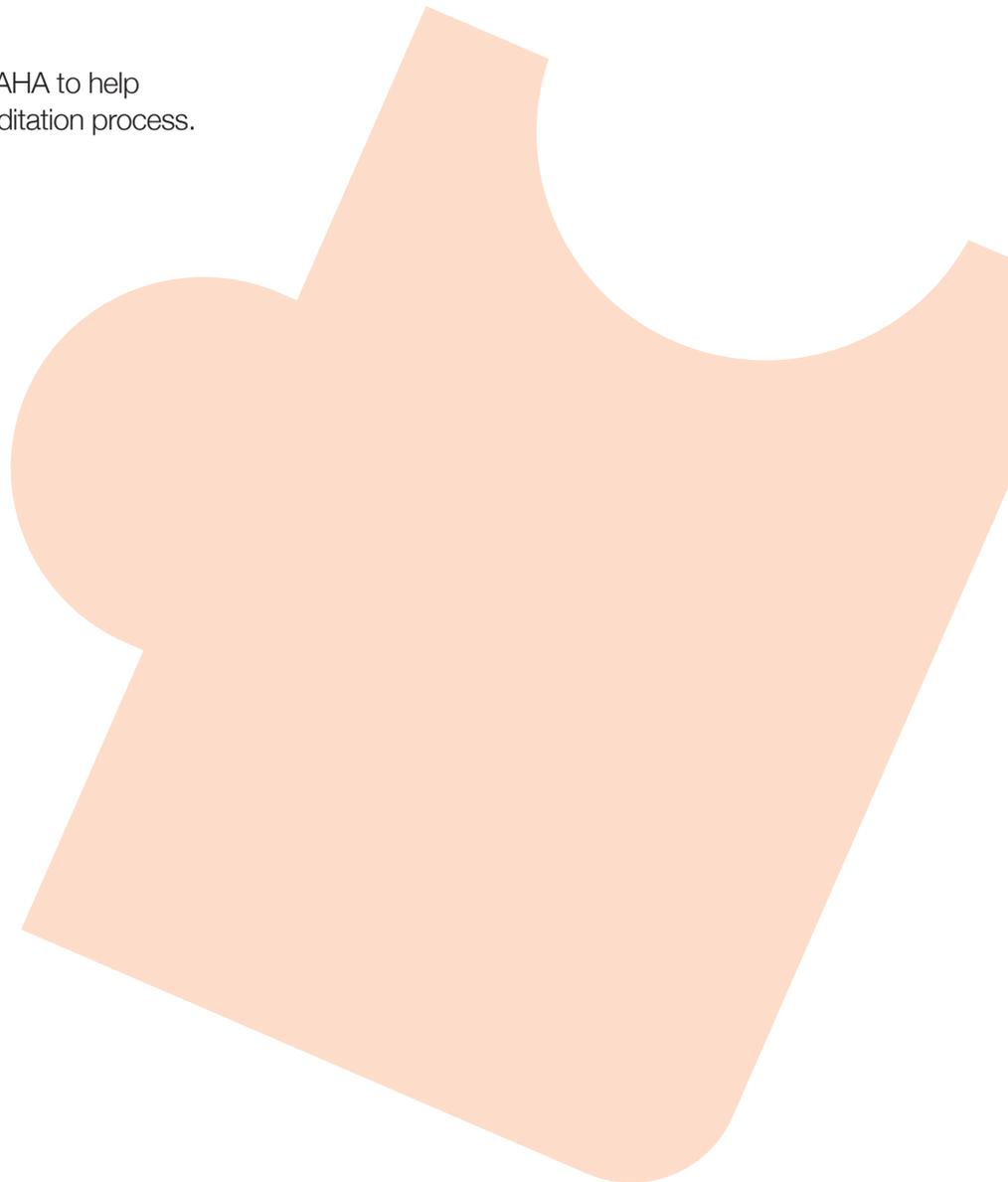
---

---

The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance's (DAHA) mission is to transform the housing sector's response to domestic abuse through an accreditation process which assesses individual housing providers and supports them to improve their practice.

DAHA is a partnership between three agencies; Standing Together Against Domestic Violence, Peabody and Gentoo that have a longstanding commitment to tackling domestic abuse, working in partnership and practice innovation. This includes ensuring housing professionals respond to this issue in a coordinated and consistent way.

This guidance has been produced by DAHA to help housing providers understand the accreditation process.



# Why get involved?

## Domestic Abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional.

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

## The national picture<sup>1</sup>:

- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime
- In 2012/13 1.1 million women and 720,000 men were victims of domestic abuse
- On average 2 women are murdered every week in England and Wales by a current or former partner
- Women on average experience 35 incidents of domestic abuse before calling the Police
- The average length of an abusive relationship is 5 years
- In the UK the Police receive a call for public assistance for domestic abuse every 30 seconds
- 76% of domestic abuse incidents are repeat incidents

## The link to Housing

Access to safe housing is a key priority for survivors of domestic abuse and factors strongly into their decision making around whether to stay in or leave an abusive relationship. For example, a person's tenure type will fundamentally affect the housing and safety options available to them, especially in legal terms (i.e. matrimonial homes rights under the Family Law Act or joint tenancy).

Housing professionals, including caretakers, neighbourhood managers, housing officers and repair staff are in an ideal place to identify those perpetrating and at risk of domestic abuse and their children, and respond to them with appropriate support and information. DAHA's mission is to equip these professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills to support residents to live safely and free of abuse.

### The potential impact of domestic abuse on your organisation

Welsh research into the link between domestic abuse and rent arrears found that individuals experiencing domestic abuse are 4 times more likely to have rent arrears at the point of Notice of Seeking Possession (NoSP).

- 15% of all tenants have rent arrears to the NoSP stage and
- 63% of tenants who are victims of domestic abuse have arrears to the NoSP stage<sup>2</sup>.

### The research also highlighted a link between domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour (ASB):

- 9% of all tenants have had ASB complaints made against them
- 40% of tenants who are suffering domestic abuse have had ASB complaints made against them.

1. Women's Aid website: [http://www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic\\_violence\\_topic.asp?section=0001000100220041&sectionTitle=Domestic+violence+%28general%29](http://www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic_violence_topic.asp?section=0001000100220041&sectionTitle=Domestic+violence+%28general%29)

2. (Source: Jackson 2013 The Role of Registered Social Landlords in tackling domestic abuse in Gwent and the wider Implications)

---

---

This highlights the importance of recognising domestic abuse and addressing the underlying issue and cause of ASB as opposed to using an approach which can exacerbate the domestic abuse.

**There are clear links between housing and domestic abuse:**

- Domestic violence is a key cause of homelessness. Official statistics show that in 2008/9, 6,820 households were accepted by local housing authorities in England and Wales as being owed a main homelessness duty on the grounds of domestic violence. This equates to 13% of all acceptances (Quigars and Pleace, 2010)
- A study by Crisis on women's homelessness (2006) reported that domestic violence was the reason that over 20% of all respondents left their last settled home. For women aged 41-50, this figure rose to 40%
- Shelter (2002) produced similar figures: 40% of all homeless women in their study stated domestic violence as contributing to their homelessness<sup>3</sup>. Domestic abuse also impacts housing staff. A 2005 study revealed that perpetrators carry out their abuse before, during, and after work<sup>4</sup>. Abuser tactics reduced women's job performance as measured by absenteeism, tardiness, job leavings, and terminations.

## Statutory Responsibilities

Figures from the Department for Communities and Local Government show that in 2013 there were 6,300 homeless presentations due to Relationship Breakdown – Violent. It is reasonable to assume that this is the tip of the iceberg as other reasons could also be given as the main reason for presenting as homeless. The Housing Act 1996 sets out clearly those duties a housing authority owes vulnerable victims of domestic abuse and other violence. Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) were established on a statutory basis under section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004). This provision came into force on 13th April 2011.

Like other statutory or voluntary services, housing providers participate in Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR) of which there are approximately 170 per year in England and Wales. It is likely that when a DHR is commissioned by the local Community Safety Partnership housing providers will be required to participate and submit information to the DHR panel.

As a result of Safeguarding duties housing providers are bound by legislation to ensure tenants are appropriately safeguarded. Children are in the same or next room 90% of the time when abuse occurs, which raises domestic abuse as a safeguarding issue for children. The Care Act requires housing providers to work proactively with their safeguarding partners and improve their response to vulnerable individuals.

Underlying all of the above is the moral and ethical duty to protect tenants. The ethos of housing providers is centred around well-being, providing opportunities, and building and maintaining safe communities. In order to do this domestic abuse must be tackled effectively.

3. Source: <http://www.avaproject.org.uk/media/62315/idva%20policy%20briefing%20march.pdf>

4. Swanberg, Jennifer E.; Logan, T. K., Domestic Violence and Employment: A Qualitative Study. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol 10(1), Jan 2005, 3-17

# The accreditation

---

---

The process is conducted by DAHA professional who examine key elements of service delivery.

## **The accreditation process is based on the following principles:**

- Safety
- Being person-centred
- Taking a believing/non-judgmental approach
- Confidentiality
- Inclusivity

## **The 8 key elements of service delivery are divided into the following 8 priority areas with a number of requirements within each one:**

- Policy and Procedures
- Case Management, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Risk Management
- Inclusivity and accessibility
- Holding perpetrators accountable: Support Enforcement and Prevention
- Partnership working.
- Training
- Publicity and Awareness.

# The assessment process

## What will a Housing Provider's involvement look like and what to expect from DAHA?

DAHA is available to assist housing providers on their journey in improving their organisation's response to domestic abuse. DAHA's highly skilled

and knowledgeable specialists will work alongside the housing provider's staff to deliver the following in support of accreditation:

Process steps	Description
Desktop review	Review of policies, procedures and information sheet (1 day)
Initial Meeting with Senior Management Team	Meeting (1/2 day)
Case audit	Review of cases (1 day)
Staff interviews	Interviews with members of staff (1 day)
Mystery Shopping (optional)	2 walk ins at offices and a telephone call to call centre (1/2 day)
DAHA Report completed	Writing and circulation of report for senior management (2 days)
Meeting to feedback on findings	Meeting with senior management team (1/2 day)
Review meeting (12 months on)	Meeting to review progress on action plan and key performance indicators (1/2 day)

The accreditation process will on average take between 3-12 months at the end of which the Housing Provider receives the DAHA Chartermark signalling that it has a robust and nationally accredited response to domestic abuse.

### Additional DAHA support can include:

- Specialist training
- Introduction to bespoke IT case management systems
- Service user consultation, focus groups and feedback.

# Additional benefits to participating in the national standards accreditation process

---

---

- Being seen as a leader and innovator in the housing sector's response to domestic abuse
- Access to a suite of online resources and support
- Membership to a network of practitioners at DAHA with online forum and attendance at meetings to share learning and good practice around domestic abuse in the housing sector
- Invitations to DAHA conferences and events
- Chartermark which can be publicised on website and promotional materials

**For more information about starting the process of accreditation, please contact:**

**Guddy Burnet**

Peabody  
gudrun.burnet@peabody.org.uk  
**020 7021 4184**

**Kelly Henderson**

Gentoo  
kelly.henderson@gentooliving.com  
**0191 525 5974**

**Nicole Jacobs**

Standing Together Against Domestic Violence  
n.jacobs@standingtogether.org.uk  
**020 8748 5717**

# Appendix 1

## Who is DAHA?

---

---

### **Standing Together Against Domestic Violence**

**(STADV)** was founded in 1998 on the premise that no single agency acting alone can deal effectively with a crime as prevalent, complex, costly and damaging as domestic violence. STADV is a non-profit organisation that works to promote a co-ordinated, multi-agency community response to domestic abuse on a local level in west London, national and internationally. In west London STADV coordinates a partnership model that includes operational groups related to housing, children and health, the criminal justice system and MARAC. They also influence national policy and practice by initiating and driving innovation in providing safer options for women and holding perpetrators accountable. As a result, significant and positive changes have occurred in the provision of special courts and enhanced expert services and policies aimed at reducing the risk to women. STADV has a programme of local authority partnership reviews and consultancy, conducting over fifty reviews to date. STADV also has a large programme of training and has chaired over thirty domestic homicide reviews.

**Gentoo's** ambition is to improve the lives of the people, communities and the environment in which they operate by investing in people, the planet and property, what they call 'the Art of Living'. A 'profit for purpose' organisation, it uses any profits from our commercial activity to reinvest back in towards achieving this. Gentoo is committed to developing new products and services to meet the changing needs of society. Gentoo's uniqueness and strength comes from the dedication, skill and energy of its staff who live its values daily and work to deliver Gentoo's vision and mission. Gentoo are dedicated to tackling domestic abuse and its Neighbourhood Safety Team consists of Victim Support, Positive Engagement and Safeguarding Officers, an Operations Manager and the specific role of Business Manager - Domestic Abuse. Gentoo Managing Director Operations) is Chair of Sunderland Domestic Violence Partnership and the first Domestic Homicide Review in the City. Gentoo have 29,500 properties. Since 2001 it has invested over £475million in people, planet and property.

Gentoo believes it is important to challenge the norms and try new ways of doing things. By applying innovation and creativity it has a tangible, positive effect on the way people and communities live, develop and improve.

**Peabody** is one of the UK's oldest and largest housing associations. Founded in 1862 to tackle poverty in London, Peabody now house over 60,000 people across the capital, and invest heavily in our residents' health, wellbeing and financial stability. Peabody have always had an interest in our residents' safety, but over the past five years our Community Safety Team has consolidated and formalised our work around domestic abuse, to the stage where we are seen as best practice in the sector and our expertise is frequently requested by other housing providers.

