



Housing responses for female survivors of gender based violence: A Whole Housing approach

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Domestic abuse, housing and homelessness – making the links

- **Domestic abuse is a common driver for homelessness:** A third of St Mungo's clients reported that domestic abuse was a direct cause of their homelessness (Rebuilding Shattered Lives, St Mungos).
- **76%** of domestic homicides take place inside the home (Nia and Women's Aid England Femicide Census, 2018)
- Emphasis on refuge accommodation as the main housing option for women and children (Approx. 270 specialist domestic abuse refuges in England. **60% of referrals were turned away in 2016/17**, Women's Aid England, 2018)
- Once homeless, women are much more vulnerable to experiencing further abuse. **"Experience of domestic violence and abuse is near-universal among women who become homeless"** (Bretherton and Pleace, 2018)



daha

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance

A partnership between 3 agencies leading change for cohesive policies and strategies for tackling domestic abuse and housing in the UK



DAHA Accreditation Standards – Priority Areas

1. Policy & Procedure
2. Case Management
3. Risk Management
4. Equality & Diversity
5. Perpetrator Management
6. Partnership working
7. Training
8. Publicity & Awareness



•Free online toolkit with template docs and guidance on above available at <https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/accreditation>



Whole Housing
Domestic Abuse

An Introduction to the Whole Housing Approach



Developing Housing First for women experiencing any form of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Westminster, London

solace



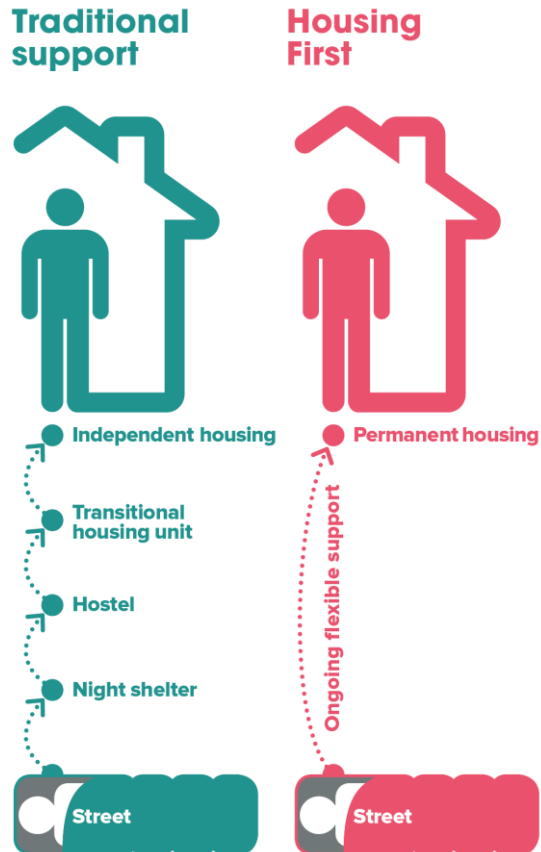
City of Westminster



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

**STANDING
together**
against domestic violence

What is Housing First?



- Unlike traditional staircase approach
- Permanent offer of a home
- No conditions other than maintaining tenancy
- Flexible, person-centred support
- For those experiencing chronic, or long-term homelessness and with the highest needs.

How does Housing First for women need to be different?

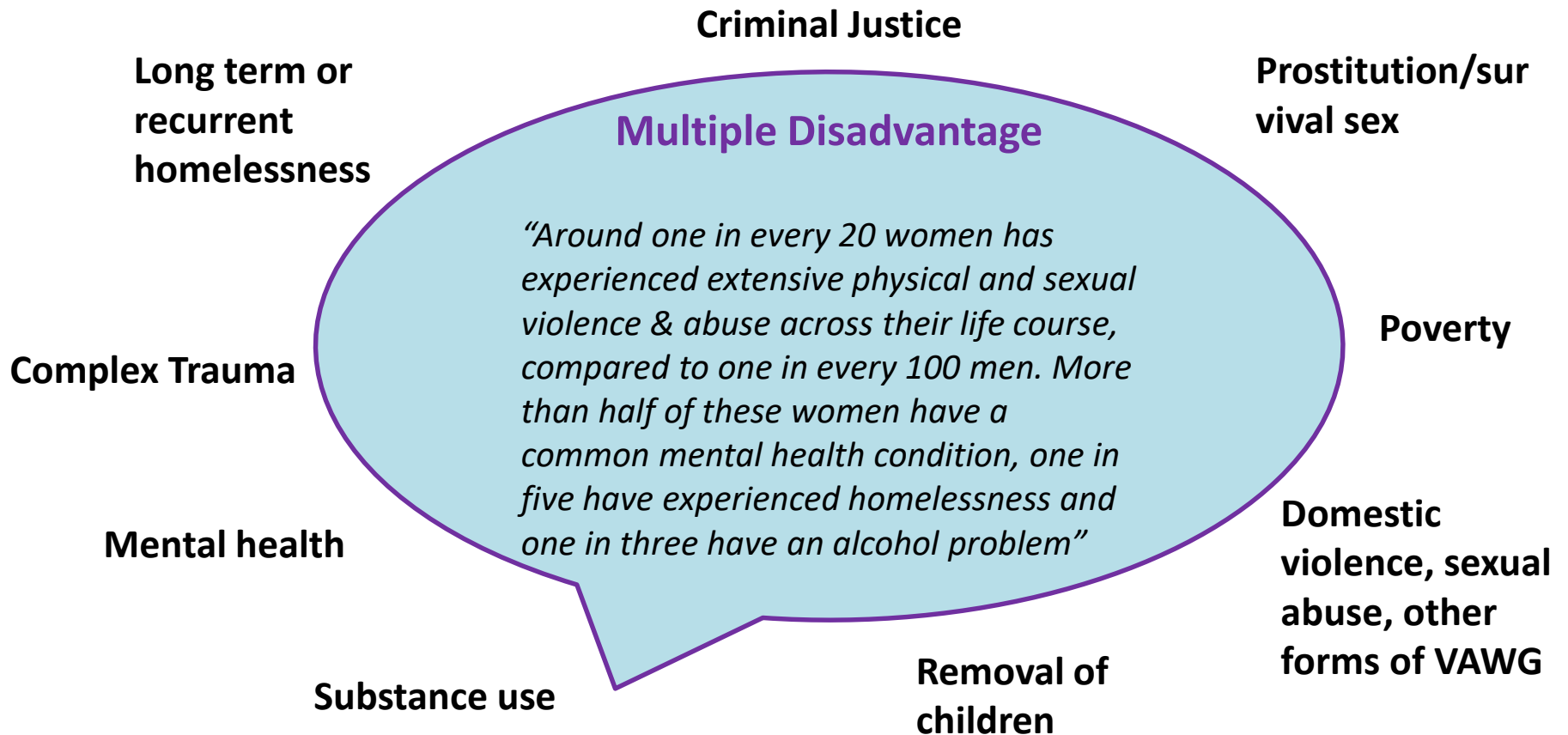
Women accessing Housing First services have **distinct gender specific support needs**.

“The successful management of former and ongoing abusive relationships...is a core function of the service, because without ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the women using it, the service cannot provide a sustainable end to their homelessness”



(The Threshold Housing First pilot for women with an offending history: The first two years. Quilgars and Pleace, 2017).

Who are these women, and what are some of the issues they face?



Scott, S, McManus, S, DMSS research for Agenda (2016)
Hidden Hurt, Violence, Abuse and Disadvantage in the Lives of women.

Housing First for women experiencing VAWG

The service

- Two years funding to support ten women experiencing VAWG and multiple disadvantage.
- Support being delivered by specialist women's sector provider, Solace Women's Aid.
- First women's sector provider to adopt the Housing First model. Specialist VAWG knowledge.

Our aims:

- Provide **'woman centred' support** to women who are experiencing VAWG and multiple disadvantage, who are currently disengaged or not engaged well with existing services.
- To support women **to access good quality independent housing**, and to **maintain this housing** as per the Housing First principles.
- To support women to **reach an understanding of the violence they have experienced**, in order that they are able to increase their safety and make informed choices.
- **To coordinate support and navigate treatment pathways with other services** to ensure women are robustly supported in the areas of housing, substance misuse, physical health care, mental health care, criminal justice engagement etc.
- To support women to **improve their confidence and wellbeing** and provide them with opportunities for personal development.

Procuring housing

- Four Registered Social Landlords (4 pan London/national and one small provider) have agreed to provide 10 units for the project.
- Signed up to Partnership Agreement agreement with support provider.
- Lettings and housing management staff trained in Housing First/VAWG – a flexible approach.



Outcomes so far....

- Woman calls the Housing First worker when she needs to talk, when she has never called any other worker before on her own initiative.
- Woman talks about her controlling (ex-)partners and discloses abuse to Housing First workers.
- First woman being housed this week after rough sleeping for 10+ years

“Feeling good about getting things done....looking forward to the future”



Housing First for women: key considerations

- Identifying cohort
- Engaging women: Relationships are key
- Managing domestic abuse: supporting women who are still with perpetrators
- Supporting women around children



Stella's story

1. Where did services miss the opportunity to provide Stella with the support she needed?
2. What response did Stella need from services, particularly housing/homelessness providers? What would have been the ideal response?

THANK YOU!

Thank you all for listening!

Any questions??

Get in touch: l.steele@standingtogether.org.uk