

Service user engagement

Services should work to embed lived experience involvement in all aspects of their work: including in support offers, evaluation and monitoring. This should involve both volunteering and paid positions.

Local commissioners should make time and space to hear from those with lived experience, as well as those who support them closely such as local advocates and support workers in services across multiple disadvantage.

Commissioning and service provision

Local commissioners should continue to fund and prioritise funding for women-only homelessness provision. This must include specialist provision for homeless people with multiple and complex needs, including those for whom refuge accommodation is not appropriate.

Ensure consistent and appropriate funding for by and for led organisations, including specialist domestic violence services, those that support Black and minoritised women and organisations working with women involved in survival sex and sex work should be adequately resourced and their expertise recognised as a vital part in ending women's homelessness.

Opportunities for peer support and/or mentoring must be embedded in service provision for women with experiences of domestic abuse and homelessness.

Housing First should be rolled out as an alternative to hostel accommodation. This must include appropriate gender specific support.

Training

All services must ensure the provision of mandatory training around domestic abuse and trauma, and include information around the specific needs of black and minoritised women facing violence and abuse, and the nature of multiple disadvantage. Training must also include information regarding support available to survivors in the local area to ensure streamlined referral processes.

This training should be provided to staff at all levels and teams to ensure they can identify abuse and signpost support confidentially and safely as early as possible and refreshed on a regular basis.

Collaboration and partnership working

Services should work collaboratively and seek to break down service siloes and offer person centred holistic support. This includes mental health and substance use services being jointly led so that women with a 'dual diagnosis' of mental health and substance use can be effectively supported.

Posters from local specialist support services should be advertised across statutory and voluntary agencies to encourage self-referrals. All information should be available in a number of languages.

Local Authorities and MARACs should monitor the engagement of housing representatives within the MARAC process.

Homelessness and domestic abuse services should work in partnership to develop move on pathways for survivors post-crisis with the provision of emotional and practical support. This may include peer support spaces or move on plans to ensure appropriate aftercare.

Data collection

Local Authorities must work to identify hidden women sleeping rough or without shelter through working in partnership with womens and community services..