

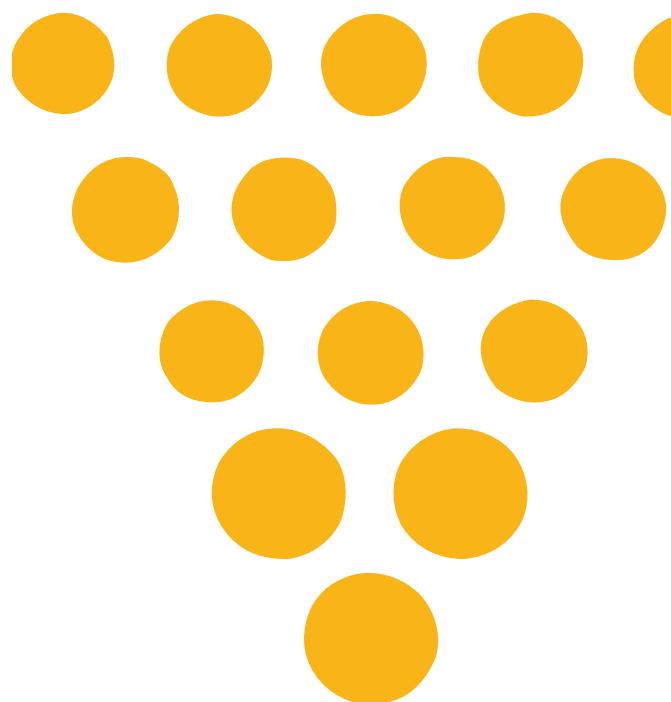


# Domestic abuse and sexual violence housing pathway

Date 18/06/25

Housing Options Service

**Guidance for housing and non-housing staff**



[www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk)

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### Legal influences on this document:

- Housing Act 1996 Part VII (as amended by Homelessness Reduction Act 2017)
- Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities
- Improving Access to Social Housing for Victims of Domestic Abuse in Refuges or Other Types of Temporary Accommodation - Statutory Guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Equality Act 2010
- Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Orders 1996, 2003 and 2012
- Safeguarding of adults and children policies
- [Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy - Cornwall Council](#)
- [Domestic abuse: draft statutory guidance framework \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK](#)

#### **Other documents linked to this policy**

- Cornwall Council: Helping Hand Policy
- Cornwall Council: Corporate Debt Policy
- Cornwall Council: Financial Regulatory Framework
- Housing Options: Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy (subject to consultation)
- Housing Options: Emergency Accommodation licence agreement and associated terms and conditions letter
- Emergency Accommodation Charging Policy (subject to review)

#### **Non-legal influences on this strategy:**

- Safer Cornwall DASV Strategy
- Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation and Housing Strategy - [Domestic abuse safe accommodation and housing strategy](#)
- Cornwall Council Allocations Policy - [homechoice-common-assessment-framework-final.pdf](#)
- [DAHA - Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance](#)

#### **Other documents linked to this strategy:**

Sanctuary Scheme Policy and Procedure - currently under review

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## 1. Purpose of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Housing Pathway

Over the 2024/25 financial year, housing authorities in England owed over 38,000 homelessness duties to applicants citing domestic abuse as the reason for loss of last settled accommodation, amounting to 12% of the total duties owed. 27% of these cases were assessed under a prevention duty (at risk of becoming homeless within 56 days) and 73% under a relief duty (already homeless). Respectively, Cornwall Housing Options Service assessed 377 such households, amounting 16% of total duties owed. 18% were assessed under a prevention duty and 82% under a relief duty.

This document outlines the housing pathway for people experiencing domestic abuse and sexual violence (DASV) who are at risk of homelessness due to this occurring. It is intended for use as a resource for internal staff and partner agencies - either those dealing with people/households experiencing ongoing DASV or its aftermath or those non-housing agencies who are approached by such households.

It also states the Housing Options Service's policy and practice relating to domestic abuse and sexual violence.

## 2. Definition of Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as:

The behaviour of a person towards another person is domestic abuse if:

- a) the two people are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- b) the behaviour is abusive.

This can include behaviour directed at the child of the person experiencing abuse.

Two people are considered personally connected to each other if they are, or have been:

- Married (or have agreed to be)
- Civil partners (or have entered into a civil partnership agreement)
- In an intimate personal relationship
- In a parental relationship in relation to the same child
- Related to each other

Behaviour is abusive if it consists of:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

So called “honour-based” abuse (HBA) is a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the perceived honour of the family and/or community, or when individuals try to break from constraining ‘norms’ of behaviour that their community is trying to impose. HBA can cover a range of circumstances, not all of which represent domestic abuse, for example if the victim and abusive person are not personally connected. However, HBA will typically be carried out by a member or members of the family and is likely to involve behaviours specified in the statutory definition of domestic abuse.

In 2012 the World Health Organisation (WHO) defined its understanding of sexual violence as:

“Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic otherwise directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work”.

### 3. Housing Act 1996 Part VII: Guidance

Housing authorities must follow the definition of domestic abuse set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 when designing and delivering services. Officers must be fully familiar with the definition of Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence summarised above and contained within the Housing Act 1996 Part VII (as amended Homelessness Reduction Act 2017). The Act sets out the framework around how we should respond to applicants seeking assistance as a result of experiencing DASV. Further detailed guidance is given in Chapter 21 of Homeless Code of Guidance providing comprehensive advice on recognising and understanding domestic abuse; carrying out inquiries and investigations in a safe manner which does not increase risk; preventing and relieving homelessness; and suitability of accommodation, as set out at the following link:

[Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Chapter 21: Domestic abuse - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities-chapter-21-domestic-abuse-guidance)

#### 3.1 Who is homeless or threatened with homelessness?

The homelessness legislation provides that it is not reasonable for a person to continue to occupy accommodation if it is probable that this will lead to domestic abuse or other violence against the applicant, a person who normally resides as a member of the applicant’s family; or, any other person who might reasonably be expected to reside with the applicant. When accommodation is unreasonable to occupy then the applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness.

‘Violence’ means violence from another person or threats of violence from another person which are likely to be carried out.

An assessment of the likelihood of a threat of violence or abuse being carried out should not be based on whether there has been actual violence or abuse in the past. Assessments

must be based on the facts of the case and should be devoid of any value judgements about what an applicant could or did not do to mitigate the risk of any violence and abuse.

A person (including someone with no dependent children) has a priority need for assistance if they are homeless as a result of domestic abuse and eligible for assistance.

There is no requirement that the person must have ceased to occupy the accommodation for this category of priority need to apply. A person is homeless if accommodation is unreasonable to continue to occupy because it is probable that this will lead to domestic abuse against them or someone in the household. A customer may also be advised not to relinquish a tenancy if it is reasonable they may be able to return safely to their own home in future. Whilst this is being assessed, they may occupy other safe accommodation.

If a victim of domestic abuse loses their secure tenancy as a result of the abuse, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires local authorities and registered providers to grant another secure tenancy to the victim if they rehouse them.

#### **If a victim wants to remain in their own home, can the abusive person be removed?**

Local authorities and Registered Providers have the power to apply to the courts to terminate a tenancy and evict the abusive person. The possession grounds include where the victim has fled the house as a result of domestic abuse, and where a serious criminal offence has been committed - (i.e. where a tenant has been convicted of an offence and been charged and where ground 7A of Housing Act 1988 would come into force).

The power to seek a court order to bring the tenancy to an end and evict the abusive person means that the landlord may grant a new tenancy to the victim in the home if they choose to remain and it is safe to do so, or an alternative home if they cannot remain. The provisions ensure that where the victim had a joint lifetime tenancy with the abusive person, the new sole tenancy will also be on a lifetime basis.

The provision applies to all local authorities and Registered Providers in England and protects all lifetime social tenants in these circumstances, whether they have a secure local authority tenancy or an assured tenancy with a housing association.

In circumstances where there is a joint tenancy, signposting to independent legal advice will be an appropriate course of action - see page 27 (useful links).

For further guidance visit:

[Secure tenancies and victims of domestic abuse factsheet - GOV.UK](#)

**Action for all partners: to share best practice activity in this area and identify any gaps where cross partnership working can be improved to prevent a victim from losing their home where they wish to remain, and or, return safely.**

**The Housing Options service will ensure data is reported quarterly to the partnership for consideration of joint mitigations in order to prevent homelessness wherever possible.**

### 3.2 Prevention and relief duties

Following an application for assistance under Part 7 of the 1996 Act, whether an applicant is threatened with homelessness or is actually homeless will be a matter for the housing authority to assess taking into account the relevant circumstances. For example, a person at risk of domestic abuse may be threatened with homelessness because the abusive person is soon to be released from custody (and so the person is likely to become homeless within 56 days); but would be actually homeless if the abusive person was in the community and presented a risk to them at their home (and so it is not reasonable for the person to continue to occupy the accommodation).

When developing a personalised housing plan (PHP) staff will be particularly sensitive to an applicant's judgement about the risk of abuse, unless there is evidence to the contrary. Where practicable and safe, applicants will be allowed sufficient time and space to absorb and understand the options available to them.

The Housing Options team will make enquiries during the relief stage into whether a main housing duty under s193 is owed.

### 3.3 Extending the prevention and relief duties

In certain circumstances housing authorities can extend the prevention and relief duties and in line with the Code of Guidance - it has the discretion to continue it; each case will take the applicant's circumstances into account.

Where the applicant remains at risk of homelessness (at the end of the prevention duty) and the housing authority considers there is still the chance that homelessness can be prevented, the housing authority will continue to help the applicant avoid homelessness, whereupon their application to the housing authority may proceed under a relief duty.

During the relief stage, where an applicant in priority need has become homeless intentionally, the Code of Guidance says the authority may want to consider continuing the relief duty for longer. Considerations may include the needs of the applicant; the risk of the applicant sleeping rough; the prospects of securing accommodation within a reasonable period; the resources available to the housing authority, and any wider implications of bringing the duty to an end such as in the case of an applicant who has dependent children and who became homeless intentionally where Children Act duties may apply if accommodation could not be secured.

**In all cases involving domestic abuse, the safety of the applicant and their household will be the primary consideration at all stages of decision making as to whether or not the applicant remains in their own home.**

### 3.4 People experiencing DASV and the homelessness process

Housing authorities should seek to obtain an account of the applicant's experience to assess whether the behaviour they have experienced is abusive and whether they would be at risk of domestic abuse if they continued to occupy their accommodation. The authority should support the victim to outline their experience and make an assessment based on the details of the case. Housing authorities should refer to the domestic abuse statutory guidance framework and Domestic Abuse Stalking & "Honour Based" Violence (DASH) risk assessment to ensure they support the applicant appropriately.

Where an applicant's experience is already documented by a domestic abuse service and this has been shared, housing authorities should utilise existing statements to avoid further trauma. DA Practitioners carry out DASH as standard practice and should be able to complete it with details from conversations and contact with the client, although in some cases it may not be appropriate to share the level of detail with the housing authority. Where a DASH has been completed the whole or redacted document may be shared with the consent of the individual or where they do not consent, the overall DASH score can be shared along with the DASV practitioners' professional judgement regarding the level of risk. Where this no DASH assessment previously undertaken, a DASH trained housing options officer will carry this out in order to expedite an applicant's housing pathway.

**Action for all partners:** to ensure the quality of information sought and shared is of a sufficient level in order to discharge our incumbent duties under the relevant Acts and to maintain a robust level of DASH practitioners to undertake this assessment. Where a partner agency does not have an available DASH practitioner, they must seek the support of a specialist DASV partner such as Safer Futures to complete an assessment.

The Housing Options team will make further enquiries where it is appropriate to do so, but will not approach the alleged abusive person. With consent from the applicant, the team may, however, wish to seek information from friends and relatives of the applicant, social services, landlords, health professionals, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARACs), a domestic abuse support service or the police, as appropriate.

There will not be a blanket approach towards domestic abuse which requires corroborative or police evidence to be provided.

### 3.5 Prevention of homelessness

The Housing Options service recognises the compounding trauma that homelessness can have on victims of DASV and wherever possible and safe to do so, will thoroughly explore options to keep victims safe in their own home and where necessary assist with a managed move. When this is not practicable, it will assist applicants to secure safe accommodation options within or out of county as set out in the following sections and will try to avoid moves into unstable temporary accommodation. This may include management moves between social rented sector registered providers or into the private sector where appropriate and suitable.

### 3.6 Providing suitable accommodation

There are a number of accommodation options for people experiencing domestic abuse that will be considered while taking into account individual circumstances and needs. This may include safe temporary accommodation. We will seek to maximise opportunities to plan for people to remain or return to their homes where it is their choice, and it is safe to do so, by working with partners in the MARAC and the police to reduce risk.

Housing Options will provide interim and temporary accommodation when required. This will be allocated in accordance with policy.

For people at risk of further domestic abuse, specialist safe accommodation will usually be the most appropriate choice. These services provide short-term, intensive support for those who flee from abuse. It is essential Housing Options practitioners explore all housing options by means of contacting local specialist safe accommodation providers and the national domestic abuse helpline about refuge services and other safe accommodation availability, and that these outcomes are recorded within case the history.

Location of accommodation will only be considered suitable where all services are satisfied an applicant will not be at further risk and will have regard to the following factors:

- Where someone may state it is not safe to remain in their home but other professionals believe, and, further enquiries satisfy it is safe to remain in their area, then consideration will sit with the housing authority to balance this information provided and decide if it is reasonable and safe to continue to occupy their accommodation / and or remain in the area
- Where the person experiencing abuse wishes to remain in the same area they experienced abuse and not relocate, for example, so that they can continue to work or their children's education is not disrupted and/or to enable them to have practical support from family, and where risk can be mitigated (such as with a non-molestation or DVPN order), this may be possible. However, this would require appropriate risk assessment in partnership with police and DA practitioners and is also subject to there being appropriate accommodation available for that household.
- Preference and circumstances in all cases will need to be assessed, considering factors such as: access to work; support networks; schooling especially for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and they will be balanced against the safety of remaining in area.
- Discretion around safety of placements and other people housed in temporary accommodation, including stock availability, will be balanced against preference and professional judgement. In urgent situations someone may be placed outside of the area of preference, however, where it is safe, and appropriate, we will work with them and other professionals to find a solution over the longer term.

- The final decision to place and where to place in the event of an emergency will sit with the Prevention and Casework officer, the authorising manager, and the Placement Officer taking into account all of the above factors. Where officers deem it unsuitable for an applicant to remain in their local area, it is appropriate to expect them to accept an offer pending further appraisal of the current risk at play. All risks need to be balanced ensuring the appropriate level of information is shared or gathered where there isn't already an assessment that evidences all the above.
- Where cases need to be urgently moved, or are immediately evicted, out of the safe accommodation in an unplanned way due to emergencies arising, the Rehousing Accommodation Team will aim to prioritise interim / temporary accommodation placements as soon as possible that day. Please note: a customer and the supporting organisations may not be made aware of the location of this booking until 6pm (or out of hours) that day. Suitable travel arrangements can be facilitated if the customer has no other means of transport. If after 5pm, this will be picked up by the out of hours service.
- If a refuge decides to immediately evict a resident, they must provide full reasons and risk information to Cornwall Council.

**Action for Housing Options:** It is essential when a household is placed into relief, where consent is given, officers must continue to refer into Safe Accommodation (SA) including the national refuge helpline. This will also form part of our TA placement checklist to ensure consistent processes are being followed across the service. Placements into Safe Accommodation can take up to 48 hours pending providers' risk and needs assessments. In some circumstances it may take longer especially involving complex cases.

All case activity must be recorded on our housing options case management system. Where people are happy to go into SA then this is the preferred option although they may need temporary accommodation in the immediate instance while the referral is processed which ideally is within 48 hours.

Refuges and other specialist safe accommodation providers in Cornwall have worked with the Housing Options Service to produce a bespoke protocol (which is currently under review) that outlines how a residents' pathway will progress and within what timescales. To complement this framework, Housing Options provides a specialist dedicated prevention and casework officer solely working DASV cases referred by MARAC and those residing in our specialist safe accommodation provision. This post is a single point of contact working to maximise successful outcomes and more appropriate offers of accommodation, reducing reliance on general needs temporary accommodation. See Housing Options DASV specialist officer pathway - Appendix 2. Medium and standard risk cases may be allocated to prevention and casework officers within the housing options service and depending on entry points into the pathway.

### 3.7 Local connection referrals

A housing authority cannot refer an applicant to another housing authority where they have a local connection if that person or any person who might reasonably be expected to reside with them would be at risk of violence and abuse in that other district.

### 3.8 Homelessness Reduction Act and The Public Body Duty To Refer

Public bodies should ensure their legal responsibilities towards those threatened with homelessness are fulfilled. People disclosing/experiencing DASV who may be threatened with homelessness as a result of this must be referred into the Housing Options Service.

Under [section 213B](#) the public authorities specified in regulations are required to notify a housing authority of service users they consider may be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days. Before making a referral a public authority must:

- a) have consent to the referral from the individual
- b) allow them to identify the housing authority in England they would like the notification to be made to; and,
- c) have consent from them to supply their contact details so the housing authority can contact them

In relation to DASV the following services (non-exhaustive) are required to refer service users in England they consider may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to a housing authority, with their consent:

- a) emergency departments
- b) urgent treatment centres
- c) hospitals in their function of providing in patient care
- d) adults and children's social care services
- e) the police

**Please note: Any agency or professional body can follow the duty to refer process into the housing options service by using the details below.**

**In circumstances where you believe anyone to be at immediate risk of serious harm (including children and any other member of the household) - call the police on 999, and then a referral should be made to Housing Options either within office hours or out of hours by calling: **0300 1234 161****

**In circumstances where there is no immediate risk of harm, our preferred referral method from public bodies (and any partner agency) is via the Housing Jigsaw ALERT Portal:**

[Duty to Refer \(housingjigsaw.co.uk\)](http://Duty to Refer (housingjigsaw.co.uk))

Or when not possible, email: [dutytorefer@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:dutytorefer@cornwall.gov.uk)

### 3.9 Cornwall Homechoice Scheme

The revised Homechoice Scheme (2025) has built in greater flexibility over how properties are allocated. Provisions have been made against specific qualifying criteria to allow the authority to direct match a proportion of properties to vulnerable cohorts. Therefore, on 10-20% of vacant homes and where specific criteria is applicable, an assisted choice or direct offer may be made. People fleeing serious domestic abuse are included in these criteria.

For more information visit: [homechoice-common-assessment-framework-final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homechoice-common-assessment-framework-final.pdf)

## 4. Housing Options - DASV Policy statement

No one should live in fear of domestic abuse or sexual violence from a spouse or partner or by any family member whether living in the same household or not. Domestic abuse is a violation of human rights and everyone has a right to live safe from abuse within their own home.

The council's DASV guidance supports members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse. All staff must complete mandatory DA training and managers receive additional training. For external employers we have a toolkit available to support their response to [Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in the workplace - Safer Cornwall](#)

We will take steps to assist any person suffering from or threatened with domestic abuse or sexual violence. Alongside our role in tackling homelessness, we will take an active role in identifying people experiencing domestic abuse and refer them for support. The Housing Options Service is a stakeholder in local domestic abuse partnerships and provides representatives at the local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC).

### The Housing Options Service will:

- Commit to treating domestic abuse seriously
- Adhere to the principle of confidentiality - unless, where there are issues of safeguarding superseding this, we will:
  - Liaise with others only with the client's permission unless children or vulnerable adults are at risk of significant harm
  - Act when a vulnerable adult experiencing domestic abuse may require protection under Safeguarding Adults procedure
  - Recognise that a child experiencing domestic abuse is a victim in their own right as stated in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and may be a child in need subject to Our Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) procedures
- Ensure the response to those affected by domestic abuse provides them with support and protection

- Be sensitive to the diverse needs of those who have, or, are experiencing domestic abuse regardless of their disability, age, gender identity or reassignment, race, religion, class, sexual orientation and marital status
- Recognise that domestic abuse can lead to homelessness where it would not be reasonable for someone to continue to live at home
- Ensure that a person fleeing domestic abuse is aware of all options available to them so they can make an informed choice for their future. These options will include:
  - Support to access tailored services and safe accommodation
  - Advice on remaining or returning to their home safely via the Sanctuary Scheme
  - Advice on housing rights and independent legal signposting
  - Advice and support (including financial) to access private rented accommodation
  - Income maximisation and welfare inclusion
  - Management transfers or mutual exchanges
  - Seeking housing through Homechoice
  - Staying with family and friends if this is a safe option, and, where appropriate, granting enhanced priority on Homechoice to facilitate a planned permanent move
  - Emergency homelessness accommodation
  - Buying and the Homeswap scheme.

We will work with partner agencies to support the person experiencing abuse by:

- Aiming firstly for the applicant to be able to remain in their home if they choose this and it is appropriate in terms of managing risk. This can be achieved through the Sanctuary Scheme. (Please note: access to such services depends on assessed risk levels). See page 21 of this document for more information.
- Providing a safe environment when someone cannot remain in their home
- Ensuring information on specialist agencies is passed on to the person
- Working with social rented sector registered providers to facilitate reciprocal transfers or management moves where practicable

We will ensure appropriate representation from Housing Options on the Cornwall Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, for the purposes of meeting the legislative requirements set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

## 5. Housing Options Service Standards - Delivering a 'person' centred approach

Those subjected to domestic abuse or sexual violence will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

The service is working towards a trauma informed approach which includes the following key elements:

- Offering a tailored response based on the presenting circumstances and avoiding re-traumatising the customer
- The option to be interviewed by someone of the same sex (where it is a preference and practicable)
- As far as possible, interviews to be carried out the same day for urgent cases, or, if the customer has somewhere safe to stay, they will be carried out as soon as possible, usually within 24 hours unless there is a longer lead in time such as early notification of an abusive person's prison release
- To be offered an interview at an appropriate and accessible location; this may be council offices, a community hub, a partnership organisation or other agreed safe space such as a doctor's surgery, or involving DA support services.
  - This will be subject to service capacity and safety for customers and staff. In some cases, it may be necessary to carry out phone or video calls.
- The level of information we require must be proportionate and where consent to share full histories is not made available to housing options staff, professional judgement statements from a key partner agency will be necessary, where practicable, covering the following items:
  - DASH will be carried out by trained professional either in house or by a partner agency
  - High risk cases (such as 14+ DASH score / or other serious indicators such as strangulation / choking / suffocation / drowning / stalking, where a 14+ may not be met but overall professional judgement is required) will trigger a referral into MARAC
  - If someone hasn't approached a specialist service prior to making homelessness approach, the Housing Options service must refer into these agencies if consent is provided
  - An applicant has the right to refuse completing a DASH assessment
  - In order to avoid re-traumatisation, we will use information provided by our partners such as DASH assessments
- An interpretation / translation service will be available to everyone for whom English is not their first language in order to ensure full understanding by both parties and minimise risk. When it is appropriate and assessed as safe, and if it is the victim's

preference, an adult family member can provide interpretation / translation support. We are committed to accessibility and developing improved ways of communicating, for example, with hard of hearing applicants and taking into account any specific additional needs.

**Improvement action:** we do not have an appointed resource to effectively support and interpret for cases of deaf applicants - seek to explore all accessible communication options available for our staff and applicants including up to date technological solutions

- Supporting the person who has experienced abuse to outline their experience without the expectation of intimate or distressing detail

**Action - for partners to support a common understanding of the following statement:**  
We are committed to maintaining information sharing protocols and will ensure existing statements and risk assessments are shared, with the victim's consent. We will strive to overcome barriers to information sharing. We accept that where consent is not given to share information and where risks may not be fully shared, the Housing Options service will need to ask for a domestic abuse statement from the applicant to understand risk and appropriate housing options.

- People may have a friend or advocate present at the interview in they wish.
- Being aware the person who has experienced abuse will be best placed to decide (where it is reasonable and safe to do so) what is safe for them and should not be forced to do anything which they believe could jeopardise their safety. This position may be superseded where professional judgement and risks indicate the personal choice of an applicant may pose significant harm and risks to the public and applicants alike.

## Personalised Housing Plans

Housing Options will undertake a number of actions within the personal housing plan (PHP). The PHP should be tailored to the customer and the following framework will be followed according to the customer's situation:

### 1. Has a DASH or a housing statement been shared by a professional supporting the applicant?

- Has consent been given for this to be shared (or a redacted version) with housing options
- Where practicable, professional judgement and information provided about a DA situation must be sought

- If there is no DASH available at this point, Housing Options must make their own enquiries and assessment of the presenting situation
- Does the customer need to be referred into MARAC? For high-risk cases presenting to Housing Options and a need for multi-agency risk management, this will be considered by our DA specialist.

**2. Is the applicant in immediate risk of harm?**

- If yes, do they need support to contact the police?
- Do they need a place of safety?
- If they need place of safety, is it an immediate need? If yes, then seek to place into interim / temporary accommodation.
- Do they want to remain in their home?
- Have they been referred to Sanctuary?
- Do they need interim accommodation / safe accommodation pending Sanctuary Scheme works?

**3. If the applicant is not in immediate risk of harm** - for e.g. due to a pending custody release and needs to leave by a certain date - seeking a planned move into Safe Accommodation is the preferred option if the customer wants to take this.

**4. What does the applicant want to happen next?**

- Do they want to go into Safe Accommodation? If so, and where there is availability, the following options may be explored:
  - women's or men's safe accommodation for 20 weeks - during which time they will be supported to access private rented accommodation and with their homelessness application. After 20 weeks has elapsed, and if no suitable move on option is secured within this time, the household may be placed into suitable temporary accommodation (usually bed and breakfast at first) pending a suitable outcome
  - dispersed unit (up to 26 weeks) where communal living is not appropriate: for example, if someone has a pet and / or teenage son, or, for drug and alcohol dependencies / any complex needs - see page 23 for more information
  - for women with complex needs who may need safe accommodation for up to one year, the EVA project may be a preferred choice: see page 23 for more information
- Refer into Safer Futures community service for specialist DA support in instances where an applicant doesn't want to access safe accommodation or wants stay at home; or, if they move into interim / temporary accommodation
  - An Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) - may be allocated to high risk cases

- A Domestic Abuse Support Advisor (DASA) - may be allocated to medium and standard risk cases
  - Refer into Krefta Kernow (see page 20) for assertive outreach and advocacy for more complex cases struggling to engage with and access Safe Accommodation; support applicants to get into Safe Accommodation or make current accommodation safer - including rough sleepers or likely rough sleepers
  - Do they need to leave the county and access safe accommodation outside of Cornwall? Call the national helpline (see page 25 for more information)
- 5. Is the customer already linked in with one of the above services?**
- If yes, Housing Options do not need to refer into these agencies but will need to liaise with them as partners and concerning case progression
  - Has the customer contacted any of the safe accommodation providers themselves and made a self-referral? Is there an outcome? Or, are they waiting to hear back?
  - If they haven't - then a direct referral must be made into safe accommodation as soon as possible by Housing Options if this is the applicant's preferred option
  - If the case is complex (Drug and Alcohol; Rough Sleeping; Significant mental health), refer customer into Krefta Kernow who will handle these referrals for additional support (see page 20)
- 6. Housing Options caseworkers must record all actions and outcomes on jigsaw - our case management system**

## 6. Guidance on domestic abuse and sexual violence support services

Housing Options works with other agencies within the Community Safety Partnership and wider domestic abuse system to signpost people for available support and will encourage them to access these networks in order to pursue legal remedies against the abusive person, receive personal support and where appropriate, placement in refuge or other safe accommodation.

All Housing Options staff will be conversant with the Safer Cornwall DASV Services.

### Domestic abuse and sexual violence - Safer Cornwall

The PHP will be tailored to the customer. All signposting or referrals must be documented on the housing options case system in order to ensure a robust audit trail.

The following actions may need to be considered based on the applicants' particular situation:

- **If there is Immediate risk to life, call the police on 999**
- **Where rape or sexual assault has been identified, if evidence needs collecting, there is a window between 48 hours and 10 days depending on the nature of the assault. Please visit:**
  - Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) - [Home - Devon & Cornwall SARC - NHS](#)
    - Tel: 0300 303 4626
  - And for further support from an independent sexual violence advisor (ISVA), signpost to - [The Bridge Project South West](#)
- **Where there are safeguarding concerns:**
  - **Child identified at risk:**  
Multi Agency Referral Unit (MARU) - **0300 123 1116**  
[multiagencyreferralunit@gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:multiagencyreferralunit@gcsx.gov.uk)
  - **Adult identified at risk:**  
**0300 124 4131**  
[Safeguarding adults - Cornwall Council](#)  
[Adult - Safeguarding Concern](#)
- **Are there drug and alcohol support needs?**
  - If consent is given, refer into treatment services as appropriate. If the person is already receiving specialist drug and alcohol treatment and where consent is given, it is important to share information with the treatment provider in order to minimise disruption to treatment which could put the person at increased risk.
  - [Drug and Alcohol Support in Cornwall | WithYou](#)
  - For young people in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, who are worried about drugs or alcohol: [YZUP: Support for Young People in Cornwall | WithYou](#)

## DASV Support Services:

- **Safer Futures** is a bespoke service for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly offering advice and support from Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence professionals and advocates, who will help people experiencing DASV, and workers assisting them, to access the most appropriate intervention and recovery services.

### **Safer Futures Helpline: 0300 777 4777**

There is a professionals' line for advice on the suitability of support and recovery options for your client.

Call **0300 777 4777** and select the professionals' option or email:

[safefutures@firstlight.org.uk](mailto:safefutures@firstlight.org.uk)

Safer futures provide Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) and Children and YP IDVAs (CYPVA) and signposting where appropriate.

Housing Options staff should contact refuges or other safe accommodation providers directly to check for vacancies and suitability, taking location of risk into account.

- **Krefta Kernow** offers trauma informed assertive outreach support for people affected by domestic abuse who may have difficulty navigating the housing system or accessing safe accommodation due to additional complexity. This includes those who are in temporary or unsafe accommodation; those waiting to access specialist safe accommodation; and, those who are rough sleeping and/or at risk of homelessness. Krefta provides specialist advocacy and supports open communication with other agencies to ensure the person's voice is heard.

Krefta Kernow will act upon a referral within 48 hours (72 over a bank over a bank holiday). It can facilitate referring into IDVAs/MARAC/safeguarding for specialist advice and other services such as therapeutic, social care and grant funding to assist people to stabilise and maintain their accommodation.

Upon assessment where the customer is presenting with more complex needs and difficulties with engaging with the pathway, housing options staff will ask the customer if they want to be referred into this service and ensure this is recorded and documented on the case history.

### **To refer into Krefta:**

**Please send completed referral form via email to:**

[KreftaKernow@womenscentrecornwall.org.uk](mailto:KreftaKernow@womenscentrecornwall.org.uk)

- **Sanctuary Scheme** is a multi-agency response to enable victims of domestic abuse and/or sexual violence to remain in their home safely, with professionally installed security measures, where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice and where the person engaging in abusive behaviour does not live. It is intended to prevent victims from being forced to leave their home by providing security, enabling them to call and wait for the arrival of the police, whilst increasing feelings of safety in their home and reducing risk of harm. The scheme is a positive response to domestic abuse and sexual violence and is a close working partnership between Cornwall Council, Devon and Cornwall Police, the Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service and the major Registered Social Landlords.

This option is available to cases of high risk or where professional judgement is that risk of harm is significantly escalating.

See appendix one for referral form.

Social landlords and Housing Options staff are able to refer directly into this scheme when appropriate and safe to do so

**To refer into the Sanctuary Scheme - please email referral form to:**

[cposanctuary@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk](mailto:cposanctuary@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk)

- **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)**

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a multi-agency meeting and person-centred method of providing a proportionate response to individuals considered to be at high risk of harm from domestic abuse. It involves the active participation of all statutory and voluntary agencies who might be involved in supporting a person experiencing domestic abuse.

The purpose of the MARAC is to:

- provide a confidential forum where agencies are able to share information, expertise and resources which will increase the safety, health and wellbeing of individuals and children related to the case
- seek to reduce the threat of further harm and repeated domestic abuse to the individual and their family members, through the agreed actions of the partner agencies
- develop multi-agency plans which identify appropriate interventions or other actions to safeguard individuals and their children.
- utilise advocacy and support services within Devon & Cornwall to support the individual, reducing the level of risk to said individual and maximising their safety and general wellbeing

- identify, where possible, whether the individual engaging in abusive behaviours poses a continuing significant threat to the individual in relation to the MARAC or the wider community, making referrals where appropriate, for example to the MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) or Local Policing teams

All professionals can refer to the MARAC directly using the referral form. However, each partner agency (including Housing Options) have dedicated MARAC representatives. The representative can support in determining whether a case should be referred and make a direct referral based on the level of risk being identified, professional judgement or risk of escalation.

Find details of Cornwall's MARAC and referral form here:

[Domestic abuse and sexual violence - Safer Cornwall](#)

## 7. Accessing Safe Accommodation

Cornwall's Refuges and other specialist safe accommodation provide short term, intensive support for those who flee from abuse. Given the intensity of the support and the vulnerability of the victims, attention should be paid to the length of time they spend in such accommodation.

There are a number of safe accommodation options, including refuges, dispersed houses and flats and a specialist service for women who have additional complex needs. They provide support and so are preferable to unsupported temporary accommodation, however they are often over-subscribed and the person escaping abuse may not want to consider this option. These services will need to carry out a needs and risk assessment to determine suitability.

If a refuge or dispersed unit has a vacancy they will require some basic information about the household and will then make direct contact with them to start the assessment process. Services aim to process referrals within 24-48 hours but this is not always possible and so interim accommodation may need to be sourced. These services also welcome self-referrals. The following pages set out possible safe accommodation options:

- **Women's refuge accommodation**

Women's refuge accommodation in Cornwall is provided by two organisations - Cornwall Refuge Trust (CRT) and West Cornwall Women's Aid (WCWAid)

In total they provide accommodation for 17 women and up to 30 children. They can provide accommodation for male children up to 18 years of age subject to suitable room type availability. Due to the communal nature of refuge accommodation it is not suitable for those with a current alcohol or drug dependency but those in recovery will be assessed on a case by case basis. Each refuge has varying on site staff availability and provides out of hours emergency support. The maximum stay in refuges in Cornwall is 20 weeks.

**Cornwall Refuge Trust (Refuges):**

- Female Refuge Main office: **01872 277814**
- 24 Hour Helpline (professional/self-referrals): **01872 225629**

**West Cornwall Women's Aid (Refuge): **01736 367539****

- **Live West - New Horizons (dispersed accommodation):**

LiveWest provide safe accommodation in properties located across Cornwall. There are 25 units for women or men, with or without children, where communal living is not available or suitable, including for those with additional complex needs or where self-contained accommodation is more appropriate. Support is offered through an outreach model through a key worker and dedicated children's workers. The maximum stay in dispersed accommodation is six months.

**Call: 01392 793821**

- **Male Refuge Accommodation: Cornwall Refuge Trust - Norda Project**

Norda House provides refuge for men who have experienced domestic abuse. There is also an annex that can be used for those fleeing so called "honour based" abuse and for transgender individuals. At full capacity the refuge can house up to five adults and eight children. Due to the communal nature of refuge accommodation it is not suitable for those with a current alcohol or drug dependency but those in recovery will be assessed on a case by case basis. The refuge has on-site support during dedicated hours and provides out of hours emergency support.

**Norda House Male refuge: 01872 277814 / 01872 225629**

- **Harbour Housing EVA Project**

The EVA Project provides Safe Accommodation and support for women fleeing DASV who also have complex needs. This may include substance dependency, mental health needs or a history of offending. Risk is assessed on a case by case basis. The EVA Project has an enhanced harm reduction housing model around substance use on site to support those in active addiction to flee abuse.

Dogs and other small pets can usually be accommodated. Most rooms are self-contained and mobility and physical health needs issues can also be considered. The service is not appropriate for children or young women under 18 years of age. Due to the additional complexity of women accessing this service, the maximum stay is 12 months, during which time their housing pathway will be developed according to need, risk and the most appropriate initiatives that are available. Each resident is required to engage with dedicated staff who offer housing related support, specialist one-to-one and group support, and coordinate other specialist agencies to supplement this as needed.

Calls are welcomed to check suitability and current vacancies for this service: **01726 74186**

Referrals are made online so please follow this link:

<https://harbour.eccosolutions.co.uk/harbour/p/r/refer>

Harbour Housing aim to be in touch with the candidate / referrer within 48 hours of receiving a referral

- **National Resources:**

**National Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline (24HR):**

**0808 2000 247**

Maintains a register of all female refuge spaces in UK called Routes to Support. Local refuges can also access this database and if refuge is needed outside of the county or there are no appropriate vacancies locally they may have the capacity to carry out a search for spaces elsewhere. This is dependent on staffing and other factors in the refuge at the time of request.

Or visit: [National Domestic violence Helpline](https://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk/)

## **Mankind Helpline:**

Provides an information, support and signposting service to men suffering from domestic abuse from their current or former wife, partner (including same-sex partner) or husband. They operate a Male Domestic Abuse Network Portal.

**01823 334244**

Or visit: [ManKind Initiative - Supporting Male Victims of Domestic Abuse](https://www.mankind.org.uk/)

- **Interim & Temporary Accommodation**

Interim and temporary accommodation will be used where the council has reason to believe a person is homeless and in priority need as a result of domestic abuse (as defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021). Where appropriate this may be a short-term option whilst risk and needs assessments for safe accommodation are taking place.

The Temporary Accommodation (TA) Placement Policy seeks to ensure that all placements are made on the basis of:

- a. A comprehensive assessment of a household's circumstances and needs, and
- b. A balanced assessment of the needs of all households requiring temporary accommodation against the breakdown of the type and location of accommodation that is available to be allocated at any given point

Our policy is to provide suitable accommodation within Cornwall and as close to a person's local area/support network wherever reasonably practicable, except in cases where there is a specific reason why the household should not be accommodated within the district itself (e.g. those at risk of violence in Cornwall). However, we are only able to do this subject to the supply of suitable accommodation being available. In cases where interim accommodation is required it may be the case that a person has to be placed away from these networks or outside of Cornwall for a short time.

- **No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)**

A person has no recourse to public funds when they are 'subject to immigration control'. They cannot access Local Authority housing or homelessness assistance and most welfare benefits, unless an exemption applies.

The Domestic Abuse Strategy Team hold a discretionary fund that can enable refuges to support people faced with NRPF, whilst other sources of funding are secured and facilitating access to safe accommodation without delay. This cannot be utilised to support people

living in other temporary accommodation or to access move on accommodation. This fund is only payable to locally commissioned specialist Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation providers, who are aware how to apply. If you are supporting someone who needs to access safe accommodation, please contact these providers directly to make enquires as to availability and suitability of a referral.

Due to the tenure of New Horizons dispersed accommodation, they are not able to offer accommodation to those who are subject to immigration control and so only refugees who issue licences are able to consider such applicants.

In some circumstances, applicants subject to NRPF may benefit from applying for the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse Concession (MVDAC) but this can take a number of weeks to process.

People need specialist advice and guidance regarding whether it is appropriate for them according to their circumstances.

**Please note:** only a qualified person is legally able to provide immigration and asylum advice and services to the public. To support an applicant to complete the above application, please signpost to the services below:

**Further specialist information can be found at the following links:**

[DCRS | Devon & Cornwall Refugee Support](#)

[Information and resources](#)

In circumstances where there is a homelessness presentation from an applicant with NRPF, officers can also refer them into the following options for assistance:

- local authority social care
- an applicant's embassy
- directly to one of the refuge providers
- national domestic abuse helpline

## 9. Independent advice services - useful links

- [Find a Legal Aid Adviser or Family Mediator](#) - Use this service to find legal aid advisers near you. They will ask about your problem and finances to work out if you can get legal aid.
- [Get help from Shelter - Shelter England](#)
- [Get Advice | Citizens Advice Cornwall](#)

## 10. Key to DASV housing pathway flowcharts pages 28 to 33:

### Key to the Flowcharts:

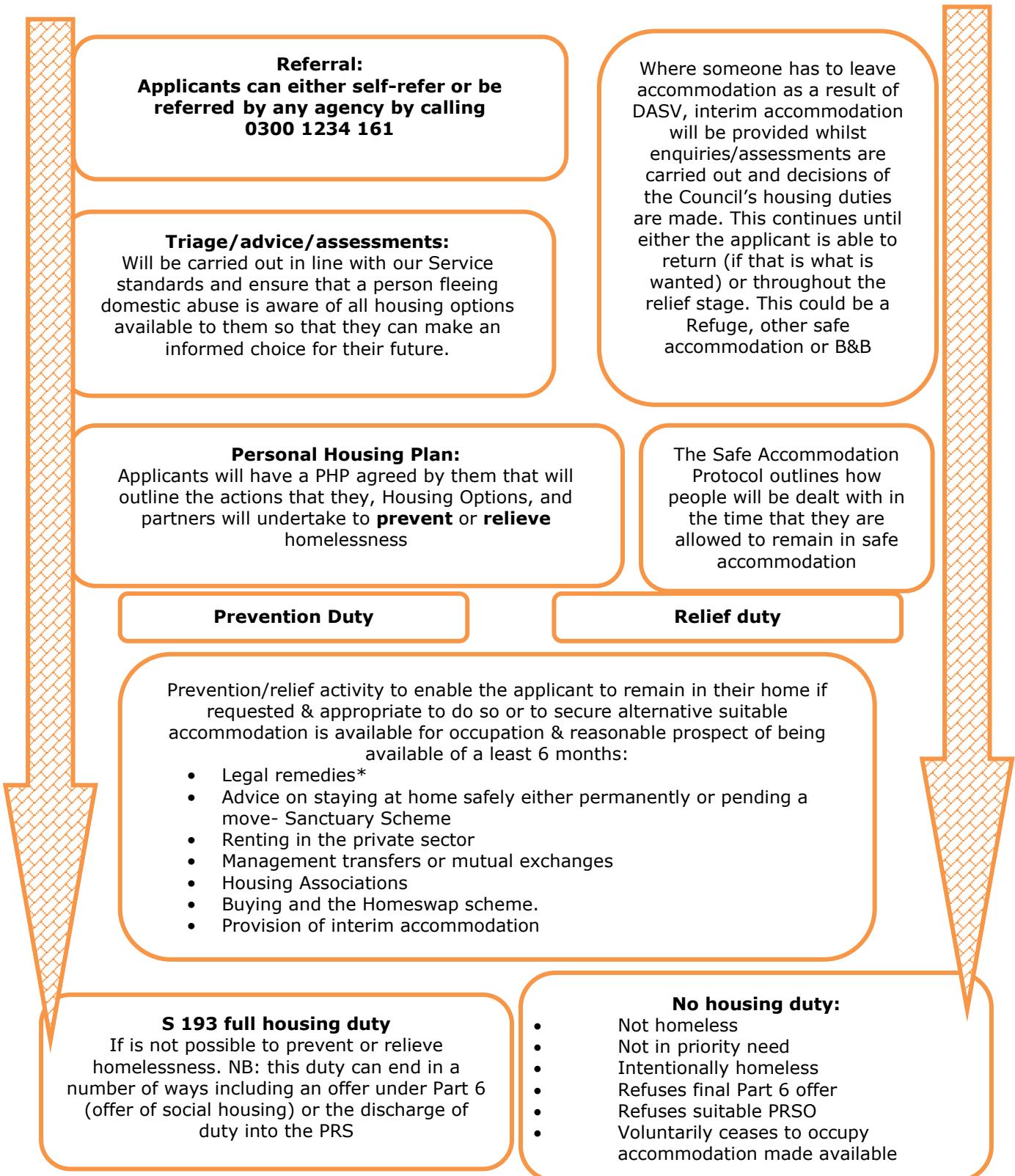
Housing Options action/policy or legislation: 

Guidance for staff: 

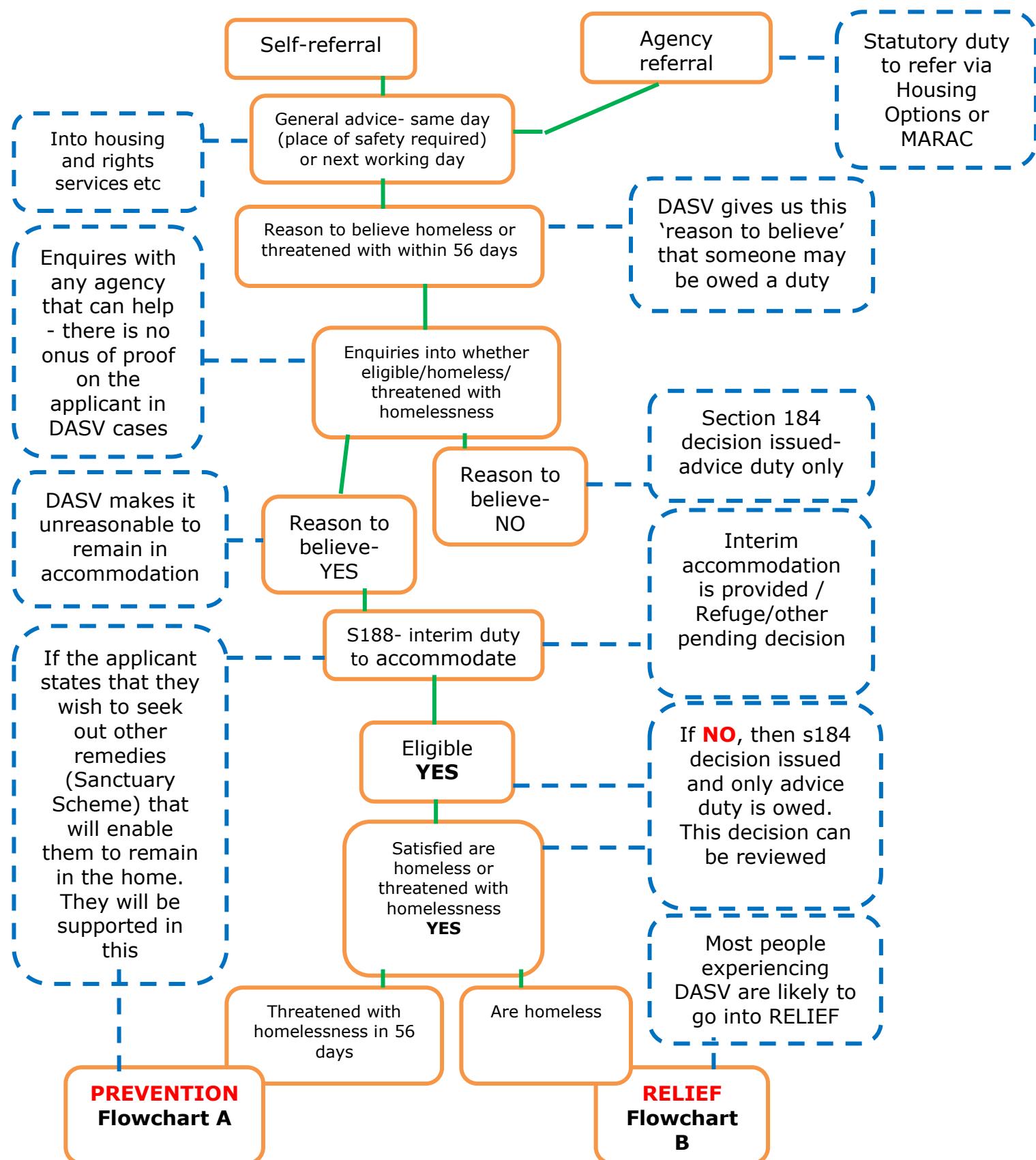
Guidance/action for partners: 

Connectors: 

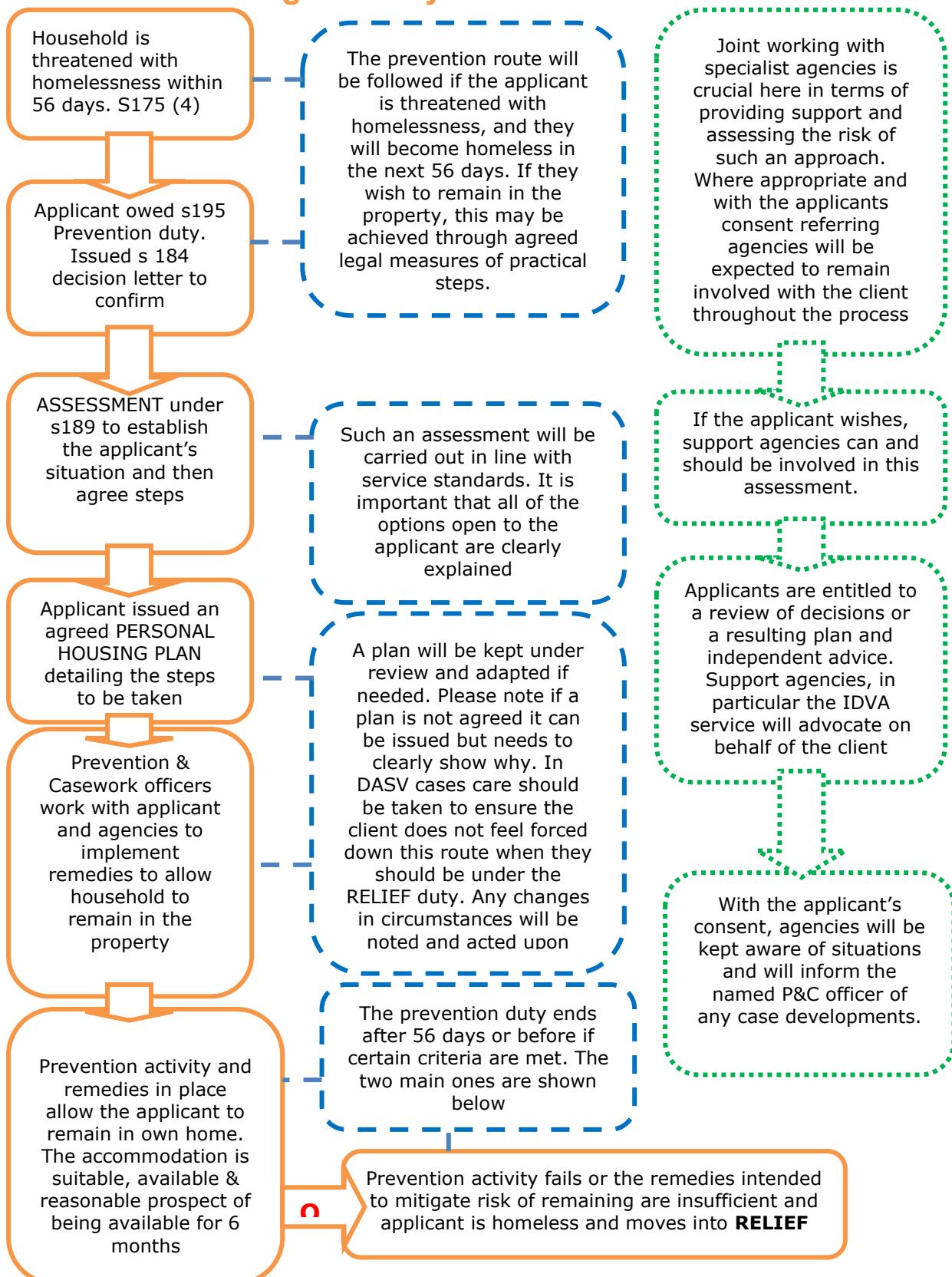
## 11. DASV Housing Pathway Overview (HA 1996 Pt VII, as amended HR Act 2017) flowchart



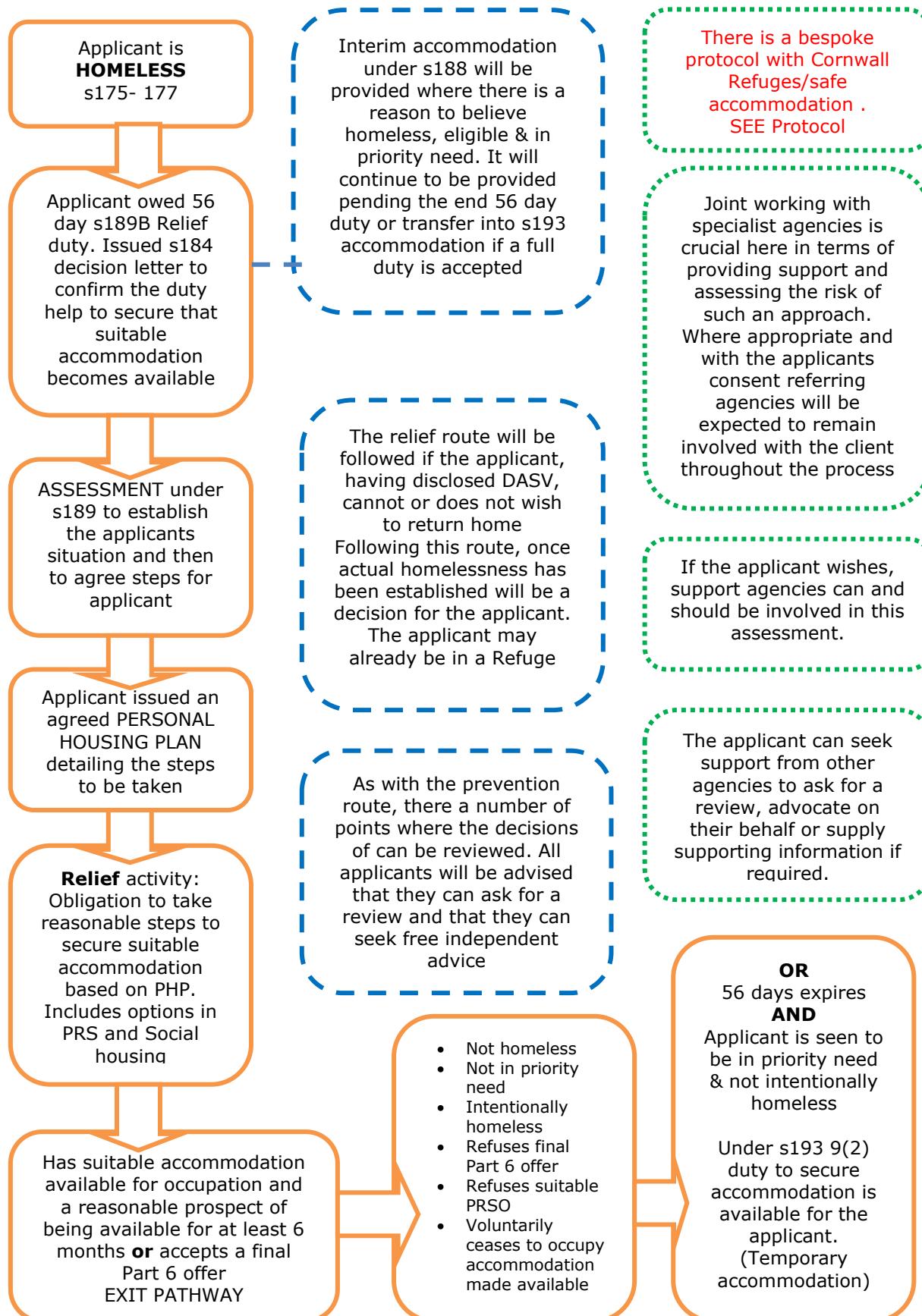
## 12. DASV Housing Pathway Initial Contact Flowchart



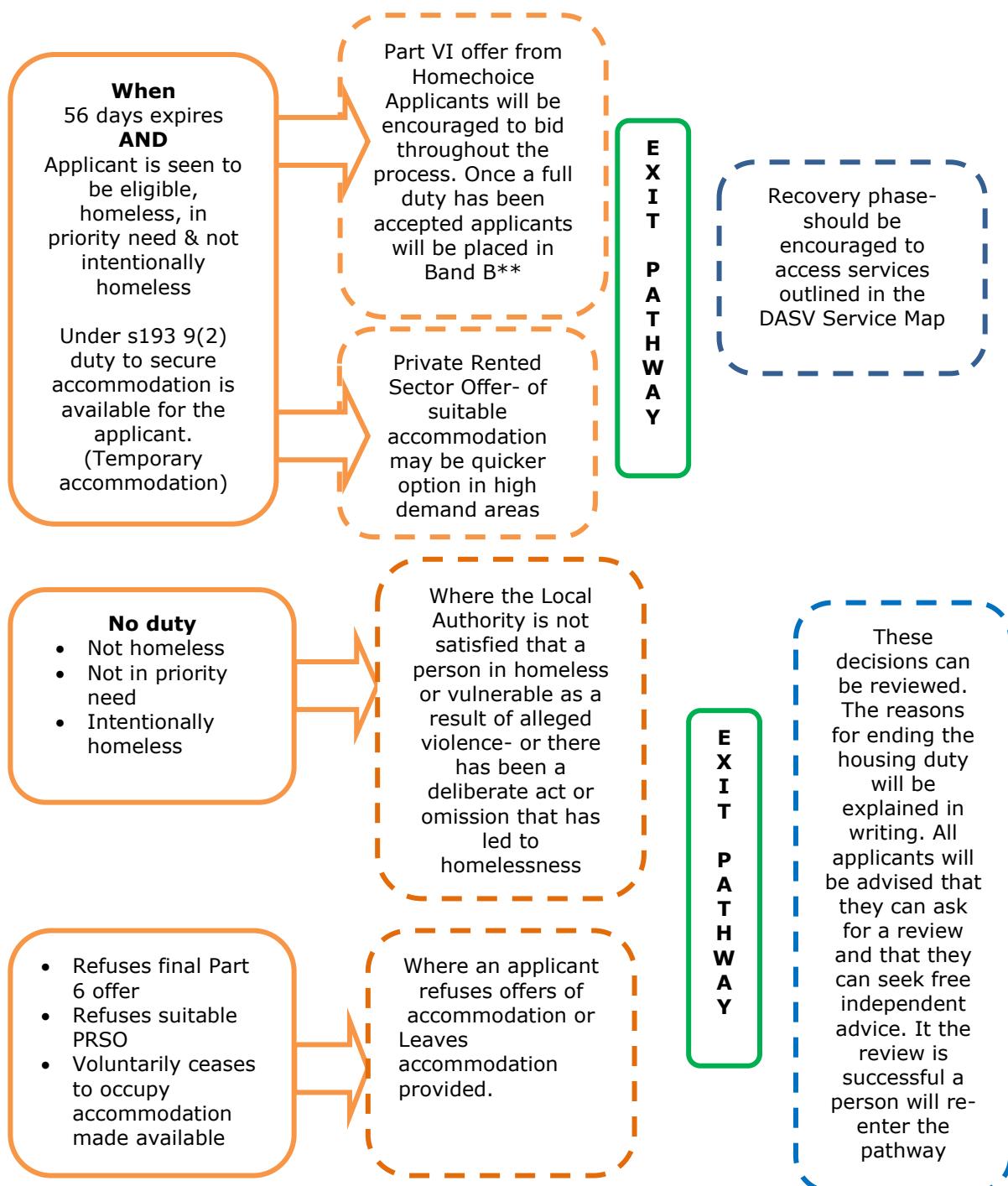
## 13. DASV Housing Pathway 'PREVENTION' Route Flowchart A



## 14. DASV Housing Pathway 'RELIEF' Route Flowchart B



## 15. Exiting the DASV Housing Pathway (main housing duty) Flowchart



\* Band C is awarded once a client is under a Prevention or Relief Duty. Once a main homelessness duty has been awarded, Homechoice banding changes to B and clients are awarded a 'Cornwall Connection'.

\*\* The Domestic Abuse 2021 ensures that where a local authority, for reasons connected with domestic abuse, grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an assured shorthold tenancy) this must be a secure lifetime tenancy.

## 16. Review of DASV Housing Pathway

The DASV Housing Pathway will be reviewed at least every year or sooner if there is a change in legislation, regulation or best practice guidance affecting service charges.

## 17. Governance of DASV Pathway

This pathway is monitored quarterly by the DASV Housing Pathway Operational Group – unresolved issues are escalated to the DASV Local Partnership Board.

In addition to this and as part of the Homelessness Case Level Collection statutory submission - random selection of cases approaching the housing options service will be quality assured to ensure compliance with the guidance set out by government and this pathway is being met.

## 18. Appendices:

<b>Appendix 1: see separate attachment</b>	 Agency referral for high risk cases to the	<b>Appendix 2: see separate attachment</b>	 Housing Options Specialism Officer_D	<b>Appendix 3: see separate attachment</b>	DASH Risk Assessment
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Appendix 4: Issues log		
Issue	Impact / action	Outcome
<b>Case recording on the housing options system</b>	To ensure robust recording as per guidance	Ongoing monitoring
<b>Feedback citing referrals being retraumatised</b>	Trauma informed approach to be embedded and trauma to be minimised – seek professional judgement where possible to minimise trauma – see guidance from p9	To cover as training item
<b>Loss of social housing tenancies</b>	Churn in flow of applications and of repeat approaches / disruption to families	Monitor flow / joint approach to mitigations
<b>Instances cited where client may not be believed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further traumatisation</li> <li>• Increases risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be reduced by training and trauma informed approach – in progress</li> <li>• Ongoing monitoring</li> </ul>

Appendix 4: Issues log		
Issue	Impact / action	Outcome
<b>Emergency moves out of refuge can be traumatic and partners would like this to be smoother for applicants</b>	The Housing Options service is currently reviewing its process and policies	Ongoing monitoring
<b>Ensure clarity re Homechoice banding</b>	* Band C is awarded once a client is under a Prevention or Relief Duty. Once a main homelessness duty has been awarded, Homechoice banding changes to B and clients are awarded a 'Cornwall Connection'.	Cover as item in next operational meeting
<b>The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 ensures for reasons connected with domestic abuse, applicants losing secure tenancies are granted a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an assured shorthold tenancy) this must be a secure lifetime tenancy.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work up framework and mechanism to assure this is implemented locally</li> <li>How is this being monitored – need to establish this is being enacted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be reviewed</li> <li>Impact of Renters Rights Bill to be set out</li> </ul>
<b>Suitable travel arrangements can be facilitated if the customer has no means of transport</b>	Housing options will make arrangements in emergency situations where no other means of transport is available	SM to feedback to our partners
<b>Citation page 11, "<i>Please note: in situations of high demand, a customer and the supporting organisations, may not be made aware of the location of this booking until 6pm (or out of hours) that day.</i>"</b>	<b>Noted</b> - Feedback from safe accommodation services is that this happens almost every time, causing further stress and upset – is there any way that DA cases can be prioritised, especially those with children?	Housing Options is currently reviewing its process and policies. Ensure trauma informed approach in these stressful situations
<b>One SPOC officer</b>	Consultation feedback cites this is too much for one person	SM to ensure feedback raised
<b>Independent legal signposting</b>	Ensure partners share best practice and commonly used links in this area	Ongoing – to be picked up in operational meeting

## 19. Document information

### Contacts

Pathway prepared by Sophie Maher, Policy and Strategy Development Officer, Housing Options Service, 04/06/2025

**Further information can be found at the following link: [Housing - Cornwall Council](#)**

Or by mailing [housingadvice@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvice@cornwall.gov.uk)

### Alternative formats

If you would like this information in another format please contact: **Cornwall Council, County Hall, Treyew Road, Truro TR1 3AY**

Email: [comments@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:comments@cornwall.gov.uk) Telephone: **0300 1234 100**

[www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk)

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