



# **Remodelling of Accommodation Services for Victims of Domestic Abuse**

## **Consultation Report**

**November 2013**

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## 1. Introduction

Consultation has been undertaken by Torbay Council on the proposal to remodel current accommodation services for victims of domestic abuse from a refuge model to an emergency accommodation model.

The reasons for the proposed change are:

- To provide equity of service to all women and children fleeing domestic abuse in terms of the initial advice they receive prior to placement, and the services they receive.
- To provide greater value for money for the Local Authority by delivering emergency accommodation linked to specialist outreach support.

The objectives of the proposal are:

- Housing Needs and Options Service to provide a range of accommodation options to women and children fleeing domestic abuse; including a women only accommodation unit and accommodation that meets the needs of women with more complex needs such as drug and alcohol users.
- Housing Needs Service staff to be trained to undertake Domestic Abuse specific Risk Assessments prior to placement to ensure appropriate placements are made.
- Delivery of fast track outreach intervention to victims of domestic abuse placed into emergency accommodation provisions.
- Compliance with homeless legislation. Currently when women and children are placed in the refuge their housing options interview is undertaken after placement, this means that the Local Authority has not undertaken investigation into whether the person is eligible for assistance prior to placement (s.184 of Housing Act 1996). Further this means that the range of homelessness prevention options have not been explored prior to placement. Alternative options would include reconnecting to an area with support networks, alternate accommodation moves into the Private Rented Sector under Localism.
- To ensure women and children using the service do not become homeless or lose their support.

The intended outcomes of this proposal are:

- A more equitable service people fleeing domestic abuse
- Women and their children are supported to achieve independent living and sustainable accommodation.
- Housing Services involvement in all pre-placement work as per s.184 Housing Act 1996 and to undertake CAADA DASH Risk Assessment (Domestic Abuse risk assessment tool).
- Where it is appropriate and safe to do so, a focus on supporting women and children from Torbay.

## 2. Methodology

Consultation on this proposal was carried out with a variety of key stakeholders and took a number of forms, please see table below.

Stakeholder Group	Method of consultation
<p><b>Current provider of the refuge</b></p>	<p>A meeting took place between the Local Authority and the current provider of the refuge. They were advised of the proposal and provided information along with a set of questions for them to respond to. They were also advised they could make further representations in writing to Torbay Council regarding the proposal.</p> <p>This meeting took place on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2013 and the provider was advised to respond by 18<sup>th</sup> September 2013. At the request of the provider, Torbay Council agreed the publication of the consultation with other stakeholders would be delayed by a week to allow the provider time to inform their staff about the proposal.</p> <p>A response to the consultation was received as well as a further representation from the provider.</p>
<p><b>Women currently using the service / have used the service in the past.</b></p>	<p>The current provider of the refuge assisted the Local Authority in arranging focus groups and telephone interviews with current clients and women who were accessing the outreach services who had been accommodated at the refuge previously. As part of these focus groups women were asked to participate in a facilitated discussion about the services they currently receive and their thoughts on the proposal.</p> <p>These focus groups took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September, 12 women took part.</p> <p>Telephone interviews were undertaken with clients who could not attend the focus group. (7)</p>
<p><b>Local and National Partner Organisations including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Members of Domestic Abuse Steering Group</b></li> <li>• <b>Providers of other Domestic Abuse services</b></li> <li>• <b>Victim Support</b></li> <li>• <b>Refuge</b></li> <li>• <b>Women's Aid</b></li> <li>• <b>National Centre for Domestic Violence</b></li> <li>• <b>Police</b></li> </ul>	<p>Local partner organisations that form part of the Domestic Abuse Steering Group were provided information about the proposal along with a set of questions for them to respond to. They were also advised they could make further representations in writing to Torbay Council regarding the proposal.</p> <p>Information was sent to partner organisations on 4<sup>th</sup> September and with a response deadline of the 18<sup>th</sup> September, later extended until 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013.</p> <p>Responses were received from six organisations.</p>

<p><b>Members of the public / non-service users</b></p>	<p>An online survey was developed which was supported by information about the proposal. Respondents were advised of how they could make further representations in writing to Torbay Council regarding the proposal.</p> <p>The online survey opened on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2013 with a closing date of 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013. The deadline was then extended to 30<sup>th</sup> October 2013</p> <p>To date a total of 273 responses have been received to the online survey (including 21 in the extended deadline).</p>

Further representations were made in writing (via both letter and email) by organisations, MPs and members of the public. A total of 26 representations were received and all the feedback provided has been taken into account as part of this report.

All feedback which has been received through the consultation process has been taken into account and summarised throughout this report. Where free text has been provided in responses, this has been analysed and categorised into key themes which are presented in this report along with examples of comments.

Feedback from this consultation has been used to inform the Equality Impact Assessment undertaken in relation to this proposal.

### 3. Summary of Results

A summary of the feedback from all methods of consultation received to date is outlined below:

#### **The current model:**

- The refuge provides peer support for women, they make friends with others who are in similar situations and have this support network available. Friendships are maintained once women move into the community.
- There is on-site specialist support for women and their children.
- Children at the refuge are supported by access to support workers and play workers, but also get to build friendships with children in similar situations.
- The refuge provides safe and secure accommodation for women.
- Staff are always available at the refuge.
- The refuge is part of a national network and they are a well know model of service provision.
- The refuge does not meet current demand as it is and there is a waiting list for services.
- There can sometimes be delays for women in getting the right type of room at the refuge while they wait for one to become available.
- The current model does not match accommodation to need, there needs to be a variety of provision available and support needs to be client focussed.
- Living in shared accommodation such as refuge can have a negative impact on some women with complex needs.
- Refuge accommodation can be identifiable over time.
- Dynamics of shared accommodation mean that there can be disagreements between women.

#### **The Proposed model:**

- The majority of respondents (91.6%) who completed the online consultation disagreed with the proposal.
- The model needs further clarity on how temporary accommodation will be provided and procured.
- The proposed model does not appear to consider support for domestic abuse victims holistically.
- There will be a lack of independent specialist advice and support.
- There will be a lack of provision for women who need to leave their homes urgently.
- Risk that without a refuge women will choose to stay with their partners.
- Concerns regarding the capacity of housing officers to undertake assessments.
- Concerns that assessments will be carried out by less experienced staff.
- There is the potential for increased demand on other services which may result in greater expenditure.
- No information relating to how children will be supported and safeguarded.
- It is considered too risky to place women in the private rented sector.
- Women need the support of a refuge and without one will not develop the skills they need for successful independence.

- There is a need for women to be able to move out of area and if priority is given to local people then some women from outside Torbay may be put at greater risk.
- Lack of an out of hours service.
- Greater isolation for women who will not receive the peer support they currently value in the refuge.
- The proposed model may provide more flexibility and more targeted support.
- Through the proposed model individuals will be matched more effectively against their needs.
- The proposed model will offer opportunities for improved safeguarding with smoother processes for sharing information.
- The proposed model provides a better change for successful move on.

The following considerations need to be taken into account in the development of any service specification for domestic abuse services including accommodation services (all of these issues were raised through the consultation activity):

- Staff levels, both in the Housing Options Services and Outreach Workers to ensure that demand for services can be met. Outreach workers should be accessible and respond to enquiries in a timely manner.
- It can be difficult for women to discuss their situations so consideration should be given to where interviews for accommodation can take place, as well as whether childcare can be provided.
- The process to be accommodated under a new model should be quicker than the current model.
- Ensuring the confidentiality of emergency accommodation is critical; accommodation must be safe and secure.
- Women who have experienced domestic abuse find a lot of peer support in being accommodated together and are able to share their experiences.
- The standards of emergency accommodation.
- Provision of services for children such as play sessions, assisting them to have more normality in their life and support for getting children back in to school.
- Providing a variety of options for accommodation

## 4. Consultation Results

### 4a: Current provider of the refuge

A meeting took place between the current provider of the refuge and Torbay Council. The provider was advised of the proposal and provided with information along with a set of questions for them to respond to. The tables below represent the provider's response to the consultation.

A further representation was made to the Local Authority from the provider regarding the consultation process and a number of other points such as the development of the proposals and the current state of the Domestic Abuse Strategy. Torbay Council has responded to this letter as part of this consultation process.

#### Current model

#### Q1) What are the main advantages with the current model of service provision?

Category	Examples of comments
<b>National Network</b>	<p><i>"The refuge is a national resource and part of a vital national network of refuge's on which it can call"</i></p> <p><i>"Women from Torbay are also able to access refuge provision in other areas of the county and country as part of the national network"</i></p>
<b>Local strategy and priority</b>	<p><i>"The refuge is an integral part of Torbay's Homelessness Strategy and assists the Council in meeting its vision, priorities and obligations"</i></p> <p><i>"The refuge assists the council to achieve the vision of the strategy and its obligation under the Homelessness Act 2002 by ensuring sufficient specialist accommodation is and will be available for people who are or may become homeless."</i></p> <p><i>"The refuge service assists Torbay Council Housing needs and options service to meet its obligations under the 1996 Housing Act by gathering evidence of the circumstances of households claiming to be homeless including domestic abuse, incorporating completion of CAADA-DASH and local connection before women are offered a place."</i></p>
<b>Responsive on-site / Specialist support</b>	<p><i>"Women and children fleeing domestic abuse and violence have access to specialist support, independent advice and effective safety planning. This is vital to ensure that women are given emotional and practical support at a crucial time in their lives."</i></p> <p><i>"[The refuge provides] accommodation, appropriate support and robust safety planning for 7 women and up to 21 children and babies at any one time."</i></p> <p><i>"Placements into the Refuge include women with alcohol and drug use and families with complex needs. Staff are experienced in supporting families with these needs and do not exclude on these grounds alone. Therefore the refuge already meets objective two of the revised proposal."</i></p>

**Table continues below**



Category	Examples of comments
	<p><i>“Women and children have access to trained and specialist support every day including weekends and for many families, this is vital to ensure that they achieve sustainable independence. Often this support has to be reactive as women and children experience emotional turmoil and increased risk after leaving.”</i></p> <p><i>“The refuge service is responsive to need and women in crisis have been able to access the refuge within 2 hours of contact, once eligibility has been established.”</i></p>
<b>Safeguarding</b>	<p><i>“Safeguarding children and adults is embedded and prioritised in the current refuge service. The service has an appointed safeguarding lead officer and all staff are experienced and trained in identifying and reporting safeguarding issues.”</i></p> <p><i>“Refuge staff carry out dynamic risk assessments to ensure that risks to women and children are identified and plans are agreed and put in place to manage them”</i></p>
<b>Appropriateness of placement</b>	<p><i>“Families and children are placed appropriately rather than being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation which should be limited only to 6 weeks and is not considered appropriate accommodation for children”</i></p>
<b>Children</b>	<p><i>“The Refuge provides additional specialist support for children through the work of its children’s worker.”</i></p>
<b>Peer Support</b>	<p><i>“The current model allows women the opportunity of peer support under difficult circumstances – and their children are able to benefit from the friendship of other children sharing similar experiences – this would be lost in the revised model”</i></p>

**Q2) What are the main disadvantages with the current model of service provision?**

Category	Examples of comments
<p><b>Level of provision</b></p>	<p><i>“The provision of specialist DA accommodation is limited – in 2012/13 108 women wanted to access the refuge. In the year 2013/14 to date there have been 82 applications.”</i></p>
<p><b>Assessment and safeguarding</b></p>	<p><i>“Current emergency and temporary accommodation provision is dangerous – staff are not required or trained to undertake specific DA assessments. This means that significant risks to women and children are not addressed.”</i></p> <p><i>“Housing and emergency accommodation providers are not consistently identifying cases that need to be referred to MARAC. Again this means that women and their children at risk of harm may not be adequately protected.”</i></p>
<p><b>Appropriateness of placement</b></p>	<p><i>“Families are often placed in inappropriate B&amp;B without cooking facilities. B&amp;B accommodation is not considered appropriate for children. The use of B&amp;B may increase if the refuge is closed as less accommodation options will be available.”</i></p>
<p><b>Process</b></p>	<p><i>“No referral pathway for women accommodated in B&amp;B or emergency accommodation to be supported to move to the refuge when space is available or to access outreach support.”</i></p>

**Q3) Is the current model of service provision adequate in meeting the needs of victims of domestic abuse?**

No

**Q4) Please provide further details below:**

The provider felt that there was inadequate provision to meet the demand on the service.

## Proposed Model

**Q5) What do you perceive the main advantages will be if the proposed model is implemented?**

The provider felt the information provided on the proposal was limited so were not able to identify any advantages.

**Q6) What do you perceive the main disadvantages will be if the proposed model is implemented?**

Category	Examples of comments
<b>Model unclear</b>	<p><i>“The consultation paper only provides very limited information on what the revised model will look like. There is no detail on the delivery model and therefore it is difficult for us to provide a full response to the consultation based on incomplete information. “</i></p> <p><i>“It is unclear how the temporary accommodation will be provided and procured.”</i></p> <p><i>“There are no details provided of how and when Torbay Council Housing Needs would make referrals to MARAC or raise safeguarding issues.”</i></p> <p><i>“Domestic abuse is a very complex area of work and requires more than a housing options solution. This model appears to solely look at housing options without considering a more holistic approach to domestic abuse, and its impact on families and communities.”</i></p>
<b>Assessment</b>	<p><i>“The model relies heavily on housing officers being trained in risk assessment, but that is only part of the picture in terms of the delivery of safe supported accommodation for people fleeing domestic abuse.</i></p> <p><i>“There are significant risks attached to staff not being fully trained or experienced in domestic abuse, risk assessment and support planning.”</i></p> <p><i>“Where it has been previously suggested that Housing workers complete the CAADA, a barrier to this has been that Housing officers only have limited time to interview someone, carry out their assessments and place someone. It is vitally important that at the point that a woman seeks help she is believed and is treated with sensitivity. To complete a CAADA-DASH assessment usually takes at least an hour and may take considerably longer depending on the woman. How will housing staff be able to resource this increased demand on their time?”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Table continues below</b></p>

Category	Examples of comments
<p><b>Specialist services</b></p>	<p><i>“The proposal indicates that the new service will be equitable, but it will not be domestic abuse specific. The women seeking advice will not have access to independent specialist domestic abuse advice and support prior to making a decision to leave. Often women seek support about the abuse and want to discuss their situation with a service they trust. “</i></p> <p><i>“No provision would be available for women who need to leave their home urgently. How would they access housing and safe space?”</i></p> <p><i>“Accommodation provided for women who use alcohol or drugs – this does not appear to be a priority group as listed in the current homelessness strategy.”</i></p>
<p><b>Risk to safety</b></p>	<p><i>“The return to area of risk percentage rate for women living in emergency accommodation is much higher than that of the refuge. Information provided suggests that it is above 20% from emergency accommodation. The return rate for the refuge is 10% or 3 women in the 2012/2013 year. This indicates that specialist support is needed to ensure that women and children remain safe and free from abuse.”</i></p>
<p><b>Demand on other services</b></p>	<p><i>“There will be an increased demand on other services – particularly the Domestic Abuse Outreach Service. There is a waiting list for this service, and pressure will increase if referrals are fast tracked from housing... This in turn means that some women will not be in receipt of a service which means that risks to women and children would not be assessed or addressed.”</i></p> <p><i>“No provision has been made for those women who should be referred to MARAC and therefore will be supported by the IDVA. This will put increasing pressure on the IDVA service which is already under-resourced. The refuge currently fulfils this role for the refuge clients.”</i></p>
<p><b>Support to children</b></p>	<p><i>“The proposal does not give any information about how children will be specifically supported in the way that they are at present from a specialist children’s worker.”</i></p> <p><i>“What provision will housing be able to make to ensure that children are not present during the completion of the CAADA-DASH. There is evidence to suggest that children can be exposed to further harm through hearing details of the abuse that their mother has suffered?”</i></p>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<p><i>“In our opinion, the current Council provision is not suitable, is linked to a church and the provision should be secular in order to be inclusive”</i></p>

**Q7) What do you think the main impacts will be on victims of domestic abuse if the proposed model is implemented?**

Category	Examples of comments
<b>Support</b>	<i>“Women will not be able to access support immediately if outreach is at capacity. This means that women will not feel appropriately supported leading to an increase in risk and serious incidents.”</i>
<b>Risk to safety</b>	<p><i>“There is also a risk that more women will return to partners or area of risk due to lack of support. This will place them and their children at greater risk.”</i></p> <p><i>“There is a risk that women will not leave in the first place rather than seek help due to the closure of a provision that is clearly understood by the community to be a response to domestic abuse.”</i></p> <p><i>“Risks of disclosure of information related to domestic abuse in a multi-client group setting.”</i></p> <p><i>“Women and children will not be supported to stay safe as there is no mention of a confidential address or safety planning at the first point of contact.”</i></p>
<b>No support to children</b>	<p><i>“Risk that children will not be adequately safeguarded as the present model includes support and services for children”</i></p> <p><i>“The impact on children will increase without a safe supportive environment to support them to recover from the trauma of living in a home where domestic abuse has been a feature”</i></p>
<b>Demand on other services</b>	<i>“There is a risk that cases will escalate to become MARAC cases without intervention.”</i>
<b>Other</b>	<i>“Risk of further Domestic Homicide Reviews.”</i>

**Q8) Do you think the proposed model will adequately meet the needs of women fleeing domestic violence and abuse?**

No

**Q9) Please provide further details below:**

Category	Examples of comments
<b>Specialist support</b>	<i>"Many families that access the refuge have complex needs and need a high level of support in order to move onto sustainable independence. This level of support will not be provided."</i>
<b>Risk</b>	<i>"It is too risky to place domestic abuse clients in the private rented sector."</i>
<b>Other</b>	<i>"The proposed model is untested and does not appear to be based on supporting evidence. "</i>

**Q10) Are there any particular groups of women which may be adversely affected by this proposal?**

Category	Comments made by respondent
<b>All women</b>	<i>"All women fleeing domestic abuse as there will be less accommodation available to them."</i>
<b>Women with children</b>	<i>"Women with children as there is no provision for the children to be specifically supported, or the women assisted by specialist staff to support the children."</i>
<b>Ethnic minority groups</b>	<i>"Women from BME communities or with no access to public funds who are often the most vulnerable and at risk including women at risk from honour-based violence and forced marriages. The proposed model would not provide the level of anonymity or confidentiality that these women require."</i>
<b>Disabilities</b>	<i>"Women with disabilities as there is a lack of accessible accommodation (the Refuge provides one ground floor, wheelchair adapted room)."</i>

## 4b: Focus Group / Telephone Interview Results

Two focus groups were held, one with current clients of the refuge and one with previous clients. A total of 12 women attended. Telephone interviews were also carried out with women who had previously used refuge provision. The same question template was across the focus groups and telephone interviews. Respondents viewpoints are outlined in this section below.

### Q1) How did you get to know about the refuge? (*current clients only*)

Clients were informed about refuge services through Council services or partner organisations including the police.

Category	Examples of comments
Council services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic abuse team</li> <li>• Housing officer</li> <li>• Homelessness protocols</li> </ul>
Partner organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police</li> <li>• Westcountry Housing</li> <li>• Outreach</li> <li>• GP</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's Aid</li> <li>• Previous knowledge</li> </ul>

### Q2) What do you/did you like about being there?

#### Refuge

The main reasons quoted for liking the refuge focused on the provision of onsite specialist support staff and the support network provided through their peers in the refuge. Women felt this was crucial in their development in the first few weeks. They also valued having a safe, secure environment where visitors are controlled and liked the direct support given to their children.

Category	Examples of comments
Access to on-site/specialist support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support network</li> <li>• Staff always available</li> <li>• Help with paperwork, letters and professionals</li> <li>• Immediate support</li> <li>• First weeks of support crucial</li> <li>• Programmes of support to change patterns of abuse to be able to sustain change</li> <li>• Staff were experts and very professional – felt safe</li> <li>• Having someone to talk through their experiences</li> <li>• Help with setting up a new life</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Table continues below</p>

<b>Somewhere safe/secure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe location/anonymity</li> <li>• Immediate safety</li> <li>• Staff to answer door</li> <li>• Visitors are checked</li> <li>• Feeling safe and being taken care of by staff</li> <li>• Was a safety net, giving courage to move on</li> </ul>
<b>Support to Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct support for children to adapt</li> <li>• Access to secure garden for children</li> <li>• Access to children's worker</li> <li>• Playroom/toys provided</li> </ul>
<b>Peer support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making long term friends / extended family</li> <li>• Meeting others with similar experiences helps change patterns of behaviour</li> <li>• The support from other women helped me realise I was doing the right thing</li> </ul>
<b>Home</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feels like home</li> <li>• Feeling of normality</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nice area-access to beach</li> <li>• Help with English</li> <li>• Food and clothing provided</li> <li>• Breaking the cycle and turning lives around</li> <li>• Weren't judged</li> </ul>

### Emergency Accommodation

For those women who had previous experience of emergency accommodation (5) most comments indicated this was a negative experience.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Examples of comments</b>
<b>Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No support</li> <li>• Lack on information as to what was going on or how long they would be there.</li> </ul>
<b>Didn't like it</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I didn't like anything/not a lot</li> <li>• Didn't enjoy it</li> <li>• It was impersonal</li> <li>• Was horrible...chose to go back home</li> </ul>
<b>Immediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was immediate</li> <li>• It was ok as a stop gap</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was a nice house</li> </ul>



### Q3) What don't / didn't you like about being there?

#### Refuge

Women felt shopping was difficult for them (with no access to a car and taxis are not allowed to the refuge) and some rooms didn't have bathrooms.

Category	Examples of comments
<b>Flexibility of stay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Length of stay should be according to need</li> </ul>
<b>Shopping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shopping difficult</li> <li>Carrying bags difficult as no car</li> </ul>
<b>Access for vehicles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No secure parking (so potentially identifiable)</li> <li>Difficult to move belongings when leaving refuge</li> <li>Not allowed taxis at door</li> </ul>
<b>Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No lift</li> <li>Some rooms don't have their own bathrooms</li> <li>Shared communal facilities/communal living</li> <li>Didn't feel safe at night</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weeds in the garden</li> <li>Noise levels sometimes high</li> <li>Can be clashes of personality</li> <li>Nothing</li> </ul>

#### Emergency Accommodation

Category	Examples of comments
<b>Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No support</li> <li>Lack of immediate support</li> </ul>
<b>Safety/Security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feeling unsafe/scared</li> <li>No security/data protection</li> <li>Isolated</li> </ul>
<b>Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not practical for children's mealtimes</li> <li>Lack of support for children</li> </ul>
<b>Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed groups of people e.g. substance misuse</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not a good experience</li> <li>Would have gone home</li> </ul>

**Q4) What support is / was available to you in the refuge to help you feel safe and gain independence?**

**Refuge**

Support is available from refuge staff, both practically e.g. filling in forms and emotionally e.g. someone to talk to at night. Women also valued peer support with the other women in the refuge, the support given to their children and the provision of instruction and training courses.

Category	Examples of comments
<b>On-site/specialist support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help with paperwork/forms/safety plans/court process/links to schools/housing</li> <li>• Having immediate personal/emotional support</li> <li>• Someone to talk to at night</li> <li>• Outreach worker, support worker</li> <li>• Feeling empowered/motivated by staff</li> <li>• Confidence building</li> </ul>
<b>Access to other services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooking lessons, budgeting course</li> <li>• Access to college courses/training</li> <li>• Access to groups e.g. You, me and mum – power to change'</li> <li>• Signposting</li> </ul>
<b>Peer Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moral support led to increase in confidence and dignity</li> <li>• Stops you going back</li> </ul>
<b>Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to schools/changing schools</li> <li>• Support for children</li> <li>• Had someone to speak to</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support with English</li> </ul>

**Emergency Accommodation**

Category	Examples of comments
<b>None</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not much, none, nothing</li> <li>• It was just a bed</li> <li>• No comparison to what a refuge does</li> </ul>

**Q5) Were you aware of the different options for emergency housing before you came to the refuge? If so why did you choose the refuge?**

Some women weren't aware of the different housing options available to them but some had knowledge of them through previous experiences.

Category	Examples of comments
Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was put into emergency accommodation previously</li> <li>• Used local housing options service</li> <li>• Linked through Police/GP/NHS</li> <li>• Knew of various options</li> </ul>
No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not aware until its needed</li> <li>• Lack of clear information through services</li> <li>• Not aware of different options – went straight to the refuge, presumed would have been B&amp;B otherwise</li> <li>• Rang the refuge</li> <li>• Felt like didn't have any options</li> </ul>

**Q6) If a refuge had not been available here – what would you have done? Where would you have gone?**

Most current and previous clients said they wouldn't have left their situation or they would have gone back to their partners.

Category	Examples of comments
Stayed in situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abuse would have escalated</li> <li>• Would have stayed with perpetrator</li> </ul>
Don't know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't know what I would have done</li> <li>• Maybe gone abroad</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends and family nearby</li> </ul>

**Q7) What are your thoughts about the proposal to move from a refuge model to an emergency accommodation model (EAM)? Which would mean the refuge closes but emergency accommodation (for women only) would still be available?**

Women were concerned there would be a lack of onsite specialist support which may put women at risk. That the level and type of support cannot be replicate in emergency accommodation. An EAM may mean there would be mixed groups of women with different issues, including drug and alcohol abuse, where they wouldn't feel as safe.

They were some questions about the process involved in an EAM including:

- Would there be enough outreach workers?
- Would women be able to contact them quickly and easily?
- Will the process be quicker?
- Would the support for children be the same as the refuge?

Category	Examples of comments
Lack of on-site/specialist support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No immediate access to staff puts women at risk</li> <li>• Would there be access to workers out of hours?</li> <li>• No support workers, no personal service</li> <li>• Inconsistent keyworkers / support</li> <li>• Not being face to face support</li> <li>• No support for clothes, food in emergency</li> </ul>
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EAM is mixed groups of women so wouldn't feel as safe, might know people there</li> <li>• Mixed with drug and alcohol users – unsafe</li> <li>• Wouldn't feel safe</li> <li>• Women would not be safe and it will compromise their safety</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will we have to sit in open offices talking about our situation with our children present - confidentiality</li> <li>• No access to a phone, can't get through?</li> </ul>
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No direct support for the children</li> <li>• Currently have play sessions</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wouldn't get support in English</li> <li>• Isolation</li> <li>• Bad idea</li> <li>• Standards of emergency accommodation poor</li> <li>• Doesn't meet the needs of women</li> <li>• Prefer refuge model</li> </ul>

**Q8) Are there any particular groups of women who you think may be affected more than any others by the proposal to close the refuge? (i.e. mental health / with children / those with disabilities)**

Women generally felt all women would be affected the same but identified the following groups of women who may be adversely affected:

- Those with children and may find it difficult to find accommodation
- Those with mental health issues
- Those whose first language is not English.

**Q9) What concerns would you have about a refuge not being available?**

Most concerns focused on safety and security as well as on site specialist support and peer support not being available. The women said the refuge has helped them build their confidence and a lower level of support would make them feel more isolated and more likely to return to their previous situation.

Category	Examples of comments
<b>Security/safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anonymity of accommodation could be compromised</li> <li>• Visitors allowed in emergency accommodation – unsafe</li> <li>• More likely to know someone in emergency accommodation – unsafe</li> </ul>
<b>On-site/specialist support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To end up with a lower level of support</li> <li>• Lack of immediate support</li> <li>• Lack of peer support</li> </ul>
<b>Self development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refuge helps build confidence for the future</li> <li>• Refuge gives opportunities to change before it's too late</li> </ul>
<b>Isolation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel more isolated</li> <li>• Isolation without support</li> </ul>
<b>Fear of harm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End up disempowered or dead</li> <li>• Women suffer and die</li> </ul>
<b>Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of support to children</li> <li>• Children bond in a refuge</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wouldn't have left my situation</li> <li>• Closing would have a knock on effect to e.g. NHS, hospital</li> <li>• Need more refuges not less</li> <li>• Will there be enough places available</li> <li>• Families destroyed</li> </ul>

**Q10) What do you think might be better about moving to emergency accommodation model with support?**

All clients indicated that there was nothing they thought would be better about moving to an emergency accommodation model. If the new model didn't provide the same level of specialist support equivalent to the refuge it was thought women would become more vulnerable.

**Q11) What are the important things you would need in emergency accommodation to ensure that you felt safe and to gain independence?**

Women felt they would need onsite support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with access to out of hours and emergency support. They would also need support for their children and a safe secure environment with time to adjust and gain independence.

Category	Examples of comments
<p><b>On-site/specialist support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support of trained staff 24/7</li> <li>• Out of hours/emergency support</li> <li>• Support with forms and housing</li> <li>• Continuity of support worker</li> <li>• Staff experienced in domestic violence support</li> <li>• 1:1 support</li> <li>• Dispute resolution-knowledge of people</li> </ul>
<p><b>Children</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time for children to adjust</li> <li>• Safety for children</li> <li>• Counselling for children/links to specialists in child trauma</li> <li>• Availability of keyworker for time out</li> <li>• Children able to talk in a safe environment and teaching trust</li> </ul>
<p><b>Safety</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secret location/safe/secure</li> <li>• CCTV, door locks, visitor control</li> <li>• Exclusions zones</li> <li>• Homely and welcoming</li> <li>• Safety plans put in place</li> <li>• Visitor checks</li> </ul>
<p><b>Creating a new life</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need time and patience to gain independence</li> <li>• No pressures</li> <li>• No contact with perpetrator</li> <li>• The refuge has given them their life back, now not just surviving but living</li> </ul>
<p><b>Peer support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support/empowerment of other women in similar situations</li> <li>• Positive role models</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to clothes and shoes, food, money, bed, cooking facilities</li> <li>• Communal areas</li> </ul>

#### 4c: Online Survey

An online survey was developed which was supported by information about the proposal. Respondents were advised of how they could make further representations in writing to Torbay Council regarding the proposal.

The online survey opened on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2013 with a closing date of 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013. The deadline was extended to 30<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

A total of 273 responses were received, 21 in the period of the extended deadline.

#### Responses

**Q1) How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposed model of emergency accommodation for all victims of domestic violence and abuse? This would mean the closure of the existing women's refuge.**

The majority of respondents strongly disagreed with the proposal (78.8%). A further 12.8% disagreed and 3.7% strongly agreed.

	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	10	3.7%
Agree	4	1.5%
Neither agree or disagree	8	2.9%
Disagree	35	12.8%
Strongly disagree	215	78.8%
No response	1	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Q2a) Do you think the proposed model will adequately meet the needs of women fleeing domestic violence and abuse?**

93.8% of participants answered that they thought the proposed model will not adequately meet the needs of women fleeing domestic violence and abuse.

	Number	Percent
No	256	93.8%
Yes	15	5.5%
No response	2	0.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Q2b) Please explain why you answered “Yes” or “No”.**

**Comments below are those made by respondents who answered “No” they do not think the proposed model will adequately meet the needs of women fleeing domestic violence and abuse. The number of comments related to the category is shown in brackets.**

The most common reason given by respondents who did not feel that the proposed model will adequately meet the needs of women fleeing domestic violence and abuse was the lack of on-site and specialist support. Other frequently mentioned themes were the need for somewhere safe and secure, that the proposals will mean women remain with or return to the abuser, issues surrounding confidentiality of emergency accommodation and provisions for children.

Category	Examples of comments
<p><b>On-site / specialist support (90)</b></p>	<p><i>“There will be no specialist workers working in the temporary accommodation so will not be able to adequately assess and manage risk within that setting...”</i></p> <p><i>“Women fleeing domestic abuse require a specialist service. They need to be supported by staff trained by ADVA to meet their specific complex needs.”</i></p> <p><i>“Women need the support of a refuge environment, emergency accommodation will not provide the support and safety currently offered by the refuge.”</i></p>
<p><b>Somewhere safe / secure (68)</b></p>	<p><i>“I believe there needs to be a separate accommodation where people can feel safe and secure and supported by trained staff.”</i></p> <p><i>“...The current system provides a safe and secure unit to provide stability and to allow them to move on after a period of time.”</i></p> <p><i>“Women fleeing DV need a secure settled environment as soon as possible when being admitted...”</i></p>
<p><b>Remain with / return to abuser (38)</b></p>	<p><i>“If women cannot obtain adequate refuge from domestic abuse and realise the only option is to go into very short-term emergency accommodation they are unlikely to leave their homes, especially if they have children, as they will be too afraid of what the future holds for them and the instability for their children. It is hard enough for these women to leave home as it is with such fear of the unknown and the new model proposed will make matters worse”.</i></p> <p><i>“...some women will struggle to leave violence without a refuge because accessing support through housing is often less accessible and meets more barriers...”</i></p> <p><i>“Many women would rather stay in an abusive relationship with their children rather than go into B&amp;B style accommodation, they would also not get the support and help they need as effectively.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Table continues below</b></p>



Category	Examples of comments
<p><b>Children (31)</b></p>	<p><i>"...in the refuge there are other children who have been through similar issues, they interact together and help each other deal with things..."</i></p> <p><i>"...Refuges provide staff that are dedicated and trained to work with this very vulnerable client group, including children who are often traumatised and whose behaviour can be challenging..."</i></p>
<p><b>Confidentiality (29)</b></p>	<p><i>"Putting victims of domestic abuse in B&amp;Bs will potentially expose them to further risk of abuse by making discovery by their abuser easier along with easier access to the victim".</i></p> <p><i>"If emergency accommodation is provided there will not be specialised advice and support and there is a good chance the woman and her children will be found by the perpetrator...and be forced back into a situation where she is being abused..."</i></p>
<p><b>Peer support (27)</b></p>	<p><i>"With a refuge victims have access to support and can seek support from their peers. This will not be the case in emergency accommodation."</i></p> <p><i>"Putting someone in emergency accommodation means they will be on their own and not feel safe, with the existing women's refuge they are with others going through the same, and feel much safer know someone who was in the women's refuge and being with others...really helped."</i></p>
<p><b>Increased risk (20)</b></p>	<p><i>"Women and children will be put at risk by eliminating the refuge model. Having worked in housing for years I do not believe this will meet the needs of vulnerable women and children."</i></p> <p><i>"More women will return to partners or unsafe places due to lack of support. This will place them and their children at greater risk."</i></p>
<p><b>Not suitable (19)</b></p>	<p><i>"Women who have experienced domestic abuse do not have the same or similar issues as women with drug and alcohol issues and it would be interesting to know how the women's safety will be managed in accommodation which also houses women with drug and alcohol issues. (Not just from the inside but with keeping the location confidential)".</i></p> <p><i>"I think that the young people in families fleeing an abusive situation should not then be placed into a situation where, they will then come into close contact with others who have drug and alcohol problems. These two issues should be treated entirely separately where possible"</i></p>
<p><b>Timeliness (16)</b></p>	<p><i>"Women fleeing domestic abuse are doing so as an emergency, closing the refuge will mean the process will take longer and therefore putting victims of domestic abuse in a potentially life threatening situation".</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Table continues below</b></p>

Category	Examples of comments
	<i>"The system doesn't move quickly enough, and service-users would find themselves with nowhere to go and feel even more pressure to return to dangerous situations."</i>
<b>Works as it is (15)</b>	<i>"Why close something that works well and supports all these vulnerable people. Closing this will have a long term effect on a lot of people".</i>
<b>Demand (13)</b>	<i>"It will not be sufficiently resourced to ensure that units of accommodation are available to meet demand. The outreach service will not have capacity to make these women priority".</i>
<b>Isolation (13)</b>	<i>"If the victims don't receive the support they need they are likely to return to the situation they came from because they feel alone and isolated".</i>
<b>National network (13)</b>	<i>"There is a great need for anybody fleeing domestic abuse to be able to live in a different area and if the priority for the proposed model is local people then this would be putting them at greater risk and excluding those from other areas of the support on offer".</i>
<b>Housing officers not trained in DV (12)</b>	<i>"If decisions are being made by housing officers regarding need, they are not qualified to make these assessments without experience of working in domestic violence...cannot provide the expertise and sensitivity when dealing with vulnerable families just based on the number of people they can expect."</i>
<b>Need long term solution (11)</b>	<i>"Emergency accommodation is about temporary relief but the reality is that many women and children will need the safety of the refuge for a long time."</i>
<b>Consistent place to go / trust (10)</b>	<i>"It sounds as though there will be too many different people involved, people seeking safety need to be able to trust and a consistent team, too many different staff at once scare them even more."</i>
<b>Will not save money long term (10)</b>	<i>"...ultimately your cost saving plans will result in increased expenditure and more demands on the social care services and still not adequately meet the needs of those who need a safe haven at a time of crisis".</i>

Comments below are those made by respondents who answered “Yes” they do think the proposed model will adequately meet the needs of women fleeing domestic violence and abuse. The number of comments related to the category is shown in brackets.

The most common reason given was that it will be more flexible in meeting individual’s needs. A selection of other responses are shown in the table below.

Category	Examples of comments
<p><b>Flexible / appropriate to need</b> (4)</p>	<p><i>“As long as they are housed immediately. They will be in accommodation appropriate to their needs. Which at the moment they may not get.”</i></p> <p><i>“The proposed model will provide more flexibility and the ability to match provision to individual need more effectively.”</i></p>
<p><b>Other</b> (7)</p>	<p><i>“Floating support would meet the need and make best use of support meeting client need. It is not the best use of time working full time in a house”.</i></p> <p><i>“This model provides a better chance for successful move on”.</i></p> <p><i>“Women will be supported nearer to support networks and will also help to prevent homelessness.”</i></p> <p><i>“I think as long as the current refuge stays open until all these plans are in place and are available then it should work.”</i></p>

**Q3) Are there any particular groups of women who you feel will be significantly affected by this proposal?**

Most respondents felt that all women fleeing domestic abuse would be affected but also women with children and those with complex needs.

*(See table below)*

Category	Examples of comments
<b>All women / victims (109)</b>	<p><i>“All women fleeing domestic abuse as there will be less accommodation available to them if priorities are also to provide for women with other support needs as part of the overall provision.”</i></p> <p><i>“All groups of women fleeing domestic violence and abuse will be significantly affected by this proposal”.</i></p> <p><i>“Any women who needed help would be affected by these changes.”</i></p>
<b>Children / Women with children (50)</b>	<p><i>“All women and children who are seeking a place of safety from domestic abuse will be significantly affected by this proposal”.</i></p> <p><i>“Women with children as there is no provision for the children to be specifically supported, or the women assisted by specialist staff to support the children”.</i></p> <p><i>“Women with small children. Emergency accommodation very often is not suitable for children. In a refuge the children can mix with other children who have had a similar experience in a safe environment. The mothers also feel more secure.”</i></p>
<b>Vulnerable women (27)</b>	<p><i>“All vulnerable women in need of a safe, supportive environment will be affected by this proposal”.</i></p> <p><i>“Women who struggle to leave and are more vulnerable. There are many women where the ability to move into a refuge is the only thing that persuades them they can do this.”</i></p>
<b>Those with no access to public funds (11)</b>	<p><i>“Women with no access to public funds who are often the most vulnerable and at risk.”</i></p> <p><i>“Women with no recourse to public funds.”</i></p>
<b>Women from outside of Torbay (11)</b>	<p><i>“Vulnerable women from out of the area that are looking to escape violence and the area that they are in.”</i></p> <p><i>“Women fleeing domestic abuse are unlikely to do so within their own area. There are a network of refuges across the UK. If the refuge is closed it would make it more difficult for women to flee to Torbay as a safer place and they may be at increased risk.”</i></p>
<b>Women with mental health problems (8)</b>	<p><i>“Women with...mental health difficulties may be made more vulnerable by this proposal.”</i></p>
<b>Local women (8)</b>	<p><i>“Local women who want some protection and anonymity and do not want their abusive partners to find them”.</i></p>
<b>Young women (8)</b>	<p><i>“Young women with children would be a particular group.”</i></p>
<b>Drug / alcohol dependency (6)</b>	<p><i>“Those struggling to overcome addiction to drugs and alcohol.”</i></p>
<b>Lower income (6)</b>	<p><i>“Yes – usually women in lower income groups who have no immediate support of family or friends.”</i></p>

**Q4) If you have any further thoughts about the proposal please tell us in the box below.**

Category	Examples of comments
<p><b>Don't close the refuge (25)</b></p>	<p><i>"Don't shut the refuge down fight hard so women and children can be safe."</i></p> <p><i>"Do not close this vital service for women fleeing DVAA."</i></p> <p><i>"Having the experience there I did and gaining what I have from it I would be extremely upset if you took this house of support who help people like me everyday away. So please don't and give lots more women a chance to rebuild their lives and start fresh as I did".</i></p>
<p><b>The safety / rights of women and children (21)</b></p>	<p><i>"I feel strongly that this proposal puts more women and children at risk of significant harm due to lack of specialist support and advice, non confidential accommodation, no provision for the needs of children".</i></p> <p><i>"I feel the proposal will not support the high risk vulnerable clients who need to flee their homes and need high levels of support."</i></p> <p><i>"In order to leave a dangerous situation, there needs to be reassurance that the new situation is SAFE. Your proposal does not fulfil this. Your proposal places women and children at higher risk than they are now."</i></p>
<p><b>Emergency accommodation not suitable alternative (15)</b></p>	<p><i>"Emergency accommodation will not provide sufficient safety, either physically or psychologically for women fleeing from domestic abuse. It is also not a fitting environment for the deeply personal and probing interviews that need to be carried out with women. They may not wish their children to hear all of the harrowing details. Anyone can gain access to the 'emergency accommodation' thereby losing that safety feeling for women, who may then be disinclined to flee."</i></p> <p><i>"Temporary emergency accommodation can be as dangerous as staying in the family home. Refuges may not be ideal but they are far more regulated and supported than other forms of temporary accommodation."</i></p>
<p><b>Vital service (15)</b></p>	<p><i>"I believe it is wrong to think about closing the refuge, it is a vital part of the women's life in which the support workers work very hard to rebuild."</i></p> <p><i>"I feel that it is the Council's duty to provide a Refuge so that women and children are supported to be free from abuse and violence."</i></p>
<p><b>Bad idea (14)</b></p>	<p><i>"I feel it's shocking that you are even considering this. You are targeting the most vulnerable in both the women and the children."</i></p> <p><i>"I feel this would be a very bad step for the council to take and I do not agree with the proposed changes."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Table continues below</b></p>

Category	Examples of comments
<b>Money saving (14)</b>	<p><i>“Cost cutting should not be the prime mover in any such proposal.”</i></p> <p><i>“This is just a money saving exercise and will put women and their children at risk.”</i></p>
<b>Cost more in the long term (11)</b>	<p><i>“It would not save money in the long run as accommodation would still be required and would it would fall to the councils to provided B&amp;Bs or temporary housing with no security.”</i></p> <p><i>“This 'knock on' effect has not been given due consideration, the results may well show extra costs for the Council let alone distress and harm to innocent members of the public. Certainly not good value for money”</i></p>
<b>Need a specialist service (10)</b>	<p><i>“It may be cheaper in terms of life-time costs to provide good quality specialist services.”</i></p> <p><i>“The refuge has been saving lives since it opened and is a very thorough support service.”</i></p>
<b>Consultation too short / not enough detail (9)</b>	<p><i>“I am concerned that the consultation is very short, why has the Council not put this knowledge into the public domain, they could have spoken to the news paper to run an article on the proposals, and explain to people what this means.”</i></p> <p><i>“I think the proposal as written in its published form on the website is disingenuous. Further pertinent information could have been supplied such as how long the refuge has been available, levels of occupancy, staffing and their specialities.”</i></p>
<b>Need a national network (9)</b>	<p><i>“If anything we need more Safe Houses, not fewer. Women and children often have to be moved to a different part of the Country and we need a large network of these Homes.”</i></p> <p><i>“Whilst some women in the refuge may be from out of the area for obvious safety reasons, the abused women in Torbay may well be being supported in other areas, what sort of society is it that only cares for those in their immediate area, shame on you!”</i></p>



#### 4d: National and Partner Organisations

Papers were sent to national and partner organisations, responses have been received from six organisations and results are presented below. For anonymity all reference to specific organisations has been removed.

##### Current model

Q1) What are the main advantages with the current model of service provision?

Category	Examples of comments
Peer Support	<p><i>“Small refuge units can be very supportive. Tenants can support each other very effectively having had a shared experience – peers understand what you have been through. We have seen some wonderful peer support emerge”</i></p> <p><i>“Our experience of refuge relationships is that friendships forged in the collective setting often continue when people move on into the community so that supportive network helps ease the move on.”</i></p> <p><i>“Able to gain peer support from other women in similar situations.”</i></p> <p><i>“A 2012 EHRC study found that the peer support and solidarity between women in refuge was highlighted by survivors as key to their recovery”</i></p>
Children	<p><i>“Many of the women who come into our refuges struggle with parenting either as a result of the trauma they have experienced or as a result of their own poor experiences. Staff can be very effective in supporting parenting and monitoring child protection issues which do not become so evident in an independent setting”</i></p> <p><i>“Children can be very effectively supported in a refuge setting helping them deal with the trauma they may have experienced”</i></p> <p><i>“Children also gain many benefits - they feel less isolated as there are other children with whom to play with, as well as indoor and outdoor play equipment, computers to help with homework and other activities available to them”</i></p>
National / familiar model	<p><i>“Refuge models are familiar to people – they know what it means so when fleeing have a concept of what will await them rather than stepping completely into the unknown”</i></p> <p><i>“Well known model of service provision.”</i></p> <p><i>“Many women may need to move to another local authority for their own safety. The reciprocal arrangements of refuges have always contributed to the safety of women at high risk across the whole of the country”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Table continues below</b></p>

Category	Examples of comments
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Staff knowledge</b></p>	<p><i>“Staff knowledgeable about issues and risks facing women fleeing domestic violence.”</i></p> <p><i>Refuge workers provide specialist support with a range of practical and emotional issues”</i></p> <p><i>“Referrals should be risk assessed by trained specialist workers prior to entering a refuge and this should happen in a matter of hours”</i></p> <p><i>“The team also empowers women to achieve their own individual goals and helps them to successfully rebuild their lives - and their children’s lives”</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Safety</b></p>	<p><i>“The 2012 EHRC study concluded that safety and security are paramount in domestic and sexual violence services and recognised the need for women’s only refuge to provide this, stating: “Women felt relieved that there was a space where there was no need to worry about coming face to face with a man.”</i></p> <p><i>“Refuges are places of safety with CCTV, specialist staff on site and if run appropriately operating a 24/7 on-call service model to allow access at any time of the day or night”</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Other</b></p>	<p><i>“Set number of units for women.”</i></p> <p><i>“I don’t feel in the present climate that there are any.”</i></p> <p><i>“(We) believe, and the research evidences, the benefit of refuge accommodation on women’s recovery from abuse and their ability to build resilience going forward.”</i></p>



**Q2) What are the main disadvantages with the current model of service provision?**

Category	Examples of comments
<b>Meeting need</b>	<p><i>“It does not match need to accommodation – what is required is a continuum of provision that tailors support and accommodation to an individual’s need. This would include refuge”</i></p> <p><i>“There is already significant shortfall in refuge provision across the country with an average of 180 women every day being turned away from the first refuge they contact”</i></p> <p><i>“There have been occasions where victims have stayed there too long”</i></p>
<b>Not always suitable for need</b>	<p><i>“If someone is actively using drugs/drinking chaotically the refuge is not always a suitable placement for them (both in terms of their own needs and the needs of others in the refuge).”</i></p> <p><i>“Tenants with specific issues such as some mental health or substance abuse can be negatively impacted by shared living or equally can impact on others”</i></p>
<b>Safety</b>	<p><i>“Accommodation can (and has over time) become increasingly identifiable which reduces the protective factor and makes it less likely for women within the Torbay area to use the local service – they are more likely to move out of area.”</i></p> <p><i>“If money saved is not reinvested then there could be a negative effect on safeguarding”</i></p>
<b>Communal living</b>	<p><i>“Dynamics in shared accommodation can be difficult – not everyone will get on all the time”</i></p> <p><i>“Some women may not want to be with other people or find this type of living arrangement supportive at a difficult time for them.”</i></p>
<b>Children</b>	<p><i>“Lots of children in a refuge can be difficult to manage both for parents, staff and the children themselves”</i></p> <p><i>“Doesn’t cater for boys over 16”</i></p>
<b>Other</b>	<p><i>“Men are not able to access the refuge.”</i></p> <p><i>“Our service has very little success at accessing the refuge for women who approach us direct. Due to this we accommodate a number of women and their families who are fleeing Domestic Abuse in out emergency accommodation.”</i></p>

**Q3) Is the current model of service provision adequate in meeting the needs of victims of domestic abuse?**

Three of the organisations responded no, while one felt the current model partially met the needs of victims.

**Q4) Please provide further details below:**

Category	Examples of comments
<p><b>Meeting specific needs of women / client focused</b></p>	<p><i>“No - what is required is a continuum of provision starting with refuge for assessed higher need which could include specialist support for those with more complex needs, moving through to community based options with varying degrees of support – this affords choice and matches individuals to the best accommodation and support option for their particular needs. But refuge is a positive choice for many and should not be dispensed with as invaluable intensive work can be undertaken in such a setting providing a really positive foundation for moving on successfully.”</i></p> <p><i>“No - It is not clear from your proposal how the women only accommodation and accommodation for women with more complex needs would be supported. If this is through outreach then I am not sure that is appropriate.”</i></p> <p><i>“Neither yes or no – partially- it suits the needs of some women well – however it is not a model of provision that suits everyone so there will always be the need for an alternative source of provision.”</i></p> <p><i>“No - I believe that the attitude and assistance given to victims of domestic abuse has moved on greatly since the first introduction of ‘refuges’”</i></p> <p><i>“No - Many clients we see need a more flexible approach. The direction of travel now is geared much more towards client focused support and the view that a housing need does not necessary mean a support need, if there is a support need than using the floating support services in a focused manner is more cost effective.”</i></p> <p><i>“No - We also find that victims in temporary accommodation are moved on into suitable longer term accommodation quicker than those in the refuge due to range of options and the focus we have on this work.”</i></p> <p><i>“No - Currently there are delays in service and we need a system that provides more rapid support/intervention to include outreach cover outside of office hours. The current service requires improvement rather than being inadequate, however the likelihood of making these improvements may be limited by the current financial position.”</i></p>

## Proposed Model

**Q5) What do you perceive the main advantages will be if the proposed model is implemented?**

Category	Examples of comments
<b>Meeting need</b>	<p><i>“It starts to provide some of that choice and targeted support based on assessment of need”</i></p> <p><i>“Will be more flexible in meeting the individual needs of people presenting for support.”</i></p> <p><i>“Fast tracking of victims into emergency accommodation and greater emphasis on early intervention”</i></p> <p><i>“Accommodation that meets the needs of women with more complex needs such as drug and alcohol users.”</i></p>
<b>Safety</b>	<p><i>“Less likely for accommodation to become ‘visible’ to the general public.”</i></p> <p><i>“This will ensure a smoother process of sharing information and ensure that the safeguarding of both victim and members of their household are prioritised.”</i></p>
<b>Demand on other services</b>	<p><i>“It would also in our view reduce the amount of out of area victims of domestic abuse settling in Torbay and therefore reduce the pressure on other services i.e. Children Services.”</i></p>
<b>Support for Torbay residents</b>	<p><i>“Individuals may be more likely to stay within Torbay where they are closer to established support networks – also may provide more continuity for children.”</i></p>

**Q6) What do you perceive the main disadvantages will be if the proposed model is implemented?**

Category	Examples of comments
<b>Assessment</b>	<p><i>“Undertaking risk assessments for DA services is a highly specialised skill and I am not sure that being undertaken by housing options provides that critical skills base.”</i></p> <p><i>“The provision of risk assessment training to general housing staff will result in complex assessments being carried out by less experienced staff, with fewer skills to support women with more complex needs”.</i></p> <p><i>“This work cannot be carried out by generic non-specialist workers/providers ..., such as those working in an emergency accommodation model. The risk and needs assessments specific to women and children escaping violence require the expertise, skills and resources of workers based within the specialist women’s domestic violence sector.”</i></p> <p><i>“Housing Needs and Options services do not provide specialist domestic violence workers with the skills and experience to risk assess appropriately”</i></p>
<b>Specialist support</b>	<p><i>“Outreach services are a very appropriate option for some but cannot deliver appropriate support to everyone. Do not underestimate the value of consistent staffing available during the day – clients really value that level of support particularly if they have experienced real trauma.”</i></p> <p><i>“Women’s Aid’s Annual Survey indicates that in 2011-12 generic services were four times as likely to be unable to meet a woman’s support needs in community based (i.e. non-refuge) services than specialist services.”</i></p> <p><i>“Research indicates women are more likely leave abusive relationships earlier and less likely to return when they receive specialist support for a gender specific service.”</i></p>
<b>Demand on other services</b>	<p><i>“Further reducing refuge provision will have significant impacts on the health and wellbeing of women and children in Torbay. While reducing refuge provision in Torbay may create a saving in the short term, the potential increased risk to women and children may impact heavily on other budgets such as healthcare and the police.”</i></p> <p><i>“A 2006 Crisis study found that the lack of women’s only refuge spaces is directly linked to an increase in women’s homelessness. Domestic violence is one of the key triggers for women who end up homeless.”</i></p>
<b>Safety</b>	<p><i>“Still no provision for men needing to flee domestic violence.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Table continues below</b></p>

Category	Examples of comments
	<p><i>“The provision of emergency accommodation with ad-hoc outreach support will not provide the holistic care that women and their children need to recovery and move on from the trauma of abuse.”</i></p> <p><i>“Loss of refuge facility which it could be argued means a reduction in the capacity for women to support each other and there would be more isolation. This is a risk that needs to be factored in as are the security benefits of the current refuge arrangements. “</i></p> <p><i>“If specialist accommodation and support is not provided, women and children who experience domestic violence are at much greater risk of injury and harm.”</i></p>
Other	<p><i>“(We are) noticing a trend by local authorities to move to a model of domestic violence service provision where emergency housing is given to local women and men experiencing domestic violence, with support provided by outreach workers. Whilst this model may fit with the homelessness strategy in terms of the Homelessness Act 2002, it does not meet the needs of very vulnerable women and their dependent children escaping domestic violence and abuse”</i></p>

**Q7) What do you think the main impacts will be on victims of domestic abuse if the proposed model is implemented?**

Category	Examples of comments
Alternative provision	<p><i>“There would be little impact as we are able to access suitable temporary accommodation and also assist with approaches to out of area authorities (if unsafe in Torbay) following the legal process. We have excellent women and children only temporary accommodation already contracted. In the evaluation responses completed by women accommodated in this provision they rate the fact they feel secure, supported and the quality of provision as high.”</i></p> <p><i>“We also have temporary accommodation in both Paignton and various locations across Torquay, giving a larger range of temporary accommodation options that would be safe for this service user.”</i></p>
Safety	<p><i>“People who need that more intensive support of staffed shared accommodation will not be provided for / will feel unsafe.”</i></p>
Child protection	<p><i>“Child protection issues may go undiscovered / not dealt with.”</i></p>
Other	<p><i>“Some people will not develop the skills they need for successful independent living.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Table continues below</p>

Category	Examples of comments
	<p><i>"I suppose work will need to be done on publicising what support is available – lots of people know the refuge model of provision and if this were not available I would want people to easily be able to find out what support is available to them and how to access it."</i></p> <p><i>"Earlier intervention and enhanced accommodation pathway"</i></p>

**Q8) Do you think the proposed model will adequately meet the needs of women fleeing domestic violence and abuse?**

Two of the organisations responded no, while three answered yes. The sixth organisation did not provide a response to the question.

**Q9) Please provide further details below:**

Category	Examples of comments
<b>Support</b>	<p><i>"No - Offering that continuum of service with appropriate levels of support caters for a much wider range of needs and offers more personalised services."</i></p> <p><i>"Yes - However this will only be the case if the proposed savings are reinvested into domestic abuse services offering more instantaneous safeguarding and out of hour's provision"</i></p>
<b>Assessment</b>	<p><i>"No- I am very concerned about housing options staff undertaking risk assessments which is a highly specialist area and requires time &amp; patience particularly when dealing with someone who may be very fearful / traumatised."</i></p> <p><i>"Yes - Ensuring that a housing options interview is undertaken prior to placement means that a more successful plan including what they will be eligible to access will be provided before they are settled which will hopefully mean a longer term effective plan of support being implemented at the soonest opportunity."</i></p>
<b>Demand</b>	<p><i>"Yes - We have a duty to provide temporary accommodation for anyone who is eligible and approaches us, and cannot legally refuse accommodation. Therefore we are constantly monitoring availability and looking at options to ensure we can at all times meet demands made on our service"</i></p>

**Q10) Are there any particular groups of women which may be adversely affected by this proposal?**

Category	Examples of comments
<b>All women</b>	<p><i>“Those who are in considerable danger. Much of domestic abuse is very hidden, subtle and not immediately obvious. A wealth of experience is required to understand and deal with that”</i></p> <p><i>“No. It is clear in Housing Legislation and the Code of Guidance that anyone fleeing violence can approach any Local Authority irrespective of local connection.”</i></p>
<b>Women with children</b>	<p><i>“Those who really need assistance with parenting / supporting their children”</i></p> <p><i>“Children who have been traumatised may also be adversely affected by not feeling safe / not having their needs identified”</i></p> <p><i>“At present women who have older male children in their household are not able to access the refuge. We still have to consider them as part of the household and do provide temporary accommodation.”</i></p>
<b>Ethnic minority groups</b>	<p><i>“For Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women, receiving BME specific support has a direct impact on their willingness to access the criminal justice service for support”</i></p>



#### 4e: Feedback from Correspondence

Correspondence was also received from individuals and local organisations via email and letter (26 responses). As these representations were not responding to a specific template of questions the main categories and themes from all the correspondence received has been grouped and summarised in the table below.

Category	Examples from respondents
<p><b>On-site/specialist support</b></p>	<p><i>“Support will be limited (in emergency accommodation)”</i></p> <p><i>“The refuge supplies specialist ‘life-saving’ services”</i></p> <p><i>“Having staff available throughout the day was crucial”</i></p> <p><i>“Mobile support will not be sufficient”</i></p> <p><i>“This facility (refuge) provides very vulnerable women with the support and counselling they need at a critical time in their life, to rebuild their confidence and learn to live independently and look after their children”</i></p> <p><i>“(Staff) Work with agencies alongside you to gain crucial support”</i></p> <p><i>“I cannot fault the refuge staff who were all so helpful, empathetic, patient and an absolute godsend in my hour of need”</i></p> <p><i>“To only be able to access outreach workers at set times when they can meet you is truly unacceptable...women will not receive the level of support they require to re-gain their lives”</i></p>
<p><b>Peer Support</b></p>	<p><i>“I don’t know how I would have coped had I been placed in housing on my own”</i></p> <p><i>“I believe if I had been on my own in emergency accommodation I would of have gone home (to perpetrator)”</i></p> <p><i>“(The support of) other women from similar backgrounds was as important as the support received from refuge staff”</i></p>
<p><b>Security/safety</b></p>	<p><i>“Emergency housing would not feel safe and secure unlike the refuge”</i></p> <p><i>“(there) is a real need for women and children who are in need of a safe and secure place of sanctuary”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Table continues below</b></p>



	<p><i>“There being a general awareness of a refuge within the population of Torbay which may mean that it is not an appropriate place of safety for some women and families and other options are required”</i></p>
<p><b>National network</b></p>	<p><i>“The refuge ensures women receive reciprocal support nationally”</i></p> <p><i>“Women fleeing violence need geographical separation from a violent partner”</i></p>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<p><i>“Reduction in domestic violence support services will have serious implications on people’s lives in the short medium and long term”</i></p> <p><i>“(Closing the refuge) Will result in further additional cost and more expensive interventions by other services”</i></p> <p><i>“Provision of service must involve a permanent refuge”</i></p>