

Swindon Sanctuary Scheme

Making it possible for victims of domestic violence to remain in their home and feel safer



Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust

Swindon Women's Refuge

Introduction

It has been identified that victims of domestic violence are continually fearful of repeat attacks on themselves or their homes. This has meant that the only option for many is to move, perhaps several times, with all the problems connected to this, like changing children's schools and leaving friends and family behind.

The Sanctuary Scheme is a project that aims to make it possible for victims of domestic violence to remain in their homes and feel safer.

The Scheme is available to anyone living in Swindon, who is or could become homeless because of domestic violence. It is not limited to council or housing association tenants.

The main feature of the project is the creation of a 'sanctuary' room, which consists of replacing an internal door with a solid core door and reversing it to open outwards, so that the door jamb acts as an additional barrier. Two mortice bolts, three steel hinges, hinge bolts and a door viewer are also added. Other additional security can be provided.

The Sanctuary Scheme is a positive response to domestic violence and a close working partnership between Swindon Borough Council Housing Department, Swindon Community Safety Partnership, Swindon Women's Refuge, Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust, Wiltshire Fire Service and Wiltshire Police.

What is a Sanctuary Scheme?

Every Sanctuary Scheme is tailored to the needs and circumstances of the individual, but could include all or some of the following:

The door to a main room, usually the master bedroom, is replaced with a solid core door and reversed to open outwards. Two mortice bolts are fitted to the inside of the door, one at the top and one at the bottom along with three large steel hinges, hinge bolts and a 180 degree door viewer. An alarm is also fitted for the victim to contact the emergency services. This provides a safe room or Sanctuary in which victims can call for and await the arrival of the police.

A number of other security options can be provided without having a 'Sanctuary Room' i.e. upgrading door locks and adding window locks, door chains and fire safety equipment.



Who is eligible for a 'Sanctuary'?

As part of the Housing Act, the local authority has the responsibility to decide whether it is reasonable for a person to continue to occupy accommodation.

The Act states that it is not reasonable for a person to continue to occupy accommodation if it is probable that this will lead to domestic violence, or violence against:

a) a person who normally lives with them as a member of their family,

or

b) any person who might reasonably be expected to live with them.

The Sanctuary Scheme is not limited to local authority or Housing Association tenants and includes any person, who is homeless or threatened with homelessness because of domestic violence.

Referrals to the Sanctuary Scheme can be made from any agency or organisation working with victims of domestic violence in the Swindon area and these should be directed to Swindon Borough Council's Housing Needs Department.



Sanctuary Scheme Referral Process

The referring agency completes the Sanctuary Scheme form and faxes to Swindon Borough Council Housing Needs Team.



The Housing Needs Team decides whether the case meets the Sanctuary Scheme Criteria



If the criteria is met the Housing Needs Team notifies the Bobby Van Trust of approval and also emails the Police Domestic Violence Unit for a risk assessment on the perpetrator. The Housing Needs Team also contacts the landlord regarding possible works being carried out.



The Police email the Bobby Van Trust with the risk assessment on the perpetrator.



The Bobby Van Trust contacts the client to make an appointment to carry out the assessment and discuss recommendations with them



The client decides whether to opt for the Sanctuary Scheme and signs consent for the works to be carried out.



The Bobby Van Trust submits the Sanctuary Scheme assessment form to the Housing Needs Team for approval.



Once the approval has been given by the client, Swindon Borough Council and the landlord, the Bobby Van Trust carries out the agreed work. When the works are completed the Bobby Van Trust notifies Wiltshire Fire Service of the existence of the Sanctuary



I would like to thank you for the work carried out in my home and for making a safe room for my son and me. This has given me and my son great peace of mind knowing that we have a place in our own home to keep us safe. Even though we are eternally grateful to the Refuge for all their help and support, this room has made it possible for us to return to and remain in our own home and have a more normal life and routine. We can sleep better at night knowing that all the alarms on the windows and door will give us that bit of extra time we need to lock ourselves into our sanctuary and be safe until the police arrive.

The sanctuary and all the other work has also meant that my mother, who is elderly and has health problems, does not worry as much about us and our safety and security.

This has meant so much to me that 'thank you' doesn't sufficiently express my sincere gratitude to you for all your help.

A victim of domestic violence



Help and Information available in Swindon

In an emergency always dial 999

National 24-Hour Domestic Violence Helpline	0808 2000 247
Swindon Women's Refuge	01793 536447
Swindon Borough Council Housing Needs Team	01793 464498
Wiltshire Police (ask for the Swindon domestic violence unit)	0845 4087000
Victim Support Wiltshire	01380 729476
Children & Families (Social Services)	01793 466903
Emergency Duty Service (Social Services) (Evenings, nights, weekends and Bank Holidays)	01793 436699
Adult Services Careline	0800 085 6666
Childline	0800 1111
NSPCC	0808 800 5000
MALE (for male victims of domestic violence)	0845 064 6800
Broken Rainbow (for lesbian gay bi-sexual and transgender victims)	08452 60 44 60

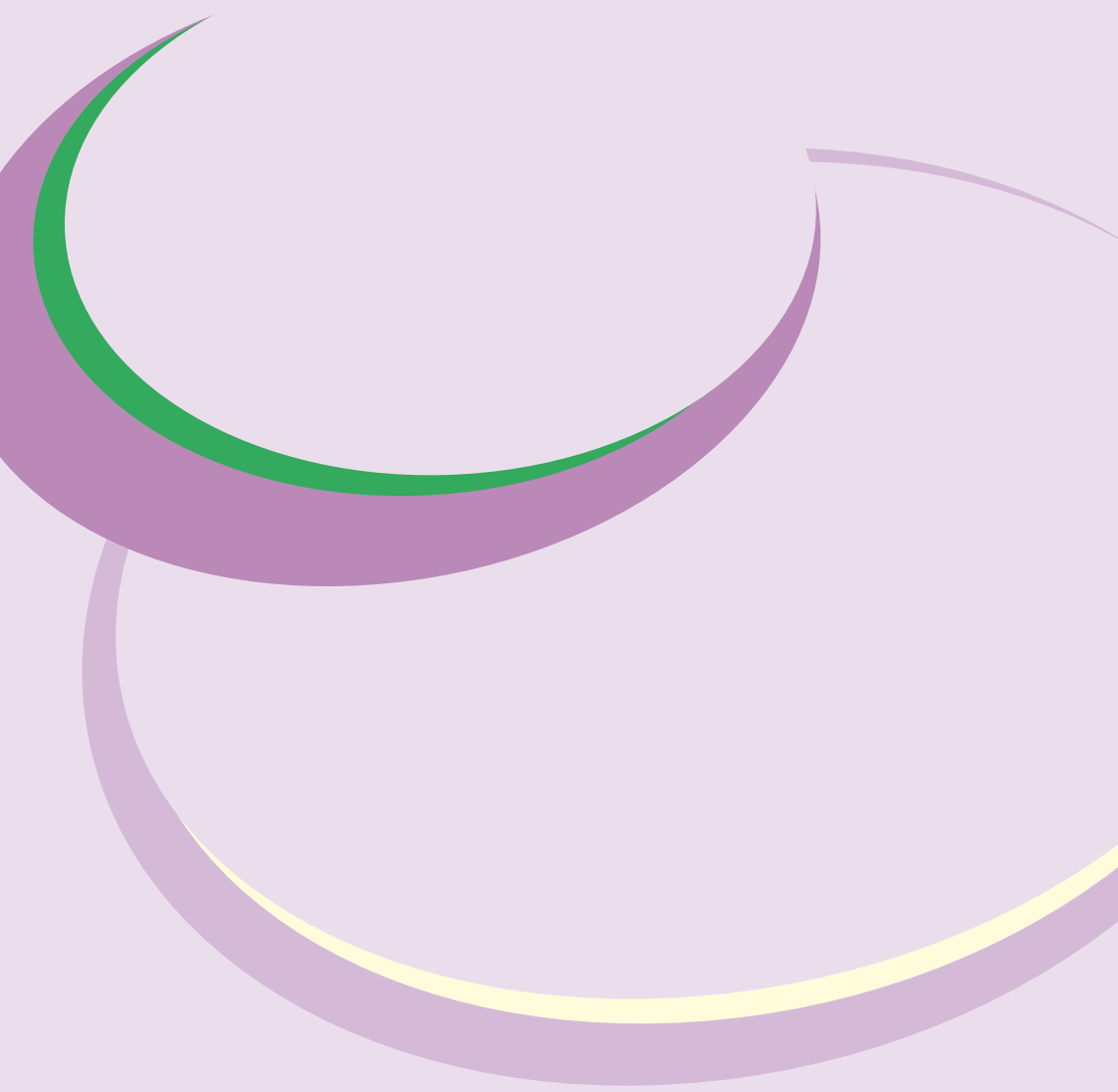
or visit

www.womensaid.org.uk

www.mensadviceline.org.uk

www.broken-rainbow.org.uk

www.thehideout.org.uk (for children & young people)



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