



## Co-locating Specialist Domestic Abuse and Violence Staff in Supported Accommodation:

**A pilot to explore the impact of a complex domestic abuse and violence assertive outreach worker being based at a supported accommodation facility in Brighton & Hove.**

### Background

Fulfilling Lives is interested in how women with multiple and complex needs access domestic abuse pathways and support. We know from client feedback and from our active network of volunteers who share their lived experience, that accessing appropriate support can be challenging, especially if other complex needs are at play. Through conversations with partner agencies, RISE – a charity that helps people affected by domestic abuse – and BHT Phase One hostel, we all felt there was an opportunity to explore new ways of providing specialist domestic abuse support for women with multiple and complex needs. From these conversations, a co-location pilot was designed, and this report captures the journey of this initiative.

Hostel key worker roles supporting clients with multiple complex needs are recognised as being particularly challenging where clients can present with a range of trauma-based support needs. Domestic abuse accounts for around a quarter of all recorded crime and is one of the leading causes of homelessness for women (<http://rightsofwomen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/guide-to-domestic-violence-housing-and-homelessness.pdf>).

Government statistics from England, Wales and Scotland show that domestic abuse accounts for at least one in ten people who require local authority support for homelessness. It's generally assumed this figure is much higher, particularly for women, who are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse and often 'hidden' from official homelessness statistics. ([http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe\\_at\\_home\\_Spotlight\\_web.pdf](http://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe_at_home_Spotlight_web.pdf))

Homelessness charity St Mungos report that 32% of the women they work with said domestic abuse contributed to their homelessness (*Rebuilding Shattered Lives*, <https://www.mungos.org/publication/rebuilding-shattered-lives-final-report/>).

Though the research and evidence – outlining the complex and interwoven issues of women with experience of historical or current domestic abuse and homelessness – is in the public domain, many hostels do not hold the specialist knowledge onsite or have access to specialist professional training to effectively meet the support needs of these women alone. Also, women who have experienced domestic abuse are often placed in mixed gender hostels which can deepen anxieties of feeling unsafe.

The blend of national statistics on the relationship between domestic abuse and homelessness; the feedback from women with lived experience; and the willingness of staff at both Phase One and RISE in Brighton brought about an environment to experiment with new approaches to better support staff in their support of hostel residents effected by domestic abuse, as well as an appetite to develop more impactful interventions through more tailored support for women in particular who experience domestic abuse during their stay in supported accommodation facilities. This led to the pilot discussed in this report where a specialist complex domestic abuse assertive outreach worker from RISE was co-located at the hostel Phase One. **The aim was to develop the confidence and knowledge of non-specialist frontline workers through the following initiatives:**

- Bespoke training sessions for Phase One key workers.
- Complex Case Discussions; a protected space for Phase One workers to receive expert advice and guidance on how to effectively support complex domestic abuse clients. With the option that discussions could lead to joint client working if it was appropriate.
- Increasing the links between Phase One and the Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Champions Network.

## Partners

**RISE** is an independent, Brighton-based registered charity that helps people affected by domestic abuse. They offer practical help ranging from direct advice to refuge accommodation for those whose lives are at risk. RISE were successful in securing a grant

from The National Lottery Community Fund for the new 'Community Engagement & Building Project'. A pilot project that focusses on building the capacity of communities across Brighton and Hove who are supporting women affected by domestic abuse who find it hard to access mainstream services; including women with multiple and complex needs who have experienced domestic abuse.

**Phase One** is a 52 bed, high support hostel for single homeless men and women, who often have multiple and complex needs. The accommodation accounts for approximately 14% of the city's commissioned supported accommodation bed spaces. The staff team is comprised of 8 workers. Working to increase self-esteem and create a space where service users can begin to address the issues at the root cause of their homelessness, make the changes necessary to lead more settled lives, and realise their aspirations. The hostel offers mixed-gender accommodation. Phase One works with clients who are using alcohol and substances and encourage them to examine their substance misuse and take positive steps towards their recovery and abstinence. The hostel delivers an in-house life skills course called Programme for Change.

**Fulfilling Lives** is an eight-year project based across twelve areas of England. It is focussed on improving service provision for individuals who are deemed to have multiple complex needs (MCN). Here in Brighton & Hove, the South East Fulfilling Lives project works with local partners and stakeholders from the voluntary sector and statutory services to achieve this outcome. The definition of MCN that Fulfilling Lives work to is an individual who experiences three of the following at any one time; mental health, substance misuse, homelessness and involvement with the criminal justice system. The Fulfilling Lives South East Partnership – Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings – is driven by service user involvement and co-production. For more information on co-production go to the [Social Care Institute for Excellence](#).

## Executive summary

The support needs of female residents with MCN who are experiencing current or historical domestic abuse are unique and difficult to address and those involved in the pilot acknowledged the complexity of this space.

Feedback on the co-location pilot and accompanying development activity, was received well across the board – RISE staff fed back how they felt their expertise had been well received and they could identify examples of how their knowledge had been applied by hostels’ staff and had positive impact on hostel residents’ engagement with safety planning, seeking support and reporting domestic abuse. Phase One staff fed back feeling more confident in addressing reports of domestic abuse and spoke often of how much they valued having a direct line into specialist knowledge as it had enabled them to approach their practice with clients in a more informed, empathetic and confident way.

Feedback from a Phase One resident to their key worker highlighted that having the RISE assertive outreach worker co-located at the hostel, had encouraged the resident to be more aware of their long-term goals and of accessing specialist support and accepting that RISE were based at the service to help women like her and that this was an accessible service.

As a result of this pilot, there was wide support for the continuation and embedding of domestic abuse specialist support in this particular hostel and also prompted reflections between partners that this would also likely benefit other supported accommodation facilities.

One of the key praises for the specialist domestic abuse worker from Phase One staff, was that she had improved their connections with local agencies targeting domestic and sexual abuse, and the impact of this had been that the Phase One staff began to better tailor and respond more quickly with greater confidence to the specific needs of this client group when they disclosed domestic abuse or abuse was suspected.

The Phase One deputy manager who led on this work for the hostel fed back during the consultation period:

*“Having the expertise of a RISE domestic abuse specialist co-located and working from the hostel one day a week has been invaluable. The staff team has felt more confident in dealing with complex domestic abuse clients; they can now ask for advice and check they are correctly following procedures. Knowing there is support in the background is reassuring for workers”.*

There was a clear appetite amongst both organisations to continue to collaborate continuing to develop practices to better identify and support complex needs homeless women living in the hostel system, with historical or current experience of domestic or sexual abuse. This appetite was not restricted to developing practice within the participating organisations but they also wanted to take this forward to explore with other colleagues across the city to identify how more hostels could develop these practices and support mechanisms/services for this cohort of residents within supported accommodation.

The pilot identified positive results when non-specialist frontline workers received targeted training from and close working relationships with specialist domestic abuse outreach workers in hostels.

This brief snapshot of having a RISE domestic abuse assertive outreach worker co-located at the Phase One hostel has illustrated a demonstrable impact on how non-specialist frontline workers think about how and what support to provide to women with complex needs experiencing domestic abuse.

## Key findings

- The Phase One hostel team all reported feeling more confident to deal with domestic abuse incidents as they occur; knowing there is a point of contact who will either be at the hostel a guaranteed one day per week or can be reached via email or phone in the knowledge they will receive a reply, along with support and guidance.
- Phase One workers highlighted that they have a varied workload covering many different duties, with a client group that are presenting with increasing levels of complexity in addition to their housing need. Having a specialist to consult with, who could concentrate on domestic abuse means the response to support needs can be immediate, as hostel workers felt more confident acting on the advice of a domestic abuse expert.
- The current RISE referral route can act as a barrier to MCN women accessing the support they need; the referral route can feel daunting for both hostel residents and staff. Having the RISE worker co-located and available reduced the anxiety felt

towards engagement with specialist services and the wider safeguarding referral pathways, such as MARAC.

- This client group require domestic abuse workers who are skilled at supporting women with complex needs and skilled in their knowledge of the subject and specialist ways in which to support clients to engage, report the abuse and safety plan.
- The RISE assertive outreach worker reported that being at the hostel once a week meant that Phase One workers could, in person or by phone call, report Incidents of domestic abuse to RISE more quickly. This meant workers could offer support and put things in place to help the client before the incident escalated.
- The Phase One deputy manager felt that having a domestic abuse specialist co-located at the service had enabled some clients to build more trusting relationships with workers, confident in the knowledge that the hostel was being supported by an expert service.
- The RISE worker highlighted that women with complex needs who have experienced or are at risk of domestic abuse require a 'one stop shop' where they can receive wrap around care from all relevant services, where needs can be met immediately, and support can be more flexible.
- The BHCC *Safe in The City* Champions Network was not available during this pilot project which left a gap for frontline workers to up-skill as domestic abuse Champions and link into other support.
- There are no formal dedicated spaces for hostels to discuss female clients affected by domestic and/or sexual abuse. This was felt to be a gap by both partners that needs to be addressed.
- Having a specialist worker onsite kept domestic abuse on the agenda and visible – this can remain a '*hidden issue*' in hostels as women want to hide it and workers can lack the confidence to ask questions.
- Through this pilot, RISE reflected that as an organisation they have started to explore and develop a new relationship to risk that is strength and needs based. Taking a longer-term approach allows risk to come out after time. Rather than starting from a default position of being risk averse.

## Recommendations

- Funding to enable specialist workers like the RISE assertive outreach worker to support both complex needs clients and key workers in supported accommodation services.
- RISE 'Community Engagement and Building Project' assertive outreach worker to continue being collocated one day per week at Phase One providing domestic abuse consultancy to the staff team.
- Commissioners to explore 'one stop shop' model for women with complex needs and experiencing domestic abuse to be able to access wrap around support from relevant agencies.
- Commissioners to explore co-location of other key support services within supported accommodation services.
- Core training package on complex domestic abuse to be made available to all hostel workers and mandatory training for new workers as part of staff inductions.
- Phase One to build further support networks with domestic abuse experts in the city to bolster key workers access to best practice and targeted training.
- RISE to establish a Local Champions Network – led by a specialist – to link up hostels to provide space for this topic to be discussed and explored with a view to building confidence and skills to support women at risk of, or who are currently experiencing, domestic abuse who are homeless or vulnerably housed; to integrate and share domestic abuse best practice more broadly across relevant services.
- Women only spaces needed for homeless / vulnerably housed complex needs women. This needs to be long-term so trust and relationships can be built enabling women to slowly open-up.
- Both Rise and Phase One reflected on new ways that residents could be introduced to and engage with specialist support and reflected that having the specialist on site had helped break down barriers and perhaps this could be enhanced further via creative ways to engage women – for example, arts and crafts. As such, we include a recommendation to trial these creative sessions to test if these can further build trust and open-up conversations around experiences of domestic abuse.

- The importance and value of expertise from the women's sector needs to be acknowledged, promoted and more widely accessed as a resource by community and statutory services.
- RISE, as a wider organisation, to build upon the learning from this pilot regarding new approaches and relationship to client risk.

## How this pilot was measured:

- **Feedback evaluation forms:** from training facilitated by the RISE assertive outreach worker for the Phase One team.
- **1-2-1 interview:** a consultation was facilitated with a Phase One hostel support worker.
- **1-2-1 interview:** a consultation was facilitated with the RISE assertive outreach worker
- **1-2-1 interview:** a consultation was facilitated with the Phase One deputy manager.
- **Focus group:** a short consultation was facilitated with the Phase One staff team.

## Initiatives that were introduced

- **Training:** bespoke complex domestic abuse training delivered to Phase One support workers by the RISE assertive outreach worker.
- **Complex Case Discussion:** this was a protected space for Phase One workers to discuss domestic abuse with the RISE assertive outreach worker; receiving expert advice and guidance to feed into the support of female residents.
- **Joint Working:** Phase One workers' shadowing the RISE assertive outreach worker. Witnessing best practice and good modelling of how to work with complex domestic abuse clients.
- **Resident Workshop:** the aim was to raise awareness and knowledge in female residents in understanding their rights in relationships and, the available options if they want to get out of relationship.



- **Safe in the City Champions:** as a service, the aim was, for Phase One to be better linked in to domestic abuse support networks in the city and for staff to start attending this Champion network.

Additionally, Phase One and RISE, were asked to describe what an effective MCN referral pathway into RISE would look like.

## Impact of Initiatives – Pilot Detail

### Training

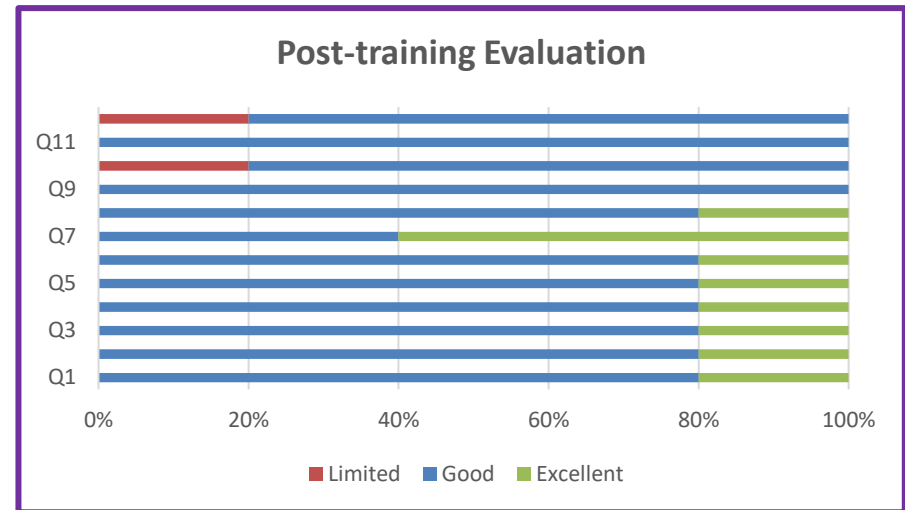
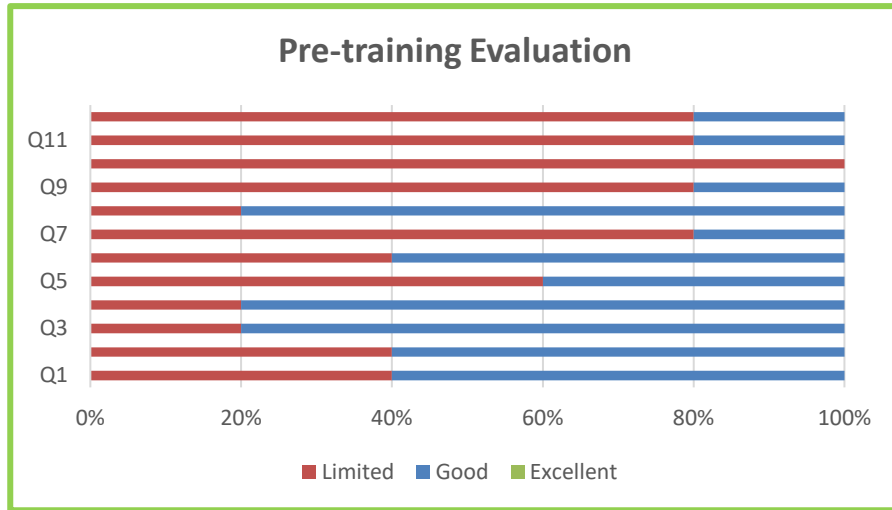
With hostels supporting clients with increasing levels of complexity, a trend that is set to continue, it is therefore important that hostel workers have access to training covering specialist support areas, such as domestic abuse.

Two separate training sessions were facilitated for five Phase One key workers. Pre-and-post training evaluation forms were used to capture immediate learning. The results showed a clear uptrend in worker learning covering 12 key areas (*see Fig 1, p.10*). One hostel key worker said prior to receiving this training:

*“I was unclear about my statutory duties to clients”.*

Other domestic abuse training identified by the RSIE assertive outreach worker that would be of value to hostel key workers were: risk and safety planning, and further bespoke domestic abuse training.

**Fig 1:**



<b>1</b>	Understanding & awareness of issues relating to domestic abuse?
<b>2</b>	Understanding of your professional role in relation to complex domestic abuse cases?
<b>3</b>	Skills for responding to clients who are complex domestic abuse cases?
<b>4</b>	Skills for working with partner agencies in relation to complex domestic abuse cases?
<b>5</b>	Skills for conducting a risk assessment in relation to complex domestic abuse cases?
<b>6</b>	Skills for responding to safety issues of complex domestic abuse cases?
<b>7</b>	Knowledge of how to make a referral?
<b>8</b>	Confidence to engage with clients around complex domestic abuse cases?
<b>9</b>	Knowledge around domestic abuse and women specific issues? (sexual violence, trauma, children and family interventions)
<b>10</b>	Understanding of RISE's processes and procedures?
<b>11</b>	Knowledge of RISE's role in supporting women?
<b>12</b>	Understanding of what RISE can and can't provide?

## **Complex Case Discussion**

A protected space for Phase One workers to receive expert advice and guidance from the RISE worker on how to effectively support female clients who are/or at risk of domestic abuse. Three Phase One workers engaged in complex case discussions with the RISE assertive outreach worker. These opportunities for discussion with a domestic abuse expert were reported by both RISE and Phase One as always being positive and building hostel worker competencies. Covering topics, such as, Looked After Children (LAC) meetings and the potential for perpetrators to be invited to the same meeting as domestic abuse victims and how staff can support female clients to be prepared for this dynamic. Supporting workers to make referrals to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and using the Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment risk assessment checker ('DASH'). Another complex case discussion focussed on drawing up a list of the women living at the hostel who were known to be experiencing domestic abuse or at risk of. Additional to these three cases, the RISE outreach worker supported and advised Phase One when two gay males who were in a relationship, and had a history of domestic abuse, moved into the hostel.

As well as liaising closely with staff the RISE worker supported Phase One staff and a Phase One client to obtain an emergency restraining order. Liaising with the RISE Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) worker based at the Police station, who delivered the paperwork to the court. A safety plan was created with the client and the RISE worker alerted hostel staff to support the client to call the police if the perpetrator showed up at the hostel.

Feedback from partners highlighted the positive outcome of having a domestic abuse expert on-hand and available. The Phase One staff team widely agreed on the benefits of co-location:

*“Being part of complex case discussions has made me more confident in dealing with client’s needs. Its impacted on my knowledge and understanding on how to manage high risk, safeguarding, and getting clients to identify risk and to report incidents; which can be a real barrier”.*

## **Joint Working**

The opportunity for non-specialist frontline workers to joint work with a domestic abuse expert and witness best practice has proved to be invaluable to worker confidence and

development. Alongside, for example, improving communication, some of the key benefits of joint working were opportunities to carry out preventative and early interventions. In terms of the impact joint working at the hostel has had on client support the RISE assertive outreach worker said:

*“Incidents are reported quicker. Which meant we were able to offer support and put things in place to help the client before escalation. I was able to engage with the client and talk about the risk to herself. This opportunity to engage allowed the client to think about the danger they were in”.*

One of the Phase One workers felt that joint working with a domestic abuse expert has had a very positive effect on how they approach supporting clients with experience of complex domestic abuse. The worker said they had been able to see first-hand how to:

*“Meaningfully convey the clients views with external agencies. For example, I effectively put forward her wishes at the MARAC. Also, through joint working I’ve developed my approach to working sensitively and in a non-intrusive way”.*

The Phase One deputy manager who led on this work for the hostel fed back during the consultation period:

*“Having a domestic abuse specialist present has enabled our clients to start building relationships with workers based on trust. For example, learning about Clare’s Law [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme] has made me realise why it’s important for us a service to have an offer of support. We need that layer of expertise”*

### **Resident workshop**

The hope had been for the RISE assertive outreach worker to deliver workshops for Phase One female residents, with the aim to raise awareness and knowledge in understanding their rights in relationships and, the available options if they want to get out of a relationship. No resident workshops took place during the six months of this work. It was the projects anticipation, that the number would be small, but that some women would wish to attend. The RISE worker outlined as part of the consultation that women tend to find these workshops difficult because of the history of complex and repeated trauma, and this likely was the reason

behind there being no uptake on the workshops. Though a few women living at Phase One had expressed an interest in taking part in something similar in the future.

The RISE assertive outreach worker is continuing to facilitate the weekly women only drop-in at William Collier House. This group is also open to women living at any of the city's other hostels. This is a positive development from RISE. Fulfilling Lives in partnership with RISE previously tried to establish a group for insecurely housed women, though it wasn't sustainable due to the unsuitability of the venue.

### **Safe in The City Champions Network**

As part of the *Safe in The City* initiative, a network of *Safe in The City Champions* was established to bring together practitioners from a range of agencies across Brighton and Hove. The Champions acted as point of contact and were 'in-house' specialists within their service. The hope for this pilot was to have two trained Champions in the Phase One staff team, to better link the service to domestic abuse support networks in the city.  
<http://www.safeinthecity.info/safe-in-the-city-champions>

Despite the service's best efforts, no workers from Phase One were signed up to the Champions Network during this co-location pilot because the initiative was not functioning at the time.

At time of writing Brighton and Hove City Council were in the process of finalising their domestic abuse and sexual violence strategy, with the Champions Network placed on hold. Even when active, RISE and Phase One, felt the Network's scope was too broad to effectively deal with the nuanced needs of frontline workers dealing with high need clients who require immediate response to disclosure.

**An outcome of this pilot has been that RISE feel there is a need to establish a Theme-Specific Champions Network – led by a specialist – to link up hostels on this topic and others in the city working with complex needs women who are homeless or vulnerably housed and RISE are exploring how they can initiate this Network with Phase One. The first Homeless/ Insecurely Housed DV Champions Network meeting has taken place and they will continue every 6 weeks.**

## Conclusions and Learning Summary

### The value of expertise and collaboration

From this small snapshot, service data supports that having a domestic abuse expert co-located in a hostel working alongside non-specialist frontline staff has begun to improve the knowledge, understanding and confidence of the Phase One staff team.

Early indications have shown that providing bespoke training for Phase One support workers has had a positive impact on staffing and approaches to working with women experiencing or at risk of complex domestic abuse (*see fig:1*). The training intervention has highlighted a need for further training for workers to expand their understanding of how to engage and support this group of women. Other domestic abuse training identified by the RSIE assertive outreach worker that would be of value to hostel key workers, were; risk and safety planning, and further bespoke domestic abuse training.

Consultation feedback illustrates that there is an appetite from the Phase One service to continue seeking new ways to engage with this client group. Through having a co-located domestic abuse expert providing consultancy hostel workers have felt supported and more confident in dealing with incidents as they happen. The Phase One staff team offered some of the following feedback during a focus group:

*“We need to keep the consultancy going to keep the work and response immediate otherwise women’s needs are not met and this puts the client at further risk”.*

*“We have many different duties within our role, and it would be great to have a specialist who could concentrate on the needs of the clients here”.*

*“We have concerns that through the MARAC process there seems to be gaps in services”.*

*“MCN clients tend to have a history of early trauma, we know this makes women more vulnerable to domestic abuse”.*

### Multiple and Complex Needs referral pathway into RISE

There was a feeling among partners in this pilot project that the current referral pathway into specialist domestic abuse services, such as RISE, was not suitable for women with multiple and complex needs. When asked to describe what an alternative pathway for this client group would look like there was no definitive answer and an acknowledgement from all that this

was difficult to pin down in this current climate of austerity. Though there was a leaning to continued greater emphasis on RISE engaging with community services through outreach, along with a more strength-based, needs-led, long-term and relational approach, to meet the needs of these women. Some of the following feedback was given by the partners:

*“The way things are currently set up there is no guarantee that a meeting will take place, or the client be seen”.*

*(Phase One worker)*

*“I’m not sure, because of the clients struggles with engagement and her previous experiences of difficulties in engaging with RISE; there’s now a trust issue”.*

*(Phase One worker)*

*“Now it is not really working, the women just have too much on their plate. They need a one stop shop, where they can receive wrap around care from all the services. Needs can be met immediately, and we could work with more flexibility”.*

*(RISE Assertive Outreach worker)*

*“Better for Rise to work in the community as consultants as a specialist response is crucial in the homeless and insecurely housed sector, we need a memorandum of understanding across the sector. Specialist IDVA training needs to be kept within a specialist setting like RISE to ensure women’s voices are heard loud and clear in a relatively male dominated sector. This will lead to women no longer falling through the gaps”.*

*(RISE Assertive Outreach worker)*

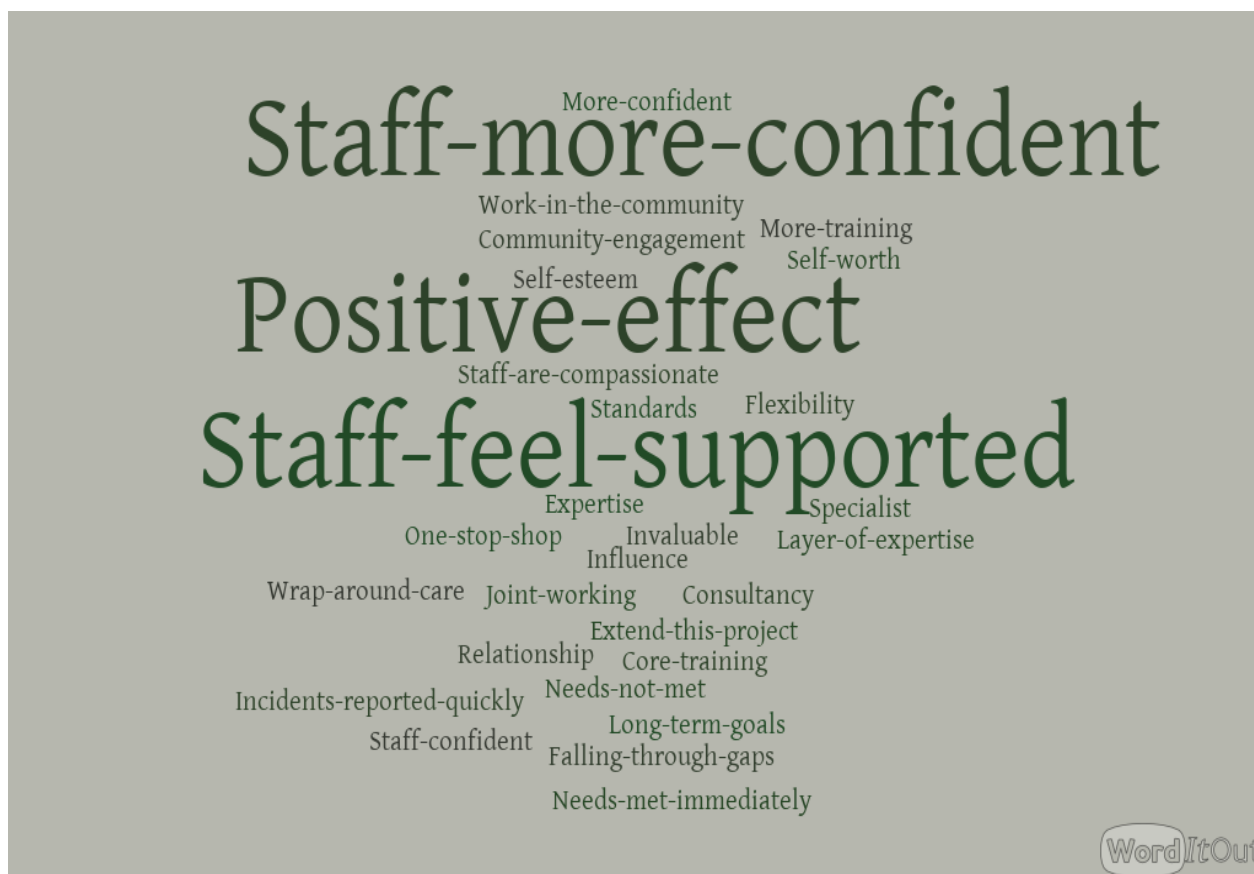
The positive response to this pilot project highlights how a more assertive and immersive approach to referral /access points into specialist support can be more successful, especially for women with multiple and complex needs.

### **Safe in The City Champions Network**

Unlike the existing Brighton and Hove City Council, Safe in The City Champions Network, which covered all services across the voluntary and statutory sectors, a network solely focussing on women with complex needs has clear advantages and both RISE and Phase One are keen to take this idea forward. They feel that a Network of this kind could provide a space for expanding on the positive outcomes of this pilot project and enable a wider skilling up non-specialist frontline workers who are most likely to work closest with this client group; who are supported by specialist workers, promoting more targeted approaches to identifying

women who could benefit from more specialist domestic abuse support, providing a space to build a shared community of practice across the hostel system, and embedding RISE's approach to working with complex needs women into community services.

### Some of the most used phrases and words used by partners during the consultation for this pilot



### Next Steps: Reflections from RISE, Phase One and Fulfilling Lives

Being collocated at the Phase One hostel once a week and engaging with both the staff team and residents has promoted openness and started conversations.

This pilot has helped to build confidence in the hostel staff team via formal training that I delivered and by me being in the hostel and encouraging staff to approach me with questions and engage in conversations with the team about any client concerns. It was useful to be on site as I was able to support with issues as they came up and support with immediate responses.



If I were to use three words to describe what had really been at the heart of making this pilot a success, they would be: flexibility, availability, and communication.

I hope the information and learning we have gathered from the pilot is shared across the sector and wider public shared she hoped to see it distributed publicly. And used to inform new thinking and approaches to engaging and supporting complex needs women who experience or at risk of domestic abuse.

**AJ Paterson, RISE Assertive Outreach Worker**

Having AJ [RISE Assertive Outreach worker] based at Phase One every week has been invaluable for the staff and clients accessing supported accommodation. Working in a busy environment with 52 complex clients requiring intensive support and care can mean at times the staff feel they are 'firefighting' or 'treading water' to maintain a safe, risk management lead environment. Having AJ there as a consultant for our teams with her special knowledge, commitment to women and caring attitude enabled the staff to create more space for the women in our hostel environment. AJ's input has ensured that conversations and training around domestic abuse has been kept current and live, empowering our team to raise these issues regularly and feel confident to know where they can access support/refer to or simply follow a procedure. Having a domestic abuse consultant has allowed our team to feel listened too, empowered and cared for by RISE, creating smoother paths into the service, ultimately this enhances the chance of someone getting the specialist support they require.

**Jodie Masters, Deputy Manager, BHT Phase One**

RISE recognise that homeless and insecurely housed women are some of the most vulnerable people in our city and often their experiences of domestic violence and abuse are left unacknowledged and unaddressed by professionals. We know that violence and abuse is both a cause and a consequence of women's homelessness and we recognise that many homeless services are not set up to respond to women's specific needs. Indeed, the vast majority offer support in male-dominated environments which can place women at further risk of intimidation and violence. RISE recognise that women in hostels need safe, women-only

spaces led by specialist workers who can open up these conversations along with hostel staff who are well-informed, well-trained and well-supported around this topic.

It has been an enlightening and productive experience to work with the amazing team at Phase One to start to address this need. Our Big Lottery-funded Assertive Outreach worker offered bespoke domestic abuse training to all the staff at Phase One about how to open up the conversation and how to deal with a disclosure, offered joint working and consultation for residents affected by domestic abuse, along with co-location once a week to build the partnership and offer informal capacity building. The staff responded positively to this input and gained confidence in addressing this issue. It was clear that building the links between the services and providing a more accessible, flexible and community-based entry into RISE was helpful for Phase One staff and ultimately for the women themselves. We are excited to continue our fruitful partnership with Phase One and to continue to explore solutions to these issues.

**Caitlyn McCarthy, RISE complex needs manager**

Collaborating with Phase One and Rise to launch this pilot has highlighted the value of sharing learning and the value of cross-sector partnerships. We were really pleased that Rise's expertise in the field of domestic abuse was warmly welcomed by Phase One staff and that the partnership has had a positive impact on hostel staff by building staff confidence and encouraging more open discussion around the issue of domestic abuse. Fulfilling Lives is aware that domestic abuse and violence is a very common experience for women who have multiple and complex needs and in a snapshot of our project's clients in December 2018, 93% of the women on our caseloads had experienced domestic abuse (25 out of 27 women). In response to this, Fulfilling Lives is committed to continue working with partners like Rise and Phase One to support in finding new ways of working and testing new ideas to help improve the situation for women who have multiple complex needs and experience domestic abuse and violence.

**Rebecca Rieley, Fulfilling Lives Systems Change Lead**

## Credits and acknowledgements

**Data gathering:** Angela Girling

**Writing and design:** Alan Wallace and Rebecca Rieley

**Participating services:** RISE and BHT Phase One