

For Immediate Release

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News Release

New free open-source toolkit to support social housing tenants affected by violence, exploitation and abuse to find safe secure homes they can afford.

Safer London has today released **Unlocking Doors: A Professional's toolkit for establishing managed housing reciprocals**.

This **free open-source** toolkit has been developed from Safer London's experience of running and operating the Pan London Housing Reciprocal. This managed housing reciprocal scheme supports Londoners with, or who are owed, a social tenancy who are also at risk of abuse and violence in their borough.

Social housing tenants affected by violence and abuse can often face a difficult choice - remain at risk or end up becoming homeless. For six years, the Pan London Housing Reciprocal has offered a different option.

The scheme connects local authorities and housing providers, to support individuals and families impacted by violence and abuse to move to a London borough that is safe for them, whilst maintaining their tenancy rights. Safer London acts as a central administrator, ensuring the scheme is transparent and fair to all those who use it.

Since its inception in January 2017, the Pan London Housing Reciprocal has facilitated **227 moves**, with **517 adults and children** having **moved to safe, secure homes**.

The scheme has been an effective tool in the fight against gender-based violence, providing a pathway for individuals and families to find affordable homes away from harm. From 2017 to 2020 almost two thirds (63%) of property requests were for applicants fleeing a form of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), most of them referred due to domestic abuse (58%).

Recognising wider risks, Safer London opened access to the Pan London Housing Reciprocal to other groups including young Londoners and their families affected by violence, and those experiencing hate crime within the community, such as LGBTQ+ hate crimes.

Firmly rooted in the notion of generous leadership, Safer London is now sharing what they have learnt since the scheme was first established in 2017, by producing a toolkit which provides practical advice and guidance on how to set up a managed housing reciprocal based on local need.

The hope is that other areas in the country will replicate the Pan London Housing Reciprocal model, to support social housing tenants living in the local area who are affected by violence and abuse. Safer London is already extending the reach of the Reciprocal and is currently working in partnership with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) to set up a similar scheme in the northwest of England.

The following videos have been produced to provide insight into how the Pan London Housing Reciprocal works, as well as the impact it has on lives.

- [The role of a managed housing reciprocal coordinator](#)
- [Unlocking Doors: Perspective from a nominating officer - serious youth violence](#)
- [Unlocking Doors: Perspective from a nominating officer - domestic violence/abuse](#)

Sherry Peck, CEO Safer London said: “We have seen firsthand how effective a managed housing reciprocal can be for social housing tenants and their families at risk of serious harm.

A managed housing reciprocal is a really empowering pathway for those fleeing risk and we firmly believe it can be replicated across the country, based on local need. Whether this be to support victims/survivors of domestic abuse, individuals affected by criminal exploitation such as County Lines or care leavers - every local authority should have one.”

An applicant of the Pan London Housing Reciprocal said: “I think there are so many people that are victims of violence in London [who] would be relieved to know about the Safer London Housing Reciprocal Scheme... Safer London has the potential to safely rehouse so many people without the risk of losing their tenancy.”

The toolkit is available to access now: <https://saferlondon.org.uk/unlocking-doors/>

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Notes to Editor:

For further information or interview requests please contact Helen Green at helengreen@saferlondon.org.uk or call 07985 656 286

References:

https://saferlondon.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/PLHRThreeYearsOn_2020.pdf

About the Pan London Housing Reciprocal

The Pan London Housing Reciprocal is funded by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime.

The scheme supports social housing tenants affected by:

- Domestic violence and abuse
- Sexual violence and exploitation (including – prostitution and trafficking)
So called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage
- Stalking
- Hate crime
- Serious youth violence

Between 2017 and 2020, the primary reasons for Pan London Housing Reciprocal applications were:

- 58% Domestic Abuse
- 26% Serious youth violence
- 9% High risk community safety
- 5% Other VAWG (inc. sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviours and child sexual exploitation)
- 2% Hate crime

Safer London isn't a housing provider, and the Pan London Housing Reciprocal shouldn't be considered as emergency accommodation.

About Safer London

Safer London is a leading charity working with young Londoners and their families affected by violence and exploitation.

Safer London is working alongside young Londoners, so they can move onto the positive futures that they deserve. We put young Londoners at the centre of their support, focusing on them and their needs. By building strong, trusting relationships we gain an insight into their world, begin to understand what they need and together we find the best ways to keep them safe.

Understanding that young Londoners' lives are shaped by the world in which they live, we work not only with them and their families, but also their peer networks and directly within the community and the places where they live and spend their time.

We're committed to learning, innovating, and delivering high quality, evidence-based support. With a footprint in every borough in London, we develop robust partnerships to embed our approaches, and work towards achieving our vision of a city that is safer for all young Londoners who live here.

Visit our website <http://www.saferlondon.org.uk>
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