



PORTUGAL 2007



European Crime Prevention Award  
and  
EUCPN Best Practices Annual Conference 2007

Project Entry Form

The theme for this year's European Crime Prevention Award and EUCPN's Best Practices Annual Conference is Prevention of Domestic Violence.

The following are some areas that the projects may focus on:

- Role of the community and partnerships in the prevention of domestic violence;
- Role of the police in addressing domestic violence;
- Alcohol, drugs and domestic violence;
- Juvenile delinquency and domestic violence;
- Cultural/educational issues and domestic violence;
- Prevention of domestic violence against women, children and elderly people;
- Victim support, psychological rehabilitation and prevention of revictimization in domestic violence (both direct and indirect victims);
- Use of technologies in the prevention/deterrence of recidivist offenders in domestic violence;
- Prisons, community sanctions and rehabilitation of domestic violence offenders; and
- Alternatives to shelter programmes for victims of domestic violence.

The list is not exhaustive. The projects may address any question relevant to prevention of domestic violence.

Please complete the attached form (the boxes are expandable). Note that the last page is for a one-page description of your project.

Entries should be in English, but may be accompanied by a version of the entry in the national language if wished. Each country may enter one project as its ECPA entry and up to two other projects to be presented at the conference. Projects should be submitted only through the National Representatives. The full ECPA rules may be found at [www.eucpn.org](http://www.eucpn.org)

The deadline to send in your entries is 10 November 2007.

Send your entry or entries to: [eucpn.pt@gmail.com](mailto:eucpn.pt@gmail.com)

If you have any questions, please contact us at the above email address or [paulo.vgomes@gmail.com](mailto:paulo.vgomes@gmail.com)



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## ECPA/BPC 2007

Please answer the following questions in English.

1. Is this your country's ECPA entry or is it an additional project? (Only one ECPA entry per country plus up to two other projects.)

This is the UK's ECPA entry.

2. What is the title of the project?

The Harrow Sanctuary Scheme.

3. Please give a short general description of the project.

The Harrow Sanctuary Scheme is a victim centred initiative, which makes it possible for victims of domestic violence to voluntarily remain in their homes and feel safe, without fear of attack.

The main feature of this pioneering scheme is the creation of a 'sanctuary' or safe room within the house, which enables the occupier to retreat to a place of safety to await the arrival of the police and other emergency services.

4. Please describe the objective(s) of the project?

There are 3 core objectives:

1. to offer victims of domestic violence (who no longer live with the perpetrators), the opportunity to be safe and secure in their homes, with their network of friends and family around them,
2. to reduce repeat victimisation,
3. to reduce the usual costs incurred by the local authority for multiple relocations of domestic violence victims.

## 5. How was the project implemented?

The idea for the Harrow Sanctuary Scheme was conceived in 1998 by police constables Mark Dowse and Geoff Bigby from the Harrow Police Crime Reduction Unit. Due to lack of funding at the time, they ran the scheme for the next four years with a dedicated group of volunteer tradesmen, in conjunction with the Harrow Crime Prevention Panel.

In 2002, PCs Dowse and Bigby approached the Chair of the Harrow Borough Council Domestic Violence Sub-Group to highlight the need for a more robust strategy for the project, with a view to reducing response times for Sanctuaries and easing the financial burden being placed on local voluntary organisations. They based their case on the fact that it is a legal requirement for a Local Authority/Borough Council to assess 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 other violence against:

- i) the person concerned
- ii) any person who normally resides with them as a member of their family; or
- iii) any person who might reasonably be expected to reside with them

For Harrow Borough Council, PC's Dowse and Bigby's strategy was a way of addressing the fears of the victims of domestic violence, and providing them with safety and reassurance, while ensuring compliance with statutory re-housing obligations. As a result of the efforts of PC's Dowse and Bigby, Harrow Borough Council Housing Assessment Team successfully applied for funding for the project from strategies money granted by the UK Government under the auspices of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), as an initiative to help avoid homelessness.

Local master locksmith companies were then given the opportunity to tender for the work and provide a detailed breakdown of costings. This resulted in a dedicated company being chosen to carry out work for the scheme and they have an undertaking to install the Sanctuary room within 48 hours of receiving authorisation from the local authority.

## 6. Were partners involved in planning and/or development and/or implementation of the project? If so, who were they, and what were their roles?

- Harrow Borough Council Housing Assessment Team – applied for funding from strategies money granted by the ODPM, in addition they organised the tender for the locksmith company.
- Women's Aid – referred victims to the Harrow Sanctuary Scheme.
- Social Services – referred victims to the Harrow Sanctuary Scheme.
- Harrow Women's Centre – referred victims to the Harrow Sanctuary Scheme.
- Harrow Police Community Safety Unit – referred victims to the Harrow Sanctuary Scheme.

## 7. How did you build in plans to measure the performance of the project?

The success of the Sanctuary Scheme was measured against delivery of its objectives, chiefly those relating to repeat victimisation and cost.

First, the proposal to install a sanctuary was assessed by the Local Authority Housing Assessment Team, and, when approved, was recorded.

The performance of each individual installation was then measured on the basis of the number of successful repeat offences of domestic violence.

Second, the Local Authority monitored the performance of the scheme as a whole on the basis of cost.

To date there have been approximately 291 approved referrals to the Harrow Sanctuary Scheme. To date, there have been no confirmed cases of a perpetrator compromising the Sanctuary security in Harrow, despite numerous attempts.

The local authority has estimated that the cost of re-housing any of the families in question would have ranged from £3,000 to £10,000 (€4,260 to €14,200). The average cost of a Sanctuary installation is £1,200 (€1,704). Notwithstanding the assistance the Scheme has given to individuals, there has been a significant cost saving to the local authority. The total cost of the project to date in Harrow has been £280,000 (€397,600).

## 8. Has the project been evaluated? How, and by whom?

The Scheme has been evaluated largely by way of satisfaction surveys carried out by those local authorities where the Scheme has been implemented. A third of local authorities (around 120) offer Sanctuary Schemes, and it has emerged through such surveys that 90 per cent of victims of domestic violence believe that Sanctuary Schemes are a good idea. The most recent survey, carried out by Barnet Council (a local authority in the County of Hertfordshire) included the question - 'Have the additional safety measures made you feel safer?' with a 'yes' or 'no' answer. 75% of those who replied said, 'yes'.

In December 2006, Ruth Kelly Government Minister for Communities and Local Government said:

"The Government is determined to do more to prevent victims of domestic violence victims being driven from their own homes as well as stepping up prosecutions of perpetrators."

"Sanctuary Schemes have been proven to prevent homelessness by giving people the security and confidence to stay in their own home, where it's their choice and police experts agree it's a safe options."

"It is not right that victims should have no other choice but to go into temporary accommodation or refuges, which can feel unsettling and cause family upheaval at the worst possible time. That is why I want to see more local authorities provide the option of a Sanctuary Scheme."

9. What were the results? How far were the objectives of the project achieved?

The Harrow Sanctuary Scheme has fully achieved all of its 3 core objectives. The project has been such a resounding success, that it has now been recommended as a model to be used throughout the United Kingdom.

The UK Government has awarded £74m to support a nationwide rollout of the scheme, based on Harrow's model.

In Harrow, the objectives set out have so far, and continue to be met:

1. Approximately 291 referrals to the Harrow Sanctuary Scheme, who otherwise would have had to consider relocating.
2. To date, in Harrow, there has been no compromise of the Sanctuary security.
3. To date, the Harrow Borough Council continue to favour funding the Sanctuary Scheme installation as a viable alternative to the cost of re-housing.

10. Are there reports or documents available on the project? In print or on the Web? Please, give references to the most relevant ones.

There are numerous references to the Harrow Sanctuary Scheme, and subsequent schemes which have been implemented throughout the United Kingdom, based on Harrow's model. An internet search will demonstrate this. For specific reference, please see detailed below the links to websites showing the announcement of Government funding in December 2006. There is also a link to a document to assist with setting up a Sanctuary Scheme, again based on Harrow's pioneering model.

- New Support for Domestic Violence Victims – Government Minister Ruth Kelly announces £74m Government funding, to support the Sanctuary Scheme nationally.

[http://cms.met.police.uk/met/boroughs/harrow/04how\\_are\\_we\\_doing/news/minister\\_ruth\\_kelly\\_announces\\_national\\_funding\\_for\\_harrow\\_s\\_sanctuary\\_project\\_02\\_01\\_07](http://cms.met.police.uk/met/boroughs/harrow/04how_are_we_doing/news/minister_ruth_kelly_announces_national_funding_for_harrow_s_sanctuary_project_02_01_07)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/newsupportdomestic>

[http://www.sourceuk.net/article/9/9061/safe\\_rooms.html](http://www.sourceuk.net/article/9/9061/safe_rooms.html)

- Options for setting up a Sanctuary Scheme – based on the Harrow model.

[http://www.lga.gov.uk/Documents/Briefing/Our\\_Work/Projects/Barnetsanctuary.pdf](http://www.lga.gov.uk/Documents/Briefing/Our_Work/Projects/Barnetsanctuary.pdf)

## **Please, write here a one-page description of the project:**

**Harrow Sanctuary Scheme** Prior to the introduction of the Harrow Sanctuary Scheme, there was a great deal of moral support being offered to victims of domestic violence and hate crime, but there were no facilities available to help them secure their homes and prevent repeat victimisation.

**Concept** The idea for the Harrow Sanctuary Scheme was conceived in 1998 by police constables Mark Dowse and Geoff Bigby from the Harrow Police Crime Reduction Unit. Due to lack of funding at the time, they ran the scheme for the next four years with a dedicated group of volunteer tradesmen, in conjunction with the Harrow Crime Prevention Panel.

The main feature of this pioneering scheme is the creation of a Sanctuary or safe room within the house. This enables the occupier to retreat to a place of safety to await the arrival of police and other emergency services. The Sanctuary room is created by replacing an internal door, generally the master bedroom door, with a solid core, ½ hour fire rated door. This door is reversed to open outwards onto the landing, to ensure that the doorjamb acts as an additional barrier to the reinforced frame, locks and hinges. Fire safety is paramount, so occupiers are supplied with a fire safety kit, which includes intumescent fire seals around the Sanctuary door, smoke alarms, an anti-arson letterbox, fire blanket, torch, break glass hammer and fire extinguisher. Additional locks and bolts are fitted to the remaining windows and doors throughout the property to delay the suspect, giving the victim and their children sufficient time to escape to the Sanctuary room.

Harrow Crime Reduction Unit have forged close partnerships with all of the agencies involved, i.e. Harrow Police Community Safety Unit, Housing Services, Harrow Women's Aid, Social Services and the Harrow Women's Centre, who can all refer clients to the Harrow Sanctuary Scheme.

**Successes and Results** The Sanctuary Scheme is a robust and very real alternative to repeat domestic violence and hate crime. Since its official launch in 2002, the Sanctuary Scheme in Harrow has helped approximately 291 victims of domestic violence and hate crime stay in their homes, and despite numerous attempts by ex-partners and assailants, none have been compromised.

Very few Police Officers have an opportunity to make an impact and effect change nationally, but PCs Dowse and Bigby have achieved this, as there is now a drive for every borough in the country to have a Sanctuary type scheme. The Sanctuary Scheme forms a key part of the domestic violence indicator BVPI 225, which came into force in April 2005. Its purpose is to assess the overall effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims of domestic violence and prevent further domestic violence. Numerous boroughs around the country have sought advice and guidance from the Harrow Crime Reduction Unit and have subsequently implemented the Sanctuary Scheme. It is not known at this stage how many vulnerable repeat victims and their families have had their lives transformed by the Sanctuary Scheme nationally, but it is estimated that this number would run into thousands.

Partnerships that survey survivors of domestic violence who have had a Sanctuary room installed record that they do feel safer. The following are quotes from women who have requested Sanctuary security:

*"I feel 100% safer than I did before and I'm really pleased that I didn't have to move somewhere else. My baby and me are both settled in this flat and I can now sleep at night."*

*"I didn't think I'd be able to stay here anymore. I was terrified that he'd kill me. I now feel safe in the flat and have started to get a bit more self confidence."*

In 2005, PCs Waine, Bigby, Dowse, Barnes and Sullivan received an award from the Mayor of London for 'making an outstanding contribution to life in London'. PCs Dowse and Bigby have also been awarded an Assistant Commissioners Commendation for their work on the Sanctuary Scheme. In December 2006, based on the success of the Harrow model, Government Minister Ruth Kelly announced £74 million national funding for all boroughs to have a Sanctuary Scheme.