

# DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

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<b>Executive Summary:</b>
<p>Our Domestic Abuse Policy is designed to raise awareness about the definitions of abuse and to develop a culture of reporting and responding appropriately to concerns or disclosures. Our aim is to support customers suffering from domestic abuse. The policy details how we work with our partners to share information and those working in more specialised frontline roles will receive in-depth training. The policy looks at how we will support victims of domestic abuse.</p>

Policy Grouping / Directorate	Customer and Community	
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Reviewed by Policy Team	Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2025	Name: Sarah Wilson
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Notes:		

## 1 Introduction and Aims

- 1.1 This document sets out Rochdale Boroughwide Housing's ("RBH") policy relating to domestic abuse ("DA"). The policy outlines the society's commitment, aims and approach to addressing, tackling and preventing domestic abuse in homes and neighbourhoods where we work.

RBH recognises that all residents have the right to feel safe in their own home and understands the damaging effect which DA can have on individuals, families and the wider community. *Appendix 1 – Definitions of Domestic Abuse*

- 1.2 The aims of the policy are:

- Ensure that those colleagues who deal with reports of domestic abuse are trained to support victims and their families to increase safety and reduce risk, in partnership with specialist agencies.
- When dealing with reports our colleagues must be led by the wishes of the person experiencing the abuse. Colleagues will need to consider risk, safeguarding and child protection concerns, and deal appropriately with those concerns.
- Ensure we have colleagues who are confident and competent in challenging perpetrators of domestic abuse using appropriate legal remedies.
- To make sure our customers know what our approach is when responding to reports of domestic abuse.
- Ensure our volunteers, engaged customers and contractors are made aware of this policy, and their responsibility to report any concerns they may have about potential domestic abuse, to RBH colleagues.
- To make sure our service response to domestic abuse is easily accessible to all customers who are experiencing domestic abuse.
- We will, where appropriate, complete Domestic Abuse Risk Assessments (DASH) and contribute to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). We will include additional LGBTQ+ inclusive questions when completing DASH RIC assessments with victims from the LGBTQ+ community.

## 2 Context

- 2.1 This policy exists in the context of national legislation and local strategies and policies. The policy is designed and intended to assist RBH in meeting its duties and commitments, and to complement and support the relevant legislation, policies, strategies and RBH's tenancy agreement. *Appendix 2 – Legislation and Regulation*

- 2.2 **Consumer Standards**

### [Neighbourhood & Community Standard](#)

**Local co-operation** - Registered providers must co-operate with relevant partners to promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they provide social housing.

**Domestic abuse** - Registered providers must work co-operatively with other agencies tackling domestic abuse and enable tenants to access appropriate support and advice.

## Safety & Quality Standard

**Health and safety** - When acting as landlords, registered providers must take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of tenants in their homes and associated communal areas.

### **3 Values**

3.1 The policy fits with the mutual values of RBH:

**Putting People First:** We listen with empathy, respond with compassion, and make it easy for our customers to access our services. We understand the impact DA can have on individuals and will work with partners to support DA survivors.

**Doing What We Say:** We earn trust through honesty, integrity, caring and keeping our promises. We will tackle perpetrators in a way that is fair and unbiased and recognise there is no typical abuser or victim of DA.

**Working As One:** We embrace our mutuality and work together to deliver great outcomes for the people living in our homes and communities. We understand the need for strong partnering to ensure the safety of our customers when tackling DA.

**Delivering Quality:** We invest wisely in our people and make it easy for them to deliver services and create places that our customers are proud to call home.

**Open & Transparent:** We are curious, embrace diverse ways of thinking and seek feedback to help us improve. We will work with customers to develop our work in this area and be informed by them.

### **4 Policy Statement**

4.1 As a landlord RBH prohibits DA in its tenancy agreement, Section 6 Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour states:

*You, your friends and relatives and any other person living in or visiting the property (including children) must not:*

*(6.1(F)) Inflict domestic violence, threaten violence or use mental, emotional or sexual abuse against your partner, ex-partner or another member of your family or household.*

4.2 RBH will seek to enforce the tenancy agreement and/or will utilise the provisions made within the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014. RBH will support survivors and their children as victims of DA and refer to the local authority to access safe accommodation. RBH will support the police and local authorities to discharge their duties detailed in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

RBH will seek to engage perpetrators, where appropriate, and will assist them in accessing relevant and appropriate help.

4.3 RBH will adopt a victim centred approach in responding to reports of DA and will treat, with the strictest of confidence, all information provided. The exception to this is where disclosure is made of a safeguarding concern and RBH has a duty to report this to the appropriate agencies.

- 4.4 RBH will undertake a risk assessment with victims of DA, to assess the level of risk that individuals and families may be in. RBH will utilise the nationally recognised DASH form (Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Honour Based Violence) to facilitate this. RBH work within wider Community Safety Partnerships across Rochdale to ensure appropriate support is offered to all victims, whilst risks are identified, understood, and managed.
- 4.5 RBH will aim, where we are requested and where legislation allows, to ensure that the victim is able to remain in their home. This includes consideration of reasonable and appropriate security improvements which may be required to their property. Where a victim wishes to explore rehousing as an element of resolution to their situation, RBH will signpost to Rochdale Housing Solutions.
- 4.6 RBH will participate in the Rochdale Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference ("MARAC"). RBH will exchange relevant information with partners and continue to build relationships with agencies who support victims of DA.
- 4.7 RBH will provide training and support to employees to ensure that customers and the wider community are provided with a consistent and high-quality service by employees who are competent and confident in dealing with cases which are reported to them.

## **5 Monitoring**

- 5.1 The Domestic Abuse Officer will act as lead officer for the society and will take responsibility for:
- Ensuring the implementation of our policies and procedures relating to DA, including audit of case files with RBH Safeguarding coordinator.
  - Ensuring the society is represented on the MARAC and other relevant bodies and meetings.
  - Assisting in the training of employees.
  - The case management of DA reports including the initial DASH risk assessments.
  - Provide reporting internally to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

RBH will monitor and review its DA service on a regular basis, through case and service area reviews, seeking to ensure continuous development and improvement and to ensure that it meets any legislative or regulatory changes.

## **6 Review**

- 6.1 All RBH strategies, policies, service standards and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are 'fit for purpose' and comply with all relevant legislation and statutory regulations.
- 6.2 This policy will go through the full policy approval process every 3 years and will undergo a desktop review annually. This is to ensure that it is fit for purpose and complies with all relevant and statutory regulations.

## **7 Links with Other RBH Documents**

7.1 This policy links to the following policies and strategies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- RBH Lettings Policy
- RBC Allocations Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

## **8 Inclusivity statement**

- 8.1 We are dedicated to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment for all. We ensure that everyone is valued and respected. Our policies aim to be inclusive, and will comply with UK laws, including the Equality Act 2010, to create a diverse and supportive environment for people to thrive.
- 8.2 We understand not everyone absorbs information the same way. If you have any difficulty understanding or interpreting this document please email [people@rbh.org.uk](mailto:people@rbh.org.uk) or call Freephone 0800 027 7769. We will work with you to ensure your individual needs are met.