

# Domestic Violence Strategy

**2010**  
ROTHERHAM LTD

TURNING HOUSES INTO HOMES



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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## **Foreword**

We are pleased to introduce this Domestic Violence Strategy for 2010 Rotherham Ltd.

It represents our corporate commitment to take a structured approach and place local people, our employees, our partners, and the community at large at the heart of all that we do.

Our strategies are evidence that we are serious about bringing positive change within the organisation, and proof that we know more needs to be done through actions listed in the Action Plans.

We know that to succeed we need to work with local people and with local organisations to demonstrate that we are working for our communities, and we look forward to working with customers in delivering the commitments made in this strategy.

Colin Earl  
Interim Chief Executive

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. The Domestic Violence Policy and Procedure provides a detailed response to how 2010 Rotherham Ltd will manage instances of domestic violence.
2. Key elements of this procedure cover all potential instances of domestic violence and provide a robust and proactive response from 2010 Rotherham Ltd.
3. This procedure provides frontline staff with a fully functional Operational Procedure. This policy and procedure creates a firm multi-agency link up to the domestic violence strategy 2007–2010 at RMBC.

## **NEW FINANCIAL, PERSONNEL, POLICY OR RISK IMPLICATIONS DIRECTLY ARISING FROM THIS REPORT**

1. There are no major financial implications. Court cases are often used as a last resort and costs in relation to court cases are usually minimal. Many actions can be effectively dealt with by the Rotherham Safer Homes Partnership. Minor costs are required for setting up of the Sanctuary scheme, staffing resources to attend monthly MARAC meetings and cost of the administration of temporary accommodation.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The recommendation is that 2010 Rotherham Ltd adopts the domestic violence policy and procedure as set out overleaf.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Domestic Violence Policy and Procedure for 2010 Rotherham Ltd is directly linked to RMBC's Domestic Violence Strategy. In 2007 Rotherham MBC set a vision for its Domestic Violence Strategy which 2010 Rotherham Ltd signed up to. The vision is aimed at tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse through raising the standards and effectiveness of prevention, protection and support.
- 1.2 The vision which 2010 Rotherham Ltd has signed up to is:

*"To eliminate domestic violence in all of its forms, working together in partnership to deliver improved, equitable, accessible and effective services that meet the needs of all the people who experience domestic abuse"*

## **2.0 AIMS OF THE POLICY**

The aims of the policy are to:

- 2.1 improve support for our residents affected by domestic violence, ensuring clarity of provision and access to services.
- 2.2 deliver a high quality, co-ordinated multi-agency response to domestic violence.
- 2.3 work alongside Rotherham MBC to increase and develop awareness of domestic violence and attend regular training events hosted by the Council in order to share best practice with other public, voluntary and private sector agencies.
- 2.4 provide support to the neighbourhood and act as a signposting organisation to all other people suffering from domestic violence.
- 2.5 increase the rate at which domestic violence incidents result in sanctions /detections and are then converted into offences brought to justice.
- 2.6 inform the neighbourhood through use of training, publications and agency work that RMBC and 2010 Rotherham Ltd take a zero tolerance approach to domestic violence.
- 2.7 To place children's safety first and support victims to create a safe and secure environment for their children.

### **3.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

- 3.1 Neighbourhood Services and Adult services and 2010 Rotherham Ltd have an important role to play in assisting people experiencing domestic violence. We will ensure all individuals approaching the service who are experiencing domestic violence are offered sensitive, confidential and consistent treatment in discussing their housing options and will assist such people to live in safety and security.
- 3.2 We will work in partnership with statutory, voluntary and other advocacy agencies and attend the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) to meet the needs of people experiencing Domestic Violence.
- 3.3 People who have become homeless due to domestic violence will be considered to be in priority need.
- 3.4 Victims of domestic violence wishing to leave their family home will be offered either a Refuge Placement or Interim Accommodation whilst their homeless application is being assessed.
- 3.5 The 2010 Rotherham Ltd and Rotherham MBC Domestic Violence Policy is encompassed within Rotherham's Letting Scheme, and is linked to legislative requirements such as the Housing Act 1996 Parts VI and VII and the Homeless Act 2002. The Introductory and Secure Tenancy Agreement spells out that Grounds for Possession (Section 2a) includes violence towards a member of the household.
- 3.6 2010 Rotherham Ltd and Neighbourhood and Adult Services will work in partnership to ensure policies and procedures used are effective in tackling forced marriages.
- 3.7 2010 Rotherham Ltd and Neighbouring and Adult Services will produce information in partnership about domestic violence and the help available. This information will be available in different formats, including community languages.
- 3.8 2010 Rotherham Ltd with Neighbourhood and Adult Services will develop a Sanctuary Scheme to help victims of domestic violence stay in their homes, if that is what they want. The scheme will be known as the Rotherham Safer Homes Project. It will involve installing extra security measures to a survivor's property where they have chosen to remain in their home, rather than having to flee in order to escape the violence or threat of violence.

## 4.0 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROCEDURE

### Good Practice Guide for Frontline Housing Staff

- Confidentiality is crucial. Give your name and your assurance that any information given will remain confidential and will only be given to other agencies (e.g. the Police or Social Services), if the customer gives their written agreement, or a child is at risk. Check if it is all right to send letters or to phone the person at home.
- The safety of **children** is of the highest importance. Children are very much the silent victims of domestic violence. Witnessing domestic violence, or being a victim of it, can have a severe effect on a child's behaviour, health and educational performance in ways that are likely to be visible in school. Check with the child's school and arrange a meeting involving the headmaster and teacher to discuss concerns and agree an action plan. Refer to the Safeguarding Children Procedure.
- Perpetrators have been known to be very persistent in their determination to find their former partners. Confirm the identity of a caller if not completely satisfied. Always ring them back to check the number given by the caller independently. If you have any concerns about the information requested, consult your line manager. As a general rule information should only be given out to police or social services, however the same identity confirmation needs to take place before disclosure.
- Establish whether an interpreter needs to be arranged through language line rather than wait for this to be requested. Young children (children under the age of 18) should not be used for interpretation. If you are not able to supply the appropriate interpreter quickly enough you can use other individuals or other family members in an emergency. Staff are reminded that someone who is fluent in two languages cannot always effectively translate from one language to another. For this reason earlier questions will need to be cross-referenced for accuracy at a later time with an interpreter. You should always arrange an interpreter for any subsequent interviews.
- Encourage the customer to report the matter to the Police. However this should not be a pre-condition for further action being taken.
- Establish whether there is an injunction in force against the perpetrator and, if so, encourage the customer to contact the Police to advise that it has been broken

- It is important to be aware of the possible effects of being brought up in different cultures. For example, in some societies domestic violence is not publicly acknowledged. The possible effects of different cultural upbringings should therefore be taken into account.
- Offer the customer an interview with an officer of the same sex.
- Conduct interviews in private (at a place of safety if required) and in a sympathetic and non-judgemental manner.
- Keep accurate and up-to-date records, including details of contact with any other agencies, and third party evidence with the customer's consent.
- Provide the customer with details of outside agencies who may be able to offer support and counselling.
- In all cases (including customers only seeking advice) a Domestic Violence Common Monitoring Form should be completed – see Appendix 1.
- Adopt a victim-centred approach – the safety of customers is of paramount concern. Although initial action is not dependant on obtaining evidence, subsequent action against the perpetrator may be impossible without some evidence from third parties. For example, a Judge will only grant a possession order if he/she thinks that it is reasonable to do so based upon the evidence submitted to Court.

## **5.0 Procedural Guidelines for 2010 Rotherham Ltd's Tenancy Management Staff**

### **5.1 Arranging Security and Repairs**

Check whether any security/repair work is necessary to secure the property. For Rotherham MBC properties managed by 2010, the Victim Support Co-ordinator will liaise with maintenance in order to carry out repairs to the victim's property. Even though a crime reference number is not essential to carry out works to a victim's home, it may be necessary to obtain one. This is especially important if the level of estimated damage falls within the parameters of the Council's building insurance policy.

Customers requiring additional security measures will be referred to the Rotherham Safer Homes Projects.

## 5.2 Rotherham Safer Homes Project

The Rotherham Safer Homes Project is a Sanctuary Scheme which provides a multi-agency approach to addressing the fear of crime by improving home security for those that have been victims of crime or are living in fear of crime. It brings together Age Concern, Rotherham Stayput (Part of the Home Improvement Agency Group), 2010 Rotherham Ltd, Neighbourhoods and Adult Services, the Community Safety Unit, Rotherham's Refuge, South Yorkshire Police, the Thursday Project (South Yorkshire Housing Association), South Yorkshire Fire Service, RotherCare and Victim Support Rotherham.

Through the Safer Homes Project customers can access a security and needs assessment. The Project can supply and arrange for the fitting of appropriate door viewers, door chains, locks, bolts and other security equipment to the homes of referred victims, as well as provide support and appropriate crime prevention advice.

In extreme cases of domestic violence where the victim wishes to remain in the property, security measures such as a fireproof letterbox or a personal alarm system may be fitted. 2010 Rotherham Ltd with Neighbourhood and Adult Services will also develop a Sanctuary Scheme to help victims of domestic violence stay in their homes, if that is what they want.

The Police have a number of PR (Personal Radio) Alarms that can be installed in the victim's home. This provides a link to the Police control room via a portable panic button carried by the victim. When the alarm is activated there is an immediate response from the Police.

## 6.0 Offering Advice to Victims Of Domestic Violence

6.1 The type of help that will be appropriate will depend on personal circumstances, including current tenancy status, and the point at which people ask for help. To ensure that an appropriate service is given, each officer should make enquiries to determine:

- What service or assistance does the person want and need?
- Who is best placed to deliver this service?
- Is the client able to access the service?

- general advice about housing options as well as agencies who can offer support and counselling.
- emergency rehousing
- longer term housing
- help to resolve tenancy issues

6.2 Where people have no immediate need of rehousing but need advice on their options to deal with domestic violence, officers will respond positively and sympathetically to approaches made. Housing advice will also be offered on the full range of housing and legal options open to them. Victim of Domestic Violence will be given the phone number for the domestic violence helpline (0808 2000 247). This is a central helpline which can refer your details to local organisations if the customer requires this. Information is be available in all housing officers and reception areas

Victim Support working in partnership with 2010 Rotherham Ltd also provides an out-of-hours service which is a multi-tenure service and can be accessed by any member of the public needing help within the Borough of Rotherham. This service is funded and supported by RMBC.

6.3 Legal Options - Officers will outline the legal remedies available to an applicant and strongly encourage customers to seek independent legal advice on a range of issues including their homeless application. However, failure to pursue legal remedies should not lead to a decision of intentional homelessness. A list of solicitors should be given to the applicant and an appointment made for a solicitor of the applicant's choice if requested.

- **The Family Law Act 1996**

There are two types of orders available under this Act:

- Non-molestation orders prevent the perpetrator from molesting the applicant or a relevant child.
- Occupation orders deal with the occupation of the dwelling and can define occupation rights including the exclusion of the perpetrator from the property or an area around it. There are stricter requirements with regard to obtaining an occupation order, and therefore care should be taken not to raise the customer's hopes.

- **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**

This Act allows a victim of domestic violence to obtain a civil protection order against someone who has been harassing them. Breach of civil

protection orders is an arrestable offence that could lead to a prison sentence.

- **Injunctions**

- Injunctions can be taken out under the Family Law Act Part IV and the Children Act 1989.
- Injunctions are temporary measures. They are usually granted for a three month period that can allow time for both parties to make permanent arrangements.
- Injunctions may be inappropriate where the victim of domestic violence does not speak English as they may be unable to communicate that it is being broken.
- Not all injunctions carry powers of arrest. The Housing Act 1996 makes provision for the power of arrest to be attached to some injunctions issued. Note: the Tenancy Management Officer should be aware that injunctions can aggravate a violent situation and a refusal to obtain an injunction should not be a pre-condition for further action being taken.

- **Property Adjustment Order**

Property Adjustment Orders can be obtained in divorce or separation proceedings under matrimonial law for married women, or alternatively under the Children Act 1989 for unmarried women with children. Property Adjustment Orders provide a long-term measure as they direct who should be given the tenancy. They may be appropriate in instances where the victim of domestic violence has remained in the property and taken legal action to prevent the perpetrator from returning.

- **Crime and Disorder legislation**

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) can be sought under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. In broad terms an ASBO is likely to be relevant where there is behaviour of a criminal nature which causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to other people. The main test is that there is a pattern of behaviour which continues over a period of time but cannot be dealt with easily or adequately through the prosecution of those concerned for a single "snapshot" or criminal event. An ASBO may not be the most appropriate way of dealing with domestic violence given the other options available. The use of ASBOs is dealt with in more detail in 2010 Rotherham Ltd's Anti-social behaviour procedure.

## 7.0 Tenancy Management

7.1 Domestic violence presents particular difficulties for resolving tenancy issues. Legal remedies are available although they can aggravate violent situations and victims may feel unable to use them for fear of reprisals. When trying to reach the best solution to the tenancy situation the Housing Management Officer should establish:

- the safety needs of the victim and any children involved
- whose names are on the tenancy agreement
- the need to provide a home for the customer
- community networks, personal or support networks.

7.2 Victim and perpetrator are joint tenants

7.2.1 A victim of domestic violence who is a joint tenant may want to terminate the tenancy. In this instance the Housing Management Officer will:

- remain impartial
- advise the victim that s/he can sign a Notice To Quit which will end the tenancy for both joint tenants (McGrady v London Borough of Greenwich 1982)
- recommend that the victim seeks advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau or Housing Advice centre prior to ending the tenancy
- advise the victim that they will initially be housed in temporary accommodation.

If the victim still wants to terminate the tenancy, the Housing Management Officer will:

- give the victim a Notice To Quit form (**appendix 2**) to complete in his/her presence
- refer the victim to the Council's assessment and customer services team
- process the Notice to Quit
- take appropriate action to repossess the property

7.2.2 A victim of domestic violence who is a joint tenant may wish to remain in the property. The Introductory and Secure Tenancy Agreement spells out that Grounds for Possession (Section 2a) includes violence towards a member of the household.

### 7.3 Victim is the sole tenant & perpetrator lives in same property

A victim of domestic violence who is a sole tenant may want to remain in the property and take legal action against the perpetrator to prevent them from returning to the property. Alternatively, the victim may want to terminate their tenancy. The Housing Management Officer will:

- establish the course of action the victim wishes to pursue and present the options available
- recommend that the victim seeks independent advice regarding the surrender of the tenancy
- recommend that the victim seeks legal advice regarding the possibility of legal action e.g. an injunction against the perpetrator **(see 6.3 - Legal Options)**
- discuss what additional security measures the victim would require in order to feel able to remain in the property **(see 5.1 - Arranging Security and Repairs and 5.2 - Rotherham Safer Homes Project)**
- advise the victim that they will initially be housed in temporary accommodation if they leave the property.

If the victim decides to terminate the tenancy and the perpetrator remains in the property:

- refer the victim to the Council's assessment and customer services team and initiate possession proceedings against the perpetrator upon expiry of the Notice To Quit to evict them from the property as the unauthorised occupant.

<b>Victim</b>	<b>Perpetrator</b>	<b>Action for Victim</b>	<b>Action against Perpetrator</b>
<b>Tenant</b>	<b>Non tenant who is not living with victim</b>	<b>Install additional security measures to enable victim to remain at home. Or obtain a Surrender of tenancy (as it takes effect immediately) and re-house as homeless depending on level of evidence.</b>	<b>Multi-agency discussion on available action.</b>
<b>Non-tenant</b>	<b>Tenant who is living with victim</b>	<b>(In highly serious cases) refer to MARAC.  2010 Rotherham Ltd are exploring the possibility of further partnership working</b>	<b>Initiate possession proceedings (using Ground 2A. Schedule 2. Housing Act 1985) if victim and/or other witnesses provide evidence</b>

## 7.4 Table of Actions

### **Note:**

Legislation concerning domestic violence is normally interpreted as applying to people who live in the same dwelling. However the threat of violence from someone who does not live at the same address can be relevant (*Regina v Broxbourne Borough Council* 1989).

Whether a couple are married may have a material effect on the action that can be taken.

## **8.0 Where the Victim wishes to leave their family home**

8.1 The ultimate aim of 2010 Rotherham Ltd and the Council is to prevent households affected by Domestic Violence becoming homeless, as such housing advice will be offered to detail a range of housing options.

We will also prevent victims of Domestic Violence becoming homeless by:

- Developing a Sanctuary Scheme to help victims of domestic violence stay in their homes, if that is what they want.
- Ensuring policies and practices used are effective in tackling forced marriages.
- Producing information about domestic violence and help available in different formats including community languages.

8.2 The RMBCs Domestic Violence Policy is encompassed within Rotherham's Allocation Scheme, and is linked to legislative requirements such as the Housing Act 1996 Parts V1 and V11 and the Homeless Act 2002.

Where the victim wishes to move a referral will be made to the Housing Solutions Team (Council) who will assess and determine in partnership with other agencies the level of Priority. Where the recommendation to move a victim urgently is made from a MARAC or where the family requires moving urgently to ensure their immediate safety is met then outright priority (Priority Plus) will be awarded.

Note: That outright priority should not be delayed pending a MARAC meeting, eg Where the next MARAC meeting is not scheduled, the

Housing Solutions Officer will award outright priority sooner. Outright Priority cases will receive 1 offer of accommodation.

### 8.3 Emergency transfers to alternative accommodation

Emergency transfers are only granted in exceptional circumstances where a significant and insurmountable problem associated with the current tenancy. All emergency transfer cases must be referred to the Housing Assessment Panel for approval. All at risk cases normally require a statement from the Police confirming that:

1. the victim is at risk and must be moved;
2. areas where they are at risk.

Council tenants could obtain a property in another borough through reciprocal arrangements. Wherever possible if a case is serious enough to be accepted as homeless then an emergency transfer may well be the best option for a tenant so they do not lose out on security of tenure and a social housing rent.

Temporary accommodation may be appropriate for existing Council tenants whilst an emergency transfer through the Housing Assessment Panel is pursued. In these 2010 Rotherham Ltd will approach the Key Choices team who will identify a suitable vacant property for 2010 Rotherham Ltd to utilise as a temporary management let. The victim will be able to move to this property, whilst their case is being prepared, presented and assessed by panel. Their current tenancy will not be terminated until a decision is reached that:

- the victim or the panel decides whether the victim should return to their family home
- the panel decide whether or not the victim can remain at the temporary address on a permanent basis
- the panel decide whether or not an alternative permanent home would be more suitable

Where victims of domestic violence wish or need to leave their family home and require alternative emergency housing other than the above then they will be offered either a Refuge Placement or Interim Accommodation. In these circumstances or where a victim of Domestic Violence presents as homeless their case will be assessed as part of the statutory homeless duty, if following the investigation a duty is owed the case will be awarded priority, and will be offered accommodation in date turn order within the Priority Group. Housing Benefit can be paid in certain

circumstances, on both a tenancy and temporary accommodation, under regulation 5 of the Housing Benefit Regulations.

#### 8.4 Assessing Homelessness application due to Domestic Violence

Where people have made a homelessness application due to domestic violence the Council will need to consider the risk of violence or threats of violence from inside or outside the home in assessing the needs of the applicant. In all circumstances the Housing Solutions Officer at Rotherham MBC will provide all housing options to prevent homelessness. This will include offering advice on all forms of tenure, including Housing Association, private rented, Council, mutual exchanges, shared ownership, and buying a property.

##### 8.41 Collating Evidence

- It is always very difficult to prove that violence has taken place, therefore the word of the applicant should always be believed unless there is firm evidence to the contrary.
- Case officers should not ask the applicant for proof of domestic violence but should ask for names of agencies who can help the applicant's case e.g. their doctor, police (if called) social worker, etc. Information from relevant agencies can often speed up an applicant's assessment. Third party evidence from family and friends should never be requested if it may put the applicant at further risk.
- If a case officer strongly suspects that an applicant may want to move for reasons other than domestic violence, they should investigate these concerns, but the applicant must receive full and sensitive consideration until firm evidence is available to confirm that domestic violence is not the issue. Such cases should be discussed with a senior manager before any investigation takes place. A written explanation should be placed on file.

It is the responsibility of the Council to investigate a claim of homelessness due to domestic violence using legislation, the Homelessness Code of Guidance, and the relevant case law. The basic test to be applied is best summed up by the Code of Guidance when deciding whether to accept somebody as homeless as a result of domestic violence:

“The authority will need to consider the seriousness of the violence or threats of violence, the frequency of occurrence and the likelihood of recurrence”

Domestic violence is not confined to a person who normally resides with the

applicant but can include threats from outside of the home from a previous association.

The case officer's approach to investigation should be sympathetic and believing. As described above, all options should be fully explored with the applicant including extra security, legal remedies, and possible referrals to the Police, solicitor etc. The homelessness investigation should follow a step by step procedure with clear information given to the applicant on how their case will be processed.

## 8.5 Step By Step Homelessness Investigation Procedure

Case officers should take a full statement from the applicant, which the applicant should sign. Include details and dates of:

- outreach/refuge involvement
- threats of or actual assault
- property damage
- police involvement
- hospital or GP involvement
- social worker or probation officer involvement
- any history of previous incidents and requests for rehousing.

*NB The case officer must be aware that the applicant may be too upset to provide all the above at a first interview. Applicants may require a place of safety first with a follow up interview arranged. Where applicants have fled the home in an emergency they may not be able to provide personal documentation to confirm status or identity. In such circumstances status/identity should be checked with the Department of Social Security, Housing Benefit, GP's etc. A standard applicant consent form for disclosure of information from such agencies should be used.*

The case officer should contact all agencies listed by the applicant and investigate:

- how serious was the incident or incidents (incidents can involve threats as well as physical abuse)
- is the perpetrator known to the agency
- is there a history of abuse
- how likely are these incidents to reoccur
- is any agency recommending an immediate move and if so, on what basis

Having considered the seriousness of the violence or threats, the frequency of incidents and the likelihood of recurrence the Council will notify the applicant of its decision. If the decision is to find the applicant not homeless they should be fully informed of their right to a statutory review of that decision. In some instances the Council may advise an applicant to pursue any available legal remedies. This should never be done as a matter of policy but on the merits of each individual case. The need to ensure the proper safety of the applicant should always be taken into account. For those applicants not accepted as homeless or in priority need who claim domestic violence, clear advice and assistance must be given.

## **9.0 Every Contact Counts**

The 'Every Contact Counts' initiative is targeted at elderly and vulnerable people and takes a pro-active approach to reducing the fear of crime of hard to hear groups.

It is recognised, in the Council's Quality of Life Survey, that elderly or vulnerable people are more likely to perceive high levels of ASB or crime issues. This Strategy will deliver a pro-active approach to achieve the target to 'Reduce the percentage of people with a long standing illness, disability or infirmity who are 'very concerned' about being a victim of crime'.

The Initiative has two main aims:

- To ensure the target group receives positive public reassurance messages via hand-delivered leaflets and personal contact
- To give crime prevention and welfare advice and improve the quality of service to the target group.

This initiative will provide training and support to enable all customer facing staff to identify where customers may need support or advice in relation to their welfare.

## **10.0 Developing our Customers' views**

This policy and procedure has been developed with our customers. At a recent consultation event our customers provided 2010 Rotherham Ltd with valuable feedback which will be used to further develop this policy.

**Our customers said:**

- 2010 Rotherham Ltd need to raise awareness of what constitutes Domestic Violence i.e. Definition for staff, customers and children.
- 2010 Rotherham Ltd need to raise the awareness and consequences of Domestic Violence to tenants e.g. Housing Act 1996.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> point of contact is vital to establish confidence and appropriate action.
- More publicity is needed.
- 2010 Rotherham Ltd need to incorporate the Child Line link, the Common Assessment Framework and Safeguarding Children Procedures to the Domestic Violence Policy. Safeguarding Children must be a priority.

In response to these suggestions:

**2010 Rotherham Ltd will:**

- Ensure front line staff raise awareness of Domestic Violence within the neighbourhood. We will agree a multi-agency definition for Domestic Violence and ensure our staff and partners are able to support the community by providing a robust approach to dealing with Domestic Violence.
- We will develop a 1<sup>st</sup> point of contact for Domestic Violence and explore the possibilities of appointing a Domestic Violence Champion.
- To increase publicity we will provide a follow up to the article in the February 2007 edition of "Round Your Place". And include more information on help and prevention through the Safer Homes Partnership.
- 2010 Rotherham Ltd has redrafted the good practice guide in this policy to highlight that child safety is a priority. 2010 Rotherham Ltd will ensure that their domestic violence training programme also reflects the emphasis on child safety.
- Increase awareness of Safeguarding Children Procedures.

**11.0 MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)**

MARAC is a meeting where agencies talk about the risk of serious harm to people experiencing domestic abuse in their area, and make safety plans to support those at most risk.

2010 Rotherham Ltd and other agencies such as Victim Support can make referrals to MARAC to put forward a case for discussion. The cases referred to MARAC are those cases at risk of serious harm from domestic abuse.

In order to contact MARAC, officers will need to contact their agency lead on 0114 252 3682, or The Victim Support Officer on 01709 361076 or Police Domestic Violence Officer on 01709 832670 or 832671.

## **11.0 Multi-Agency Training**

Agency awareness training is co-coordinated through the Domestic Violence Co-ordinator and delivered by a range of agencies including the voluntary sector. To date, this has been accessed by people from 2010 Rotherham Ltd; RMBC; Health professionals from DASH, the Hospital and the PCT, the Justice System, including Probation and Legal Clerks, the Youth Service, the Voluntary Sector and CAF/CASS.

Between January 2006 and December 2006 a total of 146 people have accessed this training across the Borough.

2010 Rotherham Ltd recognises the need to ensure that all employees are aware of domestic violence issues and its impact on customers, residents and people in the workplace.

An on going programme of specific training has been provided, where appropriate, for those frontline employees who are most likely to deal with instances of domestic violence to ensure that they have the necessary skills to support someone who is reporting this to them.

Awareness raising courses will be aimed initially at employees with a housing management role, those working with homeless people and employees from community support projects.

## **12.0 Performance Monitoring**

The policy and procedures will then be reviewed and updated every two years, or whenever there is a relevant policy or legislative change. This

will be reported to the Board and Sustainable Communities Committee.

Incidents of domestic violence reported to staff will be recorded from completed Reporting and Monitoring forms.

An important part of the monitoring and evaluation process will be consultation with survivors of domestic violence, key voluntary sector agencies such as Women's Aid, Victim Support, Safer Homes, MARAC and employees of RMBC, including 2010 Rotherham Ltd.

Objectives for achieving the aims set out in this Policy will be reviewed and set every year. This will be reported to the Board and Sustainable Communities Sub-Committee. Details of objectives and targets will be set out in each Directorate's Service Plan and monitored through the service planning process.