
Domestic Abuse Toolkit

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Domestic Abuse Toolkit

1. Overview

This toolkit has been designed to provide a range of advice, support and resources for Officers when dealing with domestic abuse and compliments the Domestic Abuse Policy.

It is not a complete guide but offers a steer where this is needed to allow Officers to carry out their duties in supporting and protecting domestic abuse victims/survivors. It is recognised that Officers want to do their best and do the right thing for customers who are affected and this document with providing clarity, support and guidance.

Using this toolkit will assist in providing a consistent and effective response to those vulnerable customers who need our help and support during a difficult time in their life.

2. Background

Rykneld Homes (RHL) and NEDDC are well placed to recognise signs of domestic abuse. It is essential that all reports are taken seriously, and we work proactively and positively with victims/survivors. We will treat people experiencing domestic abuse in a sympathetic, supportive and non-judgemental way.

In order to provide a good response, it is helpful to recognise some barriers that can prevent this from happening:

- Simplistic thinking about options: default response of pushing victims into homelessness rather than keeping victims safe, and/or not taking action against perpetrators
- Believing myths about domestic abuse and its dynamics
- Not fully understanding domestic abuse and how coercive control works and how victims protect themselves and their children
- Concern about making matters worse
- Not wanting to get involved
- Not listening to survivors about how they can keep themselves safe (they understand a perpetrators motives and abusive triggers and actions)
- Hesitant about making decisions about domestic abuse in case the situation has been misjudged
- Being risk averse – more mindful of the perpetrator's rights rather than those of the victim/survivor
- Officers not sure how to support victims/survivors correctly
- Systematic barriers – joint tenancies. Perpetrators and survivors are treated as a single entity.

Remember, dealing with domestic abuse is directly linked to the priorities that we face every day as a social landlord and a Council:

- preventing homelessness
- child protection
- adult safeguarding
- tenant safety
- ensuring our customers feel safe and secure in their home
- poverty and inequality.

It is recognised and understood that some Officers may find dealing with domestic abuse or a specific type of abuse difficult; in this case they should speak to their line Manager.

3. Definition

The current cross-government definition is:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

Types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Financial/Economic
- Discriminatory.

The definition includes honour based, forced marriage and female mutilation.

4. Coercive and Controlling Behaviour

Under the Serious Crime Act 2015, coercive and controlling behaviour became a criminal offence.

Controlling behaviour includes a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capabilities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Victims of coercive control have every aspect of their day to day live controlled by their partner, often being subjected to daily intimidation and humiliation which will result in having a serious effect on the victim/survivor.

Police information has revealed that victims are subjected to approximately 50 incidents before reporting abuse to the Police. Coercive control behaviour is more likely to end in homicide, according to Police information and statistics.

The law helps protect victims by outlawing sustained patterns of behaviour. Police don't always need a victim statement in order to prosecute under this law.

Agencies can provide evidence for prosecution, it is therefore vitally important that we follow guidelines and record accurately and timely what we see, what we hear and all our actions.

5. Co-ordinated Community Response

Rykneld Homes and NEDDC have a responsibility to work effectively within their own teams and with other agencies (statutory or voluntary) that also have a responsibility for dealing with victims of violence and their children or perpetrators. This integrated process is known as CCR, co-ordinated community response.

6. Confidentiality

Any information we receive will be treated in the strictest confidence and in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. We will consider a person's safety at all times and no information will be disclosed or discussed without the persons express permission, except where we are required to report a case to MARAC in order to protect a survivor or their children from serious harm or homicide, including where there is a risk to themselves or others (suicide risk or parental neglect).

To protect survivors we will carry out security checks before discussing a case with anyone. This will include:

- Checking the communication plan and a survivor's preferred method of contact before making any contact
- Ensuring that it is convenient and safe to speak to the survivor and that they are able to have a conversation with you
- Organising a safe and private place to hold interviews/discussions about their case
- Being discreet and not discussing cases openly with other Officers who do not need to know about the case.

7. Deleting of Evidence/Cookies on Electronic Devices

If someone is worried about covering their tracks online then they need to delete their browser and cookies history. Although clearing their history minimises the chances of someone knowing what websites they have visited there are other means of finding out if the perpetrator knows how to.

The safest way for survivors to access sites if they want to be completely sure of not being tacked online is to use a computer at a local library, internet café or a friend's house or at work.

8. Spotting the Signs of Domestic Abuse

There are signs of potential domestic abuse that we should look out for and investigate, such as:

- Injuries (these can be seen or quite often hidden beneath clothing)
- Police call outs

- Anti-social behaviour
- Noise nuisance
- Neighbour complaints/concerns
- Rent arrears
- No control over finances and is unable to access money
- Assignment of tenancy requests where these are to a partner/spouse
- Behaviour/attitude toward partner or family member – humiliating, degrading, intimidating or threatening
- Survivor moves out of property (with children if there are any) leaving tenancy or property empty
- Spotting a pattern in behaviour.

9. Handling an Initial Report by Telephone or in Person

We will offer advice and assistance as a matter of priority. If a customer reports an incident at Pioneer House or at the Council offices, they should be offered a confidential interview with an appropriate Officer immediately.

If an incident is disclosed by a third party the information should be passed to the Community Sustainment team or the Community Safety Partnership and appropriate Neighbourhood team who will make contact within 24 hours.

If a report is via a third party and it is deemed appropriate to visit unannounced, we will exercise extreme caution as this could place the survivor at risk. We will only discuss concerns about the tenant's or resident's safety if it is appropriate to explore.

It is possible that a third party (family/friend or neighbour) may require support; therefore, they should be referred to the appropriate agency/service.

If an Officer is at a customer's home when a disclosure is made they should obtain as much information as possible, via CAADA DASH form, as long as it is safe to do so.

If an Operative observes behaviour during the course of their duties that raises concern about potential domestic abuse, or coercive or controlling behaviour, (it has been observed that perpetrators do not always alter their behaviour in front of Operatives) they should not confront the perpetrator, but should contact the appropriate team/Officer about their concerns and explain what they have seen/observed or heard the same working day or within 24 hours.

If the potential or alleged perpetrator is present or suspected to be present then the Officer will not pursue enquiries at that time regarding any potential domestic abuse, but will refer to the relevant Officer/Manager to discuss a suitable way forward and allocate the case to an Officer.

Should the Choice Move team receive a housing application from a current customer of RHL they will refer the case to the relevant Neighbourhood team for further investigation within 24 hours of receiving the application form. They will continue to process the application within five calendar days.

Upon receipt of a housing application, Choice Move will aim to triage and assess risk within 24 hours; they will make contact with the customer within 48 hours and normally process the application within five working days.

Accurate records must be kept at every stage of case management. Case Officers will use prescribed documents to capture details of the investigations and actions taken. OpenHousing will capture basic details to alert RHL colleagues and identify the person handling the case. All Officers are required to comply with confidentiality procedures in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.

10. Initiating an Investigation and Allocating the Case

Domestic abuse cases will normally be handled by one Officer to ensure the survivor does not need to repeat their experience multiple times. The nominated Officer will normally remain the customer's main point of contact in relation to their case to ensure continuity and reassurance. However, it is recognised that this is not always possible.

The duty Manager will allocate the case to an appropriate Officer depending on availability and area cover, complexity of the case and the experience of the Officer.

The investigating Officer will make contact with the victim/survivor by their preferred contact method and arrange to conduct an interview to complete the CAADA-DASH form to assess the level of risk and potential referral to MARAC.

See Section 21 "Assessing the Risk and Reporting to MARAC".

11. Planning and Conducting an Interview with a Survivor

The interview is important to demonstrate our commitment to help survivors of domestic abuse. Interview skills are essential to achieve a positive outcome, gather and provide important information and evaluate the level of risk.

The interviewing Officer must show patience and respect in a very sensitive situation. A survivor may be very scared and unclear on how they can escape the situation they are in. There may appear to be a wide range of obstacles, which we need to explore and suggest options.

It is essential to show empathy and use sensitive language to demonstrate understanding.

Children may be around during a visit but, wherever possible, we will endeavour to conduct the interview without them present to avoid unnecessary distress caused by discussion of the case. This also reduces the risk of a breach of confidentiality whereby information could be passed to the perpetrator or others.

All interviews will be carried out sensitively and in a supportive manner:

- Offer suitable interview provisions, including an accessible and private venue
- Visits and meetings will only take place by agreement with the survivor. A safe location for meetings will be offered to ensure the abuser is not alerted to support the survivor is receiving
- Reassure the person experiencing domestic abuse it is not their fault
- that confidentiality will be maintained and explain what information, if any, may or will be shared
- Explaining how their privacy will be protected by always conducting a security check before discussing their case and by having a communication plan to ensure that abusers are not inadvertently made aware of a case
- Preferred contact method – safe telephone number, email or mailing address
- Survivors may feel more comfortable and prefer a *female Officer* to handle their case and, where possible, this request will be supported where it does not override safety
- Believe the person is experiencing domestic abuse
- Ask open questions
- Identify the specific circumstances of the case and to clarify all those who are involved and their relationship to the survivor
- We will confirm the details of any other adult household members and establish their relationship to the survivor and the perpetrator
- Discuss contact with the Police and medical services
- Reassure the person that the responsibility lies with the perpetrator
- Discuss tenancy rights and any issues they are concerned about, such as property damage, rent arrears etc
- Discuss immediate and future housing options
- Refer to specialist services (Elm Foundation, CAB, Law Centre etc)
- Complete the CAADA-DASH Risk Assessment (**Appendix 1**), if necessary refer to the Severity of Abuse Grid (check and balance to support professional judgement) **Appendix 2**
- It is important to discuss a contingency plan with the survivor in case they need to leave at short notice. It is useful to keep an emergency bag somewhere safe with a trusted friend or family:
 - ✓ Clothes and toiletries for them and their children
 - ✓ A child's favourite toy
 - ✓ Keep a small amount of money available for taxis or transport
 - ✓ Keep a mobile phone at hand

- ✓ Some form of identification
- ✓ Money, bankbooks, cheque book and credit and debit cards
- ✓ Keys for house, car, and place of work
- ✓ Cards for payment of Child Benefit and any other welfare benefits
- ✓ Prescribed medication
- ✓ Address book
- ✓ Family photographs, diary, jewellery, small items of sentimental value.

The Police and supporting agency(s) will assist the survivor in ensuring recovery of essential documents.

It may be appropriate in some cases to carry out regular (possibly weekly) welfare checks. Face to face visits may reduce the severity of abuse as the perpetrator will know they are being monitored. Contact other professionals if you are concerned, it may be necessary to pull a potential team together to agree how to monitor and support, this will normally be through MARAC if the risk is particularly high.

12. The Perpetrator and their Associates

We will sensitively explore the circumstances that the survivor is experiencing. A perpetrator may be living with the survivor or be a former partner or household member. The abuse may be caused directly by the perpetrator or indirectly via a network of their friends or family on their behalf. We will work to understand the impact of the survivor's circumstances, understanding that abuse can take many forms as explained in the definition above.

It is important to gather as much information as possible as this could support enforcement action to stop the abuse and enable us to fully evaluate the level of risk and action required. The accuracy of the information is therefore important, such as names, dates and times of incidents and any witnesses or agencies involved.

We will ascertain the perpetrator's legal status in terms of their relationship to the survivor and regarding the tenancy to determine their security of tenure and right to access the property.

We will not compel the survivor to provide any information that they do not wish to provide.

We will not challenge the perpetrator or suggest that they change their behaviour. Report to the Police if concerned.

13. Children

We will confirm the details of all the survivor's children and establish whether they are currently living with the survivor and how the situation affects them. If there is any risk to children, we will evaluate this and report to appropriate agencies, where necessary. As part of the investigation we will establish the children's relationship to the perpetrator, whether they have legal access and how this affects the level of risk.

14. Schools

If there are children we will work to understand how schools are involved, and with the permission of the survivor may contact teachers as part of a co-ordinated response to the risks.

We will consider whether the location of schools is a factor that contributes to risk for the survivor, for example, whether the perpetrator could reconnect with the survivor via the school if the household was moved to different accommodation.

15. Survivor's Support Network

We will establish the support that the survivor has via family, friends or otherwise, and understand whether these will be incorporated into a support plan or could represent a risk.

16. Other Agencies Involved

We will establish details of any agencies that are currently involved in supporting the survivor and with the survivor's agreement may collaborate with these agencies in order to develop a joined up support plan. If the survivor does not have an advocate or it would be beneficial to engage other support agencies, we will explore this and refer where appropriate.

17. Pets

Survivors and their children may have strong attachment to family pets. We will confirm the details of any pets, explore any animal welfare issues and consider how pets will be managed if a move is necessary for the safety of the household. We will work with Animal Welfare organisations if there is a concern and also to explore rehoming if this is needed to assist the survivor.

18. Exploring the Options and Support

Remaining in their home – consider supporting survivors to remain in their home and taking appropriate action against the perpetrator and hold them to account (see Section 22). They may wish to stay at their current address for various reasons:

- To maintain contact with support networks
- To avoid disruption for children from changing schools
- To avoid disruption due to work arrangements
- They do not want to be forced out by the perpetrator's actions.

Target hardening – strengthening security at an existing or future home including window locks, dummy cameras, and letterbox plates. This option will not be suitable if the perpetrator still lives at the address or has a legal right to enter the home, or if the survivor continues to be at risk in the community.

Referrals to appropriate agencies – such as Elm Foundation, Adult Care, Community Mental Health Team, Derbyshire Domestic Abuse Helpline (see partnership working for a comprehensive list) including legal information and advice.

Temporary safe place/emergency accommodation – this could be at a family or friends home, a refuge or emergency accommodation via North East Derbyshire District Council's (NEDDC) Housing Options team.

Debts – we will ascertain whether rent arrears or other debts are a concern for the household and understand how these affect the survivor's situation. Financial control can be a significant obstacle to a survivor escaping abuse as they may believe that they cannot cope without their partner.

Rykneld Homes and NEDDC will explain the ways in which Welfare Benefits can be accessed to gain financial independence and, if appropriate, make referrals to debt advice agencies.

Rehousing – dependent on the household's circumstances and the level of risk that the perpetrator represents, we will explore housing options.

The level of risk may be such that the survivor does not feel safe to remain at the current property. We will explore various options and discuss the choices available to them to decide if a move is necessary. Housing options are discussed in more detail below.

Where rent arrears occur these will not be an obstacle to support a potential move to alternative accommodation. We may require an undertaking by the tenant to reduce the arrears through a payment plan either before or after a transfer takes place, this can be included in the support plan. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

Rykneld Homes and NEDDC will, on occasion, deal with survivors who have been supported previously with a move. We must avoid judgement as to why a person may have become a repeat survivor and let the investigation take its course in order to agree the appropriate action. Sometimes in these types of cases coercion and control are prevalent and the perpetrator may not be willing to let them go.

Experience has shown that some household's may contrive to increase their priority for housing through spurious declarations. This must not be allowed to influence a case or lead to assumptions. If investigation is inconclusive we must make decisions based on the balance of probability and never ignore a potential risk.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) referral – 14+ score = high risk of violence/homicide. Follow the assessment of the CAADA-DASH; explain that should the risk be high their case will automatically be referred to MARAC.

MARAC is a multi-agency approach to manage cases of domestic abuse where the victim/survivor has been identified as being high risk of serious harm or homicide.

Monthly meetings bring together representatives from both statutory and voluntary agencies with the aim of sharing information and developing a safety plan for victims and their families with a view to reducing the risks and the likelihood of repeat victimisation. The survivor does not attend the meetings but is represented by an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) who speaks on their behalf.

During exceptional times (such as Covid19 lockdown) these meetings are increased to once a week or fortnight and are held remotely.

19. Eviction

It may be appropriate to consider evicting the tenant due to a breach of section 4.1 of the Tenancy Agreement and allowing the survivor to remain as this may meet their social circumstances (support network, allow children to remain at the same school etc). These

cases will need to be considered carefully in consultation with Legal Services to ensure that it is the most appropriate and correct course of action.

In the event that the survivor moves out (joint tenant) and provides a notice to quit (NTQ) on the tenancy, the remaining tenant (perpetrator) will be served notice as an unauthorised occupier as they will have no security of tenure.

Depending on the situation of the perpetrator they could apply for rehousing and their application would be assessed in line with the Council's Allocation Policy to determine eligibility to go on the Housing Register.

20. Agreeing a Support Plan with the Survivor

After understanding the household's circumstances and needs, RHL/Housing Options at NEDDC will explain the different options available and allow them to consider which choice is most suitable for them. The decision rests with the survivor of abuse and we will not take action without their confirmed agreement to the support plan. They may wish to seek independent legal advice. Rykneld Homes/Housing Options cannot advise on what to do with the tenancy.

Once a plan is agreed, the Case Officer is responsible for initiating action to agreed timescales and for providing regular updates. The Case Officer must maintain up to date understanding of the survivor's situation to ensure that the risk has not increased. Where the risk changes this must be addressed promptly and the plan amended accordingly.

In some circumstances it may be necessary to involve other support agencies. However, the Case Officer will maintain responsibility for ensuring that support is initiated rather than passing details to the survivor to progress it independently.

Signposting to other agencies without our assistance will only be done by explicit agreement with the survivor. For example, by providing a phone number for the National Domestic Violence 24-Hour Helpline, so that they have access to counselling services, when they need it.

Any support plan will be recorded electronically using the Support Communications log/ECINS, this will detail any agreed actions and be retained confidentially.

Where housing applications have been received, the Allocations Team will complete a Housing Application Risk Assessment (**Appendix 3**) which has a support plan within it for customers who may or may not be RHL customers in order to support their application to move to alternative accommodation.

Consideration should be given to any disability that has implications to the support plan, such as the type of accommodation that is required for a move. Where disability or a health issue requires support, RHL will discuss options and if agreed may refer to other agencies. For example, if the survivor reports a health concern in relation to the abuse, we may assist them in accessing support through their GP or counselling service.

Review safety/support plans if the abuse is escalating.

21. Assessing the Risk and Reporting to MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

We will take reasonable steps to gather information, such as names and dates, to support allegations, and will ask the survivor to share their story and circumstances in relation to their household. We will never assume that a lack of evidence is an indication of low risk. The CAADA-DASH will be completed to assess risk (see **Appendix 1** which details the expectations of information within each question). A blank form can be downloaded here <https://www.saferderbyshire.gov.uk/what-we-do/domestic-abuse/marac/domestic-abuse-and-marac-referrals.aspx> or add the webpage to your favourites.

Upon completion, if the CAADA-DASH score adds up to 14 or more then the case needs referring to MARAC.

All referrals to MARAC need to be completed with as much detail as possible and typed up and presented professionally. Handwritten documents are not accepted.

If the score falls below 14, but you feel that something indicates that the risk is possibly higher than this, then use the 'Severity of Abuse Grid' (**Appendix 2**) to carry out a check and balance. If following this process you still feel that the case is high risk and warrants going to MARAC, then use the information in the grid as evidence to support the referral based on professional judgement. For instance:

Harassment or stalking, the survivor indicates that they are subjected to occasional phone calls or texting, but then states that the perpetrator has made threats of suicide/homicide to them.

The occasional phone call or text would indicate that the harassment or stalking element of the abuse is low risk; however, the indication of a threat of suicide/homicide indicates high risk.

In the 'For Consideration by Professional' section of the form your referral to MARAC would be appropriate and justified, but needs to be evidenced that in your professional opinion the reason you are referring the case is because of the threat of suicide/homicide.

For those cases not going to MARAC other options need to be fully explored.

22. Housing Options and Suitable Areas

Moving is a huge decision and can mean survivors leaving behind family, friends and support networks, employment and children's schools; it also comes with significant financial cost. All options should be explored including the survivor remaining in their current home where it is safe to do so. Every effort should be made to ensure that the focus is on providing a safe environment.

If the survivor does want to move the Officer should support the survivor to complete a housing application to join the Housing Register to move within North East Derbyshire, together with any supporting information/evidence to speed up the processing of the housing application form.

In some cases, depending on the level of risk, it may be necessary to consider a direct match; this will be carried out through the Discretionary Housing Panel to ensure that all decisions are recorded and a full audit available.

We will also support survivors/victims in applying to other areas where necessary, e.g. Bolsover District Council/Chesterfield Borough Council or further afield.

23. Rent Arrears

Rent arrears should never prevent a person experiencing domestic abuse from moving, but the debt should not be ignored, therefore, a repayment plan will need to be discussed at the time of the application. The survivor may not be aware of the size of the debt or may not be in a position to pay the debt or even begin a repayment plan, sometimes the plan may need to begin at a later date if the survivor has been subject to economical abuse and consequently not had access to funds. Flexibility will be exercised and each situation will be thoroughly considered before making a decision about rehousing.

24. Location

The location of a suitable property needs to be considered thoroughly and discussed with the survivor before making a decision on whether an area/location is suitable for rehousing.

It is expected that a survivor moves a reasonable distance from the perpetrator and his/her associates to minimise the risk of further abuse, however, social considerations need to be given to a survivor's situation, their support network, location of children's schools, local services, employment and availability of suitable properties that might affect the suitability of their accommodation.

As previously mentioned, a survivor will know more about an abusers motives and triggers than we do and are often best placed to make a decision about the suitability of an area, however, we do need to ensure that the survivor is not placed at further significant risk with their move, as this will perpetuate the abuse and a possible further move may be required to ensure their safety.

It may be possible for assistance to be given to allow children to remain at the same school by offering travel vouchers/taxi. Liaise with the school representative on individual cases.

Rent Charges – charging rent in advance of signing up for a tenancy is good practice, but can discriminate those survivors who have experienced domestic abuse and who are highly likely to have also experienced economical abuse meaning that they have been prevented from having access to money, earning and employment. In some situations it may be appropriate for the first full weeks rent to be waived in order to get the survivor to a new place of safety. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

25. Legal Remedies

Rykneld Homes/NEDDC will talk to survivors of domestic abuse on options to restrict a perpetrator's behaviour in order to promote their safety. Legal action will represent a cost but in some cases the survivor may be able to obtain financial support to access the legal system. We will advise survivors on how to obtain legal advice in the use of:

- Injunctions – to prohibit the actions of an abuser, order certain actions or limit their access to an area. These can be applied for with a power of arrest if the injunction is breached
- Non-Molestation Order – Part 4, Family Law Act 1996 to prevent a perpetrator from using or threatening violence against a survivor and their children, or from intimidating, harassing or pestering them, the perpetrator can be sentenced if breached

- Occupation Order – a Court Order that regulates who can live in the family home, and can also restrict the abuser from entering the surrounding area, this doesn't change the tenancy. It is an immediate short term solution to allow for a longer term remedy
- Exclusion Orders – an Order that forces the removal of a person from a home where they are considered a danger to a child or parent of a child. Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (ASB, Crime and Policing Act) can exclude if someone is at serious risk of harm
- Indefinite Restraining Order – this is an Order made by a Court, if there is no date given on the Restraining Order, the Restraining Order will become spent two years from the date of conviction. If, however, the Restraining Order states that it is 'unlimited' or 'indefinite', or is issued 'until further Order', then it will never become spent
- Domestic Violence Prevention Notices (DVPN) – these are served by the Police and are an immediate response to prevent further threat/violence for 48 hours to allow enough time for the Notice to be presented at Court
- Domestic Violence Prevention Orders (DVPO) – awarded by the Court following the serving of a DVPN. These last for up to 28 days to allow victims/survivors to put other measures in place such as a non-molestation order. A breach of a DVPO is an offence and the perpetrator can receive a sentence.

26. Civil Injunctions which Housing may decide is appropriate:

- ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 Part 1, ASB – civil injunction if engaged or threatened to engage in ASB and has the power to exclude persons from their home
- ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Part 4 – Closure Order, now extended to ASB. Can be used if tenant or resident is innocent party and others have to leave

Legal advice needs be sought before proceeding with any of the aforementioned actions.

27. Joint Tenancies

Joint tenants are jointly and severally liable for rent, other charges and condition of the property. Only one tenant needs to live there and it doesn't matter how long ago the other person left they will continue to be liable, but also benefit from Right to Buy (RTB).

Only one tenant needs to give notice on the property for the tenancy to end.

Neither victim/survivor nor perpetrator should be advised to terminate their tenancy.

They should be advised to seek independent legal advice. There may be Family Law remedies that will remove the perpetrator from the home or tenancy e.g. assignment of tenancy following an order from Court.

If one tenant leaves due to domestic abuse and NTQ is not received the joint tenancy will persist and RHL will need to consider its course of action. It may decide, as there is evidence of domestic abuse, as one party has left because of violence or threats of violence, which would equate to a breach of tenancy that seeking possession of the property is an appropriate option. Domestic Abuse is a clear breach of tenancy conditions.

Section 4.1 in the NEDDC Tenancy Agreement states:

“You must not inflict domestic violence, threaten violence or use mental, emotional, financial or sexual abuse against your partner, ex-partner, or another member of your family or household. Domestic abuse can be considered a good enough reason for eviction, if your partner has left as a result of your violent or abusive behaviour.”

Each case will be assessed individually. Discuss and liaise with your Manager and/or the Community Sustainment Manager prior to taking action to ensure that it is reasonable and proportionate. Also, seek legal advice prior to taking any action.

28. Protection of Vacant Property (extract from Domestic Abuse Policy Section 10.13)

In cases where a tenant leaves their property to live in a Refuge or other temporary accommodation, their property may sit empty for a prolonged period. Rykneld Homes will not normally advise a tenant to relinquish their tenancy but in some circumstances, where a survivor flees domestic abuse, the property itself can become a target.

In such cases, we may suggest security measures to deter vandalism, burglary or illegal occupation. We will advise the tenant to remove any valuable possessions and may support them in terms of temporary storage. Whilst a tenancy is current, the tenant will remain liable for the rent due.

Due to the cost of rent and storage of possessions, a tenant may decide to relinquish their tenancy whilst they wait for an offer of a permanent tenancy at a new address. In such cases, RHL will honour our commitment to offer a new tenancy when a suitable property becomes available and the tenant will retain the security of tenure of the previous tenancy and the associated rights without a break for the purposes of RTB calculations.

All cases of this nature should be referred to Discretionary Housing Panel for a decision to ensure compliance with the Council's Allocation Scheme.

Tenancy in perpetrator's name – a housing application will need to be completed, either with or without Officer support. The duty to provide temporary accommodation lies with NEDDC. It may also be appropriate to refer survivors to special agencies who provide refuge accommodation, such as The Elm Foundation.

Tenancy in the survivor's name – guidance will be provided on options available. If the person wishes the perpetrator to leave then we will provide support in conjunction with partners e.g. Police, Elm Foundation. Often the request to leave will be met with opposition, especially if it is a family home, this may heighten the risk of further abuse.

29. Partnership Working and Resources

Digital Tools to help keep people safe DO NOT PUBLICISE.

There are various tools available to the public that can assist in keeping people safe. Please use links below to see what each app provides:

- Hollie Guard – <https://hollieguard.com>
- Bright Sky – designed as a weather app <https://www.hestia.org/brightsky>.

30. Resources – Useful Further Reading

Domestic Abuse: a good practice guide for social landlords:

<http://www.cih.org/resources/PDF/Scotland%20Policy%20Pdfs/Domestic%20abuse/Domestic%20abuse%20guidance%20for%20social%20landlords%20FINAL.pdf>

Safe at Home – The case for a response to domestic abuse by housing providers:

<https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20at%20Home%20Report.pdf>

NEDDC Allocation Policy:

<https://www.rykneldhomes.org.uk/about-us/news/new-allocations-policy/>

Derby and Derbyshire Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2018-2021:

<https://www.saferderbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/domestic-abuse-and-sexual-violence-strategy-2018-2021.pdf>

31. Agencies and Websites

- DAHA – Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance: <https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/>
- Freedom Programme – domestic abuse programmes for men and women: <https://www.freedomprogramme.co.uk/>
- Clare's Law or DVD's allow Police to disclose to individuals details of their partners' abusive past to enable them to make informed decisions about escaping an abusive situation: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/clares-law-to-become-a-national-scheme>
- The Elm Foundation, Tel. 01246 540464, offering refuge accommodation, community services, children and young people services and therapeutic service: <https://www.theelmfoundation.org.uk>
- ABC Project (Voluntary Perpetrator Programme) – a structured programme for people who want to stop their use of violence or abuse towards their current or former partner, including heterosexual, transgender and same sex relationships
- Safelives – UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, for everyone and for good: <https://safelives.org.uk>
- VAWG – Violence Against Women and Girls: <https://www.gov.uk/dfid-research-outputs/vawg-legislation>
- MARAC – Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference: <https://www.saferderbyshire.gov.uk/what-we-do/domestic-abuse/marac/domestic-abuse-and-marac-referrals.aspx>
- MASH – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs
- National Domestic Violence Helpline – Tel. 0808 2000 247: <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk>

- Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) – Tel. 01773 746 115:
<https://www.saferderbyshire.gov.uk/what-we-do/domestic-abuse/staff-guidance/adults/sexual-assault-referral-centre/sexual-assault-referral-centre.aspx>
- Derbyshire Domestic Abuse Support Line – Tel. 08000 198 668:
<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/social-health/children-and-families/support-for-families/domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse.aspx>
- IDVA Service – Independent Domestic Violence Advisors:
<https://www.saferderbyshire.gov.uk/what-we-do/domestic-abuse/staff-guidance/adults/independent-domestic-violence-advisor/independent-domestic-violence-advisor.aspx> Email: IDVA.service@glow.cjsm.net
- Hadhari Nari – part of Metropolitan Housing, providing support and advice primarily to those with no recourse to public funds who are fleeing abusive partners/or family members: <https://www.communitydirectoryderbyshire.org.uk/view/1931/hadhari-nari-womens-project>
- Womens Aid: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk>
- Crimestoppers (for members of the public to report concerns about suspected abuse) – Tel. 0800 555 111: <https://crimestoppers-uk.org>
- Safe Speak (helpline and counselling for children): <https://www.safespeak.org.uk>
- Childline (helpline and counselling for children) – Tel. 0800 1111:
<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/social-health/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health-and-wellbeing/young-peoples-mental-health/young-peoples-mental-health.aspx>
- Derbyshire Rape Crisis: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Rape-and-sexual-assault-referral-centres/Chesterfield/Results/136/-1.422/53.235/364/4325?distance=25>
- Samaritans (crisis counselling service) – Tel.116123: <https://www.samaritans.org>
- North East Derbyshire District Council Housing Options team – Tel. 01246 231111:
<https://www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/housing-and-health/homelessness>
- www.gov.uk/domestic-violence-and-abuse (link)
- Respect offers support to perpetrators and to front line Officers needing support to manage perpetrators behaviour – Tel. 0808 8024040:
<https://respectphoneline.org.uk/frontline-workers/>
<https://respectphoneline.org.uk/contact-us/>
- Men's advice line (victims) – a Tel. 0808 8010327 (free call – calls will not show up on your phone bill statement: <https://mensadviceline.org.uk>
Email: info@mensadviceline.org.uk also provide support and advice to stop abusive behaviour
- Saferderbyshire: https://www.saferderbyshire.gov.uk/search/search-results.aspx?search_keywords=Domestic%20abuse

- www.core-derbyshire.com (link)
- Cafcass: <https://www.cafcass.gov.uk>
- Public Protection: <http://archive.derbyshire.police.uk/Safety-advice/Safeguarding-adults/MAPPA.aspx>
- Derbyshire Police: <https://www.derbyshire.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/daa/domestic-abuse/support-helplines/>; and <https://www.derbyshire.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/rsa/rape-and-sexual-assault/support-for-victims-of-rape-and-sexual-assault/>
- Surviving Economical Abuse – Support for organisations dealing with survivors of financial and economic abuse: <https://survivingeconomicabuse.org>

32. Appendices

1. CAADA-DASH – with comments to support comprehensive completion of the document and expectations of what information is to be found in each question.
2. Severity of Abuse Grid – used by IDVA's, but can be used by us to check and balance the risk element, useful when completing the CAADA-DASH. It helps support professional judgement when referring to MARAC.
3. Housing Application Risk Assessment.

CAADA-DASH Risk Identification Checklist

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Severity of Abuse Grid

Guidance on completing the Severity of Abuse Grid

Note: This guidance is designed to help you complete the Severity of Abuse Grid above. Please note that each case is unique and you will have to use your professional judgement in relation to the information that you are given by your client. The context in which these and similar behaviours occur is all important in identifying a level of severity. For example, the misuse of substances including alcohol may increase the level of risk faced by an individual. Similarly, the cultural context in which abuse takes place should inform your judgement as to the level of risk posed.

Physical abuse			
No	Standard	Moderate	High
Never, or not currently	Slapping, pushing; no injuries.	Slapping, pushing; lasting pain or mild, light bruising or shallow cuts.	Noticeable bruising, lacerations, pain, severe contusions, burns, broken bones, threats and attempts to kill partner, children, relatives or pets. Strangulation, holding under water or threat to use or use of weapons, loss of consciousness, head injury, internal injury, permanent injury, miscarriage.
Sexual abuse			
No	Standard	Moderate	High
Never, or not currently	Use of sexual insults.	Uses pressure to obtain sex, unwanted touching, non violent acts that make victim feel uncomfortable about sex, their gender identity or sexual orientation.	Uses threats or force to obtain sex, rape, serious sexual assaults. Deliberately inflicts pain during sex, combines sex and violence including weapons, sexually abuses children and forces partner to watch, enforced prostitution, intentional transmission of STIs/HIV/AIDS.
Harassment or stalking			
No	Standard	Moderate	High
Never or not currently	Occasional phone calls, texts and emails.	Frequent phone calls, texts, emails.	Constant/obsessive phone calls, texts or emails, uninvited visits to home, workplace etc or loitering. Destroys or vandalises property, pursues victim after separation, stalking, threats of suicide/homicide to victim and other family members, threats of sexual violence, involvement of others in the stalking behaviour.
Jealous or controlling behaviour/emotional abuse			
No	Standard	Moderate	High
Never or not currently	Made to account for victim's time, some isolation from family/friends or support network, put down in public.	Increased control over victim's time, significant isolation from family and friends, intercepting mail or phone calls, controls access to money, irrational accusations of infidelity, constant criticism of role as partner/wife/mother	Controls most or all of victim's daily activities, prevention from taking medication, accessing care needs (especially relevant for survivors with disabilities); extreme dominance, e.g. believes absolutely entitled to partner, partner's services, obedience, loyalty no matter what. Extreme jealousy, e.g. 'If I can't have you, no-one can', with belief that abuser will act on this. Locks person up or severely restricts their movements, threats to take the children. Suicide/homicide/familicide threats, involvement of wider family members, crimes in the name of 'honour'. Threats to expose sexual activity to family members, religious or local community via photos, online (e.g. Facebook) or in public places.

Severity of Abuse Grid for IDVA services⁵

This grid has been developed to be used with the SafeLives Recommended Risk Identification Checklist. It is designed to give you a framework for identifying specific features of the abuse suffered by your client and help guide you both in addressing their safety in an informed and coherent way. It may also provide information that will be relevant for those cases going to MARAC.

To complete this take the answers from the relevant questions on the checklist and then explore in more detail the severity of each category of abuse *currently suffered* and the escalation if it exists. Please see below for guidance on identifying levels of severity.

If you answer 'yes' to any of the questions 'is the abuse occurring?' you must circle one answer for each of the boxes in the other three columns to identify the level of severity, the escalation in severity and in frequency.

Type of abuse	Is abuse occurring?	Severity of abuse	Escalation in severity (past 3 months)	Escalation in frequency (past 3 months)
Physical	Yes No Don't know Not answered	High Moderate Standard	Worse Unchanged Reduced	Worse Unchanged Reduced
Sexual	Yes No Don't know Not answered	High Moderate Standard	Worse Unchanged Reduced	Worse Unchanged Reduced
Stalking and harassment	Yes No Don't know Not answered	High Moderate Standard	Worse Unchanged Reduced	Worse Unchanged Reduced
Jealous and controlling behaviour / emotional abuse	Yes No Don't know Not answered	High Moderate Standard	Worse Unchanged Reduced	Worse Unchanged Reduced

Practitioner's notes

⁵ Grid and guidance reproduced with kind permission of the Hestia Fund.

Housing Application Risk Assessment

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Title:	Domestic Abuse Toolkit
Author(s):	Neighbourhood Manager (Allocations and Service Development)
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Status – Draft or Final:	Draft
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