

# DRAFT DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY

2022-2027

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## **Foreword**

The Safer Rotherham Partnership continues to develop and strengthen, building on the commitments made within the Partnership Plan covering 2021 - 2027. Whilst it is collectively accepted that there are significant challenges ahead, it is encouraging to see progress being made against the aims of the partnership and in this case, the development of a further strategy to build on the previous version, which ran from 2017 – 2020. This strategy will be supported by a joint action plan agreed and championed by each partner within the Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

Domestic Abuse continues to be a priority for the Safer Rotherham Partnership. Building on our previous strategy, which focussed on raising awareness of the issues, encouraging people to access support and streamlining processes, this strategy will seek to build on the best practice established and further enhance the service offer. This strategy seeks to harness the energy of the partnership and focus development towards common goals. Making best use of the limited resources available by working together will enable a rigorous and proactive approach to improving the quality of relationships across Rotherham and reducing harm caused by Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

## What is Domestic Abuse?

Rotherham adopts the Home Office definition of Domestic Abuse 2021, which is defined as: "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". This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Controlling Behaviour is: "a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour". Coercive Behaviour is: "an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim". This definition includes so-called 'honour' based violence, Female Genital Mutilation, and Forced Marriage; it is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

This abuse weaves a web through many social issues; child abuse, drug and alcohol addiction, prostitution, human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and slavery. It is a cyclical pattern of power which victims experience as escalating control over themselves and their lives. Furthermore, crimes committed in the name of 'honour', such as Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), are also clearly Domestic Abuse.

NB: Throughout the strategy we refer to victims of Domestic Abuse. The term 'victim' in this context refers to anyone who has experienced Domestic Abuse, including witnesses, e.g. children witnessing Domestic Abuse within the home.

## Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Domestic Abuse Act received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021.

The Act not only focuses on substantive and procedural changes to the criminal law, but also includes provisions which are relevant to family proceedings. The key provisions contained in the Act are as follows.

1. The Act creates the **first statutory definition of domestic abuse** which includes not only physical violence but that of emotional, coercive and controlling behaviour and economic abuse. This can be limited to a single event or a series of actions. Children will now be given statutory recognition as “victims” rather than “witnesses” if they see, hear or experience abuse in the home.
2. The Act has **extended the scope of coercive and controlling behaviour** to incorporate abuse post-separation. The offence, initially introduced by the Serious Crime Act 2015, has seen cases increase each year but now the definition will widen the parameters of “personally connected” to include ex-partners and family members who do not live together. This is likely to result in an increase in investigations and prosecutions for this offence.
3. A statutory presumption is made under the Act, **that victims be eligible for special measures** in criminal, family and civil courts (for example, to provide evidence via video link). There is now a prohibition on victims of offences being cross-examined by the person who is alleged to have committed the offence against the victim.
4. Following release from custody, high risk offenders could now be the subject of **polygraph testing as a condition of their licence**. Though polygraph testing isn’t 100% accurate, domestic abuse offenders could be subject to regular tests to determine whether they have breached release conditions. Should an individual’s risk be deemed to have increased they could be returned to prison.
5. Police have been given new powers to issue **civil Domestic Abuse Protection Notices** (“DAPN”). These provide victims with immediate protection from offenders and require them to leave the home for up to 48 hours. Magistrates’ courts are now able to issue **Domestic Abuse Protection Orders** (“DAPO”) following an application by the police. It is suggested that these will prevent domestic abuse offending by enforcing mandatory steps on offenders to change their behaviour such as receiving mental health support. It is estimated that the Police attend more than one million incidents of Domestic Abuse each year, so these powers are expected to be used extensively in replacement of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (“DVPOs”) and Domestic Violence Protection Notices

("DVPNs"). Should individuals breach the conditions of a DAPO they will commit a criminal offence with a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment or dealt with by way of a civil penalty as contempt of court.

6. A statutory duty is to be placed on local authorities to ensure victims and their children are placed in refuges and other safe accommodation. All those made homeless by domestic abuse will automatically have '**priority need**' for homelessness assistance.
7. The Act ensures that the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme ("**Clare's law**") is put on a statutory footing. The scheme permits any member of the public to ask the police if they or someone they know is in a relationship with someone that could be abusive towards them.
8. The Act creates a **new criminal offence of non-fatal strangulation** (which includes suffocation). The act of non-fatal strangulation involves the intentional strangling of another person or any other act that affects a person's breathing and could see offenders face up to 5 years imprisonment.
9. It extends the scope of disclosing intimate images without the consent of the individual, also known as 'revenge porn', to cover the **threat to disclose intimate images** with the intent to cause distress. The maximum penalty of 2 years imprisonment remains in place.
10. The Act contains a theoretical statutory bar to Defendants raising the **defence of consent to serious harm for sexual gratification**. The intention of the Act was to provide a clarification of the law on consent following the case of R v Brown [1993] 2 WLR 556. In Brown and associated cases, the Courts have held a person cannot consent to serious assaults, such as occasioning actual bodily harm for public policy reasons. It was argued that the so called 'rough sex' defence was being used often by individuals stating the death was caused accidentally during 'rough sex' where the victim consented and that this amendment was required to address.
11. A new **Domestic Abuse Commissioner** role was created and is the first of its kind. Nicola Jacobs, who has taken on this role indicated that the legislation won't transform things overnight, that there is more to do and so she will be advocating for further change.

In preparation for these new duties, and as a prerequisite to effectively commission Domestic Abuse services, RMBC has completed a robust Needs Assessment. The Needs Assessment is a standardised form which aids Local Authorities to review the impact of Domestic Abuse on their community-based services. The purpose of this Needs Assessment is to ensure RMBC has comprehensive knowledge of the impact of Domestic Abuse in Rotherham and is therefore equipped to meet the duty of providing support within safe accommodation for all victims and their children. The form therefore acts as a useful tool to aid data capture and to promote consistency across the country; better ensuring all Local Authorities are considering the needs of all victims in their area.

Prior to the completion of the Needs Assessment, a review of the Housing Pathway and a Market Engagement event were undertaken. The findings of the Needs Assessment, the Pathway review, and the Engagement event shed light on the needs of Domestic Abuse victims in Rotherham and will inform the transformation of services.

# 1. Introduction

## Rotherham

The Borough of Rotherham covers a district of 110 square miles and has a mix of communities in both rural and urban areas. Centrally placed within South Yorkshire, the population continues to grow and change over time with an increase in the numbers of those aged over 60, who now make up one in four of our residents, and those from minority ethnic groups, who now account for one in ten. This range of communities and the changing nature of them mean our services must continue to adapt to meet demand. To adapt we must ensure that we continue to be informed by feedback, consultation findings and inspection recommendations, whilst responding to a changing national picture, making best use of available interventions for support that help to change behaviour as well as tools and powers.

Across the partnerships in Rotherham, there are a range of services which are commissioned and voluntary, that offer advice and support for victims of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence alongside refuge provision, housing support and a range of counselling interventions. We have learnt a lot from a wide range of people and organisations, our own assessments, alongside external reports, which tell us that we need to focus on addressing the following:

- Continue to improve assessment of risk, evidence gathering and action to address offences of Domestic Abuse
- A focus on tackling offenders and bringing them to justice
- Increased work around prevention and early identification of issues, before abusive situations develop
- Develop a greater understanding of Domestic and Sexual Abuse both from a victim and an offender perspective
- Building on existing strengths related to information sharing that facilitates communication across the continuum of need
- Upskilling agencies to swiftly identify the signs of Domestic Abuse and building consistent, integrated pathways
- Embed a culture of learning across the strategic partnership that enables a robust response to emerging research as well as findings from Serious Case Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews, whether local or national
- Publicity awareness raising and training remains key to keeping Domestic and Sexual Abuse at the top of everyone's agenda; this type of violence is everyone's business

Whilst we know that Rotherham is a unique place with its own identity and history, there are many parallels in relation to Domestic Abuse when comparing with the national picture.

According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales year ending March 2020, an estimated 5.5% of adults age 16 to 74 years (2.3 million) experienced Domestic Abuse in the last year (1.6 million women and 786,000 men).



The police recorded a total of 1,288,018 Domestic Abuse-related incidents and crimes in England and Wales (excluding Greater Manchester Police) in the year ending March 2020. Of these, 756,941, were recorded as Domestic Abuse-related crimes, an increase of 9% from the previous year.

Prevalence of domestic abuse experienced in the last year:

For the year ending March 2020, an estimated 2.3 million adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year. This equates to a prevalence rate of approximately 5 in 100 adults (Figure 1). The latest prevalence estimates for all types of domestic abuse experienced in the last year showed no statistically significant change compared with the previous year.

An estimated 7.3% of women (1.6 million) and 3.6% of men (757,000) experienced Domestic Abuse in the last year. Women aged 16 to 19 years were more likely to be victims of any Domestic Abuse in the last year than women aged 25 years and over. Adults who were separated or divorced were more likely to have experienced Domestic Abuse compared with those who were married or civil partnered, cohabiting, single or widowed.

Data from the Home Office Homicide Index for the year ending March 2017 to the year ending March 2019 show that over three-quarters of victims of Domestic Homicide were female (77% or 274 victims). This contrasts with Non-Domestic Homicides where the majority of victims over the same time period were male (87% or 786 victims).

In 2020, South Yorkshire Police received 6,878 calls relating to Domestic Abuse for Rotherham. The satisfaction rate in relation to how Police manage Domestic Abuse has remained at 81% since 2017. The Home Office Reckoner suggest over 27,000 women and girls in the Rotherham area have suffered abuse in their lifetime. The suspected underreporting is something that require further understanding.

<b>SYP 2020</b>	<b>Calls</b>	<b>Crime</b>	<b>High – Referred to MARAC</b>	<b>Medium – Referred to Rotherham Rise</b>	<b>Presented as Homeless</b>	<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>Enrolled in Perpetrator Programme</b>
	6,878	4,075	556	1,021	150	81%	540

There is a continuing challenge for services to meet demand effectively. There were 556 high risk victims who were referred to the Independent Domestic Violence Advocates, 1,021 medium risk victims who accepted a referral to Rotherham Rise.

During 2019-2020, there were 3,941 contacts for families to the Early Help Service, with 'family relationships' being amongst the top three cited needs. Almost a third (32.5%) of cases are identified by Social Care Services or the Police, suggesting missed opportunities for earlier identification and intervention. Young people are also at risk of suffering or perpetrating Domestic Abuse within teenage relationships; according to a report conducted by the South Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board, several recommendations are made to support closer working between Domestic Abuse and Younger People Services. In addition, child-to-parent-abuse (CPA) and adolescent-to-parent-abuse (APA) are increasingly serious issues which fit within the definition of domestic abuse, as do instances where a partner or family member becomes a carer and suffers any form of abuse. The presence of these forms of abuse reinforces the importance of working across a wide range of partners to ensure early identification occurs and support is in place across both young, older people and care related services.

Sexual Abuse and Rape also occur as part of the Domestic Abuse in a relationship. The perpetrator can also be an acquaintance – a colleague, a friend, a neighbour – but it is rare that they are complete strangers. For many adults getting support, the abuse may have taken place when they were children. Whether the perpetrator is well known to the victim or not, the violation, shame and stigma will have a terrible impact on health and wellbeing, and feeling able to seek support for the aftereffects may be a process that takes many months or years.

Alongside the statistical data, the partnership is supported by a range of inspections and quality assurance frameworks that provide insight into these services and inform valuable learning for the partnership. This work includes inspections of the Police, such as the PEEL inspection, partnership inspections, Domestic Homicide and Serious Case Reviews alongside themed reviews known as 'Deep-Dive' inspections and inspections by agencies such as Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. In 2018 we conducted a full review of the support in Rotherham led by Bradford Council, following this we have done a full-service overview with recommendations and action plan to move forward to the next stage of a whole service commission.

The reviews alongside our data have told us that there are numerous pathways to support which can be confusing, and early signs have sometimes been missed. Victims and their families can feel lost in the process and may be asked the same thing several times by several agencies. This can lead to families feeling they are not heard. Currently agencies look at the victim and their family to address their safety and break the pattern of behaviour, rather than challenging the perpetrator through multi-agency problem solving and risk management.

The strategic partnership recognises and seeks to further understand the drivers and impact of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. This strategy will focus on the gaps identified by the partnership, through a range of sources, and seek to improve services for the benefit of the people and communities impacted by conflictual relationships, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. The strategic vision is informed by local evidence and has been developed to accelerate change and improve outcomes.

There is a range of commissioned, voluntary, and charity funded services that exist within Rotherham. These services provide a range of functions that are important to supporting delivery of Domestic Abuse Services.

- Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) are commissioned by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and support those affected by Domestic Abuse that are assessed as high risk
- A local charity, Rotherham Rise, is commissioned to deliver a range of services for medium and standard risk victims alongside providing housing support and a refuge. There are a number of outreach, voluntary, and counselling services that support those impacted by Domestic Abuse including some which target support to minority communities and those with protected characteristics. There are currently around 350 victims being supported across this range of services
- The South Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company (SYCRC) currently runs several perpetrator programmes for those convicted of relevant offences, such as the Accredited Building Better Relationships Programme and non-accredited short duration Respectful Relationships Programme
- The Inspire to Change voluntary perpetrator programme, commissioned by South Yorkshire County Councils and PCC, have worked with approximately 1,680 identified perpetrators of Domestic Abuse within the County from 2018 to June 2020. Cranstoun replaced Inspire to Change in September 2021.
- Independent Sexual Violence Advocates (ISVA) are commissioned by the PCC to support those affected by Sexual Violence and will work with the victims through the court process to ensure perpetrators are held accountable for their actions. The ISVA service is currently supporting over 100 victims
- Operation Encompass provides an efficient, confidential channel of communication between Police Forces and Key Adults within schools. This enables the immediate and discrete recognition of the child's situation by the Key Adult, ensuring a secure and sympathetic environment is provided and the broader effects of abuse are addressed
- Homeless Team provide immediate support and housing for victims fleeing Domestic Abuse; from March 2020 to October 2020, we received 120 victims requesting homeless support

## 2. What Have We Achieved?

- There is a strong involvement from the voluntary sector with the willingness and dedication to addressing the impact of Domestic Abuse on individual lives. They have been involved in the Co-production Domestic Abuse Review and updating of all Domestic Abuse pathways
- There has been some significant progress made by agencies in recent years including higher levels of both generic and specialist training. South Yorkshire Police have invested in specialist training from Safe Lives 2020, and are running the 'DA Matters' training course for all front line police officers
- Ongoing improvements to Multi Agency Domestic Abuse Hub (MADA) including the review of repeat victims
- Implementation of a MARAC protocol, which sets out a standard for the functioning of the MARAC and the MARAC Steering Group
- Reintroduced the Domestic Abuse Managers Forum, which enables open discussions surrounding training or practitioner concerns
- Improvements in target hardening schemes including the introduction of Smart Water and Tesco alarms
- The development and success of perpetrator programmes across South Yorkshire for male female and young perpetrators
- The commissioning of "SAYIT" LGBTQ+ service across South Yorkshire, which has raised awareness through training events and webinar promotions
- The ongoing success of Operation Encompass, now to include 16+ year olds who witness abuse and are in College. RMBC has been pioneering in this collaborative project; there has been a 100% buy-in from schools across Rotherham
- Implementation of a Competency Training Framework for all Rotherham services to ensure their team are up to date with their Domestic Abuse training
- A whole online training package in conjunction with DMBC, available to all Rotherham services and staff members

- Domestic Abuse Practitioners Handbook for Rotherham frontline workers, which ensures a coordinated approach to support for victims and perpetrators
- Promotion of the 'Ask for Angela' and 'Ask for Ani' incentives, with shops, public houses, and safe places within Rotherham engaging in the campaign
- Promotion of the 'Know The Line' campaign, which seeks to raise awareness about Sexual Harassment
- Promotion of '16 Days of DA Awareness', an online platform initiative which informs residents of Domestic Abuse support services in Rotherham and raises awareness the signs of Domestic Abuse
- HARK, a fast track service for A&E, GPs, Dentists, Opticians and Pharmacists, wishing to get support for a victim
- Housing pathway for victims of Domestic Abuse to provide refuge and housing support, including out-reach properties and Domestic Abuse support

## 3. Vision

To reduce the prevalence of Domestic Abuse. To provide a co-ordinated approach to tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse that enables early identification and improved response that safeguards and supports the victim and any children. Reach out to underrepresented groups and hard-to-reach communities by finding new ways to address this important issue.

Ensure that where Domestic Abuse takes place, all those affected get the right support, at the right time. This will include them being able to stay in their own home when it is safe, appropriate and possible to do so.

Domestic and Sexual Abuse are cross-cutting issues, affecting individuals, families, children and young people, workplaces, schools, communities, and impacting on health and wellbeing both immediately and long into the future. These issues are increasingly being recognised as public health challenges that can and should be prevented.

No one should have to live in fear of violence, abuse or controlling behaviour in their relationship or family. No one should think it is acceptable to perpetrate violence against anyone. No child should grow up in a home where violence or abuse is an everyday occurrence. No one should have to put up with sexual harassment in our streets and public places. This vision aligns with the Violence Against Women and Girls strategy.

We will continue to use the latest research to develop our approaches to Domestic Abuse, seeking to understand the multifaceted and complex nature of each person's context and experience.

### 3.1 The Priority: Drive Change Together

We acknowledge that more can be done to promote integrated working across all sectors. The Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board recognise the adverse impact of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence on society, and the need to promote change through joint commitment, leadership and partnership working.

This priority focuses on strengthening our governance processes and improving the way that we work together.

We will promote a more cohesive approach to tackling Domestic Abuse, working together to meet our collective aims.

- All agencies are committed to working together to provide a seamless service, pool resources, take a more strategic and effective response to Domestic Abuse, and actively engage in meeting our collective aims and objectives, working through governance structures at an appropriate level

- We will challenge societal attitudes that allow Domestic Abuse to occur, so it is unacceptable in any form and increase awareness of how to better prevent and respond to Domestic Abuse across all agencies, services and our local communities
- We will work using a 'grass roots upward' approach, involving community assets, social hubs and community leaders, to engage people across diverse and minority groups
- Partners will work collectively to bring together comparable, accurate and consistent data on areas such as commissioning, provision and gap analysis. This information-sharing will work to strengthen our understanding around under-reporting and ensuring we learn lessons and draw out the right narratives from the evidence
- All agencies will ensure they participate in the Domestic Homicide Review process, and that learning from this, Serious Case Reviews and Safeguarding Practice Reviews are proactively shared with the wider workforce
- Staff and volunteers will have a strong understanding of appropriate responses and pathways including referrals and interventions. Agencies will ensure that they are aware of the links to each different area of business such as Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Integrated Offender Management (IOM), Local Criminal Justice Board, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), Multi Agency Tasking and Coordination meeting (MATAC) and other partnership bodies so that they can work cohesively
- We will continue to make representations for longer term and sustainable funding in respect of Domestic Abuse

### 3.2 The Priority: Prevention and Early Intervention

This priority aims to increase the focus on early intervention and prevention, which is not only about stopping Domestic Abuse but also preventing the escalation of abuse.

**The Aim:** Prevention, Diversion, Disruption and Enforcement.

- We will achieve this by identifying Domestic Abuse perpetrators and offering pathways to either therapeutic support or Criminal Justice pathway to prevent further offending

- The offer of therapeutic support will be offered in the first instance. It will offer support through locally commissioned services to address the root causes of perpetrator behaviour. Offenders will be encouraged to engage with the local Perpetrator Programme (Cranstoun), this will contribute to reducing risk posed by offender. Local research into the effectiveness of Inspire to Change demonstrated where offenders engage, in the 6-month follow up period, they had not offended
- To ensure support is available from other commissioned services, e.g. alcohol/substance services, mental health, family/parenting or housing support, thereby reducing risk and changing offending behaviour

### 3.3 The Priority: Justice and Ongoing Protection

**The Aim:** Justice, recovery, and ongoing protection.

Provision of effective, engaged, supportive, responsive, and timely protection and justice.

- We will ensure, whenever it is safe, appropriate and possible to do so, that the victim is able to stay in their own home if they choose to, and the perpetrators will be removed and prosecuted when necessary. This will include a clear commitment to widen access to support options such as safe accommodation with Domestic Abuse outreach support services
- To ensure that those who are being supported are not coerced in any way to return to abusive relationships
- For Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic, and Refugee (BAMER) victims being supported within their homes, we need to recognise that there is often an additional pressure to return to abusive relationships, and we need to thus provide appropriate support. This will build their confidence, thereby preventing them from being stuck with the ostracism and isolation they feel, and strengthening them to overcome this and remain strong and safe
- We will provide people with crisis accommodation when it is needed, including refuges via homelessness and specialist Domestic Violence and Abuse commissioned provision. We will ensure everyone in crisis accommodation has support from a Domestic Abuse service and have an allocated support worker
- Support victims and their children and keep them safe, and to challenge the perpetrator and their behaviour



- Increase the number of prosecutions without victim involvement where appropriate. Increase awareness and the appropriate use of Domestic Violence Protection Orders. Serial perpetrators are pursued through the Criminal Justice process and held accountable for their behaviour. Young people who are perpetrators of Domestic Abuse towards parents or partners are identified and offered appropriate interventions

### **3.4 The Priority: Responding to Changing Need and Demand**

We will work towards providing support where help is needed most. We will work together to plan, deliver, and commission appropriate services in response of meeting needs. We will be committed in co-production methods for reform and innovation. We will continue to work with marginalised groups and develop innovative ways of responding to their needs. We will listen to the views of our service user.

- We will be working directly with specialist service providers and users to co-design new service models of Domestic Violence and Abuse – each partner listening to one another in a non-hierarchical way, seeking innovation and new investment together
- Helpline and online support, increase access to information and support available including the use of digital platforms, a whole family approach with one front door to support vulnerable adults and children to get a swift and effective response. To integrate pathways into child safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Services by organisations working together to identify and safeguard vulnerable families at the earliest opportunity
- We will provide support to victims of Domestic Abuse and their children in refuges and safe accommodation
- We will ensure that all eligible homeless victims of Domestic Abuse automatically have ‘priority need’ for homelessness assistance

### 3.5 The Priority: Minimising Harm through the Provision of Early Help Support for Children and Families

**The Aim:** Minimising harm, providing positive outcomes, and promoting equality of access for all survivors of Domestic Abuse. Recognising and reducing barriers to reporting. Supporting a person or family through longer term support needs.

- We will ensure that all staff who work with people who may disclose Domestic Abuse are trained to respond with care. We know that people will choose to ask for help from anyone they trust, which can include family and friends, the voluntary sector, schools, GPs, practice nurses and midwives, Early Help keyworkers, housing officers, and statutory services such as social work and social care if they are already working with the family. Some victims may also call the police. There are many ways to seek support for Domestic Abuse, and the workforce will be trained to respond with care to this. Others may also disclose in learning centres, community colleges and schools
- We will ensure that each agency provides a clear strategic training and workforce development plan for Domestic Abuse
- We will ensure that all staff and volunteers in any service – particularly those under the governance of our safeguarding boards – are trained to respond appropriately to disclosures of Domestic Abuse. They will have the key knowledge of interventions and services to support a person/couple/family in their prevention, safety, and recovery
- We will continue to work in close partnership with specialist services in the voluntary and community sector and specialist academics to offer good quality training and development. This will be fresh, current, and based on sound evidence. Partner agencies must commit to accessing these training resources
- We will offer specialist training, separate from Domestic Abuse Training, for Forced Marriage, so-called ‘Honour-Based’ Violence and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). We commit to offering specialist training, advice and support to all professionals for the risk assessments/support/referrals to be successful
- By having such awareness-raising strategies in place, services can go the extra mile to ensure their service is accessible and inclusive to all, which will provide greater outcomes and achievements of the Council’s zero-tolerance vision
- We will continue to ensure access to good quality training on a range of levels, including awareness-raising, identification, and response

### 3.6 The Priority: Providing Safe Accommodation and Appropriate Support

This priority aims to ensure that every victim of Domestic Abuse that present at homeless to RMBC is provided with safe, supported secure accommodation. RMBC aims to find the right home for the right person.

**The Aim:** Safe Accommodation, Specialist Support.

RMBC has completed a Needs Assessment and a review of the Domestic Abuse support pathway to find where RMBC has capacity to improve support and accommodation for homeless Domestic Abuse victims in preparation for the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020. The gaps in this pathway were subsequently identified and they are utilised to inform our aims.

**A victim should never be left without specialist Domestic Abuse Support.** On-call weekend support should be made available to anyone presenting as homeless. All victims of Domestic Abuse deserve specialist support and shelter inside a safe environment. Victims of Domestic Abuse in Rotherham on a Leave-to-Remain Visa are eligible for support irrespective of immigrant status. **A 'priority status' must be applied to all service users under the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020**, and a specialist Domestic Abuse and Housing Support Officer will be allocated to a victim presenting as homeless.

**Service Users deserve a seamless journey through Domestic Abuse support services.** Victims of Domestic Abuse should be supported by a single support worker to guide them through the entirety of their journey through the service, regardless of the fluctuations of their risk levels. Homeless victims should have access to support packages of essential items such as food, baby clothes, etc.

**Every victim of Domestic Abuse deserves their specific needs to be met.** To effectively support service users with Complex Needs, the service should seek to undertake a second assessment alongside the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment form (DASH) at the first point of contact, that would operate as a 'Chaos Indicator' to ascertain the level of vulnerability of the service user, and thus what type of additional support needs they may require.

What we have achieved:

- Market engagement event to secure contracts for the recommissioning of the Domestic Abuse services.

- Engagement event with the Domestic Abuse Services Rotherham Rise and the in-house IDVA service to identify gaps in the current service pathway.
- Survivor engagement event, seeking thought from those who have used the Domestic Abuse service.
- Recommissioned Rotherham Refuge
- Commissioned Safer Options; 8 properties with Domestic Abuse support, based within the Community.
- Complex Cases and Chaos Index research and review undertaken, with accompanying briefing report on the findings.

What we aim to achieve:

- Refuge provision to enhance accommodation levels, ensuring more Domestic Abuse victims can be housed.
- Extend the contract to Safer Options, to provide 8 dispersed properties for victims seeking safe accommodation.
- Refurbish and maintain 5 RMBC properties for victims of Domestic Abuse presenting to the council as homeless.
- Victims of Domestic Abuse presenting as homeless to RMBC are to be met with a specialist Domestic Abuse and Housing Support Officer at the first point of contact.
- Ensure safe accommodation is equipped with essential comfort packages for victims of Domestic Abuse fleeing with little/no possessions.
- Provide a secondary assessment, alongside the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment form (DASH) at the first point of contact. This would operate as a 'Chaos Indicator' for complex needs, to ascertain the level of vulnerability of the service user and thus what type of additional support needs they may require.
- The recommissioning of our Domestic Abuse services, to ensure a more seamless pathway through the service.
- Offer temporary financial support for victims where this may be a barrier to access immediate safe accommodation, including those with No Recourse to Public Funds, and those who are unable to finance emergency accommodation themselves.

## 4 Delivery

<p><b>Strategy</b></p>	<p>This strategy has been developed by the Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, on behalf of the Safer Rotherham Partnership.</p> <p>In the preparation of this strategy, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council consulted with various stakeholders, professionals from a wide range of disciplines (including community safety, domestic abuse service providers, voluntary and community sector organisations, South Yorkshire Police, NHS Trust, came together to discuss the proposed priority areas of the strategy, identify potential gaps, and suggest how these could be addressed in the strategy. Their thoughts and ideas have been incorporated into this document. Service users, members of the public, and statutory and voluntary stakeholders were also invited to complete surveys to identify the priorities that were most important to them. The purpose of having this strategy is to clearly identify our gaps and areas for improvement and allow us to focus on them together. As highlighted within this document, partnership work is key to our success and this strategy will therefore become the driving force in respect of improvements to Domestic Abuse services.</p>
<p><b>Performance</b></p>	<p>Periodic updates in relation to progress will be expected by the SRP Performance and Delivery Group (PAD). Suitable performance indicators will be identified in order to support each aim and again, periodic updates will be provided. Alongside managing performance, the partnership will seek to manage any risks that exist in respect of delivery against the strategy.</p>
<p><b>Action Plans</b></p>	<p>A robust action plan will be developed to support this strategy. The action plan will be driven by the aims and objectives contained within this strategy and will identify specific actions needed in order to support each aim and deliver success.</p>
<p><b>Promote</b></p>	<p>The promotion and implementation of the strategy will include, training, awareness raising through events, promotional materials, media and specialist training</p>