

PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

1. Title	
Title: Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022 - 2027	
Directorate: Regeneration and Environment	Service area: Community Safety
Lead person: Sam Barstow	Contact number:
Is this a:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
If other, please specify	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
<p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy aims to support the individualised needs of every victim of domestic abuse, to create a more seamless pathway through the council's domestic abuse services by developing an integrated service which allows systemic working and ensuring the delivery of the six key priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving Change Together • Prevention and Early Intervention

- Justice, Recovery, and Ongoing Protection
- Responding to Changing Need and Demand
- Minimising Harm, Early Help Support & Children
- Homeless Victims are Provided with Safe Accommodation

The strategy aims to raise awareness of the impact of domestic abuse, encourage victims to access support, and seeks to harness the energy of the Safer Rotherham Partnership, focussing development towards common goals. As such, it will enable a rigorous and proactive approach to improving the quality of relationships across Rotherham and reducing harm caused by Domestic Abuse.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	X	
Could the proposal affect service users? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	X	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics? <i>(Consider potential discrimination, harassment or victimisation of individuals with protected characteristics)</i>	X	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal? <i>(It is important that the Council is transparent and consultation is carried out with members of the public to help mitigate future challenge)</i>		X
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from commissioning or procurement)</i>	X	
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from your HR business partner)</i>		X

If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason

If you have answered **no** to all the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**

(think about the scope of the proposal, who is likely to be affected, equality related information, gaps in information and plans to address, consultation and engagement activities (taken place or planned) with those likely to be affected)

The strategy will affect every victim of domestic abuse in Rotherham.

The intended outcome of this Strategy is to support the individualised needs of every victim of domestic abuse, to create a more seamless pathway through the council's domestic abuse services by developing an integrated service which allows systemic working and ensuring the delivery of the six key priorities:

- Driving Change Together
- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Justice, Recovery, and Ongoing Protection
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Rotherham Domestic Abuse Services

There are two domestic abuse support services provided by with Rotherham Rise - one of which is a BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic groups) specific commissioned service. The services from Rotherham Rise provide support to victims of domestic abuse who are

assessed at standard to medium level of risk. The short to medium support service helps to keep victims and their dependents safe, develop confidence, and provides emotional and practical support.

The refuge, also provided by Rotherham Rise, provides refuge supported accommodation in the instance where staying at home becomes the least safe option in the options available. The refuge currently provides 6 self-contained flats and 2 communal flats in the core building and 2 dispersed properties for women and their children.

The refuge assists the Council to fulfil its statutory duties towards people who are homeless and require emergency, safe accommodation as a result of Domestic Abuse.

The Councils Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVAs) are specialist advocacy service who focus on working predominantly with high-risk victims those most at risk of homicide or serious harm. Their main goal is to ensure safety and offer intensive short to medium term support.

The Safer Rotherham Partnership invited City of Bradford Council and partners to conduct a thorough peer review of Domestic Abuse Services in Rotherham, to both provide a health check and inform future delivery. The Safer Rotherham Partnership asked commissioners of both Adult and Children's services to undertake a full review of Domestic Abuse services in Rotherham.

Consultation and engagement activities that have taken place and planned are detailed in Part B

- **Key findings**

(think about any potential positive and negative impact on different equality characteristics, potential to promote strong and positive relationships between groups, potential to bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other, perception that the proposal could benefit one group at the expense of another)

The findings of the review indicated that the domestic abuse pathway was fragmented and there was need for a more integrated approach, with easier access to services. The findings also recognised that there should be a more defined specialised area on how support to LGBTQ+ survivors of domestic abuse and issues relating to victims of domestic abuse who have other added factors such as disabilities or caring responsibilities.

There was a significant gap evident in refuge provisions for male victims of domestic abuse and for women who have older male children.

It was concluded that the Refuge provision is remodelled to provide a diverse offer to meet the needs of a range of all victims. To co-design a new model of domestic abuse support, building on the previous co-production, followed by the commissioning of the new delivery model for domestic support services and refuge in one combined contract. Aligning the councils IDVAs service provision with the commissioned support services to enable victims and their children to remain safe and to live independently in their own home.

- **Actions**

(think about how you will promote positive impact and remove/reduce negative impact)

The strategy supports the Council to meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 as it provides accessible support, including outreach community support, assists in overcoming societal barriers to inclusion and positively supports and promotes issues experienced by people affected by domestic abuse.	
Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	17/9/21
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	17/9/21
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Sam Barstow Head of Service, Community Safety and Regulatory Services

5. Governance, ownership and approval		
Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:		
Name	Job title	Date
Sam Barstow	Head of Service, Community Safety and Regulatory Services	05/11/21

6. Publishing	
This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.	
If this screening relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.	
A copy of all screenings should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.	
Date screening completed	17/9/21
Report title and date	Domestic Abuse Strategy to be presented to Cabinet 24 January 2022
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	As above
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	05/11/21

PART B – Equality Analysis Form

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

This form:

- Can be used to prompt discussions, ensure that due regard has been given and remove or minimise disadvantage for an individual or group with a protected characteristic
- Involves looking at what steps can be taken to advance and maximise equality as well as eliminate discrimination and negative consequences
- Should be completed before decisions are made, this will remove the need for remedial actions.

Note – An Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A) should be completed prior to this form.

When completing this form consider the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc. – see page 11 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

1. Title	
Equality Analysis title: Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022 - 2027	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA): 09/09/2021	
Directorate: Regeneration and Environment	Service area: Community Safety and Street Scene - Domestic and Sexual Abuse
Lead Manager: Sam Barstow	Contact number: 07748143370
Is this a:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
If other, please specify	

2. Names of those involved in the Equality Analysis (Should include minimum of three people) - see page 7 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Name	Organisation	Role (eg service user, managers, service specialist)
Amanda Raven	RMBC – Community Safety and Street Scene	Service Specialist – Domestic Abuse Coordinator
Helen Caulfield-Brown	RMBC – Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	Commissioning Manager
Megan Dyson	RMBC – Community Safety and Street Scene	National Management Trainee

3. What is already known? - see page 10 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Aim/Scope (who the Policy/Service affects and intended outcomes if known)

This may include a group/s identified by a protected characteristic, others groups or stakeholder/s e.g. service users, employees, partners, members, suppliers etc.)

The strategy will affect every victim of domestic abuse in Rotherham.

The intended outcome of this Strategy is to support the individualised needs of every victim of domestic abuse, to create a more seamless pathway through the council’s domestic abuse services by developing an integrated service which allows systemic working.

and ensuring the delivery of the six key priorities:

- Driving Change Together
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There was a significant gap evident in refuge provisions for male victims of domestic abuse and for women who have older male children.

It was concluded that it should be proposed that the Refuge provision is remodelled to provide a diverse offer to meet the needs of a range of all victims. To co-design a new model of domestic abuse support, building on the previous co-production, followed by the commissioning of the new delivery model for domestic support services and refuge in one combined contract. Aligning the councils IDVAs service provision with the commissioned support services to enable victims and their children to remain safe and to live independently in their own home.

The service supports the Council to meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 as it provides accessible support, including outreach community support, assists in overcoming societal barriers to inclusion and positively supports and promotes issues experienced by people affected by domestic abuse.

What equality information is available? (Include any engagement undertaken)

There have been a number of engagement events undertaken which contributed towards this strategy. They are listed below:

- Market Engagement (2021)
- IDVA Engagement (2020)
- Rotherham Rise Engagement (2020)

- Victim Engagement (Refuge) (2020) (Victims have protected characteristics)
- Victim Engagement (Rotherham Rise) (2020) and the BMER service
- Key Stakeholders and Voluntary Groups Engagement – Housing, Commissioning, Voluntary Sector, SYP, NHS (2021)

There has also been a rigorous Needs Assessment undertaken, which was provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government, and serves as a useful tool to aid data capture to review the impact of domestic abuse on RMBC's services and helped RMBC understand the needs of homeless domestic abuse victims in Rotherham. This Needs Assessment therefore ensured that RMBC was prepared for the new statutory duties of the National Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Are there any gaps in the information that you are aware of?

No - the Domestic Abuse Services review was undertaken in 2018, concluded January 2019. The Council's intention was to pilot new ways of working, taking any learning before exercising a competitive procurement process. Unfortunately, due to the impact of Covid -19 pandemic this hindered the progress.

The new service model specification will be co-designed building on the previous consultation and engagement work undertaken.

What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?

Strengthened contract management will routinely review accessibility of RMBC's domestic abuse services. In addition, the accommodation offer will include accessible properties.

There are also a number of panels set in place that routinely monitor the impact of domestic abuse on all communities and groups in Rotherham. These include the Domestic Abuse Manager's Forum, the MARAC Steering Group, and the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Priority Group. Here, individualised needs are discussed, and any issues or concerns are raised and responded to in a prompt manner.

Additionally, RMBC receives weekly statistics from voluntary sector groups and South Yorkshire Police (SYP). Domestic abuse services provide weekly statistics on victim engagement with the services, and SYP provide statistics on both crime and non-crime domestic abuse related incidents. There are also bi-monthly reports from all commissioned and non-commissioned services, plus reports from the Homeless Team. Reports from Remedi, Safer Options, and Sayit.

Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)

Engagement event with victims inside the refuge and medium-risk victims supported by the commissioned service:

Key findings: There is a disjointed pathway through the domestic abuse service, because victims found that as their risk level fluctuated, they were assigned a new

	<p>support worker via a different service. Many victims asserted that it was difficult to re-tell their experience to many different support workers.</p> <p>Cultural barriers, such as lack of understanding of how to access services, resources, and public funds, were identified by victims as an issue for some Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities. Language barriers were also identified as a barrier to accessing support.</p> <p>Victims also described how shared accommodation can also be a barrier, if there are males (for example, teenage sons) in the accommodation with vulnerable women.</p> <p>Summary of engagement to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim Engagement (Refuge) (2020) (Victims have protected characteristics) • Victim Engagement (Rotherham Rise) (2020) and the BMER service <p>There has also been a rigorous Needs Assessment undertaken, which was provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government, and serves as a useful tool to aid data capture to review the impact of domestic abuse on RMBC's services and helped RMBC understand the needs of homeless domestic abuse victims in Rotherham. This Needs Assessment therefore ensured that RMBC was prepared for the new statutory duties of the National Domestic Abuse Act 2021.</p>
<p>Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</p>	<p>Engagement Event with IDVA Team: 03/03/2021 and Rotherham Rise: 26/02/2021</p> <p>Key findings: Service staff corroborated the victim's concerns about the disjointed pathway within the service. Staff claimed that it is difficult to build a rapport with the victim if they are having to move between services as their risk level changes rapidly. Moreover, some victims with protected characteristics do not want to move support services due to lack of trust with local authority staff. It is asserted that some of these victims find it difficult to disclose their experiences to staff, therefore making them more reluctant to move between services as their risk level fluctuates. Staff claim that this risks them disengaging from the service altogether.</p>

There is also an issue with getting some victims of certain cultures to recognise that they are in situation or relationship which is causing them to experience domestic abuse.

However, the service staff did not find that 'protected characteristics' was in itself a barrier for the services to support victims – especially due to RMBC's specialist BMER service and refuge.

Domestic abuse and Homelessness Pathway Internal Review and Consultation: February 2021

Key findings: It was also found that a victim could be left without specialist domestic abuse support over a weekend; for example if a victim presented as homeless due to domestic abuse to RMBC after 5pm on Friday, will have to wait until the following Monday to be referred to any specialist domestic abuse support.

In one case, a service user who was in Rotherham on a Leave-to-Remain Visa was not eligible for support due to immigrant status. A 'priority status' must be applied to all service users under the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020.

The majority of service users had dependent children in their care; often, more than one child per service user. Where victims are fleeing with little to no personal possessions, the new service will aim to provide safe accommodation properties with comfort packages equipped with essential items.

Summary of engagement:

- Market Engagement (2021)
- IDVA Engagement (2020)
- Rotherham Rise Engagement (2020)
- Key Stakeholders and Voluntary Groups Engagement – Housing, Commissioning, Voluntary Sector, SYP, NHS (2021)

There has also been a rigorous Needs Assessment undertaken, which was provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government, and serves as a useful tool to aid data capture to review the impact of domestic abuse on RMBC's services and helped RMBC understand the needs of homeless domestic abuse victims in Rotherham. This Needs Assessment therefore ensured that RMBC was

	prepared for the new statutory duties of the National Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
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4. The Analysis - of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service (Identify by protected characteristics)

How does the Policy/Service meet the needs of different communities and groups? (Protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity) – see glossary on page 14 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance)

The commissioned service as set out in this strategy will enable people to achieve their optimum level by delivering services that are inclusive for all victims of domestic abuse. Understanding cultural differences and supporting victims, taking into account their protected characteristics, will also enhance the wider service offer. Empowering victims to have a voice and take control of their lives, whilst breaking the cycle of abuse. Providing both emotional and practical support and accessible supported refuge accommodation.

The strategy seeks to enhance the accommodation offer and ensure an increase in individualised housing, certifying it is accessible for all victims of domestic abuse – pertaining to all genders, sexualities, ethnicities, religious beliefs, and disabilities. Specialist domestic abuse support will also be provided to every homeless victim inside all forms of safe accommodation.

The strategy also seeks to create a one whole commissioned service, enabling a seamless pathway for service users. It also sets out to acknowledge and understand the individualised support needs of each victim and enables their specific needs to be met.

The service set out in this strategy will be inclusive to all of those effected by domestic abuse. Although the service is an adult service of 16+ years, it will make referrals to safeguard children at risk of harm and provide a 'Whole Family Approach' which will benefit children, young people, and families.

The strategy also seeks to deliver training and awareness-raising campaigns in different languages and will spotlight particular issues such as Forced Marriages, 'Honour Based' Abuse, and FGM. It will also provide training sessions for staff dealing with issues LGBTQ+ victims face where domestic abuse is occurring in same-sex relationships.

It also will deliver wider campaigns to raise awareness of the impact of domestic abuse on everybody in the community, under the ethos that "domestic abuse is everyone's business".

Services will be monitored via statistics, groups, and panels - any gaps will therefore be identified promptly and processes and pathways to support will be reviewed accordingly.

Ultimately, the focus of this strategy is to achieve optimum outcomes which make a real difference to the quality of life and wellbeing of people who have experienced domestic abuse. The domestic abuse services will provide a service for **all** people, including those with protected characteristics.

Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Groups?

The strategy does not present any problem or barrier to the community. If the strategy is implemented, further awareness raising and training will be employed, and we will continue to work with the voluntary sector and user groups to help address any concerns within the community to ensure every victim's needs are met, no matter what background they are from. As such, this strategy will endeavour to remove any barriers to inclusion, and to provide an accessible service for all.

Does the Service/Policy provide any positive impact/s including improvements or remove barriers?

Yes – the strategy seeks to ensure that all victims of domestic abuse in Rotherham receive support to maximise the best outcomes inclusive of all protected characteristics. The service outlined in this strategy will ensure that a victim will have a continuity of support no matter what level of risk, individual support needs, or protected characteristics the victim may have.

Additionally, the strategy seeks to strengthen overall resources that safeguard victims of domestic abuse and their families in Rotherham, alongside diversifying the type of properties available for individuals feeling their home due to domestic abuse.

The strategy will also ensure that homeless victims of domestic abuse are provided with both safe accommodation and a specialist domestic abuse support worker, meaning that their individualised needs are catered for and they are guaranteed a safe journey of recovery.

What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations? (may also need to consider activity which may be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another)

Further investing in domestic abuse services, which support the most vulnerable residents of Rotherham, is likely to have a positive impact on community relations.

The service model outlined in this strategy will have a positive impact on communities and contribute towards providing a local community support to victims and their families. This will enable people to reach their true potential and contribute towards providing safer neighbourhoods and communities within Rotherham.

Please list any **actions and targets** that need to be taken as a consequence of this assessment on the action plan below and ensure that they are added into your service plan for monitoring purposes – see page 12 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

5. Summary of findings and Equality Analysis Action Plan

If the analysis is done at the right time, i.e. early before decisions are made, changes should be built in before the policy or change is signed off. This will remove the need for remedial actions. Where this is achieved, the only action required will be to monitor the impact of the policy/service/change on communities or groups according to their protected characteristic - See page 11 of the Equality Screening and Analysis guidance

Title of analysis: Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022 - 2027
Directorate and service area: Regeneration and Environment – Community Safety and Street Scene
Lead Manager: Sam Barstow
Summary of findings:
The pathway throughout shows a need for individualised support to every victim’s specific needs can be met. It also needs to become more seamless to prevent disengagement from the service.

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
N/A		

***A = Age, D= Disability, S = Sex, GR Gender Reassignment, RE= Race/ Ethnicity, RoB= Religion or Belief, SO= Sexual Orientation, PM= Pregnancy/Maternity, CPM = Civil Partnership or Marriage. C= Carers, O= other groups**

6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state those that have approved the Equality Analysis. Approval should be obtained by the Director and approval sought from DLT and the relevant Cabinet Member.

Name	Job title	Date
Sam Barstow	Head of Service, Community Safety and Regulatory Services	05/11/21

7. Publishing

The Equality Analysis will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this Equality Analysis relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date Equality Analysis completed	17/09/2021
Report title and date	Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022 - 2027
Date report sent for publication	
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	