DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

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Author: Jermaine Sterling
Department: Operations

Domestic Abuse Policy

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Domestic Abuse Policy

1.0 Policy Statement

1.1 Radcliffe Housing Society (RHS) recognises domestic abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of social background, disability, age, gender, religion, sexuality or ethnicity. We also recognise domestic abuse affects both male and female victims. We are committed to supporting victims of domestic abuse regardless of gender or sexuality.

1.2 We take domestic abuse seriously and we're committed to providing a sensitive and professional response to anyone approaching us for assistance in cases of domestic abuse.

1.3 We work robustly with partner agencies, to support victims of domestic abuse.

1.4 We encourage residents, staff and contractors to report domestic abuse, whether they are the victims, or witnesses to such incidents.

2.0 Aims

2.1 This Policy aims to provide clear guidance on:

- Ensuring residents experiencing domestic abuse can feel confident in approaching us for advice
- Signposting victims and witnesses of domestic abuse, in order to support them in the most appropriate way
- The processes in place that record incidents of domestic abuse, with action plans in place appropriate to each individual case

2.2 We will achieve our aims by:

- Treating all reports of domestic abuse seriously and as a matter of high priority
- Putting residents in contact with appropriate agencies, that can help them by providing specialist advice and support
- Ensuring that residents receive appropriate and accurate advice regarding their housing options, including any legal rights and responsibilities

3.0 Definitions

3.1 "Domestic violence and abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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".

3.2 This can include, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Psychological and Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Coercive and controlling behaviour
- Financial abuse
- Digital abuse

4.0 Our Approach

4.1 When we receive reports of domestic abuse directly from a victim, an interview will be offered within 24 hours of the notification. Interviews will be carried out in a sensitive and professional manner at a location of the victim's choice. The intention of the conversation is to identify needs and to complete risk assessments. This initial step will also determine what support, safeguarding and signposting can be offered to the victim to make them safe, in both the short and long term.

4.2 We will do all we can to assist and support residents suffering with domestic abuse. We recognise, in some cases, residents reporting domestic abuse will not want any action to be taken, or for any information they provide to be passed on to any other agency.

4.3 We would seek to refer the matter to another agency without the permission of the victim, where there are concerns about the safety of children. Advice will be provided, and the victim will be made aware that they can contact us again at any time.

4.4 We will provide advice on rehousing options available to victims of domestic abuse. Some residents will choose to stay in their home, and we will offer advice on making their home safer on a practical basis.

4.5 In cases where the victim may feel unable to return to their home, either in the immediate or longer term, advice will be offered regarding options for rehousing via a Local Authority. The Local Authority have the statutory obligation to consider an application for alternative or emergency housing.

4.6 In some circumstances their case can also be considered for a management transfer. Please refer to our Housing Options Policy.

4.7 Where there is a joint tenancy, and one party is the perpetrator, we are not able to remove one of the tenants unless either one of the following takes place:

- A Court Order instructs the removal of one of the joint tenants
- One, or both joint tenants completes a Termination of Tenancy form to end the tenancy

4.8 If a termination notice is received by one tenant, with (or without) the knowledge or consent of the other, this notice will still end the tenancy. Accepting a notice from a single joint tenant on behalf of all would not automatically prevent RHS from re-granting a tenancy to the remaining (previously joint) tenant. This would be subject to our Housing Options Policy and must be approved by our Operations Director.

4.9 We have the legal powers to seek possession of a property using specific Grounds of the Housing Act, where the perpetrator remains in the property, including in the following situations:

- The property was occupied by a married couple, a couple who are civil partners of each other, a couple living together as husband and wife or a couple living together as civil partners
- One or both partners were the tenants of the property

- One partner has left the property because of violence or threats of violence by the other towards them or a member of their family who was residing at the property immediately before the partner left
- The Court is satisfied that the partner who has left is unlikely to return

5.0 Further information and Support

5.1 If someone is experiencing domestic abuse and need immediate help, ask for 'ANI' in a participating pharmacy. 'ANI' stands for Action Needed Immediately. If a pharmacy has the 'Ask for ANI' logo on display, it means they're ready to help. They will offer the individual a private space, provide a phone and ask if support is needed from the police or other domestic abuse support services.

5.2

Organisation	Contact Number	Website
Victim Support	0808 1689 111	https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/
Women's Aid		https://www.womensaid.org.uk/
Men's Advice Line	0808 801 0327	https://www.respect.uk.net/
Childline	0800 1111	https://www.childline.org.uk/
National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline	0800 999 5428	https://galop.org.uk/
Samaritans	116 123	https://www.samaritans.org/
Refuge	0808 2000 247	https://www.refuge.org.uk/
Karma Nirvana (Honour based violence	0800 5999 247	https://karmanirvana.org.uk/

6.0 Responsibilities

6.1 All staff and our contractors, have a duty to report concerns of domestic abuse.

6.2 The Tenancy Services Officer (TSO) will be responsible for the supervision of each case recorded, and to liaise with the victim and local agencies.

6.3 Cases are logged by the TSO on our system and will be monitored on a weekly basis.

6.4 The Operations Director (OD) has overall responsibility for the provision of safeguarding, monitoring oversight, and ensuring our residents have direct access to report domestic abuse or concerns.

7.0 Confidentiality

7.1 We recognise when reporting or investigating domestic abuse, victims are discussing very personal and sensitive information. It is therefore important to establish with the victim, that whilst the information is confidential some or all of it may be shared with other agencies. For example, this could be the Police or Social Services, to deal with cases more effectively and achieve the best outcome. This would only be where this is in the best interest of the victim to share this information.

7.2 We work in partnership with Local Authorities, Social Services, Police and other specialist and non-specialist agencies, sharing appropriate information to assist the

investigative process. We will attend meetings such as MARACs, Safeguarding hubs and Vulnerability Boards, where appropriate.

7.3 When sharing information about adults and children at risk, all staff will follow our Data Protection (GDPR) Policy.

7.4 Our staff will ensure they only involve other agencies and share information with the consent of the resident unless:

- The information is necessary for the safeguarding of children or adults
- We are required to by Law. For example, we cannot withhold information if being questioned by the police during a criminal investigation

8.0 Cross Reference

- RHS Data Protection (GDPR) Policy
- RHS Anti Social Behaviour Policy
- Anti Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014
- RHS Hoarding Policy
- RHS Self Neglect Policy
- RHS Whistleblowing Policy
- RHS Safeguarding Policy
- Care and Support Guidance
- Care Act 2014
- Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015

9.0 Review

9.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years. The Policy may be reviewed earlier in line with any legislative, regulatory, best practice development or to address operational issues.