
Author**Title of policy**

Head of
Neighbourhoods and
Support

Domestic Abuse

**Section**

Updated: April 2022

Housing

1 Policy statement

- 1.1 Our Mission is to build **Great Homes** and support **Successful Lives** by being a **Better Business**. It is why we exist and guides everything that we do.
- 1.2 This policy sets out Rooftop's commitment to assisting customers and applicants who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse.
- 1.3 We believe that our customers should not live in fear of violence, abuse or harassment from a partner, former partner or any member of their household or family.
- 1.4 Domestic abuse is still a largely hidden crime and measuring the true scale of the issue is difficult. Domestic abuse happens in all communities, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- 1.5 As a housing provider, Rooftop is well placed to recognise the signs of domestic abuse. We will:
 - 1.5.1 Take all reports seriously and work pro-actively with survivors to report domestic abuse and offer support.
 - 1.5.2 Assist perpetrators of domestic abuse who wish to positively change their behaviour by helping them access support and assistance.
 - 1.5.3 Use the appropriate legal tools and powers available to us, to tackle perpetrators living in our homes, who do not wish to positively change their behaviour. This may be to assist a survivor to terminate their tenancy and gain alternative accommodation, support to seek a property adjustment order and to have a perpetrator removed from a property they have no entitlement to.
 - 1.5.4 Work pro-actively with partner agencies (e.g. Womens Aid, The Dawn Project, Mankind, Police, local authorities etc.) to promote awareness, challenge attitudes, provide and improve the response to domestic abuse.
 - 1.5.5 Assist local housing authorities (e.g. District and City Councils) by providing temporary safehouses.
 - 1.5.6 Assist local Social Services authorities (e.g. County Councils) by providing support to survivors when they are in a safehouse.

2 Statutory and Regulatory context**2.1 What is Domestic Abuse?****2.1.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 says:**

Behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if

- a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- b) The behaviour is abusive.

Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following:

- a) Physical or sexual abuse
- b) Violent or threatening behaviour
- c) Controlling or coercive behaviour
- d) Economic abuse (see below)
- e) Psychological, emotional or other abuse

And it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

“Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to

- a) Acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
- b) Obtain goods or services

A’s behaviour can be considered behaviour towards B even where it consists of conduct directed towards another person e.g. B’s child.

“Personally connected” applies if:

- a) They are, or have been, married to each other
- b) They are, or have been, civil partners to each other
- c) They have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- d) They have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- e) They are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- f) They each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child (where parental relationship means either being the parent of the child or having parental responsibility for the child)
- g) They are relatives.

2.2 What do the housing regulations say?

2.2.1 There is no specific reference to Domestic abuse in the Regulator of Social Housing’s (“the Regulator”) consumer standards.

2.2.2 However the Regulator’s Tenancy Standard requires and expects us to:

- a) Let our homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way,
- b) Co-operate with local authorities’ strategic housing function, and their duties to meet identified local housing needs. This includes assistance with local authorities’ homelessness duties, and through meeting obligations in nomination agreements.’

This is particularly pertinent when local authorities are discharging their homelessness duty to those affected by domestic abuse.

2.2.3 The Regulator’s Neighbourhood and Community Standard requires and expects us to take actions that keep people safe, work in partnership with other agencies to promote community wellbeing and prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour.

3 Policy

3.1 We recognise:

3.1.1 Domestic abuse exists primarily as part of violence against women and girls including different forms of family violence such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation and so called “honour crimes” and that domestic abuse is also

experienced by men. 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men have experienced domestic abuse; and of domestic abuse crimes recorded 75% are against women and 25% are against men. We will offer appropriate support in all cases.

3.1.2 The detrimental effect domestic abuse can have on children and vulnerable adults. We will also implement our safeguarding adults and children's policies.

3.2 We will:

3.2.1 Ensure that all new and existing residents are aware that Domestic Abuse is a criminal offence and a breach of the terms of their tenancy agreement.

3.2.2 Work with partner agencies to promote awareness of domestic abuse both publicly and professionally, participate in appropriate campaigns and pro-actively review and improve performance.

3.2.3 Provide a sensitive and confidential response to anyone approaching us for assistance and respect the wishes of the survivor.

3.2.4 Ensure that we only involve other agencies and share information with the consent of the person reporting domestic abuse, unless:

- The information is necessary for the protection of children or vulnerable adults.
- We are required by law, for example as part of a criminal investigation.

3.2.5 Assist survivors to report domestic abuse to the appropriate agencies, including the police, local district housing authority and local specialised domestic abuse agencies.

3.2.6 Assist anyone who witnesses potential domestic abuse, to report their concerns to the appropriate agencies.

3.2.7 Aim to ensure that victims of domestic abuse are aware of the options and support available to them so that they can make informed decisions about the route they wish to take to end the abuse and rebuild their lives. This will include the provision of appropriate advice about their housing options and about their legal rights and responsibilities regarding their tenancy.

3.2.8 Work in partnership with legal, statutory and voluntary services to ensure that support is provided in a co-ordinated way, to provide temporary and permanent homes, support victims and take appropriate action with the perpetrators.

3.2.9 Provide a specialist domestic abuse service, supported by local social service and housing authorities, that can help survivors cope with the domestic abuse they have suffered and rebuild their lives, where appropriate, in new locations.

3.2.10 Ensure that we have 'domestic abuse champions' who will provide additional guidance and advice whenever necessary to all our staff.

3.2.11 Provide information on domestic abuse and the help available as part of the staff induction process.

3.2.12 Provide appropriate and regular training for staff to recognise, report and deal with domestic abuse effectively.

3.2.13 Assist with additional security measures as needed to our temporary and permanent homes and act outside our normal repairing policy as necessary and appropriate in certain circumstances. This may include works carried out as emergency, required as a result of violent or threatening incidents.

3.2.14 Continue to sign up for the Chartered Institute's 'Make a Stand' pledge to show our commitment to supporting people experiencing domestic abuse. In line with the pledge, Rooftop will –

- Put in place and embed a policy to support residents that are affected by domestic abuse
- Make information about national and local domestic abuse support services available on our website and in other places so that they are easily accessible for residents and staff
- Ensure our HR Policy includes support to members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse
- Appoint a champion at a senior level within Rooftop to own the activity we are doing to support people experiencing domestic abuse

4 Objective/project

- 4.1 To support the provision of Rooftop's Domestic Abuse Support Service and give the service clear guidelines on relevant practices.

5 Review

- 5.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years unless there are major changes in legislation or good practice.

6 Consultation (please complete as applicable)

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| 6.1 | Leadership Team | March 2022 |
| 6.2 | Executive Team | April 2022 |
| 6.3 | Other (e.g. customers) | March 2022 |

7 Responsibilities

Responsible body

- | | | |
|-----|--|---------------------------|
| 7.1 | Formulation, amendment and approval of policy | Executive Team |
| | Monitoring of policy | Leadership Team |
| | Operational management of policy/policy author | Supported Housing Manager |
| 7.2 | Date of formulation of policy | March 2019 |
| 7.3 | Dates of policy reviews | April 2022 |
| 7.4 | Date of next review | April 2025 |

Associated documents

Internal – Rooftop policies and procedures

- Allocations and Lettings policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Safeguarding Adults policy
- Safeguarding Children policy

External

- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)
- [Regulator of Social Housing Regulatory standards, procedures and guidance](#)