

## 10. DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICIES

CCBC in defining domestic violence/abuse for the purpose of this document has used the definition provided in the all Wales strategy on domestic abuse. The definition is as follows:-

*Domestic violence/abuse is best described as the use of physical and/or emotional abuse or violence, including undermining of self-confidence, sexual violence or the threat of violence, by a person who is or has been in a close relationship.*

*Domestic abuse can go beyond actual physical violence. It can also involve emotional abuse, the destruction of a spouse's or partner's property, their isolation from friends, family or other potential sources of support, threats to others including children, control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone, and stalking.*

*It can also include violence perpetrated by a son, daughter or any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim/survivor. It can also include violence inflicted on, or witnessed by, children. The wide adverse effects of living with domestic abuse for children must be recognised as a child protection issue. The effects can be linked to poor educational achievement, social exclusion and to juvenile crime, substance abuse, mental health problems and homelessness from running away. Domestic abuse is not a 'one-off' occurrence, it is frequent and persistent.*

Domestic abuse is essentially a pattern of behaviour, which is characterised by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person over another, often seen in the context of an intimate or close relationship.

CCBC is a member of the Caerphilly Domestic Abuse Forum. The Forum comprises a large number of agencies dedicated to tackling domestic abuse. The Forum has produced a directory of support services for agencies in this field, a three year Strategy and Action Plan which mirrors the All Wales National Strategy, and their Strategy is embedded in the three year Caerphilly Community Safety Strategy.

CCBC will provide support and advice for those who are victims of domestic abuse via its dedicated Domestic Violence Co-coordinator, and its partnership with Llamau Womens' Services Caerphilly, the Police, Victim Support and other dedicated services, which work with victims of domestic abuse. CCBC will also make referrals to the Safer Caerphilly Multi Agency Centre (Caerphilly MAC) in Ystrad Mynach where front line agencies provide a vital service to victims of domestic abuse. It is based on the principle of a One Stop Shop and aims to provide a swift and safe response for victims and their children. In addition CCBC has in place a Domestic Violence/Abuse Policy for Council Employees, which sets out procedures for the support and safety of those suffering from domestic abuse.

CCBC are active partners in the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). The purpose of MARAC is to reduce the risk of serious harm or homicide for a domestic abuse victim and to increase the safety, health and well being of other victims, both adults and children. In a MARAC local agencies will meet to discuss the highest risk victims of domestic abuse in their area. Information about the risks faced by those victims, the actions needed to ensure safety, and the resources available locally are shared and used to create a risk management plan involving all agencies. The MARAC will seek to protect those who disclose domestic abuse and are at high risk of being seriously injured or killed from further abuse through a co-ordinated response from all agencies. The MARAC is part of a multi-agency strategy to tackle domestic abuse in partnership with other agencies

In addition to the above services any individual approaching the Housing Service on the grounds of domestic violence/abuse who feels unable to return to their home for fear of further violence or abuse and requires urgent rehousing will be referred to the Housing Advice Centre

where their circumstances will be considered under homelessness legislation. All other cases of domestic violence/abuse where rehousing is not requested will be looked at sympathetically and any appropriate action or support deemed necessary taken or offered.

CCBC will not tolerate any form of domestic abuse and has embraced the aims of the All Wales National Strategy on Domestic Abuse which are to: protect survivors, to hold abusers accountable and to prevent domestic abuse from happening in the first place.

If there are children whose safety and welfare may be compromised as a consequence of domestic abuse, CCBC will adhere to the All Wales Child Protection Procedures and the All Wales Protocol: Safeguarding Children and Young People who are affected by Domestic Abuse.