

MILTON KEYNES INTER-AGENCY CODE OF PRACTICE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Formulated by Members of the Milton Keynes Violence Against Women and Children Working Party

Domestic Violence is the abuse experienced by people, principally women and children, which, is perpetrated by partners or ex-partners or by others with whom they are, or have been, in a relationship, including carers. Domestic Violence is also experienced within the immediate and extended family. It includes psychological, financial, emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

The impact of Domestic Violence on children is significant and far-reaching. Children can be direct victims of the violence. They are also often traumatised as a result of witnessing the violence. The harm suffered by these children may be long-term, affecting their physical and psychological well being and impairing development in all spheres of life.

The majority of perpetrators of Domestic Violence are men. However, people in same sex and some men in heterosexual partnerships also experience Domestic Violence situations.

Domestic Violence occurs across all social groups throughout society.
An anti-discriminatory approach is integral to all aspects of this Code of Practice.

Staff should:

- Give priority to ensuring the immediate safety of the victim and children.
- Listen to the victim's report of violence and take it seriously.
- Not attribute responsibility for the violence to the victim; offenders are accountable for their own behaviour.
- Appreciate the potential danger of further violence and do not under-estimate the actual violence that exists toward the victim and the children.
- Let the victim know that support, information and guidance are readily available.
- Maintain up-to-date information about the rights of victims, particularly women and children, who are discriminated against in other aspects of life.

- Create a climate which encourages reporting of incidents of domestic violence by:
 - being accessible to the victim and children;
 - ensuring the safety of both the victim and children;
 - raising awareness of the issues of domestic violence within the community;
 - raising awareness of the issues of domestic violence within partner agencies; and
 - dealing with the victim and children in a caring, sensitive and professional manner.
- Acknowledge and safeguard victims, children and young people's rights.
- Recognise and value the expertise of partner-agencies in the areas of domestic violence.

ALL AGENCIES SHOULD:

- Work together on behalf of those suffering domestic violence, including children and young people, recognising each agency's responsibilities and limitations.
- Be aware of the issues, particular to specific ethnic and other minority groups, and ensure that culturally appropriate information and resources are available.
- Develop joint strategies for the Milton Keynes response to domestic violence, including awareness raising and training.
- Link this Code of Practice to other relevant Policy or Strategy documents.
- Evaluate and monitor agency responses to domestic violence.

Outcomes and performance measures relating to the implementation of this Code of Practice are described in the Milton Keynes Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy.

These agencies and voluntary organisations are signatories to the Milton Keynes Inter-Agency Code of Practice on Domestic Violence:

Franklins Solicitors

Linnells Solicitors

Milton Keynes Community NHS Trust

Milton Keynes Family Mediation Service

Milton Keynes National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Milton Keynes Racial Equality Council

Milton Keynes Rape Crisis

Milton Keynes Women's Aid

Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Probation Service

Pictons Solicitors

Relate Milton Keynes

Shelter - MK Housing Aid Centre

Thames Valley Police - Milton Keynes Area

Victim Support (MK)