

SAFETY FIRST SCHEME: INFORMATION FOR AGENCIES

1. An Introduction

The Richmond upon Thames Safety First Scheme is a holistic, victim-centred initiative that provides additional security measures for survivors of domestic abuse and hate crimes, like racial or homophobic harassment, as well as vulnerable/older adults who are the victims of crimes (such as distraction burglary).

Safety First aims to make it possible for victims of domestic violence (and any children) victims of hate crime and vulnerable/ older adults who are victims of crime to remain in their homes and feel safe if they choose to do so. Safety First aims to increase the housing options available to victims and is one of a range of options to those at risk of homelessness because of domestic abuse, hate crime or vulnerable/older victims of crime. The scheme is available across all types of tenure (including registered social landlords, private rented and owner-occupied).

Safety First is a partnership led by the Council's Housing Services and Richmond Upon Thames Police's Community Safety Unit. The borough's Community Safety Partnership, Hampton Fuel Allotment Charity and local housing associations, such as Richmond Housing Partnership, have all generously supported the scheme.

Safety First has been running since October 2003 and has benefited a number of households. Feedback has shown that their fear of crime has been dramatically reduced as a result of the help offered.

2. What does Safety First offer?

Safety First is open to all residents regardless of tenure where the perpetrator does not live with them. It is not an emergency scheme and in case of emergency clients should be advised to dial 999. Safety First offers the following:

- Referral to the Police Lock Fitters team for free target hardening within 48 hours of a referral (e.g. replacement locks) for high risk victims;
- Free property survey and a recommendation for any additional security works to be carried out (e.g. better door and window locks, installation of replacement doors etc) within five working days;
- Free installation of a Richmond Careline alarm, linked to the Police control room to allow rapid response in case of future incidents, with free rental for at least six months;
- Advice on personal safety from the Police Crime Prevention Officer;
- Onward referral to specialist domestic abuse services for holistic support and advice. Referrals can be made for support from local agencies, like the Ethnic Minorities Advocacy Group (EMAG), Victim Support, Refuge, Welcare and Victim Support the Police Community Safety Unit; and
- Referral to the London Fire Brigade for advice on home fire safety.

3. The aims of Safety First

- Reduce repeat victimisation by improving home security for victims who have been subjected to violence and abuse / threats of violence and abuse from persons who do not normally reside with them;

- Reduce the fear of crime among victims of domestic violence and hate crime, as well as vulnerable/older victims of crime;
- Deter perpetrators by making the property more secure and providing a Careline alarm offering a rapid response from the Police if activated; and
- Prevent homeless and all the upheaval in moving home, away from family and friends and support networks where this is the victim's choice.

4. Who is eligible for Safety First?

To be eligible for assistance under Safety First, a victim will normally have to meet all the following criteria:

- Live in Richmond Upon Thames
- Be a victim of domestic abuse, hate crime or vulnerable/older victims of crime
- Their safety and / or that of any children is at risk, which could lead to homelessness
- The perpetrator or alleged perpetrator does not reside with the victim.

The scheme is available across all types of tenure (including registered social landlords, private rented and owner-occupied).

5. How to make a referral

The scheme does not accept self-referrals. Individuals need to be referred by a partner agency using a [referral form](#) which should be sent to the [Crime Prevention Officer](#).

The Police are responsible for providing initial target hardening for high risk victims within 48 hours of referral, surveying the property and making recommendations for any additional security works to be carried out. Richmond Council's Housing Options Team coordinates the scheme and arrange for any additional home security measures. Referrals can be accepted from the following agencies:

Metropolitan Police	Richmond Upon Thames Victim Support	Refuge
LBRuT Adult and Community Services	Ethnic Minorities Advocacy Group (EMAG)	Richmond Citizens Advice Bureaux
LBRuT Children's Services and Culture	Richmond Upon Thames Welcare	Local housing associations

If any organisation wants to join the list of referral agencies or wants training on the scheme, it should contact the [Safety First Coordinator](#) in the Housing Options Team.

6. Risk assessment

The Safety First Scheme can offer an **urgent** response where a victim is considered to be at **high risk**. High risk victims are referred to the Police Lock fitters Team for initial free target hardening (E.g. replacement locks) within 48 hours. They will also receive a free property survey which will make recommendations for any additional security works to be carried out (e.g. better door and window locks, installation of replacement doors etc) within a short time of the initial referral. A case may be assessed as high risk on the basis of

1. Professional judgement: if a professional has serious concerns about a victim's immediate safety; or
2. A risk assessment: For example, in domestic abuse cases, this can include the [CAADA-DASH Risk Indicator Checklist](#)

Safety First is not an emergency scheme and in case of emergency clients should be advised to dial 999.

7. Agency responsibilities

Richmond Police

The Police are one of the main partners in the Scheme:

- [**Crime Prevention Officer**](#)
To survey the property and recommend additional security works to be carried out within a short time of the initial referral. Provides information on or a referral to the London Fire Brigade for a home fire safety visit.
- [**Community Safety Unit**](#)
Specialist Police Officer who can undertake any actions appropriate to victim safety (including MARAC referral if appropriate in cases involving domestic abuse, hate crime or vulnerable adult.
- **Lock Fitters Team**
Lockfitters to provide initial free target hardening (E.g. replacement locks) within 48 hours.

[**Housing Options Team**](#)

Scheme Coordinator to instruct contractor or Careline where referral is eligible. To ensure that works are completed and to inform for CPO and referring agency when done so. To undertake follow-up survey of client satisfaction.

London Fire Brigade

To provide a home fire safety visit.

[**Victim Support**](#)

To provide support and safety planning to victim/survivor, onward referral (including Refuge Floating Support and Victim Support Volunteers) and liaison with other agencies where appropriate.

8. Data Protection

Information should be handled in accordance with the Domestic Abuse Forum Information Sharing Protocol, the MARAC protocol and any organisational information governance procedures.

Agreed: June 2009
Review date: June 2010

Step 1: Referring agent completes referral form. The referring agency must complete a risk indicator checklist with client, identify those high risk cases requiring an urgent response time (i.e. within 48 hours)

Step 2: Referral faxed to Crime Prevention Officer or sent electronically using Secure eMail

Step 3: Crime Prevention Officer (CPO)

- CPO informs CSU
- In **high risk** cases, the CPO alerts the Police Lock fitters Team for initial free target hardening (E.g. replacement locks) within 48 hours
- For **all cases**, CPO contacts the household and referral agency to make an appointment to view the property within five working days
- CPO visits the property, completes the specification of work form survey, advises on what the scheme can provide and provides advice on personal safety and support
- CPO secures tenant authorisation for works
- CPO offers referral to Fire Safety Scheme

CPO sends recommendations to Scheme Coordinator for further action on the same day as visit

Step 4: Scheme Coordinator

- Where CPO recommends installation of Careline, Scheme Coordinator will ask Careline to do this within two working days.
- Careline will then contact household to arrange fitting.
- Scheme Coordinator will instruct the contractor where tenant is eligible

Contractor confirms completion of works to scheme co-ordinator

Step 3a: Community Safety Unit (CSU)

- CSU to undertake any actions appropriate to victim safety (including MARAC referral if appropriate in domestic abuse cases) or onward referral to a specialist domestic abuse organization like Victim Support or Refuge Floating Support

Step 5: Case Closure

- Scheme Coordinator confirms completion to CPO and referring agency

Step 6: Case Review

- Scheme Coordinator contacts clients with Careline to decide on whether alarm is still required and if so, who will pay for rental after initial six-months "rent-free" period

- Housing undertakes follow-up survey of client to check impact of Safety First and their satisfaction with service

Timescale: between 3 and 6 months of referral