



## **New Code of Good Practice raises hopes of combating domestic violence and abuse in Devon**

The Devon Strategic Housing Group (DSHG) has developed a new Code of Good Practice that aims to raise awareness and improve the way Housing Associations address cases of domestic violence and abuse across Devon

The Code of Good Practice will be launched during Domestic Abuse Awareness Week (November 23<sup>rd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> 2009) and will be available for download on the **adva** (against domestic violence and abuse) website [www.adva.org.uk](http://www.adva.org.uk)

**Lisa Jennings, Devon Housing Options Partnership Manager for the Devon Strategic Housing Group** said “This document will mean that Housing Associations across Devon are working consistently and to the same set of principles, helping them to provide an effective response to people suffering the effects of domestic violence and abuse”.

A total of 17 Housing Associations in the South West have signed up to the Devon Domestic Abuse Code of Good Practice which seeks to encourage partnership working between specialist agencies such as the police, other housing providers and voluntary and charitable organisations.

The new code sets out clear standards to provide support to those affected by domestic abuse. Staff will be given full training and Housing Associations will be appointing their own domestic abuse “champion”.

As part of the code, Housing Associations will also work in conjunction with partner agencies on a case by case basis to help people affected by domestic violence and abuse to feel safe and secure when they choose to remain in their own homes, by improving the security with professionally installed security measures.

Rachel Martin from **adva** said “We are incredibly heartened that the DSHG have developed this Code of Good Practice to deal with the very widespread problem of domestic violence and abuse and to safeguard victims in their own homes. It is vital that we raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse and have effective ways of dealing with it – not just to encourage the victims themselves to come forward, but also to encourage relatives, friends, neighbours, support workers and colleagues to seek help on their behalf and on behalf of their children.”

### **Notes to editors**

1. Lisa Jennings, Devon Housing Options Partnership Manager for Devon Strategic Housing Group can be contacted on 07827 821788.
2. Devon Strategic Housing Group is a strategic partnership made up of the Devon Housing Authorities and Housing Associations working to improve the delivery of housing in Devon.
3. The 17 Housing Associations signing up to the code are: Cornerstone, Devon & Cornwall, Magna, North Devon Homes, Plymouth Community Homes, Riviera Housing Trust, Sanctuary Shaftesbury, Sarsen, Signpost, Sovereign, Tamar Housing Society, Tarka Housing, Teign Housing, Tor Homes, Westcountry Housing, West Devon Homes and William Sutton Homes – part of Affinity Sutton.
4. **adva** is the Against Domestic Violence and Abuse in Devon Partnership ([www.adva.org.uk](http://www.adva.org.uk)).

**5.** Domestic Abuse Awareness Week is week beginning 23 November 2009.