

Report To:	CABINET	Date:	25th NOVEMBER 2019
Heading:	DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICIES		
Portfolio Holder:	CLLR KIER BARSBY – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING CLLR DANIEL WILLIAMSON – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY		
Ward/s:	ALL		
Key Decision:	YES		
Subject to Call-In:	YES		

Purpose of Report

To seek approval of two policies regarding domestic abuse

Recommendation(s)

- **To approve the Housing & Assets Domestic Abuse Policy**
- **To approve the Employee Domestic Violence & Abuse Policy**

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

In July 2018, Cabinet approved ADC making a commitment to the Make a Stand campaign, which has been developed by the Chartered Institute of Housing in partnership with Women's Aid and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance. It was created to encourage social housing providers to make a commitment to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

A requirement of committing to the campaign was to ensure that two policies are put in place:

1. a policy to support residents who are affected by domestic abuse
2. a HR policy to support members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse

At the time of committing to the Make a Stand campaign, three policies were in place at ADC, developed between 2014 and 2017. Following the commitment, these policies have been reviewed, updated and consolidated into the two policies that are the subject of this report.

Alternative Options Considered

(with reasons why not adopted)

To not review, update and consolidate the three policies developed between 2014 and 2017. This option was not adopted as it is important that policies are regularly updated and a number of updates were identified to be included to enhance ADC's efforts to tackle domestic abuse committed against residents and employees.

Detailed Information

Housing & Assets Domestic Abuse Policy

This policy focuses on the tenants and residents of homes owned and managed by Ashfield District Council. It describes the support that will be offered to survivors and the enforcement action that will be taken against perpetrators, including the impact on their tenancy rights.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Proactively offer support to survivors
- Ensure survivors are as safe as possible
- Maximise the opportunities for survivors to seek the help they need
- Reduce the average time before a survivor seeks help
- Ensure domestic abuse is not incorrectly managed as a tenancy issue such as ASB
- Provide whole family support that is survivor led
- Take appropriate action against perpetrators and maximise their opportunities to break the cycle

A copy of the policy is attached to this report.

Employee Domestic Violence & Abuse Policy

This policy sets out the actions that will be taken in responding to employees who are experiencing domestic violence and abuse and where there are concerns that an employee may be the perpetrator of domestic violence.

A copy of the policy is attached to this report.

Rolling out the policies

A programme of training is being developed to roll out the policies to all staff to ensure that they are put into action. The programme of training includes:

- Basic training for all staff, covering what domestic abuse is, how to spot the signs, how to give basic safety planning advice and where to signpost for further support. This is an e-learning course developed in house.

- Training for all managers on supporting staff who are survivors and dealing with staff who are perpetrators of domestic abuse. This is an e-learning course developed in house.
- Specialist domestic abuse training for staff working in a front line role supporting residents. This will provide more in depth training on supporting survivors. This will be provided by an external specialist training provider. It is anticipated that this will be delivered by a provider commissioned by Nottinghamshire County Council who will also bear the cost.
- Specialist training for tenancy management staff on the legal action that can be taken and the impact on tenancy rights. A specialist external provider will be procured to provide this training in 2020/21, subject to budget approval.

In addition to the training programme, there will be resources available on the intranet such as safety planning guidance, a list of specialist domestic abuse services and guidance on how to complete a Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment Risk Assessment.

Finally, a network of domestic abuse champions in the key sections of the Council will be developed. Champions will be asked to attend the specialist training to ensure they have advanced knowledge of domestic abuse, to support colleagues with any queries they may have and to provide regular updates at team meetings on the latest good practice and policy updates.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The development and implementation of these policies is a key element of achieving the 2019-2023 corporate plan priorities around domestic abuse, which include:

- Increasing the support for high risk victims of domestic abuse
- Achieving the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance standard

Legal:

There are no significant legal issues associated with adopting the two policies.

Finance:

There are no financial implications associated with approving these policies. Approval will be sought separately for any expenditure associated with implementing the policies, such as external training.

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	Nil at this stage
General Fund – Capital Programme	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	Nil at this stage
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	N/A

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
An increased number of requests for support are received as a result of awareness raising	The number of requests will be monitored to ensure the demand can be met
The policies are not effectively and consistently implemented	<p>A comprehensive programme of training is planned, which will be kept up to date and recertification will be required</p> <p>A network of champions is being developed to drive forward implementation in their sections</p> <p>Referrals and outcomes will be monitored regularly by the Domestic Abuse Caseworker</p>

Human Resources:

The training programme is being developed in collaboration with the learning and development team.

Equalities:

(to be completed by the author)

Domestic abuse is a gendered crime and disproportionately affects women. In the majority of cases the perpetrator of abuse is male. Domestic abuse is also common in LGBT+ relationships. Domestic abuse includes 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. This type of abuse commonly occurs in BME communities and is driven by religious and cultural beliefs. Individuals with protected characteristics are often at greater risk of domestic abuse, both in terms of experiencing domestic abuse and also the severity of the abuse. This is particularly the case for disabled and pregnant women. There is a growing trend for older women to report domestic abuse.

As such, by increasing the support available to survivors of domestic abuse, these policies will have a positive impact on equalities. The policies take into account the needs of diverse groups, for example by offering appointments with a member of staff with the same characteristics and providing details of specialist support providers.

Other Implications:

(if applicable)

Reason(s) for Urgency

(if applicable)

Reason(s) for Exemption

(if applicable)

Background Papers

(if applicable)

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