

## **DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY**

Report of the Head of Housing Management

### **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Earlier this year Derby Homes signed up to the “Make a Stand” campaign run by the Chartered Institute of Housing. “Make a Stand” was launched in June 2018 as part of the then CIH President Alison Inman's presidential appeal to tackle domestic abuse. The pledge gives housing organisations the opportunity to sign up to make four focused commitments to provide support for people experiencing domestic abuse. Complying with the commitments required us to review and make changes to our current Domestic Abuse policy by September 2019, hence reviewing the policy.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 For the Operational Board to approve the revised Domestic Abuse policy.

### **3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The changes to the policy are compliant with the “Make a Stand” pledge and help to improve it.

### **4. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 4.1 The changes to the policy are highlighted in yellow (Appendix 1), the only thing that was deleted was with reference to a Domestic Abuse group that no longer exists.
- 4.2 The updates to the policy will ensure that Derby Homes is meeting the commitments of the pledge. The largest changes relate to domestic abuse and our employees. The new policy gives comprehensive guidance to staff and managers who are either experiencing or supporting staff experiencing domestic abuse. This wasn't covered in our previous policy. The policy will be presented at a managers briefing and training will be made available where necessary.
- 4.3 With regard to supporting tenants, the policy has been strengthened in a couple of areas. Firstly, to support the victim to remain safely in their home or for them to be rehoused if that is more appropriate. This includes taking enforcement action against perpetrators where necessary and ensuring that the victims needs are correctly assessed with regards to rehousing. Secondly to ensure that the victim is not penalised by the actions taken by the perpetrator e.g. they are not charged unfairly for damage to property that they have no control over.

- 4.4 In terms of partnership working we have a dedicated member of staff who attends the multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference every fortnight. If they are unable to attend, another member of staff attends in their place. This ensures that Derby Homes is always kept in the loop, tenants are kept safe and there is a consistent approach to the work.

## **5. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 No other options

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **6. CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Tenants have been given the opportunity to comment on the policy via an online consultation. Unfortunatley despite distributing the information on two occasions only nine full responses were received which was very disappointing. The results of the survey are attached (Appendix 2). Of the people that responded eight were Derby Homes tenants one is listed as a resident of Derby. With such a small cohort of respondees, percentages are not always a good indicator with which to work.
- 6.2 77% of the 9 people surveyed felt the policy was positive, one didn't comment either way and one disagreed. Reviewing the comments and the areas to consider; it is accurate to say that everyone receiving a service from Derby Homes is thoroughly risk assessed. High risk cases are presented to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment conference. This is a multi-agency panel that produces a safety plan for the victim. In terms of adhering to the policy, the new policy will be introduced to staff through managers briefings, team meetings and one to one sessions. Any additional training needs identified will be addressed. Adherence to the policy will be monitored by managers. The policy will also be communicated to tenants via the newsletter and the website.
- 6.3 Derby Homes are also involved in multi-agency groups that are looking to improve information available to victims of Domestic Abuse and improve communication channels.
- 6.4 Derby Homes do not lead on Domestic Abuse issues for the city. It is impossible to know from the survey where all the comments came from. However it is possible that the person who is resident in Derby City thought that this was an overall policy for the City. It is also possible that they have actual experiences around Domestic Abuse that were experienced outside the control of Derby Homes officers. This is something that there is no way of establishing.
- 6.5 In terms of the staffing element of the policy, this has been approved by senior management and the HR advisors at Derby City Council. The changes reflected in this policy are in line with the councils draft Domestic Abuse and Violence Policy which is currently being updated.

### **7. FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None identified

## **8. LEGAL AND CONFIDENTIALITY IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The policy complies with the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act

## **9. COUNCIL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 This is a matter which doesn't require the approval of the Council.

## **10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Derby Homes will provide support to any Derby Homes staff or tenant experiencing Domestic abuse that require and accept help.

## **11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no direct health and safety implications. Any identified will be managed as part of the risk assessment.

## **12. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 Each case will be risk assessed and an appropriate plan will be put in place. High risk cases will be referred to the multi-agency risk assessment conference.

## **13. POLICY REVIEW IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 This is a key policy of Derby Homes and is included in the Key Policy Review Schedule. In accordance with Derby Homes Board Minute 10/51 this policy will be reviewed no later than 3 years from the date of this meeting.

The areas listed below have no implications directly arising from this report:

Financial and Business Plan

Personnel

Environmental

For more information please contact:

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Background information: None

List of appendices            Appendix 1 Revised Domestic Abuse Policy  
   Appendix 2 Consultation Results

This report has been approved by the following

Managing Director Head of Finance & Income Company Solicitor Director of Housing Services	Maria Murphy Michael Kirk Taran Lalria Clare Mehrbani	1 August 2019 [Date] 15 July 2019
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