

Council (Extraordinary) - 8 October 2024**Agenda item 7a - Strategy and Resources Committee - 26 September 2024****RECOGNISE**

Domestic Abuse may manifest or become visible in a variety of different ways:

A member of staff may become concerned about a resident who is showing signs that they may be experiencing domestic abuse. This may include:

- Changes in behaviour and demeanour
- Lack of engagement
- Damage to property
- Injury or pain
- Financial problems

REPORT

A victim / survivor may report or disclose domestic abuse to us through any contact they have with us, for example by referring to the Contact Us page on the Council's website, in person or in writing. A friend, relative or neighbour may also report concerns.

RESPOND

The Council will ensure that the response to those reporting domestic abuse is consistent and that its services are accessible for all regardless of their identity or protected characteristics, providing interpreters and translating information into other languages or formats as needed.

The involvement of the Housing Team, Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or a Domestic Abuse (DA) Champion should always be sought if any concerns or reports are raised around domestic abuse. These members of staff have had enhanced training and are equipped to advise and undertake any necessary risk assessment or referrals.

- In all cases, a resident should be offered time and a private space to talk about their current concerns where it can be identified what further action needs to be taken. The option to talk to a member of staff who is of the same gender can also be offered.
- With consent, of the victim / survivor, a trained staff member will carry out a risk assessment, using the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) Risk Identification Checklist. The DASH risk assessment is a UK wide accredited form used by us and partner organisations to plan how we will support them and any children.
- Relevant advice and help, including information about legal remedies, safe accommodation, additional security measures in the home and suitable support from specialist organisations will be offered where appropriate.
- The Council acknowledges that safe housing is often one of the biggest barriers to separating from an abusive relationship, if the victim / survivor needs to move home, the Council will work with them to identify areas that will minimise the risk of future abuse.
- If the victim / survivor fears for their immediate safety and risk assessment identifies significant risk, the Council will help consider their housing options. This may include referral into a refuge or emergency accommodation.

Empathy, safety, and accountability will be at the centre of how the Council responds to domestic abuse. The Council will case manage in a safe and sensitive manner with trust and non-judgement at its core. This will be overseen by senior members of staff who will ensure that the Council's approach is as it says, through regular case audits.