

Domestic Abuse Policy

1.0 Policy Summary

This policy establishes Stonewater's commitment to assisting tenants and applicants who are suffering domestic abuse.

2.0 Policy Objectives

Stonewater have adopted the Government's definition of domestic abuse as being:

"Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality."

This includes issues of concern to black and minority ethnic (BME) communities such as so called 'honour killings'.

Following the publication of the 'Call to end violence against women and girls strategy' in November 2010 the definition was extended to include those aged 16-17 and from 2012, to include coercive control.

Stonewater recognises that domestic abuse often has complex housing consequences and as a responsible landlord, we aim to give priority to and, to protect the housing status of those at risk

3.0 Policy Details

This policy details the principles to be adopted when dealing with:

Housing applications

Communications, support and advice

Repairs and security

3.1 Housing Applications

Tenants suffering any form of domestic abuse will be awarded priority within the allocation policies.

3.2 Communications, Support and Advice

Managing reports of domestic abuse requires a multi-agency approach. Stonewater will ensure that victims of domestic abuse are placed in contact with appropriate agencies for specialist advice and support with their consent. Stonewater does not provide legal advice or counselling services but refers to other specific agencies when required.

3.3 Repairs and security

Asset Management teams will carry out repairs, which are required as a result of violent incidents. Where practicable these works will be carried out as emergency works (within 24 hours). Where this is not practicable, they will be carried out as soon as possible and this will be communicated clearly to the individual or their support agency (if appropriate)

3.4 Confidentiality

Stonewater staff will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information with the consent of the resident concerned, unless:-

- The information is necessary for the protection of children
- Stonewater is required by law, for example Stonewater staff cannot withhold information if being questioned by the Police during a criminal investigation.

3.5 Health & Safety

Stonewater staff will follow the Health and Safety Policy and Lone Working Policy at all times when managing reports of domestic abuse. They will also consider the Health and Safety of all parties involved in any one case and the wider community.

4.0 Key Outcomes

The key objectives of Stonewater are to

- Ensure all new and existing residents are aware that domestic abuse is a criminal offence and a breach of the terms of their tenancy agreement;
- Give those leaving a violent relationship access to accurate and appropriate advice about their housing options and about their legal rights and responsibilities in regard to their tenancy;
- Adopt a survivor/victim centred approach
- Ensure that our services in respect of dealing with domestic abuse are equally available to all sections of the community, recognising differences in language, culture religion race age or gender;
- Train and support staff to recognise, report and deal with domestic abuse effectively

5.0 Equality and Diversity

We will apply this policy consistently and fairly and will not discriminate against any person on grounds of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender, age or any other matter that may cause a person to be treated with injustice.