



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICY

Policy Summary:

This Domestic Violence policy outlines Chelmer Housing Partnership's commitment to deal with incidents of domestic violence.

It details how CHP will investigate reports of domestic violence; Partnership working with other agencies; and the actions and legal remedies it will take to deal with such cases.

1. POLICY AIMS

1.1 Chelmer Housing Partnership (CHP) aims to ensure that it deals with domestic violence effectively and efficiently;

- Believing that none of its tenants should live in fear of violence from a spouse or partner, former spouse or partner, or other member of their household. It will provide appropriate assistance and support to any person suffering from or threatened with violence. Such violence may be physical, emotional or psychological. This policy is intended to cover all eventualities.
- By adopting a victim-centred approach in responding to cases of domestic violence. Recognising that evidence of violence may not always be readily available. Chelmer Housing Partnership will take into account the views of the victim in determining the most appropriate course of action in responding to an incident of domestic violence.
- Taking where necessary action to evict the perpetrators of domestic violence using the powers available to it under the Housing Act 1996 to ensure a victim has access to secure accommodation which is their home.
- By working with other relevant agencies and taking a flexible approach in responding to incidents of domestic violence, taking account of the varying circumstances of victims of violence and the different courses of action which may be possible and appropriate through a variety of organizations.
- By working with local housing authorities and other local agencies to develop appropriate strategies for responding to the needs of those experiencing domestic violence.

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2. STATUTORY & REGULATORY OBLIGATIONS

2.1 The following legislation relates to Domestic Violence:

- Housing Act 1996
- Family Law Act 1996
- Children Act 1989
- Adoption and Children Act 2002

3. CORPORATE VISION & VALUES

3.1 CHP's Corporate vision and values highlight the following key values in dealing with Domestic Violence:-

CHP is customer driven

- Everyone we deal with is a customer
- We view our services through our customer's eyes
- We work in partnership with local neighbourhoods to improve our services

CHP is resourceful

- We actively pursue innovative ideas
- We adopt and improve upon best practice
- We keep abreast of current ideas and future trends.

CHP is ethical

- We act with integrity
- We are honest and open in all our dealings
- We value diversity and treat everyone with respect regardless of race, gender, age or disability.

4. POLICY DETAILS

4.1 Chelmer Housing Partnership will seek to respond immediately to interview all victims of domestic violence and in no case longer than 1 working day of their making a complaint to Chelmer Housing Partnership, either via an officer or a representative from a recognized organization.

4.2 The victim will be offered an interview with an officer of the same sex and/or cultural background. Where it is necessary to use an interpreter, he or she should also be of the same sex as the victim if the victim requests this.

4.3 Interviews will be carried out in a sympathetic and supportive manner. The victim will be assured of confidentiality.

4.4 The victim will be advised of possible courses of action, both to respond to the immediate situation and to deal with the longer term. This may include possible legal

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- remedies (such as injunctions), alternative housing options and other sources of advice and assistance (such as Women's Aid).
- 4.5 Where appropriate, the officer carrying out the interview will contact external agencies such as the local authority, police, a solicitor, local advice agency etc. The officer will only do so with the permission of the victim.
- 4.6 If the victim is unable to return home, Chelmer Housing Partnership will liaise with appropriate local authority regarding the provision of temporary accommodation, subject to the wishes of the victims (he or she may prefer to stay with friends or relatives).
- 4.7 Where the victim has left the accommodation, and subject to his or her wishes, Chelmer Housing Partnership will consider taking action to evict the perpetrator of the violence using its powers under the Housing Act 1996 and the tenancy agreement.
- 4.8 If the victim is unable to remain in their home temporarily, Chelmer Housing Partnership will explore the option of offering them a management transfer to a similar property elsewhere.
- 4.9 If the victim feels able to remain in his or her home either temporarily or permanently Chelmer Housing Partnership will consider requests for additional security measures.
- 4.10 All cases involving domestic violence will be kept under review until it is deemed that the problem has been resolved satisfactorily.
- 4.11 Chelmer Housing Partnership will keep an up-to-date list of local agencies which might be in a position to offer advice or support to victims of domestic violence, and participate in any local forums established to consider the needs of those suffering from violence.
- 4.12 **Consultation**
- 4.12.1 Chelmer Housing Partnership will consult the Central Tenants forum, recognized tenants and residents groups, voluntary and statutory agencies on a regular basis to assess the effectiveness of the policy, and to develop improved working practices.
- 4.13 **Review**
- 4.13.1 Chelmer Housing Partnership will formally review its domestic violence policy bi-annually.
- 4.14 **Equal Opportunities**
- 4.14.1 To ensure equal access to our services is available, Chelmer Housing Partnership will comply with all legislative requirements and good practice relating to equal opportunities. We will endeavour to avoid exclusions or relocations that are not appropriate to the housing and support needs of residents that may lead to discrimination. We will ensure that all residents receive a consistent level of quality service.

5. POLICY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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- 5.1 The Head of Residential Services will be responsible for the effective implementation of This policy and will ensure staff are adequately trained in the procedures for dealing with domestic violence and understand legal remedies, to ensure competence with the domestic violence policy.

6. KEY REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Housing Act 1996

Homelessness Act 2002

Family Law Act 1996

CHP – Anti Social Behaviour Policy

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Essex against domestic violence – plan of action 2005-2997

Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004

Department for Constitutional Affairs – Guide to Civil remedies and Criminal sanctions

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