

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-043-2022/23

Date of meeting: 13 March 2023

Portfolio: Communities and Partnerships

Subject: Domestic Abuse and Domestic Abuse Workplace Policies

Responsible Officer: Caroline Wiggins (01992 564122).

Democratic Services: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To note and agree The Domestic Abuse and Domestic Abuse Workplace Policies

Executive Summary:

As part of our work to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation we have been working across services to develop our Domestic Abuse and Domestic Abuse Workplace Policies. We believe that no person should live in fear of violence or abuse. These two policies set out our responses to both individuals and our workforce. They set out how we will provide support tailored to the needs of the individual.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

These two policies are essential in giving guidance as to both staff and residents as to how we will endeavour to support those experiencing domestic abuse and evidence our commitment to end violence against women and girls in line with the government's Violence against Women and Girls Strategy. The policies are also integral in our bid for DAHA accreditation. They sit across the whole organisation, with specific procedures outlining how each team will implement these policies in practice.

Other Options for Action:

Not to agree the adoption the policies preventing a robust, consistent and transparent approach to tackling domestic abuse and supporting any members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse.

Report:

1. The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) was launched in 2014 and is managed by Standing Together. EFDC aspire to achieve a DAHA Accreditation to support our residents and staff in providing a positive, safe environment and encouraging them to have the confidence to approach us as a council at a time of need.
2. These two policies set out our commitment as a local authority to take efficient and effective action to deal with all reports of incidents and it explains how we will provide support tailored to the needs of the individual working in partnership with specialist services to provide a coordinated response. They indicate the position and values of the Council and set out how we intend to comply with standards and best practice
3. The latest Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) completed in October 2021 estimated 2.4 million adults aged 16 years and over experienced domestic abuse in the year

DS/AH (November 2020)

ending March 2022 (1.7 million women and 699,000 men).¹ In Epping Forest there were 1939 recorded incidents of domestic abuse (1st October 2021 – 30th September 2022) an increase of 9% (170) on the previous year.

Resource Implications:

Policies and associated action will embed across the organisation into existing resource. Most frontline teams already operate a trauma informed practice on the basis of 'making every contact count' and specific funding for DA has been secured from Essex County Council to the sum of £23,330. In addition to that, there is £11,866 Homelessness Prevention Grant Funding and £35,439 New Burdens Funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Funding for the DAHA accreditation (£3125) is budgeted for from the New DA Burdens Funding.

Legal and Governance Implications:

- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- Crime and Security Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Domestic Abuse Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Housing Act 1996 as amended
- Local Government Act 1972
- Policing and Crime Act 2009
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Serious Violence Duty 2022

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

These Policies fall within the priorities of Police & Crime Plan 2021-2024, Essex Police Crime Prevention Strategy and Southend Essex & Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board Domestic Abuse Strategy 2020-2025.

Consultation Undertaken:

Stronger Communities Select Committee
Epping Forest Community Safety Partnership (CSP)
EFDC Tenants & Leaseholder Panel
Standing Together (DAHA)
EFDC Corporate Safeguarding Group

Background Papers:

Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation Manual 2022-2023
Domestic Abuse Act 2021

¹ ONS
DS/AH (November 2020)

Risk Management:

Procedures and practice are reviewed by our Safeguarding Service and information is disseminated across services via our Corporate Safeguarding Group.

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
 - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
 - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage/civil partnership
 - pregnancy/maternity
 - race
 - religion/belief
 - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. **All Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqIA.** An EqIA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
 - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
 - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics
 - Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
 - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
 - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
 - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision making body

Section 1: Identifying details
Your function, service area and team: Directorate Specialist – Technical Services – Community Resilience
If you are submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: Peoples Team
Title of policy or decision: Domestic Abuse and Domestic Abuse Workplace Policies
Officer completing the EqIA: Caroline Wiggins Tel: 01992 564122 Email: cwiggins@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Date of completing the assessment: 31.01.23

Section 2: Policy to be analysed	
2.1	Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? New domestic abuse policy and change to work place policy
2.2	Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)? These two policies set out our responses to both individuals and our workforce. They set out how we will provide support tailored to the needs of the individual.
2.3	Does or will the policy or decision affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service users • employees • the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities? ALL Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?
2.4	Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources? Policies and associated action will embed across the organisation into existing resource and specific DA funding has been secured from Essex County Council.
2.5	Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council’s other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes? These Policies support Epping Forest District Council’s Corporate Strategy objectives.

These Policies are linked to the following policies:

- Allocations Scheme 2022-2027
- Anti-social Behaviour and Hate Crime Policy
- Customer Complaints Policy
- Employee Domestic Abuse Support Policy
- Housing Rents Policy 2020
- Income Recovery Policy 2020
- Privacy Policy
- Planned Maintenance Policy
- Repairs Policy
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Tenancy Policy 2022-202
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures

Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation²

As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

3.1	<p>What does the information tell you about those groups identified?</p> <p>Every year, nearly two million people in the UK experience domestic abuse. Seven women a month are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales. Yet thousands of victims do not get the right support at the right time, with SafeLives research showing that 85% of victims seek help five times on average before they get effective help</p>
3.2	<p>Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?</p> <p>Given that domestic abuse is largely perpetrated at home, housing providers can play a unique role in supporting victims of abuse who are their tenants, and holding perpetrators to account.</p> <p>In their draft format both policies were scrutinized by the Regional Lead from DAHA (South) Standing Together to ensure the policies meet the standards set out within the DAHA Accreditation Framework.</p> <p>Following this the Policies were shared with the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel for comment of the two responses we received one was that the policies were excellent but they should be reviewed annually and it was also noted</p> <p><i>'The implantation of the policy will depend on quality of officers on the ground and resources available coupled with an ongoing process of frank review of impact and outcomes for the people affected as I would say they are the best placed people to give feedback . That the policy is clear on its inclusiveness of gender/beliefs/type of relationship etc in Identifying who can be a victim of abuse is good and that can be overstated but may need targeted campaigns of awareness amongst minority groups in the district who may feel excluded.</i></p> <p>They were also shared with EFDC Corporate Safeguarding Group</p>
3.3	<p>If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary:</p>

Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	1. Positive - We recognise survivors' experiences may be partly defined by background, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, religion or beliefs ethnic group or immigration status. We understand that some may face discrimination and we will consider the individual needs of each survivor when tailoring our approach.	M
Disability	Positive	M
Gender	Positive	M
Gender reassignment	Positive	M
Marriage/civil partnership	Positive	M
Pregnancy/maternity	Positive	M
Race	Positive	M
Religion/belief	Positive	M
Sexual orientation	Positive	M

Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	Does the EqIA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	If 'YES', use the action plan at Section 6 to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.

Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.

Section 7: Sign off

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of Head of Service:

Date:

Signature of person completing the EqIA: Caroline Wiggins

Date: 31.03.23

Advice

Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqIA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqIA for your records. If this EqIA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, eg after a consultation has been undertaken.