

Dale & Valley Homes

Equality Impact Assessment

Domestic Violence Strategy June 2009



Equality Impact Assessment Template

General Information

Date	June 2009
Name and Job Title of Responsible Officer	Pat Wanless Director of Housing Operations
Policy Under Consideration	Domestic Violence Policy

What is the title of the policy that is under consideration?

Domestic Violence Policy

What are the aims and objectives of the policy?

We are committed to improving the lives of customers who are existing tenants or who are applicants on the housing register. We currently work in partnership with the County Council to offer support to staff and customers who are victims or survivors of Domestic Violence and make sure that they are signposted to the team who specialise in the provision of this service.

Our aims are to :

- Raise awareness that domestic violence is unacceptable, that it is a breach of tenancy and will not be tolerated.
- Have a successful partnership approach in order to support and offer choice to victims of domestic violence
- Make sure our employees understand their role in contributing to tackling domestic violence.
- Offer support to our employees who experience domestic violence

Is an EIA required?

Yes

State why?

Dale & Valley Homes' wishes to make a commitment to the rights of every person to live a domestic violence-free life and to live safe from fear and abuse in their own home.

As an employer Dale & Valley Homes is committed to the welfare of its

employees and seeks to support and assist employees who may be affected by domestic violence.

As a major provider of housing services in Wear Valley we have a key role in tackling domestic violence and in working in partnership with the council, and other agencies to improve services and reduce incidents of domestic violence.

Dale & Valley Homes recognises that it cannot tackle domestic violence on its own; therefore, we are committed to working in close partnership with other agencies, including statutory agencies, voluntary agencies and local communities.

Dale & Valley Homes has previously worked with Wear Valley District Council to make sure that customers are aware of the actions that constitute domestic violence and the help and support available to victims. The formation of the new Durham County Council which incorporates Wear Valley and all the other District Councils in County Durham has presented an ideal opportunity to review our contribution to this issue.

Domestic violence can affect all members of the community, irrespective of their age, gender, social class, culture, ethnicity, sexuality, ability/disability, levels of education, income groups, or occupation. Violence can happen at any stage in a relationship, at the beginning, after many years, or when the relationship is over. There are no boundaries.

Stage 1

Establish Whether the General Equality Duties are Relevant

Is the policy relevant to the General Equality Duties?

Yes

Which ones?

(tick as appropriate)

General Duties

Race	
eliminate unlawful racial discrimination	√
promote equality of opportunity	√
promote good relations between people of different racial groups	√
Disability	
promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons	√
eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act	√
eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities	√
promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons	√
encourage participation by disabled persons in public life	√

take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons	√
Gender	
eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex AND transgender	√
promote equality of opportunity between women and men	√
(not to discriminate on the grounds of marital status)	√
Age, Sexuality, Religion and / or Belief	
eliminate direct discrimination	√
eliminate indirect discrimination	√
eliminate Harassment	√
eliminate Victimisation	√

Stage 2

Give brief details of the type of barriers / discrimination faced by target groups?

Please Explain your reasons:

Race: There are a small number of BME customers in the Wear Valley area. We do offer a translation service and the information provided in connection with Domestic Violence can be translated as necessary.

Disability: Dale & Valley Homes has adopted the Social Model of Disability. We are, therefore, aware that the language we use and our communication with customers can have major impact on their ability to easily access our services.

Gender: The majority of sole tenants are female. Where there are joint tenancies the lead tenant is generally male with the second tenant being female. Compared to men, women are more likely to experience domestic violence, and are more likely to experience repeat victimisation. There is a possibility that male victims will be reluctant to report incidents because of the stereotypical view of men in the N.E. region

Age: D&VH customer profile information shows that customers from the 65 + age group form the most significant group. To date there is no breakdown of cases by age group which would help us understand if one or more age groups are less likely than another to disclose that they are a victim of DV.

Religion or Faith: Our customer records show that the majority of Customers refer to themselves as 'Christian'.

Sexual orientation: Questions to determine sexual orientations are now included in our customer profile surveys. Domestic violence does occur in same sex relationships, and sometimes where the aggressor is the female.

Stage 3

Evidence Gathering: Please give the source and a brief summary of the information that you are using for the EIA.

Figures provided by the Domestic Violence Team show that last year they worked with 51 clients. Of this 51, 27 were re-housed by Dale & Valley Homes with 19 of those re-housed being owed a full duty under the Homelessness Legislation.

Details of further evidence to be gathered:

The clients are all female. Details of ages, ethnicity and sexual orientation are to be gathered.

Evidence for this EIA

Public Safety & Welfare (PSW)

There were 567 PSW incidents in Wear Valley, this is a rate of 9.24 per 1000 population, compared to a County rate of 8.70. Of the PSW incidents, 47% (266) had a qualifier attached containing more detail about the nature of the incident: -

Domestic Abuse

- Of these 266 incidents, 30% (81) related to some form of Domestic Abuse;
- Of these 81 Domestic Abuse incidents, 30% (24) were alcohol related;
- Of these 81 Domestic Abuse incidents, 6% involved a vulnerable child;
- Of these 81 Domestic Abuse incidents, none were drugs related.

The ward with the highest volume of PSW incidents involving Domestic Abuse was Woodhouse Close (13).

We do not know if the incidents reported involve customers who live in properties managed by Dale & Valley Homes.

We do not know if men and / or same sex couples feel able to report incidents of domestic violence

STATUS SURVEY 2008

The large majority of respondents considered their ethnic group to be 'White - British' (98.7%), and nearly two thirds of all respondents (65.2%) said that there is a household member who has a 'long-term illness, health problem, or disability which limits their daily activities or the work they can do, including any problems which are due to old age'.

Over half of all tenants responding to the survey are over the age of 59 years: 12% 60 to 64 years, 19.6% 65 to 74 years, 12.9% 75 to 84 years and 7.2% are 85 years and over half, 57.5% of all responding tenants are women and 42.5% men.

52.5% of all respondents said that there are one or more household members aged 60+ years.

The large majority of respondents considered their ethnic group to be 'White - British' (98.7%), and a further 1.2%, gave 'other White' backgrounds (99.9% non-minority ethnic groups). Only one respondent belonged to an ethnic minority group.

Over three quarters of those who had made contact (79.5%) said that when they last had contact getting hold of the right person was easy, whilst one in ten, (10.3%), said that this was difficult (7.1% gave 'neither' responses, and 3.0% 'couldn't recall').

Access to the service appears to be easy for the majority of customers. 80% females, 94.7% of those over 85yrs and 81.5 % of those with a long term illness or disability found it easy to get hold of the right person.

77% of respondents stated that 'racial or other harassment' was 'not a problem in their neighbourhood. However, of those who believe it to be a very big problem 3.1% were males (.3% females) and the age group most concerned was the 25 – 34 yr old, with 2% of customers with a disability believing it to be a very big problem. This means that 33% of respondents consider this issue to be of concern to them. This is an area where we need to develop a positive action plan to raise awareness of our approach to both the prevention and reporting of incidents of racial or other harassment. Plans to address this will be detailed in the action plan. We are unable to tell if the harassment reported is linked to Domestic Violence.

On our waiting list we have 52 customers who have told us that they want to leave their current home because of harassment; we don't know if the harassment referred to is connected with Domestic Violence.

Consultation carried out to date in respect of this policy or function

Summarise details of consultation, attendees and outcomes

There has been no consultation to date.

Dale & Valley Homes has recently completed its Domestic Violence Strategy; Consultation in connection with the Strategy and the impact assessment will be undertaken.

If you think the consultation has not been robust enough, **in your EIA Action Plan detail further consultation required**

Stage 4

Consider the Disproportionality

Based on evidence are there any signs that: -

one or more groups of people either **are experiencing** or **could experience** a less favourable service than other groups; **No**

OR

the needs of one or more groups are not being met.

(Please tick as appropriate)

Give details

From the evidence gathered in connection with the Domestic Violence Policy we see that the cases we are made aware of all involve women as victims. There is a possibility that men and / or same sex couples may not be accessing the services available.

The policy quite clearly states that domestic violence can affect all members of the community, irrespective of their age, gender, social class, culture, ethnicity, sexuality, ability/disability, levels of education, income groups, or occupation. Violence can happen at any stage in a relationship, at the beginning, after many years, or when the relationship is over. There are no boundaries. Staff have undertaken training in this issue and are aware that women are not the only victims of Domestic Violence.

Can this bias be justified?

Can the different treatment be justified?

Or

Is there a positive action to one or more of the groups covered in order to address equality?

Or

Is there no explanation for this bias?

NB IF THERE IS NO EXPLANATION FOR BIAS, THIS POLICY OR FUNCTION IS DISCRIMINATORY, PLEASE TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION - CONTACT RELEVANT DIRECTOR

Give details: -

If there is disproportionality, consider an alternative way forward

Can the policy/function be amended or changed in order to address the issues that have been identified and to ensure that the original aims of the policy are met?

Do we need a positive action programme – Yes

Give details

Whilst there is no evidence of disproportionality, we believe it is important for us to raise awareness of domestic violence and the support available to victims. We will also explain to customers the action that will be taken against perpetrators should they be on our waiting list for re-housing or if they are already tenants of ours.

We are shortly to commence a review of the Tenancy Agreement as the County Council aims to have one agreement which covers all of its tenants across the County Durham area. The review will include the issue of domestic violence and will clearly state that domestic violence is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

We will design new leaflets which explain domestic violence and direct customers to the help and support available.

Customers on the housing register who tell us that they need to leave home because of harassment will be sent information explaining harassment and directing them to the support services available to them. Care will always be taken to assess the risk for the customer prior to sending information.

Posters raising awareness of the issue and the help available to victims will also be displayed.

Stage 5

Draw up action plan based on findings

What disproportionality has been identified?	How will you address it?	What outcome do you expect to see?	How will you monitor this?	How will you evaluate this?	Who will be responsible for making sure this happens?	What timescales are you working to?	Are there any resource implications?
We are aware that the victims of Domestic Violence that we have rehoused to date have all been women	We will make sure that we advertise the service more widely to our customers through a variety of methods	<p>Increase in the amount and visibility of information available to customers.</p> <p>Increase in the number of customers seeking help and advice</p> <p>Potential for more staff training</p>	<p>Compare the number of cases currently registered on the housing waiting list and review in six months.</p> <p>Monitor the number of customers disclosing they are victims of DV</p>	Work with customer groups and staff to determine understanding of the issues and the impact of awareness raising	<p>Chris Walton</p> <p>Editorial Panel will be called upon to help with information to customers</p>	<p>Analysis and development of 'way forward' October 2009</p> <p>Review impact of Dale Mail article by December 09</p>	Staff time

Under the terms of the Equality Duty Dale & Valley Homes is required to make arrangements for publishing the results of the assessment and consultation that has been carried out.

Please indicate how you recommend that this should be undertaken: -

Press release in connection with the scheme.
Report to Policy & Service Development Committee
Report to Customer Panel and residents Groups
Report to Stakeholders

Confirmation

Signature of Completing Officer

.....Pat Wanless, Director of Housing Operations...

Signature of Chief Executive

Peter Chaffer.....

Date.....26 August 2009.....

Once completed please return to Louise Butler, Equality & Diversity Officer