



## CABINET

**Subject Heading:**

**Housing Services – Domestic Abuse policy (2024)**

**Cabinet Member:**

Councillor Paul McGeary – Cabinet Member for Housing and Property

**ELT Lead:**

Neil Stubbings, Strategic Director, Place

**Report Author and contact details:**

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**Policy context:**

This policy sets out the Council's position in relation to Domestic Abuse conducted or suffered by its tenants and leaseholders.

It is required by the Social Housing Regulator as a stand-alone policy, and aligns with other, relevant Council Housing policies, such as Hate Crime (2024) and Anti-Social Behaviour (2024).

**Financial summary:**

No financial implications.

**Is this a Key Decision?**

Yes, because it will have a significant effect on two or more Wards.

**When should this matter be reviewed?** Annually, to ensure it continues to comply with legislative or regulatory requirements.

**Reviewing OSC:** To be reviewed by the O&S Board.

**The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives**

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council	<input type="checkbox"/>

**SUMMARY**

This report explains the legal definition of the terms used in this policy; what constitutes Domestic Abuse and the measures – both legislatively and by Havering Council – currently in place to deal with the perpetrators of Domestic Abuse, regardless of whether they are tenants, leaseholders, staff or representatives of the Council.

It also sets out the rehabilitative support for perpetrators and support for victims of Domestic Abuse.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The safety of residents and the reputation of the Council would benefit from clearly declaring and communicating our position concerning Domestic Abuse.

Cabinet are requested to approve this policy.

## REPORT DETAIL

Domestic Abuse is a persistent problem both nationally - and in Havering.

This new Housing-specific policy explains:

1. The purpose, aims, scope and legal context of the policy;
2. Defines the Domestic Abuse associated terms used in this policy;
3. Explains how to report Domestic Abuse;
4. Explains how Housing Services deals with reports of Domestic Abuse;
5. The consequences for perpetrators of Domestic Abuse; and
6. The support available to victims.

The proposed policy has been produced in partnership with a range of internal and external expert partners.

## REASONS AND OPTIONS

### **Reasons for the decision to approve this policy are to:**

- Meet the current requirements of the Social Housing Regulator;
- Meet current legislative and regulatory requirements;
- State Havering Council commitment to combat/reduce domestic abuse, incorporating recognised good practice elsewhere;
- Assure Havering residents that the Council takes domestic abuse seriously and has robust mechanisms in place to help combat/reduce such behaviour; and
- Inform victims and witnesses about the various support options currently available; including how to contact those specialist agencies.

### **Other options considered:**

- **No action**  
Saying nothing and not having a policy in place for this specialist crime would be ethically wrong and present the Council in a poor light. It would also make victims feel that the Council does not take such crime seriously.
- **Allow councillors to represent their views in the absence of Council-agreed guidance**  
Not having a policy would expose councillors and the Council to unnecessary and avoidable challenge, such as via resident complaints, FOI requests, press enquiries, etc., and damage the reputation of the Council.

## IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

### **Financial implications and risks:**

None. This policy will be delivered using existing financial resources and poses no risk to the Council or to the population of Havering.

### **Legal implications and risks:**

The Housing Service's activities to support survivors and victims of domestic abuse are supported primarily by the following legislation:

***The Housing Act 1996***, which established it is not reasonable for a person to continue to occupy accommodation if it is probable that this will lead to violence or domestic abuse against them or someone with whom they usually reside or might reasonably be expected to reside.

***The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017***, which sets out the Council's new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness.

***The Domestic Abuse Act 2021***, which sets out the new definition of domestic abuse and established that people made homeless due to being a victim of domestic abuse have an automatic priority need for homelessness assistance.

There are no immediate legal implications arising from this Report and approving the policy would contribute towards the discharge of the Council's statutory duties.

### **Human Resources implications and risks:**

None. This policy will be delivered using existing HR resources and poses no risk to the Council or to the population of Havering.

### **IT implications and risks:**

None. This policy will be delivered using existing I.T. resources and poses no risk to the Council or to the population of Havering.

### **Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion implications and risks:**

This policy does not differentiate and applies equally across the entire population, as stated in Section 8 (Equal Opportunities statement) of this policy and further detailed in the accompanying Equality and Health Impact Assessment (EqHIA).

### **Health and Wellbeing implications and risks:**

None. This policy will, if anything, help to improve the health and wellbeing of Havering residents.

**Environmental and Climate Change implications and risks:**

None. There will be no negative impact on climate change. This policy will, if anything, help to improve the environment by helping to make Havering a better, safer place to live, work and visit.

**APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Domestic Abuse Policy (2024)

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.