

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Introduction

Midsummer recognises the far-reaching effects of domestic violence, which can extend beyond physical injury and include psychological, emotional and sexual abuse.

Domestic Violence is an abuse of the individual but where there are children, they too are at risk. It can affect anyone regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, location, income, sexual orientation, disability and tenure.

Domestic violence can prevent households from remaining safely in their home and through sensitivity and strategic awareness, Midsummer will be responsive to the needs of victims.

Definition

In 2004, a report on domestic violence commissioned by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service recommended that a common definition should be adopted across organisations, to help with consistency in future actions against domestic violence.

Midsummer accepts the Home Office 2004 definition of domestic violence, which is:

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.'

Policy Statement

Midsummer is determined to play its part in stopping domestic violence and is corporately committed to working with others in partnership to combat this problem.

We are committed to improving the way cases of domestic violence are dealt with and we want our residents to have confidence in the way in which we review and progress cases.

Midsummer will:

- Not tolerate domestic violence as it is a violation of human rights.
- Offer a victim centred approach and speak to victims in a sensitive and understanding way.
- Help to protect and support abused individuals and their families.
- Work with the Police, statutory and voluntary agencies, to help us develop best practice in the delivery of services to residents suffering domestic violence.

- Actively support and promote the work of the Milton Keynes Forum Against Domestic Violence and other relevant agencies in the areas where our housing stock is located.
- Work closely with victim support groups.
- Use information sharing protocols where appropriate.
- Support and promote the work of Community Safety Partnerships.
- Comply with all relevant legislation and regulation and have regard to appropriate codes of practice relating to domestic violence.
- Hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.
- Monitor the way we deal with cases of domestic violence and where appropriate, request feedback from service users.
- Publish information literature.

Service Standards

Midsummer is committed to providing a high quality service to its residents. When dealing with cases of domestic violence it will seek to achieve the following standards:

- All reports of domestic violence received by the Association will be responded to within 48 hours.
- If the incident is such that people are at serious risk, action will be taken within 24 hours.
- Leaseholders will have their property secured, and enhanced security offered, the cost of which will be recovered as a recharge.
- Emergency repairs will be undertaken within 24 hours.
- All other necessary repairs will be completed within 7 days.
- When interviewing a victim of domestic violence who experiences language difficulties, we will offer the services of a translator.

Monitoring

Midsummer will monitor reported cases of domestic violence and will provide a quarterly update to its Board of Management confirming the number of cases reported.

Legislation

In fulfilling its obligations under this Policy the Association will have regard to a range of legislation including:

- The Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act 1976
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1977
- The Housing Acts 1985, 1988, 1996
- Data Protection Act 1998
- The Children's Act 1989
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Crime & Disorder Act 1998

Linked Policies

- Racial Harassment
- Harassment
- Tenure
- Equality & Diversity
- Allocations
- Elder Abuse

Training

Housing management staff induction and training programmes will specifically address Domestic Violence.