

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Aim of the Policy

Sentinel is committed to tackling domestic violence by providing support to victims and taking appropriate and fair action against perpetrators.

Objectives of the Policy

- Definition of domestic violence (**Appendix 1**).
- Explanation of the Group's response to dealing with reports of domestic violence.

Statement

1. This policy is concerned with how the Group deals with reports of domestic violence.
2. We will comply with all relevant legislation and regulatory guidance in relation to domestic violence.

Policy

1. Sentinel will provide support to victims by:
 - Defining all cases of domestic violence as severe anti-social behaviour and making contact with the victim within 24 hours of when the report is first received. (If first reported outside normal office hours this period will start on the re-opening of the office).
 - Recognising that the safety of victims is the principal priority and, where appropriate, liaise with specialist support agencies to provide emergency rehousing and undertake works to improve home security.
 - Prioritising applications from victims of domestic violence who wish to transfer permanently to alternative accommodation if they are unable to remain in their own home. Applicants in arrears will not be prevented from being rehoused if they are fleeing domestic violence. They may still be required to make arrangements to pay debts, although Sentinel will look at each case individually.
 - Recognising that victims may wish to be interviewed by staff of the same gender or by staff of similar ethnic/cultural background. Interviews can be arranged away from the home in a neutral setting.
 - Working in partnership with other specialist agencies to ensure services to victims are provided in a co-ordinated way.
 - Providing staff who are involved in dealing with cases of domestic violence with appropriate training to allow them to provide appropriate support to victims.

Performance

The number of domestic violence cases will be collected monthly and reported to the Board every 6 months.

Policy Review

The Operations Director, through the Neighbourhood Services Manager, Tenancy Manager, Oakfern Residents' Forum and Hart Tenants and Leaseholders' Federation Committee will review the Domestic Violence policy on an annual basis. The review will seek to involve those who have been victims of domestic violence during the proceeding year to ensure that the service is appropriate to their needs. Significant changes to the Policy will be brought to the Board for approval.

Approved by: Sentinel, Hart and Oakfern Boards. 16 June 2005 (SHG.122/05)

Definition of Domestic Violence

The Group has adopted the Home Office definition, which defines domestic violence as:

“Any violence between current and former partners in an intimate relationship, wherever and whenever the violence occurs. The violence may include physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse”.

The Group acknowledges that domestic violence occurs across society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth and geography. However it is predominantly women who suffer as a result of it.