

EastendHomes

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE POLICY

1 STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 1.1 EastendHomes believes that its residents have the right to live free from violence, threats, intimidation and abuse from a spouse or partner, former spouse or partner, or other member of their household or former household and will take steps to assist and support any resident suffering from or threatened with violence or abuse. Such abuse or violence may be physical, emotional, psychological, financial, sexual and also coercive and controlling behaviour. This policy is intended to cover all such instances regardless of the perpetrator.
- 1.2 In March 2013 the Home Office extended the definition of domestic violence and abuse to include young people aged 16 to 17 years and coercive and controlling behaviour as follows:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling , coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

- 1.3 The support which EastendHomes will provide, will, in some cases, depend on the tenure of the survivor but in every case, regardless of the age, ethnicity, disability, sex or gender identity, religion or faith, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or economic status of the survivor, EastendHomes will identify appropriate agencies and progress a referral.
- 1.4 EastendHomes will offer assistance to any of its residents who are suffering from domestic violence or threats of violence or abuse either from someone

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within their own home, or from someone outside their home (such as a boyfriend/girlfriend or former partner).

- 1.5 EastendHomes will publicise our approach, both in print and digitally, to raise awareness amongst staff and residents of the wider definition of domestic violence and abuse.
- 1.6 EastendHomes does not have any statutory responsibility for re-housing survivors of domestic violence or abuse. EastendHomes will support survivors to access rehousing opportunities within and outside the borough and will provide advice to the survivors of violence or abuse on alternative sources of accommodation and support through all appropriate agencies.
- 1.7 EastendHomes will take a survivor-centred approach in responding to cases of domestic violence or abuse. EastendHomes will be guided by the survivor in determining the most appropriate course of action in responding to an incident.
- 1.8 EastendHomes will, wherever possible, take action to repossess the property of the perpetrators of domestic violence or abuse using the powers available to it under the Housing Act 1996 as amended.
- 1.9 EastendHomes will take a flexible approach in responding to incidents of domestic violence or abuse to take account of the varying circumstances of survivors and the different courses of action which may be possible and appropriate.
- 1.10 EastendHomes will work with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and other local agencies to develop appropriate strategies for responding to the needs of those experiencing domestic violence or abuse.

2. DETAIL

- 2.1 Wherever practicable all survivors of domestic violence or abuse will be interviewed within one working day of EastendHomes being made aware of their situation whether this is by the survivor making a report to the local housing centre or notifying an officer of EastendHomes, or by EastendHomes being notified by a third party referral.
- 2.2 The survivor will be offered an interview with an officer of the same sex and/or cultural background if possible. Where it is necessary to use an interpreter, s/he should also be of the same sex as the survivor if the survivor requests this.
- 2.3 Interviews will be carried out in a sympathetic and supportive manner. The survivor will be assured of confidentiality.
- 2.4 The survivor will be advised of possible courses of action, to respond to both the immediate situation and to deal with the longer term. These will include

possible legal remedies, re-housing options and other sources of advice, assistance and support.

- 2.5 EastendHomes records all reports of domestic violence or abuse and will refer the survivor with their agreement to the Tower Hamlets Domestic Violence and Hate Crime Team. Where there is no agreement with the survivor the referral will be anonymous.
- 2.6 Where necessary, with the survivor's permission, the officer carrying out the interview will contact external agencies, such as the local authority, police, a solicitor or a local advice agency. EastendHomes cannot make solicitors appointments on behalf of the client.
- 2.7 If the survivor is unable to return home, with the survivor's agreement EastendHomes will contact the Local Authority, or other agency regarding the provision of emergency and/ or temporary accommodation.
- 2.8 Consideration of the eviction of a perpetrator of domestic violence or abuse will usually be made where the survivor (and his/her dependants) has left the property and the perpetrator remains. The possible outcome of eviction action will be considered at the outset given the supporting evidence available. The option to evict a perpetrator will also be discussed with the survivor and they will be reassured of the necessary support.
- 2.9 An Injunction or a non molestation order against a perpetrator of domestic violence and abuse can be sought by both the survivor and EastendHomes or other agencies on behalf of EastendHomes. In cases of domestic violence and abuse, in addition an occupation order can also be sought which for example would prohibit the perpetrator from entering a specified vicinity of the survivor's home.
- 2.10 If the survivor is able to remain in their home, EastendHomes may refer the case to the Sanctuary Project regarding securing the property and ensuring the safety of the survivor if improvements to the property are recommended. Where necessary to ensure the safety of a tenant, security work will be carried out immediately by EastendHomes. This may include items such as lock changes or replacing doors or repairs to doors and windows. Sanctuary will always seek the landlord's permission before carrying out any adaptations.
- 2.11 In the instance of repairs being required which have arisen further to an incident of domestic violence or abuse, for example a security breach to a property or the removal of graffiti, EastendHomes will raise the necessary repairs with an emergency priority as appropriate.
- 2.12 All cases involving domestic violence or abuse will be kept under monthly review at the local Anti-Social Behaviour Panel with the agreement of the tenant/survivor until it is agreed that the problem has been resolved satisfactorily.

- 2.13 EastendHomes will keep up-to-date information about local agencies, who may be in a position to offer advice or support to survivors of domestic violence or abuse. Wherever possible EastendHomes will participate in any local forums established to consider the needs of those suffering from violence and abuse.
- 2.14 A summary of reported domestic violence or abuse will be included in the annual report to tenants and in the bi-annual Anti-Social Behaviour and Harassment report submitted to Service Review Committee.
- 2.15 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if best practice, regulation or statute requires it.

Approved by Service Review Committee

25 July 2017