

Portfolio holder decision – Portfolio holder for Housing and Homelessness – 29 April 2025

Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed new duties on local authorities, requiring tier 2 councils (district & borough councils) to co-operate with the lead local authority, so far as is reasonably practicable.</p> <p>Section 84(4) of the 2021 Act requires persons exercising public functions, to have regard to the guidance in the exercise of those functions.</p> <p>The Act requires that the council must ensure that victims of domestic abuse and their children can access the right support in safe accommodation when they need it.</p> <p>New Forest District Council (NFDC), through the statutory functions of the Community Safety Partnership 'Safer New Forest', recognises Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) as a strategic priority in supporting victims/survivors and tackling offenders.</p> <p>NFDC's Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028 sets out to prioritise domestic abuse with 4 key priority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness & early intervention • Workforce development • High quality service provision • Multi-agency working and pathway development. <p>The priorities are aligned to Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership and informed by the national Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and serious violence duty.</p>

	NFDC's Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy supports meeting the priorities of NFDC's Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025 – 2028 and details how domestic abuse will be actioned for our tenants and leaseholders.
Recommendation(s)	That the Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy is approved.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>The Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy supports the objectives within the Corporate Plan as outlined below:</p> <p>People – Helping people in the greatest need and creating balanced, resilient and healthy communities who feel safe and supported with easy access to services.</p> <p>Priority 1: Helping those in our community with the greatest need</p> <p>Priority 2: Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives.</p> <p>The implementation of the Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy highlights the council's commitment to meeting its obligations of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.</p>
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Steve Davies
Strategic Director(s)	Richard Knott – Housing and Communities
Officer Contact	<p>Kirsty Farmer Service Manager – Housing Resident Services 02380 285151 Kirstym.farmer@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction and background

1. Domestic abuse is recognised as one of the most harmful crimes in society with far reaching and long-lasting consequences impacting on both adults and children.
2. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) placed new duties and functions on Local Authorities under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to provide support for domestic abuse survivors and their children residing in safe accommodation. The aim is to ensure victim-survivors of domestic abuse have access to the right accommodation-based support when they need it.
3. In recognising the continued prevalence of domestic abuse, acknowledging underreporting and the devastating impact it has on the individual, their family, community and wider society, officers have drafted a 4-year Domestic Abuse Strategy to set the aims for the council's approach.
4. The development of this strategy sets out NFDC vision, priorities and commitments with the overall aim of reducing incidents of domestic abuse to ensure all those affected receive appropriate support. This strategy fulfils our statutory requirements as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and also incorporates Violence Against Women and Girls Agenda (VAWG) and the Serious Violence Duty 2022.
5. The Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028 is based on 4 priorities:
 - Awareness & early intervention
 - Workforce development
 - High quality service provision
 - Multi-agency working and pathway development.
6. The Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy supports the overarching strategy and sets out how, as a landlord, we will support victim-survivors of domestic abuse.
7. The Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy has been through informal staff consultation and overall feedback from the staff was supportive. It has also been through consultation with the Tenant Involvement Group (TIG) who support the council's proposals and measures to protect the safety of individuals, household and our communities. The TIG see this as a positive step towards raising awareness of our commitment to our tenant's safety and welcome

the purpose and objectives within. The TIG noted the aims, included best practice and awareness as particularly important within the Policy.

8. The Policy was reviewed alongside the strategy at the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 19 March 2025. The panel recommended the approval of the policy by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness.

Corporate plan priorities

9. The Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy supports the Corporate Plan 2024/28 priorities:

People - Helping people in the greatest need and creating balanced, resilient, and healthy communities who feel safe and supported with easy access to services.

- **Priority 1:** Helping those in our community with the greatest need.

- **Priority 2:** Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives.

Options appraisal

10. The Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy has been considered and it is deemed appropriate and proportionate for NFDC to publish this document as best practice.
11. The Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy has been devised to align with the priorities of the Domestic Abuse Strategy.

Consultation undertaken

12. Informal consultation with staff and the tenant involvement group has been undertaken for the Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy.

Financial and resource implications

13. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed new duties on local authorities across England to ensure that victims of domestic abuse and their children can access the right support in safe accommodation when they need it.
14. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC – now MHCLG) provided new burden funding of £257 million allocated to local authorities for delivery of their duties,

which included nearly £4.8m for Hampshire, and just over £70k for NFDC.

15. Hampshire County Council has provided a Whole Housing Approach (WHA) Grant of £53,364, which we are working with Stop Domestic Abuse to provide a 1-year co-located post to ensure that all victim-survivors of domestic abuse can access appropriate support.

Legal implications

16. The implementation of the Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy outlines the council's commitment to meeting its obligations of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
17. The Regulator of Social Housing launched its new regulatory framework on 1st April 2024 which outlines our responsibilities as a social housing provider in this respect.

Risk assessment

18. The delivery of the Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy mitigates legal and financial risk to the council, as well as aiming to reduce risks faced by tenants subject to Domestic Abuse, or the likelihood of facing abuse.
19. The work of officers is risk assessed in line with health and safety and lone working procedures.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

20. Whilst the report has no direct implications, this may present opportunities to contribute to the Council's climate objectives through alternative working practices.

Equalities implications

21. The proposed policy will improve the council's response to domestic abuse for victim-survivors. It is recognised that every individual will have unique needs and experiences and people will face additional barriers and concerns in seeking and accessing help and support, including those in marginalised groups. The policy sets out the council's commitment to supporting and preventing domestic abuse for our Housing tenants and leaseholders.

Crime and disorder implications

22. The objectives of the Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy is to support and protect victims-survivors of domestic abuse from the harm of domestic abuse.

23. Prevention of perpetrated domestic abuse behaviours is supported by a range of perpetrator programmes aimed at encouraging healthy, non-abusive relationships, aimed at preventing reoffending behaviours.

Data protection/ Information governance/ ICT implications

24. The collection, retention and deletion of resident's data is governed by GDPR and associated guidance. All data is collected and maintained in line with the required legislation and shared in accordance with defined and established information sharing protocols and procedures.

New Forest National Park/ Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications

25. The new approach to ensuring the housing service positively contributes to housing neighbourhoods may involve increased partnership working with the National Park Authority.

Conclusion

26. The Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse policy will support the overarching Domestic Abuse Strategy and sets out how as a landlord victim-survivors of domestic abuse will be supported.

Portfolio holder endorsement

I have agreed to the recommendations of this report.

Signed: **Cllr Steve Davies**

Dated: 29 April 2025

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy

Background Papers:

[Draft Domestic Abuse Strategy Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Strategy 2023-2025 domestic-abuse-strategy-2023.pdf](#)

Date on which notice given of this Decision – 29 April 2025

Last date for call in – 7 May 2025