



Domestic Abuse Resident engagement



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Places to live. Space to grow.

Domestic abuse policy review here



- A review of our domestic abuse policy and procedures began in 2020
- Committing to the Chartered Institute of Housing's (CIH) Make a Stand pledge
- Aiming to gain accreditation from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA).
- All staff steering group established – including a communications and engagement staff member
- Emphasised importance of resident input from starting point-with safety measures in place
- Resulted in tpa's Excellence in Tenant Communication Award 2021

Initial survey

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- Survey designed collaboratively – communications and engagement partner and consultation with DAHA

Surveys aims

- To establish how much residents currently knew about West Kent's domestic abuse response
- To find residents who wanted to join a focus group to review our policy and procedure

Safety measures

- Generic email title with link to survey
- Support contacts in email and at end of survey
- How to contact me option included in survey (for focus group interest)
- Didn't ask directly for survivors to come forward (*'We would particularly like to hear from residents with lived experience of domestic abuse.'*)
- Ensured website was up to date with guidance and 'report concerns' option



Survey results

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- 131 respondents
- 40 volunteers for focus group
- From comments, clear we had survivors responding
- Clear we weren't communicating our domestic abuse response well enough- many residents didn't know we could help

Safety measures

- All individual responses read thoroughly- any concerns highlighted and passed to tenancy services team



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Focus group plan

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- Email invite to those interested
- DAHA and local DA partner (DAVSS) invited to attend and support
- Focus group information pack created:
 - agenda
 - summary of survey results
 - safe space agreement and support contact info
 - joining instructions and meeting guidelines

Safety measures

- Option to get involved just by email or phone rather than a group setting
- Safe space agreement and meeting guidelines- emphasis on using personal experience to inform comments, not to share direct experiences. Also, that those who haven't had experience of DA have a valid voice too.
- Generic email title
- Awareness the group could be triggering and support needed to be available immediately afterwards



Focus group structure here

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Creating a safe space- an agreement to keep everyone in the group safe and comfortable
3. Policy review- why we have policies and why they need reviewing
4. Survivor led approach to our response
5. Results of survey- group feedback
6. Where to get help and support

Safety measures

- Safe space agreement at start
- Support available directly after meeting
- Check in emails sent to all participants after meeting



Focus group outcomes

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- Eight residents attended
- Very powerful voices
- Residents were very keen to influence policy and procedures
- Clear that residents appreciated the presence of professionals
- Discussions around older survivors
- Discussions around hesitancy in reporting concerns
- Some residents discussed ASB situations – in hindsight clearer definitions were perhaps needed
- Careful notes taken to inform policy

Safety measures

- Safe space agreement at start
 - Support available directly after meeting
 - Check in emails sent to all participants after meeting
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Next steps

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- Policy written – informed by resident input
- More awareness that help is available
- Press 3 to speak to a customer advisor
- Home standard when moving
- Practical support when moving to new home

Next resident focus group:

- Review of procedure
- Review of campaign materials



A poster for West Kent's Domestic Abuse Room. The background is blue. In the top left corner is a logo for 'DOMESTIC ABUSE ROOM IN YOUR HOME' with a red hand icon. In the top right corner is the 'WestKent' logo with the tagline 'Places to live. Space to grow.' The main headline reads 'Home should be a safespace.' Below this, it says 'If it's not, we can help.' A photograph shows a woman with curly hair hugging a child from behind. Text below the photo states: 'Abuse can be financial, psychological, physical, Sexual, emotional or control and can affect anyone.' At the bottom, it says: 'West Kent can offer support from trained staff and can refer you to specialists- call xxxxxx email xxxxx website xxxxx'. At the very bottom, it provides contact information: 'National Domestic Abuse helpline Free, 24 hours a day - 0800 2000 247' and 'Find Kent based support services at www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk'.

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