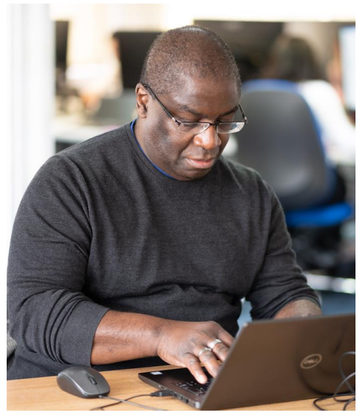

Domestic abuse - resident engagement

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE | Gold

WestKent

Places to live. Space to grow.

Domestic abuse policy review

- A review of our domestic abuse policy and procedures began in 2020
- All staff steering group established – including a communications and resident involvement staff member
- Emphasised the importance of resident voice from starting point, with safety measures in place
- Resulted in tpas Excellence in Tenant Communication Award 2021.

Initial survey

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

Survey 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
- Didn't ask directly for survivors to come forward (*'We would particularly like to hear from residents with lived experience of domestic abuse.')*
- 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.
- Awareness the group could be triggering and support needed to be available immediately afterwards
- Ensured website was up to date with guidance and 'report concerns' option.

Survey results and focus group

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

Focus group outcomes

- 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
- 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

Create policy

- Policy written – informed by resident input
- Increase awareness that help is available
- Press 3 to speak to a customer advisor
- Home standard when moving
- Practical support when moving to new home – moving – utilities, bank account, ID, new landlord handover
- Draft policy and campaign material reviewed by focus group
- DA managed by Community Safety Team with a victim led approach
- All front-line staff trained
- Final policy and campaign completed

Learning outcome

- Resident and staff awareness campaign
- Quicker way to safely ask for help
- ASB – ask yourself could this be DA
- Don’t presume everyone knows help is available
- Victim/survivor
- Impact DA can have on managing a home

Consumer Standards

Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Policy in place to effectively manage DA cases

Code of Practice
- Understand the impact DA can have on residents
- Staff skills to manage DA
- Partnership working with local DA support agencies
- Victim led approach to how cases are managed