



## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT INITIAL SCREENING

Name of policy / strategy / project (the “initiative”):

Statement of Domestic Violence Policy and Procedure

Provide a brief summary of the aims and main activities of the initiative: (bullet points)

- To meet with the requirements of the Audit commission and best practise for RSL’s and other social landlords
- Illustrate the scale of Domestic Violence incidents and underreporting in Britain
- Define what constitutes DV with regard to the Law and government definitions.
- Give examples of DV for illustration purposes
- Outline Chevin Housing Group’s statement of approach
- To give guidance to staff and customers as to how the association will deal with complaints of DV with reference to victims and perpetrators. This includes reporting, case management and outcome monitoring.
- To give guidance to staff and customers regarding support for victims and perpetrators.
- Outline the relevant law and legislation with regard dealing with DV
- Provide contact and support information for staff, victims, customers and witnesses.

Completed by: George Walker

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### STAGE 1: SCREENING

This stage establishes whether a proposed initiative will have an impact from an equality perspective on any particular group of people or community – i.e. on the grounds of race, religion/faith/belief, gender (including transgender), sexual orientation, age, disability, or whether it is “equality neutral” (i.e. have no effect either positive or negative).

**Q 1. Who will benefit from this initiative?** Is there likely to be a positive impact on specific groups/communities (whether or not they are the intended beneficiaries), and if so, how? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality ‘neutral’ i.e. will have no particular effect on any group?

*Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

Chevin recognises that domestic violence is a crime generally committed in private and as such is grossly under reported. The policy and procedure recognises that domestic violence can occur in same sex relationships, by women against men (& vice versa)

from other family members, against children, against elderly and other vulnerable adults, and in transgender relationships. It also recognises other forms of gender based violence such as forced marriage and honour crimes, as well as the trafficking of young women and girls for sexual exploitation.

We anticipate that the Domestic Violence procedures will have a positive impact for all of our customers experiencing, or at risk of domestic violence by demonstrating a multi-agency and flexible, sensitive, victim-centred approach. All investigations will be carried out with due regard to race, religion, culture, gender, age, disability and sexual orientation. We also anticipate that our focus on domestic violence and ongoing work to highlight our zero tolerance approach will encourage reporting of domestic violence incidents. Staff training relating to DV is ongoing in order to support the procedures, and our specialist ASB team receive ongoing training in order to keep up with current legislation and good practice in this area.

Part of the new procedures includes upgrading our domestic violence signposting information for both residents and front line staff in order to help in the area of victim support. This information is available within the policy, over the telephone and on the external website.

**Q 2. Is there likely to be an adverse impact on one or more minority/under-represented or community group as a result of this initiative?** If so, who may be affected and why: Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality 'neutral'?

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No adverse impact is anticipated. The policy will have a positive impact on minority / under represented groups. This has been passed to relevant specific agencies for comment in order to ensure 'neutrality' Agencies include, Women's Aid- Leeds and Harrogate, Broken Rainbow, Mankind, Asiana Help and The Domestic Abuse Project Burngreave. Their constructive inputs have been included in the policy.

**Q 3. Is there sufficient data on the target beneficiary groups/communities?** Are any of these groups under or over represented? Do they have access to the same resources? What are your sources of data and are there any gaps?

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Figures show that Chevin only had five reported incidents of domestic violence from our tenants between January 2005 and March 2008, despite raising the profile of the issue via our newsletter and publicising our zero tolerance approach. By emphasising our victim-centred approach to domestic violence, we are hoping that the new procedure will encourage reporting of domestic violence incidents and early indications demonstrate that this is the case.

Victims of domestic violence can now be identified and targeted for satisfaction surveys, etc, via the contact management system which we use to monitor specific incidents of ASB and overall trends. Recent figures demonstrate an increase in reporting of domestic violence – three further reports of DV were received between July 2008 and November 2008. Satisfaction outcomes can also be assessed and we will review the results periodically, with results analysed by age, disability, gender / transgender, ethnicity, religion and sexuality.

**Q 4. Outsourced services – if the initiative is partly or wholly provided by external organisations / agencies, please list any arrangements you plan to ensure that they promote equality and diversity.**

*Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

Not applicable.

**Q 5. Is the impact of the initiative (whether positive or negative) significant enough to warrant a full impact assessment – see guidance?** If not, will there be monitoring and review to assess the level of impact over a period of time?

*Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

We do not consider that a full impact assessment is necessary in light of data currently available. Early indications are that the new policy and procedure is having the desired effect in encouraging our residents to report incidents of DV to us. The outcomes of specific cases will be monitored as part of our equality and diversity framework requirements which include review and evaluation of results and policy. Data and progress will also be reviewed on a six monthly basis as part of our gender equality action plan.

**Q 6. To be completed at six monthly review** Detail actions taken to assess the level of impact over a period of time, or to address any gaps in data.

*Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

There have been seven reported cases of domestic violence for the period July 2008 to December 2009, an increase on figures for 2005 to 2008. This does indicate that residents are more likely to report incidents of domestic violence to us. However, it is still a relatively small number of cases and Chevin continues to promote reporting by regular newsletters demonstrating our stance towards domestic violence. The next newsletter is planned for the spring 2010 edition of the Chevin Views newsletter.

Training held for our Resident Panel and Performance Panel members held in December 2009 has included issues around domestic violence. We are also producing a leaflet to illustrate Chevin's response and procedure for dealing with cases of domestic violence.

Our new Single Equality action plan establishes our commitment to encouraging reporting and to mapping cases of domestic violence across our area of operation.

#### **Guidelines: Things to consider**

- Where a negative (i.e. adverse) impact is identified, it may be appropriate to make a full EIA (see Stage 2), or, as important, take early action to redress this – e.g. by abandoning or modifying the initiative. **NB** If the initiative contravenes equality legislation, it **must** be abandoned or modified.
- Where an initiative has a positive impact on groups/community relations, the EIA should make this explicit, to enable the outcomes to be monitored over its lifespan.

- Where there is a positive impact on particular groups, does this mean there could be an adverse impact on others, and if so can this be justified? - e.g. Are there other existing or planned initiatives which redress this?
- It may not be possible to provide detailed answers to some of these questions at the start of the initiative. The EIA may identify a lack of relevant data, and that data-gathering is a specific action required to inform the initiative as it develops, and also to form part of a continuing evaluation and review process.
- It is envisaged that it will be rare for full impact assessments to be required. Usually, where there are particular problems identified in the screening stage, it is envisaged that changing the approach at this stage, and/or setting up a monitoring/evaluation system to review a policy's impact over time will tackle the problem.