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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 14</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2020</b>	<b>CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (SERVICE DELIVERY)</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	Allison Thomas <a href="mailto:allison.thomas@southderbyshire.gov.uk">allison.thomas@southderbyshire.gov.uk</a>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>DOMESTIC ABUSE PROCEDURE – MAKE A STAND CAMPAIGN</b>	<b>REF:</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM05</b>

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## **1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 That progress against the 'Make a Stand' pledges outlined in the report is noted.
- 1.2 That the Domestic Abuse Procedure is approved (Appendix 1).
- 1.3 That the Strategic Director (Service Delivery) is appointed to champion work that the Council is doing to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To provide the Committee with an update on the 'Make a Stand' pledges including seeking approval for a Domestic Abuse Procedure for the workforce and appointment of an internal Champion.

## **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) has launched a National Campaign for landlords to support people experiencing domestic abuse. 'Make a Stand' was launched in June 2018 in partnership with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) and the charity Women's Aid.
- 3.2 The Council signed up to this pledge at its meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018 and gave a commitment to support the following four pledges:
  1. Put in place and embed a policy to support residents who are affected by domestic abuse.
  2. Make information about national and local domestic abuse support services available on the organisation's website and in other appropriate places so that it is easily accessible for residents and staff.

3. Put in place an employment policy, or amend an existing policy, to support current staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse.
4. Appoint a champion at a senior level in the organisation to lead the work the Council is doing to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

### **Pledge 1 - Housing Domestic Abuse Policy**

- 3.3 This is being completed and will be reported to the Housing and Community Services Committee.

### **Pledge 2 - Existing support given to victims of domestic abuse across South Derbyshire**

- 3.4 Trident Reach is currently (up until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2020) the sole provider of Domestic Abuse services across South Derbyshire and offers the following services to support victims of domestic abuse.
  - 3.4.1 **Refuge Accommodation** - This provides short-term, confidential and safe accommodation for women and children escaping domestic abuse. The accommodation offers practical and emotional support to residents from qualified and experienced staff who understand the impact of domestic abuse on family life.
  - 3.4.2 **Floating Support** - Floating Support is flexible, individual, one-to-one support that is not tied to accommodation. The floating support service is available to both women and men and provides the same high-quality advice, information and guidance that are offered in the refuge.
  - 3.4.3 **Children's Service** - This provides support for children who may be witnessing or victims of domestic abuse, both within the refuge and within the local communities of South Derbyshire.
- 3.5 In October 2019 Derbyshire County Council carried out a new commissioning process for the delivery of Derbyshire Domestic abuse services from April 2020 to April 2023.
- 3.6 Following a formal interview process, Derbyshire County Council has confirmed that the domestic abuse services contracts for April 2020 to April 2023 (with optional further years subject to funding and satisfactory delivery) have been awarded as follows:
- 3.7 Derbyshire Domestic Abuse Support Line – The Elm Foundation  
Derbyshire Domestic Abuse Support Services (accommodation, floating support, children's services and therapeutic) – Consortium of Derbyshire Wish, Crossroads Derbyshire and the Elm Foundation
- 3.8 Trident Reach has confirmed that the [REDACTED] refuge will continue to run under the new contract with the new provider.
- 3.9 Information about national and local support has been updated and is available on the Council's website.

### **Pledge 3 - Domestic Abuse Procedure**

- 3.6 A Domestic Abuse Procedure for employees based on examples used by other local authorities for their workforce and national good practice has been completed.
- 3.7 This has been subject to internal consultation with Officers across the Council and the Trade Unions and the final version is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.8 The Procedure recognises that domestic abuse is a serious issue and that incidents of domestic abuse are common, significantly under-reported and critically affect many people's lives. The Council acknowledges that domestic abuse can affect an individual's work performance and as an employer it accepts the health, safety and welfare responsibilities at work. Domestic abuse towards or by its employees is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- 3.9 The effects of domestic abuse can influence the physical and mental health and self-confidence of employees who may in turn feel unable to confide in others or seek help. Many of those that experience domestic abuse have difficulty attending work regularly and demonstrate symptoms such as depression, anxiety, or stress and in some cases signs of physical harm.
- 3.10 The Council recognises that it is important that all employees and managers are aware of the impact that domestic abuse can have and will create a working environment that promotes the understanding that everyone has the right to a life free from domestic abuse in any form and that domestic abuse towards or by its employees is wholly unacceptable.
- 3.11 Training and further information on the Domestic Abuse Procedure will be provided to the Council's staff.

### **Pledge 4 - Domestic Abuse Champion**

- 3.12 From an operational perspective the Communities Manager represents the Council at a District/County level on domestic abuse matters and attends the County Domestic and Sexual Abuse Action Group (DSAAG). This post will continue to offer support, advice and guidance in relation to appropriate actions and agencies that should be considered should any instances of domestic abuse be reported.
- 3.13 It would not be appropriate for this post to also champion this work as it clearly has an impact across several services areas. It is proposed that the Strategic Director (Service Delivery) is appointed as the Champion and oversees the work the Council is progressing to tackle and raise awareness of domestic abuse.

## **4.0 Financial and Corporate Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

- 4.1 None directly arising.

### **Employment Implications**

- 4.2 The Domestic Abuse Procedure will provide a framework for the Council to provide support and guidance for any employee who may experience domestic abuse. The intent of the Procedure is to enable the Council to take a fair and proportionate approach to matters that could be occurring outside of the workplace and recognise the Council's responsibilities towards the health, safety and wellbeing of the workforce.

### **Legal Implications**

- 4.3 None directly.

### **Corporate Plan Implications**

- 4.4 This work will directly support the Theme 'Our People' and the key aim of; 'Supporting and safeguarding the most vulnerable'. It is expected that this work will raise the profile of the Council not only with tenants and employees but also with the wider community to support work to tackle and provide support for any persons affected by domestic abuse.

### **Risk Impact**

- 4.5 None directly

## **5.0 Community Impact**

### **Equality and Diversity Impact**

- 5.1 Delivery against the four pledges set out in the Make a Stand Campaign will have a positive impact for a number of groups with protected characteristics, for example, domestic abuse disproportionately affects women, those with disabilities, those who are younger, those who are bisexual and those who are from a mixed/multiple ethnic background. The Council as an employer and service provider takes its commitment to equality and fairness very seriously. It is, therefore, unacceptable to discriminate against any employee who may be the subject of domestic abuse.

### **Social Value Impact**

- 5.2 Committing to the Make a Stand Campaign will demonstrate ongoing support and enhances the work being done to tackle domestic abuse across the community. As a landlord of 3,000 homes and service provider to around 99,000 people, the Council has a key role to play in ensuring tenants and residents, including its own employees, are able to live safely and securely in their homes.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

- 5.3 Not applicable in the context of the report

## **6.0 Conclusion**

- 6.1 The development of this procedure and appointment of a Champion meets two of the Pledges of the national 'Make a Stand' campaign. The Council will continue to

develop an inclusive approach, with partners and other agencies, to provide support and raise awareness of the serious risks associated with domestic abuse and raise awareness of the support that is available.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Domestic Abuse Procedure

## **Background Papers**

[Make a Stand report to Full Council dated 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018](#)