

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICY

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 To propose the adoption of the attached Domestic Violence Policy for front line Rochford District Council staff as identified in Appendix 1.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 There is no statutory requirement to have a Domestic Violence Policy, but it is good practice and beneficial for staff and management from different departments to have guidelines to work with. It also provides a reporting method to ensure accurate Domestic Violence statistics are recorded.
- 2.2 By implementation of the Domestic Violence Policy, it shows Rochford District Council takes very seriously violence perpetrated in the home and that we want the best possible support for the residents and staff of Rochford District.
- 2.3 Rochford District Council's statistics from April 2000 to date show that 88 domestic violence cases perpetrated by people known or a family member have approached the Council. This averages to 3 cases per fortnight, 27% of these have been since April 2002, which shows an increase.

3 DETAILED PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The attached policy sets out guidelines for members of staff who interact with the public. It aims to ensure that residents receive a clear, consistent and co-ordinated service from the Council. The Council has a role in providing support to enable people to make the best choice for their situation.
- 3.2 The policy also includes help and advice to provide appropriate support to our staff experiencing Domestic Violence and guidelines for their managers.
- 3.3 The contents of the policy have been the result of advice and consultation with The Dove Project, which provides advice and victim support and women's refuge facilities and members of Rochford District Domestic Violence Panel.

- 3.4 It is proposed that the Domestic Violence Policy be circulated to all appropriate members of staff to be used as guidelines and an information source. It will also be included in the staff handbook to be accessed by all staff.
- 3.5 Any future staff training dealing with/or awareness in Domestic Violence will be based on the policy's contents.
- 3.6 The adoption of this policy would necessitate alteration of the Housing Allocation Policy. An item outlining changes in allocation points to re-implement 10 points for persons suffering domestic violence will be considered by this committee

4 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report addresses Item **4**, Primary Objective **5** of Rochford District's Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2002/05.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Under the Housing Act 1996, people have the right to apply to the Council if they feel it is unreasonable for them to occupy their current accommodation due to Domestic Violence. The Council has a duty to provide housing advisory services to anyone that is threatened with homelessness, or is homeless, free of charge.

6 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

The adoption of the Domestic Violence Policy identified in Appendix 1. (CEX)

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