

Cabinet Member

Cllr Des Keers, Cabinet Member for Community Services

Responsible Officer

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Report Author

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Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation – Policies and Procedures

1 Summary and Purpose of Report

1.1 The Borough Council is working to achieve accreditation from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA). As part of this work, there needs to be policies and procedures in place to show how the council are supporting both staff and residents who may be experiencing domestic abuse. This report gives details about the policies and procedures that have been developed and how these will support staff and residents.

2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

2.1 Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.
2.2 By having these policies and procedures in place the council can ensure that residents and staff know what to expect if they approach the Borough Council as victims of domestic abuse.

3 Recommendations

3.1 For Members to approve and adopt the Policies and Procedures as stated within this report.

4 Introduction and Background

4.1 Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) does not tolerate violence and abuse and is dedicated to tackling domestic abuse (DA) and ensuring that all staff feel safe at work. The council promotes a culture that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of victim/survivors, and places responsibility firmly on the perpetrator.

- 4.2 As part of the work to tackle domestic abuse the council is looking to achieve an accreditation from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA). This scheme is aimed at helping Local Authorities and Housing Associations improve their response to domestic abuse. It is the benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse in the UK.
- 4.3 The Borough Council is currently working towards the 'bronze' level accreditation and to achieve this must meet a series of standards and provide clear evidence demonstrating how each one is being fulfilled. As part of the bronze level, policies and procedures must be in place for both staff and residents.
- 4.4 The Borough Council already had a Domestic Abuse Policy for Staff, and this has now been reviewed and updated. The policy outlines how TMBC will identify signs of domestic abuse among staff, respond to disclosures and what support will be provided to staff members that are experiencing domestic abuse. This is attached at Annex 1.
- 4.5 DAHA also requires a Staff Procedure to be in place for disclosing domestic abuse. This is attached at Annex 2. This procedure should be read alongside the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Employees Domestic Abuse Policy. It offers practical guidance for council employees on how to respond to domestic abuse.
- 4.6 The council also needs to have a Policy and Procedure in place for residents who are approaching the Borough Council's Housing service for support with accommodation/housing advice.
- 4.7 The Residents Domestic Abuse Policy aims to outline how staff will respond to people approaching TMBC Housing for reasons of domestic abuse. It will also apply to those living in interim or temporary accommodation provided by the council. This is attached at Annex 3.
- 4.8 The Resident's Domestic Abuse Procedure outlines practical steps that Housing staff can take to respond to cases of domestic abuse. This is attached at Annex 4.

5 Proposal

- 5.1 Members to approve and adopt the policies and procedures set out within this document.

6 Other Options

- 6.1 Members may decide not to adopt the policies and procedures, but this would mean that the Borough Council could not proceed with the DAHA accreditation process.

7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

7.1 Funding for the DAHA accreditation was provided by KCC, so there is no cost to the Borough Council.

8 Risk Assessment

8.1 All appropriate risk assessments have taken place.

9 Legal Implications

9.1 There are no legal implications associated with this paper.

10 Consultation and Communications

10.1 Consultation with Borough Council staff has been undertaken through the Joint Employee Consultative Committee, who were supportive of the policies and procedures.

11 Implementation

11.1 Once approved, the Policies and Procedures will be available on the Borough Council's Intranet for staff and website for residents. The aim is to achieve the 'bronze' DAHA accreditation by March 2026 and then move on to the 'silver' award.

12 Cross Cutting Issues

12.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

12.1.1 Limited or low impact on emissions and environment.

12.1.2 Climate change advice has not been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

12.2 Equalities and Diversity

12.2.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Background Papers	None
Annexes	Annex 1 - Domestic Abuse Staff Policy Annex 2 - Domestic Abuse Staff Procedure Annex 3 - Resident's Domestic Abuse Policy Annex 4 - Resident's Domestic Abuse Procedure