

**Angus Council
Housing Division
Domestic Abuse Policy - Consultation Report**

Introduction

Angus Council's housing service made a commitment as part of the Chartered Institute of Housing's (CIH) Make a Stand campaign to implement a domestic abuse policy. The policy was drafted based on the recommendations from research completed by Women's Aid, the CIH Domestic Abuse Guidance for Social Landlords and following discussions with key stakeholders.

An online survey was developed to capture the views from tenants and residents in Angus on the proposed policy. The survey was shared via social media, with the Tenants E Panel and with agencies who provide support to women who have experienced domestic abuse, who discussed their views with them.

Survey Findings

The survey had 20 responses. Of those who responded, 60% were existing Angus Council tenants and 45% confirmed they had experienced domestic abuse.

Every person who responded thinks it is important for the Housing Service to have a policy setting out how they will respond to and support women experiencing domestic abuse and 95% of those who responded agreed that the policy clearly sets how the housing service will provide a confidential, sensitive and supportive response to women and their children.

95% of respondents also agreed the policy clearly sets out how the housing service will work in partnership with other services to provide a joined-up response to help women access a range of housing options, advice, information and support.

From the comments received, there were some concerns raised that the policy focussed primarily on women experiencing domestic abuse. Consistent with national policy and guidance, this policy has adopted a gendered approach to domestic abuse, in recognition that being female is the primary risk factor for domestic abuse. As a result of this feedback, the policy has been updated to make it clearer that while it takes a gendered approach, it applies equally to any person suffering from or threatened with domestic abuse.

70% of respondents agreed the policy sets out how Angus Council will hold perpetrators to account. There were concerns raised that the policy does not allow for perpetrators of domestic abuse to be removed from the family home. Due to current legislation, it is not possible to evict a perpetrator of domestic abuse, when the tenancy is joint and held in both names. However, certain measures can be applied for to prevent the perpetrator remaining in the family home and guidance is being developed for housing staff on the measures available so they can support women to seek legal advice to prevent the perpetrator remaining in the family home.

75% of those who responded would feel confident to approach Angus Council's housing service for assistance if they were experiencing domestic abuse. There were some concerns raised within the comments as to how the policy would be implemented in practice. To support the implementation

of this policy we will ensure that domestic abuse training is mandatory for all staff who come into contact with tenants or applicants. Guidance is also being developed which will support the delivery of the policy and we will conduct case reviews with Angus Violence Against Women partners to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy, highlight developing practice, examples of effective partnership working and any gaps in service provision.

Next Steps

The revised Domestic Abuse Policy will be submitted to the Communities Committee for approval.

If the policy is approved, the council and its partners will progress any procedural changes and training required alongside the implementation of the policy.