

SBC HOUSING SERVICES

Question: SBC Housing Services' role / responsibilities in relation to this scrutiny topic.

Service response:

- The **Homelessness Service** will have direct contact and provide support to individuals who are homeless because of domestic abuse. And/or will be supporting individuals who have experienced domestic abuse.
- The wider **Housing Service** will also have officers visiting residents in their homes (including our Private Sector Housing and Disabled Facilities Grants Teams).

Question: For any SBC housing staff required to visit properties across the Borough, do they feel confident about spotting signs of domestic abuse, and do they know how to report it?

Service response:

- We aim to ensure all team members receive sufficient training so they feel confident in identifying signs of domestic abuse (levels of training will vary depending on role).
- All new starters are required to complete Introduction to Safeguarding training. Each team member is required to refresh this training every 2 years.
- We are currently reviewing our employee Training and Development plans. Rather than encouraging colleagues to attend Safeguarding Adult and Children's refresher training (every 2 years) our intention is to make this mandatory for all Housing and Fairer Stockton-on-Tees team members (regardless of role).
- Wider TSAB training courses are shared with Service Managers who will review and identify suitable training for their team members.

Question: Data on the number of domestic abuse-related referrals made by housing services in the last three years.

Service response:

We are unable to provide this information. Whilst referrals will be made, we do not record the number of referrals made.

Question: Working with local social housing partners regarding domestic abuse considerations – how does this operate; is this effective; is there anything that could strengthen current arrangements?

Service response:

There is limited direct working with social housing providers regarding domestic abuse regarding domestic abuse considerations. Engagement is undertaken for example via the following routes:

- The Homelessness Service brings together partners who are working/supporting those experiencing homelessness via a Multi-Agency Forum, the Forum is attended by social housing providers and organisations supporting those who are experiencing domestic abuse.
- We will also engage with tenants of Registered Providers and provide advice and support (via the Homelessness Service and the Lettings & Nomination service).

Question: Any SBC oversight of private sector housing in relation to domestic abuse (e.g. awareness-raising, promotion of reporting routes, etc.)?**Service response:**

All visiting officers complete a service Safeguarding Visit Form when they visit a property which also provides additional information on how to report.

Question: Any views on key areas of future focus relating to this scrutiny topic (e.g. existing challenges that need to be addressed; national / regional / local developments that will / are likely to have an impact**Service response:**

Government has recently published 'A National Plan to End Homelessness', section 3.4.7 includes a specific reference to Domestic Abuse [A National Plan to End Homelessness - GOV.UK](#)

Additional information:

- During the period 1.4.24 to 31.3.25: there were 78 presentations to the Homelessness Service from families fleeing domestic abuse (which included 6 presentations from families fleeing domestic abuse from an associated person).
- The Homelessness Service is looking to explore how it can support children who may be placed in temporary accommodation when a homelessness presentation is made (regardless of the reason for the presentation) and will be meeting with Family Action.
- The Homelessness Service Manager represents the wider service at the corporate Domestic Abuse Steering Group.