

Redland Housing Association

Domestic Violence Policy

Policy Statement

The domestic violence policy states Redlands' commitment to offering assistance to any of its residents who are suffering from domestic violence or threats of violence from either a current partner or ex-partner.

Effective Date

February 2006

Scope

- All Redland staff are expected to support the organisation's commitment to dealing with domestic violence.
- Staff in both operational departments in particular the housing team, will be working with the procedures that accompany this policy.
- This policy and its associated procedures have been developed in consultation with residents and other housing organisations. Redland works with and will continue to work with relevant agencies to develop appropriate strategies for responding to the needs of those experiencing domestic violence.

Principles

- Redland will adopt the following **definition** of domestic violence:

“The term ‘domestic violence’ shall be understood to mean any violence between current or former partners in an intimate relationship, whenever and wherever it occurs. The violence may be explicit or implicit and may include physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse. Domestic Violence can be experienced throughout all cultures, family backgrounds and age groups. It is a serious crime that is not acceptable.”
- Redland believes that none of its residents should live in fear of violence from a spouse or partner, former spouse or partner, or other member of their

household, and will take steps to assist and support any person suffering from or threatened with violence. Such violence may be physical, emotional or psychological. It is most commonly perpetrated by men, but may also be perpetrated by women, and between gay and lesbian partners as well as heterosexual partners. This policy is intended to cover all such instances.

- Wherever possible, Redland will ensure that it assists those threatened with or suffering violence by providing them with secure accommodation, free from the threat or fear of violence. Where Redland is not in a position to offer such assistance, it will provide advice to the victims of violence on alternative sources of accommodation and support, including assistance from voluntary organisations.
- Redland will take a victim-centred approach in responding to cases of domestic violence. Recognising that evidence of violence may not always be readily available, we will accept the victim's account and will not insist on the victim providing proof of violence. However, some form of evidence will be required where legal action is to be taken and verification may be required where other potential solutions are being considered.
- Redland will take action to evict the perpetrators of domestic violence using the powers available to it under the Housing Act 1996, and other relevant legislation, subject to the wishes of the victim.
- Redland will take a flexible approach in responding to incidents of domestic violence, to take account of the varying circumstances of victims of violence and the different courses of action which may be possible and appropriate.
- If the person suffering domestic violence feels able to remain in their home either temporarily or permanently, but request additional security measures then Redland will endeavour to arrange for these to be installed.
- Redland will keep up to date records of local agencies which might be in a position to offer advice or support to victims of domestic violence and participate in any local forums established to consider the needs of those suffering from domestic violence.

Equality

- Redland will implement this policy in a way which achieves equality and

recognises diversity, in line with the Group Equality and Diversity policy and its scope.

- Redland recognises that cultural differences should be considered in the assessment of individual need.
- Victims from black and minority ethnic communities may have additional fears of racist reaction, language and cultural barriers.
- Disabled victims may be reluctant to report violence perpetrated by a partner on whom they are reliant, and may find options for temporary or permanent housing limited by accessibility.
- Redland will monitor by ethnicity and disability the reporting and outcomes of domestic violence.

Application

- There is a procedure document describing how this policy is to be implemented, covering the following:
 - Timescales
 - The sensitive management of cases
 - Confidentiality
 - Liaison with outside agencies
 - Legal action
 - Additional security measures
 - Monitoring and review

This policy is effective from: Feb 2006.
The policy is due for review from: Feb 2009
The responsible Officer is: Head of Housing
The responsible Focus Group is: