

## SERVICE USER AND RESIDENT DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

### 1. SUMMARY

1. SSJ believes that no person should live in fear of violence or abuse. This policy sets out the approach to supporting service users and residents of SSJ who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse. The policy also covers the approach SSJ will take if there are concerns that a service user or resident may be the perpetrator of domestic abuse.

1.2 SSJ commits to treating all reports of domestic abuse seriously and ensure all staff are trained comprehensively to deliver a trauma informed, non-judgemental approach. SSJ will look to create a safe space, whilst sending a strong message that domestic abuse is unacceptable.

1.3 SSJ understands that there are many barriers to reporting domestic abuse, but encourages service users and residents affected to raise the issue in the knowledge that SSJ will treat the matter empathetically and with a non-judgemental approach.

1.4 If service users or residents have any queries about this policy or SSJ's approach to domestic abuse, they could ask to speak to a DA Lead within their service, or housing management team. Staff should contact the Organisational Lead or Deputy Organisational Lead who oversees SSJ's response to domestic abuse.

### 2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The Board of Trustees: will ensure there is a reasonable policy and approach to supporting service users and residents who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse.

2.2 Senior Management Team: To ensure there is an organisational appointed lead who will review the policy in line with legislative change or as per the agreed timeframe.

2.3 Organisational Lead: To ensure a Deputy Organisational Lead is appointed and to coordinate and lead the bi-annual DA Leads forum. To provide advice and guidance to staff relating to DA when required.

2.4 Deputy Organisational Lead: To support and potentially lead the bi-annual DA Leads forum and provide support and guidance to staff and DA Leads when required.

2.5 Management: Ensure each area of responsibility has a DA Lead and inform the organisational lead of any changes in personnel to the role.

2.5 DA Leads: To attend and participate in the bi-annually DA forums. Be the lead within their respective area of work providing advice and guidance for staff.

2.6 Staff: Will attend relevant training to be able to comprehensively respond to reports of domestic abuse.

### 3. POLICY SCOPE

3.1 This policy applies to all SSJ service users and residents (regardless of tenure).

3.2 Within the [Domestic Abuse Act](#), domestic abuse is defined as any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse;
- violent or threatening behaviour;
- controlling or coercive behaviour;
- economic abuse;
- psychological, emotional or other abuse.

3.3 Within this definition, economic abuse means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to do either of the following.

- Acquire, use or maintain money or other property.
- Obtain goods or services.

3.4 It does not matter if the behaviour consists of a single incident or part of an ongoing pattern of behaviour.

3.5 For the definition and the policy to apply, both people must be aged 16 or over and personally connected. Personally connected is defined in the Act as people who (or are believed to be):

- are married to each other;
- are civil partners of each other;
- have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement is still in place);
- have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement is still in place);
- are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
- are, or have been, parents of the same child or children;
- are relatives.

3.6 This definition includes modern day slavery, honour-based violence or abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

3.7 If a service user or resident tells staff about abuse in other circumstances, such as abuse by a carer, SSJ will consider this under the Safeguarding Policy.

#### **4. IDENTIFICATION OF DOMESTIC ABUSE**

4.1 Domestic abuse is a serious crime. SSJ will provide sympathetic, supportive and non-judgemental support and help to any service user or resident who is experiencing or recovering from domestic abuse.

4.2 Service users and residents can report domestic abuse through any form of contact to any member of SSJ staff who they feel comfortable with, for example; telephone, face to face, email or in writing. SSJ also has a network of Domestic Abuse Leads, who understand domestic abuse and can offer additional support where appropriate.

4.3 Staff may receive information from partnership agencies or outside sources regarding service users or residents being a survivor or perpetrator of domestic abuse. Risk Assessments, risk management plans and recording systems should be updated appropriately and highlighted to management within the service.

4.4 If staff are concerned about a service user or resident, concerns can be discussed with their line manager or a Domestic Abuse Lead. It may also be appropriate to discuss concerns with SSJ's safeguarding Lead.

#### **5. SUPPORT FOR SERVICE USERS AND RESIDENTS EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE**

5.1 SSJ recognises that living a life free from abuse is a process not an event, and commit to providing ongoing support for those who disclose abuse.

5.2 SSJ will respond empathetically and confidentially to whoever discloses that they are experiencing domestic abuse. Service users or residents do not need to provide evidence to access support.

5.3 SSJ will ensure all staff are specially trained to deal with reports of domestic abuse. The SSJ Domestic Abuse Lead is an Operations Director who, with support from the workplace DA Leads, oversees SSJ's response to domestic abuse.

5.4 With consent from the service user or resident, the support staff member or housing management staff (whoever the service user or residents wishes to engage with) will offer information, support, and signpost service users and residents to relevant specialist organisations.

5.5 SSJ will prioritise service user and resident's safety if it is known that an individual is experiencing domestic abuse. Staff will be able to undertake a DASH (domestic

**POLICY NAME:** Service User and Resident Domestic Abuse Policy

**AUTHOR:** Nicky Wilsenham

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abuse, stalking and honour-based violence) risk assessment - [DASH risk assessment](#) and make appropriate referrals where necessary. With consent, they will work with the service user or resident and other agencies to identify what actions can be taken to increase personal safety. This may include discussions around safeguarding, in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

5.6 SSJ recognises that housing is one of the main factors why survivors do not leave abusive homes. If there is an immediate threat to a service user or residents' safety, staff will work in partnership with Housing Management or the relevant local authority and partners to consider housing options. This may include temporary accommodation or a permanent transfer if there is no prospect of a safe return.

5.7 Staff will consider incidents, such as violence in SSJ accommodation settings or services, abusive phone calls, intimidation or harassment by the alleged perpetrator, and will address this in any safety planning. Safety planning is completed in collaboration with the service user/resident and could involve a broad range of support, which may include but is not limited to:

- a safe word or phrase highlighting when the survivor is at risk;
- change of accommodation setting, ie, a move to a different property;
- visitor exclusion in the accommodation where the survivor is located (if possible);
- in mutual agreement, hold the service user or resident's bank card in the service safe if appropriate;
- mutual agreement in how staff should respond if the perpetrator makes contact with the service;
- ensure regular contact with the service user or resident (may include support to purchase a phone);
- out of hours monitoring from the Operational Security Team (OST);
- Multi Agency Risk Management meeting (MARM)
- support the service user or resident to specialist support agencies;
- use other existing policies; for example, the managed money policy or safeguarding policy.

5.8 All staff are responsible for the accurate and timely recording of information on the relevant case management system(s). This includes escalating to management or support staff, referrals to safeguarding where appropriate, serious incident reporting.

## 6. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

6.1 SSJ respect service user and residents right to privacy and will never force anyone to share any information they do not want to.

6.2 When working with partnership agencies, SSJ may need to share some information about the service user or resident. Information will only be shared with consent, unless there is a risk to the safeguarding of children or a vulnerable adult and it is a duty of care.

6.3 Staff should actively encourage service users and residents to seek ongoing support from specialist agencies.

6.4 Staff may initiate and potentially chair a MARM dependent on risk. Support can be sought through the Organisational DA Lead or Deputy DA Lead. This can also be completed through the safeguarding process with the support from the Safeguarding Lead.

6.5 It may also be appropriate for safety plans, risk assessments and risk management plans to be shared with other agencies. Consent should be sought, but dependent on risk it may be considered a duty of care. If staff require further advice, managers, the DA Leads will be able to provide further clarity.

6.6 Dependant on risk, a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) referral should also be considered.

## 7. AWARENESS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

7.1 SSJ will widely publicise information to raise awareness about domestic abuse, advising service users and residents how to get help should they need it. SSJ will also support or highlight national campaigns to increase awareness.

7.2 SSJ will ensure employees and managers undertake training to increase staff and managers awareness and knowledge as how to support service users and residents experiencing domestic abuse. Information and briefings will make sure that line managers and relevant employees are able to:

- identify if a service user or resident is experiencing difficulties because of domestic abuse;
- respond to disclosure in a sensitive and non-judgemental manner;
- provide information and support, including referrals to specialist agencies;
- complete a DASH risk assessment and risk management plan;
- discuss safety planning, considering practical support as needed (examples set out in section 5.7).

7.3 SSJ will keep an up-to-date list of a range of local and national agencies which may be able to offer advice or support depending on the survivor's circumstances. This will be held on the SSJ Intranet which all staff will have access to.

## **8. PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE**

8.1 SSJ does not condone domestic abuse perpetrated by individuals under any circumstances.

8.2 SSJ recognises that the use of violence and abusive behaviour by a service user or resident, whenever this occurs, as a crime. It may also be appropriate to refer to the organisations Safeguarding Lead. SSJ reserves the right to take the appropriate action.

8.3 SSJ will treat any allegation or disclosure of a domestic-abuse-related offence on a case-by-case basis, aiming to reduce risk and support change.

8.4 SSJ will encourage and support perpetrators to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds.

8.5 SSJ recognises that both the survivor and perpetrator may both be service users or residents of the organisation. Where this is the case separate support workers should be appointed using a collaborative approach. The safety of the survivor should always take precedent.

## **9. EQUALITIES CONSIDERATIONS**

9.1 SSJ provide a variety of ways that service users and residents can talk about domestic abuse to staff they feel comfortable with.

9.2 SSJ recognises that survivors' experiences of domestic abuse may in part be defined by their background, for example; economic status, gender, sex, sexual orientation, ability, age, religion, ethnic group, immigration status. SSJ also recognises this intersectionality and understands that certain individuals may face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. SSJ will consider the individual needs of each survivor when tailoring the approach.

9.3 Although domestic abuse can affect anyone, certain people may be disproportionately affected or particularly vulnerable and some groups are affected by specific forms of domestic abuse. SSJ also understands there are cultural and other barriers to reporting domestic abuse, so will take all of this into account in the support that is provided.

9.4 SSJ will train employees to understand how domestic abuse differently affects individuals and work in partnership with specialist providers to act and make sure staff get the right support. SSJ will partner with and support local organisations with all relevant experience and understanding to better support survivors' needs.

## **LOCAL AND NATIONAL SUPPORT AVAILABLE**

**Aurora New Dawn – Portsmouth – 023 9247 9254**

**Stop Domestic Abuse – Portsmouth – 023 92065494**

**Portsmouth Abuse and Rape Counselling Service:**

**Women 023 9266 9511/ Men 023 9266 9516**

**Yellow Door – Southampton – 023 8063 6313**

**PIPPA – Southampton – 023 80917917**

**Hampshire Domestic Abuse Service – 0330 165112**

**Men’s Advice Line – 0808 801 0327**

**National LGBT & Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0800 999 5428**

**Hampton Trust – 023 8000 1061**

**Refuge** [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk) Refuge is one of the largest single providers of specialist accommodation and services to women and children escaping domestic violence, supporting over 1,000 women and children every day

**Women’s Aid** [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk) Women’s Aid is the national domestic abuse charity that helps up to 250,000 women and children every year. They work to end violence against women and children and support over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the country.

**Respect** [www.respect.org.uk](http://www.respect.org.uk) Respect is the UK association for professionals working with domestic violence perpetrators, male survivors and associated support services. The organisation’s key aim is to increase the safety of those experiencing domestic violence through promoting effective interventions with perpetrators.

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**GALLOP** [www.gallop.org.uk](http://www.gallop.org.uk) Gallop provides support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experiencing domestic abuse.

**Men's Advice Line** [www.mensadvice.org.uk](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk) The Men's Advice Line offers practical advice, information and support to male victims of domestic abuse as well as concerned friends and families