

Joint Tenancies and Domestic Abuse



Delays in accessing emergency accommodation due to Universal Credit joint claim

Homeless application duties often lead to private rented offer

Survivors unaware they are a joint tenant and not aware of rights and implications

Most Common Issues

Current legal options available to survivors are limited, costly and time consuming

Solutions often lead to either survivor or abuser becoming homeless. This may not reduce risks

Delays in accessing policies and procedures from Social Landlords

Joint Tenancy Example

- *Survivor had a joint tenancy with a Local Authority for 15 years. Subjected to domestic abuse by her husband.*
- *Informed housing officer of 'relationship issues'. Housing officer gave limited information and signposted tenant to another team.*
- *Survivor felt her options were to remain in an unsafe home, pursue lengthy and costly legal proceedings with uncertain outcomes or present as homeless.*
- *Survivor was concerned that her husband would become homeless if disclosed domestic abuse and was concerned that one of her children would choose to stay with him.*
- *Survivor chose to not contact tenancy team and instead decided to make a homeless application to the same borough.*
- *Homeless officer informed survivor that she would likely be offered emergency accommodation out of London and would only receive an offer of private rented.*



Joint Tenancy Outcome

- *Survivor received a private rented offer on outskirts of other side of London and was told that refusal would result in case closure.*
- *Accepted the offer and moved with two children.*
- *The social landlord confirmed that her principal home had changed. As a result, she lost her lifetime social tenancy. The perpetrator remained in the previous property.*
- *Survivor was then referred to one of our community-based services for ongoing domestic abuse support. We became aware of previous housing issues retrospectively.*



Build Partnership working with specialist Domestic Abuse Services and reciprocal agreements with other LAs /Registered Providers



Improved responses to disclosures

All Domestic Abuse policies should include specific directions on supporting survivors with a joint tenancy.



Reflections &



Improved joint working and information sharing across tenancy and homeless teams.

Recommendations

Review allocation policies. Award Additional and Reasonable preference for social tenants subjected to DA.



Pledge to not give private rented offers to tenants who have fled social tenancy due to domestic abuse.

PRINCIPLES OF SURVIVOR CHOICE, SURVIVOR SAFETY AND PERPETRATOR ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGHOUT

Thank you

