

**13<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

**For Immediate Release**



## **Local Housing Provider Speaks Out On Domestic Abuse**

Local housing provider St Leger Homes of Doncaster is this week taking the opportunity to raise awareness of domestic abuse locally – calling on people suffering violence to get the help they need.

Figures provided by South Yorkshire Police show that between April 2016 and December 2016 in Doncaster:

- 2160 domestic abuse crimes were committed
- The total number of domestic abuse incidents recorded were 6623
- The number of repeat victims numbered 2310
- 414 cases were reviewed by MARAC (the multi-agency risk assessment conference, which looks at the most serious cases of domestic abuse) – 172 of these cases were repeat cases.

Paul Tanney, Chief Executive of St Leger Homes, said:

“Domestic abuse can take many forms and can affect people from any background. We want people across Doncaster to know how to get help, if they need it – and that is why we are talking about domestic violence this week, attempting to raise awareness and tackle any stigma that exists. Domestic abuse in any form is simply unacceptable – and as a local housing provider we want to let people know what support is in place to our tenants who might be worried about coming forward. The first step is often the hardest, but we will always do everything we can to support in this difficult situation – particularly in helping people to maintain their tenancies, where that is appropriate.”

Andrea Parkinson, Service Manager for Riverside Care and Support at Doncaster Domestic Abuse Services, said:

“It’s good news that people are raising awareness around the effects of domestic abuse in Doncaster. We see first-hand every day the effects of domestic abuse on individuals and families. We offer support and counselling to anyone facing abuse – not just through our refuge, but also through our support we provide in the community.”

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, or if you want help to change your abusive behaviour, you can **call the confidential domestic abuse helpline on 0800 4701 505** or email [domesticabusehelpline@riverside.org.uk](mailto:domesticabusehelpline@riverside.org.uk)

The helpline is open from 9am to 10.30pm Monday to Friday, and all calls will be answered by experienced advisers who understand your situation, and who will be able to refer to the most appropriate service to get further help.

If you are at immediate risk of harm, please call 999.

Detective Superintendent Lisa Ray, South Yorkshire Police, said:

“I want to reassure victims of domestic abuse that we are always here for you, we will listen to you and we will do everything we can to help you.

“We can meet you somewhere where you feel comfortable and safe and through our Safeguarding Adult Teams, we will do our utmost to provide you with the support and protection you need.

“After you’ve reported the abuse, our support doesn’t stop there and we work alongside a number of partner agencies to continue to provide help, so that you can move forward with your life.

“Please call us on 101 to report an incident or always call 999 in an emergency.”

**ENDS**

Editor’s notes:

### **How Can St Leger Homes Help Those Facing Domestic Abuse:**

We can help you:

- Remain in your current accommodation with support
- Access a private interview room with a free telephone
- Get in touch with partner organisations for specialist support
- Get advice on rent and housing benefits and debt
- By fitting extra security to your home under the Safe & Secure Scheme. (An assessment will be carried out by the Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) unit or

the Independent Domestic Violence Advisory (IDVA) service to check if and what additional security measures may be required)

- With housing support should you need to move from your current home – this may be in the form of the local domestic violence refuge or contact with our Home Options service in emergency situations
- With housing advice that may help you to remain in your current accommodation where you may be experiencing domestic abuse or sexual violence – if that is what you want to do.

### **Frequently Asked Questions We Receive About Domestic Abuse:**

#### **If I leave my home what will happen?**

*If the person being violent to you is your partner it may be possible to reach a voluntary agreement whereby your partner leaves and agrees to you having sole tenancy or ownership of the property.*

*If a voluntary agreement is not possible it may be necessary to go to Court and ask the judge to award the home to you (and your children). A Solicitor, the CAB or St Leger Homes Home Options officers, can give you further advice on the options available to you.*

#### **If I lose the rights to my property will St Leger Homes Re-house me?**

*Under the Housing Act 1996 Part VII, (Homelessness) St Leger Homes has a duty to provide advice and assistance and if necessary temporary accommodation to persons who it is considered have suffered or are at risk of physical violence/abuse.*

*A Home Options officer will consider your individual circumstances and provide you with the appropriate confidential advice and assistance.*

*Under the Homelessness Legislation, a person must do everything reasonably possible to retain their property. Consequently, you should not voluntarily surrender your tenancy, or relinquish your rights of occupancy until a decision has been reached on your homeless application as it could seriously jeopardise any application you make to St Leger Homes under the homeless persons legislation if you do.*

*The Police can arrange to place a 'TAG' on a victims address on the Police National Computer so they know the situation when the victim calls them.*

For more information about Doncaster Domestic Abuse Services, please contact Andrea Parkinson, Service Manager for Riverside Care and Support on 0800 4701 505, or email [helpline@riverside.org.uk](mailto:helpline@riverside.org.uk).

For more information about Doncaster Domestic Abuse Services, please visit: <http://doncasterdomesticabuse.co.uk/>.

For more information about Riverside, please visit: [www.riverside.org.uk](http://www.riverside.org.uk).

For more information about this press release or the work of St Leger Homes of Doncaster, please contact the Communications Team at St Leger Homes on 01302 736 924 or email [communications@stlegerhomes.co.uk](mailto:communications@stlegerhomes.co.uk).

St Leger Homes is an award-winning social housing organisation which provides housing services across Doncaster and manages the council's 21,000 properties. It also works to build confident communities working with its customers and partner agencies.

For more information about St Leger Homes, please visit [www.stlegerhomes.co.uk](http://www.stlegerhomes.co.uk).