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**RE: Launch of Devon Housing Advice and Homelessness Departments:
Domestic Abuse Code of Good Practice**

The attached document has recently been developed by the Devon Strategic Housing Group, it sets out what victims of domestic abuse who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and organisations working with victims, can expect from Local Authority homelessness services. The document hopes to address the issues raised at the November 2005 ADVA Survivors Conference.

Women's Aid, DV Co-ordinators, Housing Associations, and Housing Departments have all been involved in the development of the document, which has been widely circulated in draft form.

There will always be an element of difference in the way Local Authorities run their services. The nature of each Local Authority being an organisation with different resources, internal structures, rural and urban locations, priorities and pressures all mean that consistent services across a wide area are difficult to achieve. However, this document will mean that the homelessness departments across Devon are working to the same set of principles, and it should help to avoid scenarios where victims are receiving very different levels of service depending on where they approach for help.

Alongside the code of good practice we hope to work with SEEDS Devon to develop a smaller easy to read leaflet with summary information. This will be widely distributed and will help individuals understand what they can do to access help from housing departments and what they can expect to be provided.

The code of good practice will be launched during the Regional Awareness Week in November 2006. It will be circulated to all organisations working with victims of domestic abuse in Devon and will be available for download on the DSHG website (www.dshg.org.uk).

The Devon Strategic Housing Group is committed to improving services. In order to understand the impact that this document has had we will be writing to you in 12 months time for your input into a monitoring and review exercise. In the meantime should you have any queries or comments regarding the policy and procedures, please direct them through myself in the first instance.

Kind Regards

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