Domestic Abuse Policy (Tenants)

Version Number	1.3
Date Applies From	17/11/2023
Policy Owner	Executive Director of Homes
Next Review Date	17/11/2026
Strategy Link	Customer focused and equitable services Safe, well maintained, sustainable and affordable homes

Key connected legislation/regulation:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing 2014
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Family Law Act 1996
- Housing Act 1988
- Housing Act 1985

Annual Checks

Policy owners should ensure that an annual check of hyperlinks, roles, and names is undertaken. These checks are in addition to formal review process. Please see Policy and Procedure framework guidance for further details.

If you need this information in an alternative language please call

0161 605 7260

For other formats please call

0300 123 5522

Introduction

ForHousing owns properties which are spread over a large geographical area and therefore there will be reference in part of this policy to specific areas; the policy will otherwise be common between the areas.

Strategic Statement

Our vision is to positively impact the lives of our social housing tenants by providing safe, well-maintained homes and deliver customer focused equitable and efficient services.

Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse can have a devastating impact on the lives of their victims and their actions can result in injury, trauma and potentially death.

Domestic Abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of age, background, gender, religion, sexuality or ethnicity. However, statistics show most Domestic Abuse is carried out by men and experienced by women.

The policy applies to anyone living in our properties or receiving a service from us. We have a separate policy which applies to ForHousing colleagues, contractors, and volunteers.

This policy sets out how ForHousing will respond to anyone suffering from Domestic Abuse and the key principles that underpin our response. The policy also sets out how we will hold perpetrators to account.

The policy recognises the need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies with greater experience of Domestic Abuse in order to reduce the risk of harm to victims.

Our aim is to support victims of Domestic Abuse by:

- Enabling staff to identify Domestic Abuse through training.
- Speaking to victims and taking account of any safety concerns around communication.
- Listening and believing their account.
- Working with them to assess risk and agree an appropriate action plan.

We will work with relevant external agencies and share information appropriately, in line with GDPR and our data sharing protocols.

We will work with victims ensuring we stay focused on their individual needs and the needs of their family/ household.

This policy is supported by the ASB Procedure and the Safeguarding Procedure.

Scope of Policy

This Policy sets out how ForHousing will endeavour to tackle Domestic Abuse and applies where the alleged perpetrator and/or the victim lives in, or is visiting, a property owned by ForHousing or is within a neighbourhood where ForHousing has homes.

Definition of Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines abusive behaviour as:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- controlling or coercive
- violent or threatening
- financial
- economic
- emotional

Domestic Abuse can encompass, but is not limited to, the above types of abuse. It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.
Both parties must be 16 and over and “personally connected”, defined as being married or civil partners; or have agreed to a marriage or civil partnership; are or have been in an intimate personal relationship with each other; or have a parental relationship with same child; or are relatives. Domestic Abuse can also occur between adult children and parents, or those in similar relationships.

Children

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims/survivors of Domestic Abuse. Any reference in the Act to a victim of Domestic Abuse includes a reference to a child who (a) sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse, and (b) is related to either of the parties.
Children living in households where Domestic Abuse occurs are recognised as victims of that abuse in their own right and our approach reflects this. The safety of all victims is our priority, and we will inform statutory services where we believe that a child is harmed or at risk due to Domestic Abuse.
We will also make appropriate safeguarding referrals in respect of any vulnerable adult who may also be impacted by the abuse.

ForHousing will ensure that employees are familiar with the statutory definition of Domestic Abuse, and with the abusive behaviours detailed within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 through the mandatory e-learning package and bespoke training for front line staff.

Response to Domestic Abuse

ForHousing will acknowledge and triage a report within one working day and arrange to

discuss the report with the victim and interview the alleged perpetrator (where appropriate and safe to do so) within two working days.

Obligation of Tenants

ForHousing's tenancy agreements set out the tenant's responsibilities to behave in a reasonable manner and to ensure that their family and any visitors do so as well. They include specific clauses regarding ASB which includes Domestic Abuse. ForHousing will take appropriate action against perpetrators of Domestic Abuse if they do not comply with the conditions of the tenancy agreement.

Multi-agency Working

Many of ForHousing's Domestic Abuse cases will require the involvement of other agencies and services to ensure our approach is victim focused. ForHousing will work with partner agencies such as the Police, Council and other providers as well as support services, for example Social Services, Education, Health, Youth and Fire Services. The latter can include carrying out joint interviews or home visits to Victims or Perpetrators to assess support needs or issue warnings.

ForHousing is involved in multi-agency meetings such as action planning meetings to discuss victims and/or perpetrators, Community Safety Partnership meetings, MARAC (high risk Domestic Abuse) and Child Protection Professionals meetings.

Support for Victims

ForHousing will ensure that appropriate support is provided on a case-by-case basis. This will include carrying out a comprehensive CAADA-DASH Risk Identification checklist ensuring that the victims support needs are met throughout the duration of the case.
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- support for victims (and their families, where required) tailored to their individual needs, including out of hours support and pre and post court support.
- a tailored approach to support victims with protected characteristics.
- referrals to other agencies such as IDVA services, Drug and Alcohol services, Mental Health, Social Services and language translation services.
- advice around housing.
- additional security measures.

There may be limitations to what ForHousing can do to help if the victim wishes to remain anonymous or does not want to accept support.

Action Against the Perpetrator

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 specifies that perpetrators of Domestic Abuse should be held to account. Committing Domestic Abuse in a ForHousing property is a crime and a breach of tenancy. ForHousing is committed to managing Domestic Abuse cases on an individual basis, with a survivor focused approach whilst holding perpetrators to account.

We will work alongside victims and survivors to ensure that any action we take is done so in partnership with them and their wishes will be considered. We will consider appropriate action to take against the perpetrator. However, we will not take action against the perpetrator if it may increase the risk to the victim. Our main priority is to ensure the victim's safety and wellbeing. In circumstances where it is appropriate to do so, we may refer perpetrators to Domestic Abuse perpetrator programmes.

We will manage any breach of tenancy agreement by perpetrators in line with the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure.

Support for the Perpetrator

ForHousing will ensure that appropriate support is provided on a case-by-case basis. Referrals can be made to specialised support services to help perpetrators engage with therapeutic interventions aimed explicitly at addressing their attitudes and behaviours. This approach fosters increased accountability, motivation to change, and readiness for structured behaviour change programmes.

Data Protection, Confidentiality and Information Exchange

ForHousing will not disclose any information about, or provided by, a victim without their consent unless there are safeguarding issues that could impact on the safety of children or vulnerable adults or where there may have been a crime committed.
All information shared in respect of perpetrators will adhere to the principles of data protection and in accordance with legislation as it relates to information sharing between agencies for the purposes of the reduction of crime and disorder.

Equity and reasonable adjustment statement

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Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

We value diversity and work to create an inclusive environment for our customers and colleagues, where everyone has access to the same opportunities. We welcome our responsibility to comply with equalities legislation and regulatory requirements that relate to equity, diversity and inclusion and aim to do more. Through our activities we aim to remove systemic barriers to equal opportunities and eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment, and victimisation within our organisation.

We are committed to providing excellent customer services, which are fair, equitable and inclusive. As such, we will endeavour to understand and make any reasonable adjustments required for customers in line with ForHousing's Reasonable Adjustment Statement and the Equality Act 2010. Any reasonable adjustment provided will be recorded and kept under active review.

Implementation and Communication

Our Neighbourhood Services Teams will have day to day responsibility for delivering this Policy.

If employees become aware that there are problems with effective operation of this Policy or the associated procedures, they should report this to the Policy Owner. This feedback will be incorporated into the policy and procedural review process.

Monitoring, Recording, Reporting

ForHousing will monitor and report performance in compliance with this Policy through the in-house IT system, performance indicators and customer satisfaction feedback.

This Domestic Abuse Policy will be available to all employees through the intranet and via ForHousing websites for customers and partner agencies. Regular training will be provided to relevant employees on all ASB policies and procedures.

Related Documents

Policies, procedures and website pages in the following areas:

- ASB
- Domestic Abuse workplace guidance
- Hate Crime
- Safeguarding
- Data Protection
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/352562/ASB_Guidance_v8_July2014_final__2_.pdf

Co-production

Inclusive Decision-Making Framework (IDMF) completed and consultation with EDI Excellence Group

Approval & Review History

With effect from 23/10/2024 the approval route for the Domestic Abuse Policy (Tenants) is:

SLT - EMT

Date	Version	Approved by	Detail
17/11/2023	V1	Executive Management Team representative(s)	New Policy, Inclusive Decision Making Framework review and advise 26/09/2023, Health and Safety review and advise 17/11/2023,

Date	Version	Approved by	Detail
			Data protection impact assessment 12/06/2023, Legal review and advise, Human Resources review and advise 17/11/2023
04/07/2024	V1.1		Addition of ‘economic abuse’ in definition of Domestic Abuse. Addition of new section entitled support for perpetrators.
26/07/2024	V1.2		Equity and reasonable adjustment statement added
21/05/2025	V1.3	Community Safety Manager	Copied text from old template to new template