



Domestic Abuse Policy

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1. Aim and scope of policy

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure that victim/survivors of domestic abuse receive effective support and advice that prioritises their safety, autonomy and wellbeing, within our remit as a social housing provider. This policy aims to minimise the risk of further abuse or domestic homicide and improve victim/survivor outcomes through coordinated, trauma-informed housing services.
- 1.2 The policy ensures full compliance with statutory requirements, alignment with sector best practice, and integration of victim and survivor perspectives.
- 1.3 Our customers include tenants, leaseholders and household members across all tenures who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse, as well as perpetrators of domestic abuse, where appropriate.
- 1.4 Domestic abuse can touch lives in different ways so all staff should have an awareness of how to recognise possible signs of domestic abuse and what actions to take. The policy is primarily for front line staff who have close contact with customers, such as the teams within the Customer Operations Directorate.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 We adopt the statutory definition from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which defines Domestic Abuse as any single incident, course of conduct or pattern of abusive behaviour between individuals aged 16 or over who are 'personally connected' to each other.
- 2.2 Children who see, hear or experience the effects of the abuse and are related to either of the parties are also considered victims of domestic abuse.
- 2.3 Behaviour is considered 'abusive' if it consists of any of the following:
 - physical or sexual abuse
 - violent or threatening behaviour
 - controlling or coercive behaviour
 - economic abuse (where the behaviour prevents or hampers their ability to get, use or keep money or property, or obtain goods and services
 - psychological
 - emotional or other abuse

This includes incidences where the perpetrator directs their behaviour at another person (e.g. a child).
- 2.4 Definition of being 'Personally connected'

- they are, or have been, married or civil partners to each other
- they have agreed to marry one another or have entered into a civil partnership agreement (even if it didn't go ahead)
- they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- they are or have been parents or guardians to the same child
- they are relatives

2.5 'Victim' and 'survivor' are terms used to describe people directly affected by domestic abuse, including those who have witnessed it. In this policy, we will use the term victim/survivor.

3. Policy

3.1 Domestic abuse is a serious and widespread issue that affects individuals across all backgrounds and communities. It undermines safety, wellbeing, and housing stability - core elements of our vision of More Homes, Bright Futures.

Domestic abuse is a crime under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and could be a breach of tenancy or lease.

3.2 Our Approach

3.2.1 Our approach is to treat victims/survivors in a sensitive, supportive and non-judgemental way. We will believe victims/survivors and treat disclosures seriously; treating them with respect and empathy. We'll protect confidentiality, sharing information only where lawful and necessary for safeguarding.

3.2.2 Domestic abuse can affect people from across all society, including women, men, people who identify as LGBTQ+, young people, older people, people with disabilities, and people from minority ethnic backgrounds. We realise that they have different needs and we'll treat people as individuals and promote inclusivity in our service delivery.

3.2.3 We'll prioritise cases involving domestic abuse to help keep customers safe, including victim/survivor contact, case management, additional security requests, tenancy changes and alternative accommodation requests.

3.2.4 We are aware of the damaging effect on children and young people of witnessing or experiencing domestic abuse. We'll refer to our Safeguarding policy and work with other agencies to help keep children and young people safe.

3.2.5 We encourage all individuals experiencing domestic abuse, or those impacted by it, to seek support and assistance. We also urge anyone who has concerns or becomes aware of potential abuse to report these promptly, enabling timely intervention and the provision of appropriate support

3.3 Safety Led Case Management

3.3.1 We'll take disclosures of domestic abuse from victim/survivors, friends and family, neighbours, VIVID staff and other agencies. We'll treat disclosures of domestic abuse as a priority and contact victim/survivors by the end of the next working day.

3.3.2 We'll carry out risk assessments, if needed, and make referrals using local domestic abuse referral pathways. We'll signpost victim/survivor to local and national organisations to help them with support and legal advice.

3.4 Keeping customers safe

3.4.1 Where needed, we'll offer additional security in their home to help keep victims and families safe. If necessary, we'll prioritise these works, which could include:

- Home security, such as bolts, locks, window alarms, security lights, CCTV doorbells
- Personal safety equipment like safe phones, personal alarms
- Referrals to phone monitoring services

3.5 Accommodation

3.5.1 We recognise that access to safe accommodation plays a role in reducing the risk to victim/survivors and their families, however housing alone is not the solution. We are part of a wider framework of agencies working collaboratively.

3.5.2 We'll support the victim/survivor to stay safe in their home and prioritise tenancy change applications where legally possible. We'll offer independent mediation to help joint tenants communicate safely and agree to 'remove' one person from the tenancy, when appropriate.

3.5.3 If a customer is not safe within their home, we will support them to relocate and we will work collaboratively with partner agencies to identify suitable options. However, availability of alternative accommodation may be limited due to factors such as local authority nomination rights and housing stock constraints.

3.6 Financial support

3.6.1 A flexible and sensitive approach will be applied to the management of arrears, recognising the need to prioritise safety and wellbeing. We'll allow customers a 'breathing space' from income court action when a disclosure is made relating to domestic abuse, for between 1 and 3 months.

3.6.2 We'll offer money and benefit advice specific to customers experiencing domestic abuse, leaving a domestic abuse relationship or experiencing financial abuse. Customers who are in hardship may be eligible for financial support including help with moving costs.

3.7 Working with perpetrators

3.7.1 We'll hold perpetrators to account for their behaviour and take tenancy enforcement action, where appropriate and safe to do. We'll consider the views of the victim/survivor in this.

3.7.2 We'll refer perpetrators who want to engage and change their behaviour to specialist support, acknowledging that perpetrators can be victims/survivors of previous abuse themselves.

3.8 Voice of victims /survivors

3.8.1 We'll respect the experiences of victim/survivors and use their feedback to improve and shape our services. We'll be sensitive to the situation of the victim/survivor and recognise that asking for feedback may not always be appropriate or safe.

3.9 Staff training

3.9.1 Training is provided to staff, dependant on their contact with customers and if they hold responsibility for domestic abuse cases.

3.10 Coordinated Community Response (CCR)

3.10.1 We work as part of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse, working with collaboratively with other agencies and domestic abuse forums.

3.10.2 Safeguarding is embedded and staff will take proactive steps to escalate concerns and follow statutory safeguarding procedures to protect adults and children at risk.

3.11 Publicity

3.11.1 We'll promote a clear message through our communication channels that we will support customers affected by domestic abuse. We'll encourage victim/survivors to seek help and urge witnesses to report concerns.

4. Responsibilities

- The Board and Executive Team provide strategic oversight.
- The Directors Group approve the policy.
- Senior managers embed the policy into operations, monitor performance, and make sure staff are trained.
- Customer Operations managers oversee case management and coordinate with external agencies.
- Frontline staff are responsible for recognising signs of abuse, responding sensitively, and following procedures for reporting and referrals.
- Specialist teams offer tenancy, financial, and safeguarding support, while all employees maintain awareness and uphold our commitment to customer safety.

5. Related documents

This policy aligned with the following legislation:

- Family Law Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Housing Act 1996
- Domestic Abuse Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Crime and Security Act 2010
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Clare's Law 2017 - also known as Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS)
- Homelessness Reduction Act
- General Data Protection Regulation (2018)
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Equality Act 2010, ensuring accessibility and inclusion for all victim/survivors.

This policy is related to the following documents:

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Housing and Neighbourhood Management Policy
- Anti-social Behaviour Policy

- Income Management Policy
- Lettings Policy
- Speak up Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

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Policy Owner	Beth Holmyard, Head of Neighbourhoods
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