



Havebury Housing Partnership

Domestic Abuse

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Relevant corresponding Policy (<i>procedures only</i>)			
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Author (<i>Document Owner</i>)	<i>Assistant Director of Customer & Housing Services</i>		
Accountable Director (<i>Relevant ED</i>)	<i>Director of Operations</i>		
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	<i>Other</i>		
Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment Outcome			
Legal Advice (inc date)	<i>Aligned to the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance guidance and best practice</i>		

1 Responsibility

- 1.1 Tenant Experience Committee is responsible for approval and oversight of this policy. The Tenancy and Estates Services Manager and Tenancy and Estates Services Co-ordinators and delegated staff are responsible for delivery.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all Havebury tenants and household members
- 1.3 In cases of staff experiencing domestic abuse or VAWG, we will follow separate Policy (Insert policy number here)

2 Definitions

- 2.1 **Domestic Violence and Abuse:** 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 abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:
 - psychological
 - physical
 - sexual
 - financial
 - emotional
- 2.2 **Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)** refers to the following range of serious crime types which are predominantly, but not exclusively, experienced by women and girls: Domestic Violence and Abuse; Sexual Offences; Stalking; Female Genital Mutilation (FGM); Crimes Said to be Committed in the Name of 'Honour'; Forced Marriage; Prostitution; and Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation
- 2.3 **Controlling behaviour:** a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
- 2.4 **Coercive behaviour:** an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their individual.
- 2.5 **Safeguarding:** Measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, especially children, young people and adults at risk, so they can live free from abuse, harm and neglect.
- 2.6 **Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)** is a regular local meeting to discuss how to help people at high risk of murder or serious harm. This includes a domestic abuse specialist (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor - IDVA), police, children's social services, health and other relevant agencies.

3 Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 This policy sets out how we will take steps to assist and support any person experiencing or threatened with domestic abuse, it applies to all customers including those living with our tenants.

- 3.2 As a Housing Provider we are well placed to recognise the signs of domestic abuse. It is absolutely essential that we take all reports of domestic abuse seriously and work positively and pro-actively with the victim to offer support.
- 3.3 To ensure that those who are subjected to domestic abuse are dealt with in a sympathetic and sensitive manner, in accordance with their needs.
- 3.4 Provide employees with clear and practical guidance to ensure we support and protect victims of abuse, allowing victims to have more information about their choices so that they feel empowered to fulfil their ambitions.
- 3.5 Work in partnership to offer support to perpetrators of domestic abuse who recognise and seek to change their behaviour. We will work with perpetrators to increase their motivation, skills and knowledge and build confidence and resilience to combat their abusive behaviour patterns.
- 3.2 To ensure that Board, committees and staff are informed of their responsibility and duties for providing assistance and taking action in cases of domestic abuse in a non-judgemental way.

4 Policy Statement

We will:

- 4.1 Provide a supportive and enabling environment which encourages individuals to report domestic abuse through a variety of methods and will investigate all reports that we receive.
- 4.2 While women and girls are disproportionately affected by all forms of VAWG, and some are gender specific such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), we will support those individuals experiencing VAWG or domestic abuse irrespective of age, gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, religion, social background or any other protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act.
- 4.3 Provide a sensitive and confidential response to anyone approaching us for assistance within one working day, subject to the individual being available to work with us.
- 4.4 Where necessary or required, we will provide individuals with translation or support services based on their needs or disabilities.
- 4.5 Ensure that individuals know they can meet staff in confidence at our offices or at an agreed choice of safe venue. We will also agree the method of contact the individual wishes us to use and treat this information in confidence
- 4.6 Agree an action plan with the individual experiencing domestic abuse or VAWG, including monitoring the situation and review at a frequency agreed with them.
- 4.7 For every witnessed, reported or suspected case of domestic abuse where there is an ongoing risk, we will assist individuals to complete the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) Risk Identification Checklist and safety plan and make relevant referrals to the Domestic Abuse, MARAC where

the assessment against the DASH Risk Identification Checklist meets the local authority threshold for referrals or using our professional judgement.

- 4.8 For cases which meet the threshold of a MARAC, or if we have safeguarding concerns, we have a legal duty to share information with relevant agencies.
- 4.9 Will attend, when invited, and participate in MARAC conferences where HHP tenants, or those living in HHP managed properties, are nominated for discussion.
- 4.10 Provide information, advice and details of support agencies to increase the safety of those experiencing domestic abuse where the DASH Risk Identification Checklist does not meet the local authority threshold for a MARAC referral and have these listed on our websites and in other documentation.
- 4.11 Make appropriate safeguarding referrals if we believe that a child, or a vulnerable adult, is at risk due to an abusive relationship
- 4.12 Work with our partners to support individuals experiencing domestic abuse and, where appropriate, take action against perpetrators who are our tenants, where we can do so without compromising the safety of the individual experiencing abuse.
- 4.13 Explore possible options for individuals, such as added security to their homes if they wish to remain in the property, or signpost and support for re-housing if they do not wish to stay in their homes. There may be cases where a direct let is considered and appropriate in the circumstances, and in conjunction with the local authority.
- 4.14 In the case of joint tenancies, the perpetrator has the right of access to the tenancy file. Measures such as logging cases as anonymous so they are not associated with the tenancy and blanking out confidential information about the individual experiencing domestic abuse will be taken to ensure that this is not seen by the perpetrator, or anyone representing the perpetrator.
- 4.15 Signpost perpetrators of domestic abuse to agencies who can offer them support, in order to prevent the abuse reoccurring
- 4.16 Ensure that our employees receive the appropriate level of specialist training to deal with disclosures of domestic abuse effectively.
- 4.17 Commit to training domestic abuse 'champions' who will be located across the organisation, and who will be confident in advising both staff and customers on domestic abuse issues.

5 Legislation and Regulation

5.1 This policy considers the following legislation, and staff are encouraged to refer to this legislation where cases require.

- The Housing Act 1996
- The Family Law Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998

- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Police and Justice Act 2006
- The Equality Act 2010
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- The Care Act 2014
- Clare's Law, also known as Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS)
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

5.2 Legislation allows us to take possession action where a tenant causes a partner or family member to permanently flee the home because of violence or threats of violence.

5.3 All occurrences of domestic violence will be covered by specific criminal offences and will be dependent on the circumstances of each incident.

6 Service Standards

6.1 Any person being supported within this policy will be treated under our service standards as follows:

- Where there is an immediate threat to life, response will be immediate
- If we receive a report of concerns, we will respond within one working day
- Referrals will be made in line with internal policies giving consideration to data protection.
- We will aspire to comply with our Customer Service Standards and provide a service which is 'right first time' for any report or notification of domestic abuse or safeguarding.

6.2 We will keep accurate and detailed records of incidents of Domestic Abuse

6.3 Actions taken will be monitored against the policy and procedures and reports presented to Board and Tenant Experience Committee in line with terms of reference.

7 List of related internal documents (including procedures relating to the Policy)

- All tenancy agreements and licences for residential premises
- HS035 Allocations Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- HS027 Starter Tenancy Policy
- HS015 Antisocial Behaviour Policy
- GP016 Data Protection Policy
- HS053 Safeguarding Adult & Children Policy
- HS016 Repairs & Maintenance Policy
- HS006 Equality and Diversity Policy
- HSF003 – Lone Working and Personal Safety Procedure
- P028 Domestic Abuse