



Domestic abuse policy

1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out our approach to dealing with domestic abuse and applies to all our customers and their household members.

2. Underpinning principles

The following legislation is of particular importance to this policy.

- Children Act 1989
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Family Law Act 1996
- Matrimonial Causes Act 1979

The Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance issued by the government under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, s84, is intended to increase awareness and inform the response to domestic abuse. It also conveys standards and promotes best practice.

The Regulator of Social Housing Neighbourhood and Community Standard 2024 states that we must have a policy for how we will recognise and effectively respond to cases of domestic abuse, and that we must cooperate with and support the appropriate local authority departments in meeting their duties to victims of such abuse. Our lettings policy also supports this duty.

We have also signed up to the sector-led initiative developed by the Chartered Institute of Housing, in partnership with Women's Aid and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance, called 'Making a Stand pledge' ([here](#)), which supports people who are experiencing domestic abuse.

3. Policy details

Definition of "domestic abuse" (Domestic Abuse Act 2021)

- (1) *This section defines "domestic abuse" for the purposes of this Act.*
- (2) *Behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if—*



Domestic abuse policy

- (a) *A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and*
 - (b) *the behaviour is abusive.*
 - (3) *Behaviour is "abusive" if it consists of any of the following—*
 - (a) *physical or sexual abuse;*
 - (b) *violent or threatening behaviour;*
 - (c) *controlling or coercive behaviour;*
 - (d) *economic abuse (see subsection (4));*
 - (e) *psychological, emotional or other abuse;*
- and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.*
- (4) *"Economic abuse" means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B's ability to—*
 - (a) *acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or*
 - (b) *obtain goods or services.*
 - (5) *For the purposes of this Act A's behaviour may be behaviour "towards" B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B's child).*
 - (6) *References in this Act to being abusive towards another person are to be read in accordance with this section.*
 - (7) *For the meaning of "personally connected", see section 2.*

Domestic abuse is unacceptable as it impacts on both individuals and communities. We will take all steps necessary to ensure that our customers and members of their household do not have to live in fear of violence or abuse from a partner, former partner or any other member of their household.

The safety of the customer is paramount. We will take a flexible and victim-centred approach in responding to cases of domestic abuse, which can include measures such as taking legal action against the perpetrator



Domestic abuse policy

or carrying out works to the property to improve its security.

We will be proactive in taking tenancy enforcement action against perpetrators where sufficient evidence is available, provided this can be done without compromising the safety of the victim.

We will work in partnership with statutory and voluntary agencies to prevent and tackle domestic abuse and support victims, making referrals where appropriate.

We will also ensure that customers are made aware of their rights and the services available to them, ensuring equality of access to everyone regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We will do this by providing information, advice and links to support agencies in a clear and easily readable format on our website ([here](#)).

We will provide a sensitive and confidential response to anyone approaching us for assistance in cases of domestic abuse. We will treat all information given to us in confidence, and will only pass on information to other agencies if given permission, unless we are required to do so by law or the information is necessary for the protection of children or vulnerable persons.

For cases which meet the threshold of a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), or if we have safeguarding concerns, we will share information with relevant agencies such as social services as we have a legal duty to do so. In Wiltshire, we and the other agencies concerned have signed up to the Wiltshire MARAC Information Sharing Agreement.

A MARAC is a meeting where information on the highest risk domestic abuse cases is shared between representatives of the local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors. If required, action plans can be agreed in order to minimise the risk to the victim and ensure support is offered.

We will follow our Safeguarding adults policy and procedure if we believe a vulnerable adult is at risk due to an abusive relationship, and will follow our Safeguarding children policy and procedure if we believe a child is at risk due to an abusive relationship.



Domestic abuse policy

We will consider direct lets and support applications for priority status for rehousing victims of serious domestic abuse where evidence is available.

We will also work with other agencies to seek appropriate support for perpetrators of domestic abuse in order to try and prevent the abuse from reoccurring.

The neighbourhood services team manager is our organisation's champion at senior level, and they own the activity we are doing to support people experiencing domestic abuse. They are supported at practitioner level by a neighbourhood manager.

We will ensure that all operational staff receive domestic abuse awareness training.

4. Signposting

- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007
- Housing Act 1988
- Housing Act 1996
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Public Order Act 1986
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- UK General Data Protection Regulation
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (also known as Clare's Law)
- Data protection policy
- Data sharing guidance document
- Domestic abuse procedure
- Lettings policy

Policy Review Date – 12 August 2027



Domestic abuse policy

Decision-making record

| Date | Meeting/Minute Reference | Version/ Amendment |
|------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 9 November 2021 | Executive team | 1 |
| 12 August 2024 | Executive team Some amendments have been made following a consultation exercise with customers, references to antisocial behaviour have been removed, some changes have been made to the wording and it has been updated. | 2 |
| 13 December 2024 | Darren Bird Reference made to the Wiltshire MARAC Information Sharing Agreement. | 3 |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |