



DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

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Introduction

At ng homes, we believe that our tenants and applicants should not live in fear of violence or abuse from a partner, former partner or any other member of their household. People experiencing domestic abuse will be treated in a sympathetic, supportive and non-judgemental way. A victim's disclosure alone is sufficient for them to be given advice and assistance as a matter of priority by staff.

Policy Summary

This policy establishes ng homes' commitment to assisting tenants and applicants who are suffering domestic abuse. At ng homes, we acknowledge Domestic Abuse to be a crime. Domestic Abuse impacts on the quality of life of victims, their family and their friends as well as impacting on a person's home

Relevant Legislation

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 Part1 & Part 2

Definition of Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse is defined as:

Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Psychological
- Controlling or coercive behaviour

Policy Aims

- Ensure that people experiencing domestic abuse can access appropriate services as early as possible and are given advice to allow them to make choices about what to do next
- Support people who are / have experienced abuse to rebuild their lives by working in partnership with them and other support agencies (e.g. ASSIST, Police, SWS)
- Ensure that where children and young people are affected by domestic abuse, they too have access to services as early as possible
- Support victims to employ the use of civil and criminal legislation which can offer them protection and also act as a preventative measure to avoid further abuse
- Ensure that people experiencing abuse are not deterred from reporting abuse
- Seek appropriate support solutions for perpetrators of domestic abuse to prevent abuse recurring
- Provide support and guidance to employees experiencing domestic abuse
- To enable people to fulfil their aspirations, we will promote the welfare of all victims of domestic abuse who come into contact with the Association
- To create a safe environment where victims of domestic abuse feel they can approach us, are encouraged to talk and are listened to, thus enabling them to make informed decisions about their lives and live more independently
- Provide timely and effective guidance by working in partnership with relevant agencies to respond to any cases of abuse that may arise. We seek to enhance the safety and security of those involved and support them to increase their confidence, resilience and empower themselves to live independently
- 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
- Work in partnership to offer support to perpetrators of domestic abuse who recognise and seek to change their behaviour. We will work with perpetrators, supported by relevant agencies, to increase their motivation, skills and knowledge and build confidence and resilience to combat their abusive behaviour patterns

Communications, Support and Advice

Managing reports of domestic abuse requires a multi-agency approach. ng homes will ensure that victims are placed in contact with appropriate agencies for specialist advice and support with their consent. ng homes do not provide legal advice or counselling services but refers to other specific agencies when required.

Confidentiality

ng homes staff will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information with the consent of the tenant concerned, unless;

- The information is necessary for the protection of children
- ng homes are required by law, for example ng homes staff cannot withhold information if being questioned by Police during a criminal investigation.

Key Policy Objectives

The key objectives of ng homes are to;

- Ensure all new and existing tenants are aware that domestic abuse is a criminal offence and a breach of the terms of their tenancy agreement
- Give those leaving a violent relationship access to accurate and appropriate advice about their housing options and about their legal rights and responsibilities in regard to their tenancy
- Tenants suffering any form of domestic abuse will be awarded priority within our allocation policy
- Adopt a victim centred approach to ensure that when we are dealing with reports of domestic violence incidents that the needs, views and support of the victims are at the forefront of our management of the case
- Ensure we risk assess each case and the victims individual vulnerability

- Ensure that our services in respect of dealing with domestic abuse are equally available to all sections of the community, recognising differences in language, culture, religion, race, age and gender
- Train and support staff to recognise, report and deal with domestic abuse effectively

Policy Links

This Domestic Abuse policy is linked to our Anti Social Behaviour Policy, our Hate Crime Policy, our Customer Care Policy, our Complaints Policy, our Allocation Policy and our Dealing with Antisocial Behaviour Procedure Manual "Getting it RIGHT first time".

Policy Review

Our Domestic Abuse Policy will be fully reviewed in March 2024.

Data Protection

ng homes recognise the importance of data protection legislation in protecting the rights of individuals in relation to personal information that we may handle and use about them, whether on computer or in paper format. ng homes will ensure that our practices in the handling and use of personal information during the processes and procedures outlined in this policy comply fully with data protection legislation. More information is available from our Data Protection Officer.