

Domestic Abuse Policy

Document ID/Version:	V1		
Executive Lead (Owner):	Executive Director of Customer Services		
Policy Author:	Director of Housing Services		
Strategic alignment:	The policy aligns with the regulatory consumer standards, specifically for the Neighbourhood and Community Standard – which requires providers to have clear, actionable policies for recognising and responding to cases of domestic abuse. It also aligns to wider government and legislative requirements, as well as reflecting the principles of the DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) Accreditation Framework, who have reviewed this policy.		
Review frequency:	Every 3 years	☒	Other (state period)
Previous review date:	N/A		
Date policy approved:	28 May 2026		
Policy approved by:	Executive Board		
Next policy review date:	May 2029		
IMPACT ASSESSMENTS			
Equality Impact Assessment			
Completed?	No	☐	Yes ☒
☐	If not required, state reason:		
Resident Impact Assessment			
Is this one of the agreed policies requiring resident consultation? Please refer to:	Yes	☐	No ☒
If yes, please confirm resident consultation has taken place	☐	Briefly detail changes arising from resident feedback:	
APPROVAL - To show transparency and accountability, specify whether policies have been approved by the Board/Executive/Committee. Clear approval lines strengthen governance, ensuring assurance and accountability.			
Approval journey:	Executive Team	Committee	Board
	☒	Yes ☐	Committee name(s) ☐
		Add name, otherwise state N/A	
Which Regulatory Standard does this Policy support?	Economic		
	Governance & Viability	Rent	Value for Money
	☐	☐	☐
Consumer			

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	Neighbourhood & Community	Safety & Quality	Tenancy	Transparency, Influence & Accountability
	☒	☐	☐	☐
Associated legislation	The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Housing Act 1996 Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 Care Act 2014 Equality Act 2010 Data Protection Act 2018			
Associated procedures	Domestic Abuse procedure			
Where is this policy to be published?	Website	Intranet	Both	
	☐	☐	☒	

Domestic Abuse Policy

1. Policy Statement

We are committed to supporting residents affected by domestic abuse with compassion, dignity and respect. We will work with residents to help them make informed choices and access the support they need to feel safe in their homes and communities.

We recognise that domestic abuse is a serious safeguarding and housing issue. We will respond promptly and sensitively to concerns or disclosures of abuse, working with specialist partners and support services to provide appropriate support for victim-survivors and their families.

2. Objectives, desired outcomes and strategic alignment

This policy is designed to ensure a consistent and effective organisational response to domestic abuse. As a housing provider, we are uniquely placed to identify concerns through our day-to-day contact with residents and take action to support their safety and wellbeing.

The objectives and intended outcomes of this policy are to:

1. Provide a clear and supportive approach to identifying and responding to domestic abuse, ensuring victim-survivors receive the right support, guidance and protection in a consistent way.
2. To deliver this consistent approach, we will recognise the impact of trauma and respond in a way that is sensitive, supportive and avoids causing further harm. This will be supported through comprehensive colleague training.
3. Promote early identification of domestic abuse through professional curiosity and effective use of available information, leading to timely and appropriate action that can be monitored and reviewed.
4. Strengthen partnership working with specialist agency Survivors Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) to deliver coordinated and effective support, with evidence of engagement and joint working outcomes.
5. Ensure housing responses prioritise safety, stability and tenancy sustainment, with outcomes tracked through case management and tenancy data.
6. Improve safety outcomes for victim-survivors and reduce risk of harm, informed by case reviews, feedback and safeguarding outcomes.
7. Support the organisation's strategic priorities by contributing to safeguarding responsibilities, enhancing resident wellbeing, and maintaining safe, secure and sustainable homes and communities, with performance reported through internal governance arrangements.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

All residents living in our homes, including tenants, leaseholders and shared owners.

This policy applies in all circumstances where domestic abuse is disclosed, suspected, or identified, including both in-person and remote contact, and across all housing and support-related activities.

We adopt the following definitions as part of this Policy:

SettleParadigm adopts the statutory definition set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Domestic abuse is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of abusive behaviour between individuals aged 16 or over who are personally connected to each other.

Behaviour is considered abusive if it includes:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse

Abuse may consist of a single incident or a pattern of behaviour. It may also include behaviour directed at a third party, such as a child.

- Children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse are recognised as victims in their own right.
- Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) refers to abuse that mainly affects women and girls, such as domestic abuse and sexual violence. It is described as gendered because it is linked to unequal power and social roles, with women more likely to experience serious, repeated and controlling abuse. Recognising this helps ensure responses address both the harm caused and the wider inequality behind it.

This policy does not apply to:

- Situations that fall outside the definition of domestic abuse as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Safeguarding concerns not related to domestic abuse will be managed under the appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures

4. Policy Principles

Our approach is underpinned by the following principles, which guide all responses to domestic abuse and ensure compliance with safeguarding responsibilities, relevant legislation, and organisational values.

- **Safety First**
We will prioritise the safety, wellbeing and rights of victim-survivors in all decision-making and responses and will take appropriate safeguarding action where required.
- **Trauma-Informed Practice**
We recognise the lasting impact domestic abuse and trauma can have on individuals and families. We will respond in a compassionate, supportive and non-judgemental way, treating residents with dignity and respect and working to avoid causing further harm or distress.
- **Early Identification**
We will use professional curiosity and available information to identify risk at the earliest opportunity.
- **Proactive Response**
We will act on concerns of domestic abuse promptly and appropriately and will not rely solely on disclosure, following our domestic abuse procedure which outlines the areas of support that can be offered. Including referrals to outside agencies such as Hert Homes Security Service to help secure your home and to SADA for specialist support and legal advice.

- **Empowerment and Choice**

We will support victim-survivors to make informed choices, respecting their views, circumstances and decisions.

- **Partnership Working**

We will work collaboratively with specialist services, safeguarding partners and relevant agencies to ensure coordinated and effective responses. Our tenancy support team, and domestic abuse champions actively seek out ways to highlight the support we can offer to victims and survivors.

- **Perpetrator Accountability and Risk Management**

We will take appropriate and proportionate action in relation to perpetrators of domestic abuse, where it is safe and appropriate to do so, while maintaining a primary focus on victim-survivor safety. We will support residents to access independent legal advice on joint tenancy matters and will work with them to explore the options available, in line with their wishes, including staying in their home where possible or moving to alternative accommodation

- **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

We will handle information securely and sensitively, sharing it only on a need-to-know basis and in line with safeguarding requirements.

- **Non-Disclosure Awareness**

We recognise that victim-survivors may not always feel able to disclose abuse. Our response will not depend solely on disclosure and will consider other indicators of risk.

- **Perpetrator Support Pathways**

We will work in partnership with relevant agencies to ensure perpetrators are signposted or referred to appropriate behaviour change or support programmes where it is safe to do so, while maintaining a clear focus on victim-survivor safety.

5. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We recognise that domestic abuse can affect anyone and may be experienced differently depending on identity, circumstance and protected characteristics. We are committed to ensuring that this policy is applied fairly, and that decision-making processes do not disadvantage or unduly advantage any individual or group, and that intersectionality of issues can be a prevalent issue when dealing with incidents of domestic abuse.

We will ensure our services are inclusive, accessible and responsive by:

- a) Considering protected characteristics and individual needs in all responses and decision-making
- b) Recognising and addressing barriers to support, including language, disability, culture, immigration status and financial dependence, and ensuring appropriate support is in place.
- c) Ensuring communication is accessible, appropriate and tailored to individual needs where required
- d) Working with specialist services to support diverse communities effectively by supporting victim survivors to access specialist domestic abuse services, including services such as DASH a specialist support for Black, Asian and minoritised communities, so they can receive advice and support that reflects their individual needs and experiences.
- e) Challenging discrimination, inequality and barriers to disclosure or access to support, including ensuring appropriate and adapted support for individuals who are neurodivergent.
- f) We recognise that domestic abuse can be experienced by anyone, including men, LGBTQ+ individuals and those whose experiences may be less visible or less frequently reported. We

are committed to ensuring inclusive, non-discriminatory access to support for all victim-survivors.

- g) We will ensure that equality considerations and any findings from Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are embedded into the implementation, monitoring and review of this policy.

6. Roles and responsibilities

The **Executive Board** are responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving this policy and any amendments.

The **Executive Director of Customer Service** is responsible for:

- Strategic oversight of this policy as the policy owner.

The **Director of Housing Services**, is responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented effectively, reviewed appropriately, and aligned with organisational safeguarding and housing responsibilities.

Operational responsibility for implementing this policy is held by relevant service areas.

All colleagues are responsible for:

- Applying professional curiosity and recognising indicators of domestic abuse
- Responding to disclosures in a safe, supportive and non-judgemental manner
- Escalating concerns promptly and appropriately to line managers, safeguarding representatives, neighbourhood teams, tenancy support services, or community safety partners. These colleagues are trained to assess whether a DASH risk assessment should be completed and/or whether a referral to MARAC is required.
- Maintaining confidentiality and complying with safeguarding and information-sharing requirements

The **Team Managers, Team Leaders, and Supervisors** (where applicable) are responsible for:

- Ensuring colleagues understand and apply this policy consistently
- Providing guidance and oversight in relation to domestic abuse concerns
- Ensuring appropriate escalation and referral routes are followed
- Supporting colleagues through supervision and safeguarding discussions where required

All Officers are responsible for:

- Investigating and managing reports or suspected incidents of domestic abuse in line with the relevant policies, procedures and legislative requirements.
- Assessing the case and identifying the best course of action to resolve the issue, from the full range of tools available, for both early intervention and support for the victim/survivor, and enforcement against the perpetrator.
- Keeping in regular contact with the victim throughout the duration of the case so they are kept informed and updated.
- Closing cases in a timely manner, advising all parties of the outcome.
- Logging and recording cases accurately in the case management system.
- Closing cases in a timely manner, advising all parties of the outcome.

Specialist and Safeguarding Roles

- Providing advice and guidance on domestic abuse cases
- Coordinating safeguarding responses and multi-agency working where required
- Supporting risk assessment and appropriate escalation
- Maintaining links with specialist domestic abuse and support services

The **Tenancy Sustainment & Support Team** are responsible for:

- Actioning referrals for support and providing feedback as required.
- Liaising with the relevant officer with responsibility for investigation of the case and providing appropriate support and advocacy for any resident referred to them (whether victim or perpetrator).

The **Legal Service Team** are responsible for:

- Providing legal advice and support to operational teams in connection with live or contemplated litigation.
- Ensuring SettleParadigm is appropriately represented at any relevant hearings at court, including by instructing external solicitors or counsel where appropriate.
- Obtaining external independent advice and legal services where appropriate and proportionate.
- Complete court applications and warrant requests for non arrears possession cases
- Ensuring compliance with Civil Procedure Rules, Practice Directions and directions given by a court in proceedings.
- Escalating high risk or concerning cases for senior leadership review where appropriate and proportionate.

7. Compliance/Key Performance Measures

This section should be read in conjunction with **Section 2 (Objectives, Desired Outcomes and Strategic Alignment)**, where outcome areas are defined. Performance measures and monitoring arrangements are aligned to these outcomes to ensure a consistent and measurable approach to delivery.

We will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through a range of qualitative and quantitative measures, including:

- a) Recording and monitoring domestic abuse-related cases and referrals within case management systems, with appropriate access controls and data protection safeguards
- b) Tracking engagement with specialist services and safeguarding partners to evidence effective multi-agency working
- c) Monitoring completion of relevant staff training to ensure appropriate awareness and capability across the organisation
- d) Reviewing outcomes relating to safety, risk reduction, and tenancy sustainment to assess the effectiveness of interventions
- e) Learning from audits, case reviews, complaints, and feedback to continuously improve practice
- f) Analysing trends and data to identify risk patterns, service gaps, and opportunities for improvement

Governance and compliance will be supported through internal assurance processes, including regular review against safeguarding, housing, and relevant regulatory requirements.

SettleParadigm incorporates lived experience through partner organisations whose staff have relevant experience, ensuring insight is gathered safely without directly involving residents in sensitive discussions. Safeguarding considerations underpin this approach. Resident input is also

included via the Customer Panel and Resident Panel, which contributed to the policy's development and review.

We will ensure the policy remains compliant at the point of implementation and is reviewed in line with legislative, regulatory, or operational changes, including statutory duties relating to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, housing and homelessness, and child safeguarding.

8. Related Policies, Procedures and Key Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies, procedures and key documents:

Related policies

- Safeguarding Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Eviction policy
- Lettings policy
- ASB and Hate Crime Policy
- Customer Care and Reasonable Adjustments policy
- Income Recovery and Arrears Policy
- Mutual Exchange Policy
- HR Policies and Procedures (including Staff Domestic Abuse Policy, as well as Employee Support / Wellbeing Policies)
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Related Procedures

- Domestic Abuse Procedures
- Safeguarding Reporting and Escalation Procedures
- Risk Assessment and Case Management Procedures
- ASB & Hate Crime Procedures

Key Documents and Legislation

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Equality Act 2010
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Housing Act 1996 (as amended)
- Housing Acts 1988 and 1983 (as amended)
- Care Act 2014
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Relevant statutory safeguarding guidance and local partnership protocols
- Applicable local domestic abuse partnership arrangements including MARAC

9. Version Control

Version control			
Date	Version	Approved By	Details of Amendments
May 2026	V1	Executive Board	New integrated Group wide policy