



Residents Domestic Abuse Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Domestic abuse is a serious crime that often takes place in the home. It impacts on the safety of individuals, households, and communities. We believe domestic abuse presents one of the highest risks to personal safety. We'll respond to all reports of domestic abuse as an emergency, within one working day.
- 1.2 Domestic abuse can affect anyone regardless of gender, gender reassignment, sexuality, age, disability, race, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership and pregnancy or maternity or any other protected characteristic.
- 1.3 The aims of this Policy are to improve the safety of our residents affected by domestic abuse. And prevent further incidents by encouraging early reporting and a rapid response.
- 1.4 We work with other agencies to ensure the safety of survivors, meet their needs, and take action against perpetrators, in line with the [national strategy](#).
- 1.5 Where we have significant stock and available resources, we'll support local authorities in meeting their duties to:
 - Develop a strategy
 - Commission services for survivors of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation.
- 1.6 We use the term 'survivor' as affirming language. Some prefer the word 'victim', used by members of law enforcement within the context of courtroom proceedings. Ultimately, we follow the lead of the person seeking support, as the journey from victim to survivor is unique to each person.
- 1.7 This Policy relates to all Southern Housing residents. We have separate policies for colleagues experiencing domestic abuse in their personal lives. When we deal with reports of domestic abuse we'll also refer to our [Safeguarding Adults Policy and/or Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy](#).

2.0 What is domestic abuse?

- 2.1 We use the [cross-government definition](#) of domestic violence and abuse, which says:

2.1.1 The behaviour of a person towards another person is 'domestic abuse' if:

- They are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected¹ to each other, **and**
- The behaviour is abusive.

2.1.2 Behaviour is abusive if it consists of any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse²
- Psychological, emotional, or other abuse.

It doesn't matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

2.1.3 Any reference to a survivor of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who:

- Sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse, **and**
- Is related to either party.

2.2 Domestic abuse can also occur through the actions of immediate and extended family members through unlawful acts including, but not limited to:

- Forced marriage
- Honour-based abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM).

2.3 The impact of domestic abuse ranges from loss of self-esteem to loss of life.

2.4 We encourage you to report domestic abuse, whether you're a survivor of, or a witness to, an incident. We deal with all reports of domestic abuse with sensitivity. If you're a witness and want to remain anonymous, we respect this.

2.5 We operate a survivor-centred approach when handling domestic abuse cases.

3.0 What is a survivor-centered approach?

3.1 We use the term 'survivor' to refer to someone who's experiencing, or has experienced, domestic abuse. If you tell us you're experiencing domestic abuse, we deal with it as domestic abuse.

¹ As defined by the [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

² Any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to acquire, use, or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services.

- 3.2 We deal with all reports in a non-judgemental manner. When a report is received, we'll ask whether the police have also been contacted. We advise survivors to call 999 if in danger of immediate harm, if safe to do so.
- 3.3 We don't require survivors to take legal action or contact the police before we provide assistance. Any action we take is with the survivor's consent. The only exception is if there is a risk of serious harm to you or others.
- 3.4 Applying a survivor-centred approach means we assist you to reach a decision which you feel best secures your safety. We do this by reviewing your accommodation, enabling the level of support you want and taking action against the perpetrator you feel is most appropriate.
- 3.5 We help you to get advice from either an internal or external domestic abuse specialist. We seek to ensure every resident reporting domestic abuse receives an effective response. Where possible, we offer the option of being interviewed by an officer of the gender, ethnicity and/or cultural background requested by you.
- 3.6 We don't usually charge survivors for the damage to property caused by the perpetrator. We set aside a dedicated discretionary fund for survivors, to support them in rebuilding their lives and homes.
- 3.7 To send a clear message and deter domestic abuse we take the strongest possible action against individuals committing domestic abuse and consider the safety of the survivor when deciding on appropriate action to take.

4.0 Perpetrator

- 4.1 We'll take a robust stance against perpetrators of domestic abuse; where possible we'll take actions against individuals committing domestic abuse, including non-residents.
- 4.2 If the perpetrator is a resident of our property, we'll consider taking appropriate tenancy action against them, including possession action.
- 4.3 We'll provide general housing advice to the perpetrator when requested.
- 4.4 Where the perpetrator is willing to confront their abusive behaviour, we'll refer them to the appropriate support services.
- 4.5 Any support or action plan offered to the perpetrator will be centred around the voice and safety of the survivor of domestic abuse.

5.0 If you don't feel safe in your home

- 5.1 We'll look at security measures to allow survivors to remain in their homes wherever possible.

- 5.2 We can help you access emergency accommodation provided by a local authority or a refuge. Southern Housing does not own any emergency accommodation. If you need permanent re-housing, we can consider you for a prioritised move.

6.0 What action do we take to prevent domestic abuse?

- 6.1 To prevent domestic abuse, we raise awareness and encourage reporting through training, campaigns, and promotion through our communication channels.
- 6.2 We'll ensure our employees receive appropriate training on domestic abuse.
- 6.3 We make new residents aware of key policies and the implications of joint tenancies.
- 6.4 Where appropriate we seek disclosure on a resident/potential resident through Clare's Law: a domestic violence disclosure scheme with two functions:
- ‘Right to ask’ – enabling someone to ask the police about a partner's previous history of domestic violence or violent acts
- ‘Right to know’ – allowing the police to proactively disclose information in prescribed circumstances.

7.0 What have we done to make sure this Policy is fair?

- 7.1 We completed an Equality Impact Assessment to consider the positive and negative impacts this Policy may have on people with protected characteristics under the [Equality Act 2010](#). This Policy should have direct and positive equality and diversity impacts.
- 7.2 We recognise some residents may need adjustments due to a language barrier, disability, cultural need, or vulnerability. In these circumstances, in line with our [Reasonable Adjustments & Vulnerable Needs Policy](#), we'll work with residents to ensure we consider their specific needs, on a case-by-case basis, provided it doesn't compromise health and safety to individuals or homes. This includes working in partnership with other agencies to ensure we manage and mitigate any known risks of safety and wellbeing.
- 7.3 We aspire to embed diversity and inclusion within the culture of our business activities.

8.0 Review

- 8.1 We will review this Policy to address legislative, regulatory, best practice, or operational issues.

Policy controls

Version 1.2 – effective 7 October 2025