



DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Office of National Statistics reports that around a quarter of women and one in seven men will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives with an estimated two million adults experiencing domestic abuse in 2017/18.
- 1.2 Government's consultation and draft domestic abuse bill 2019 reflects a widening understanding of what constitutes domestic abuse and KNH recognises the current government definition:

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 sexual orientation. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, economic and emotional forms of abuse.

- 1.3 Within this broader understanding, housing providers will likely see a rise in domestic abuse reports. However, domestic abuse is often hidden and can be hard to identify. Victims can find it difficult to come forward and abuse itself often extends to silencing those affected. Given its engagement with residents and communities and its access to homes, KNH has a vital role within DASP.
- 1.4 KNH believes that every resident has the right to a home free from all forms of abuse and will act directly to protect and support victims in its capacity as landlord and within Kirklees Council's Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership (DASP).

2. POLICY SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all residents living in and around KNH properties. It should act as a guide and statement of intent for residents and employees, contractors, and partners working across KNH services. KNH will respect the wishes of domestic abuse victims and will treat reports as confidential, excluding exceptional safeguarding circumstances.
- 2.2 This policy applies equally to all residents regardless of their protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Domestic abuse can affect anyone irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion.
- 2.3 This policy should be considered in conjunction with [KNH Employee Domestic Abuse Policy](#) and [Safeguarding Policy](#) and Kirklees Domestic Abuse Strategy 2019-21.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Aim 1:

Prevent and identify domestic abuse within KNH communities

Objectives:

- i. Keep accurate and secure data on domestic abuse within the bounds of data protection to aid decision-making
- ii. Support the rehabilitation of perpetrators to reduce repeat occurrences
- iii. Ensure employees understand how rent arrears, housing damage, and anti-social behaviour may be indicative of domestic abuse
- iv. Ensure that relevant staff are provided with ongoing learning and development to support their role

Aim 2:

Encourage and facilitate those affected by domestic abuse to come forward

Objectives:

- i. Signpost support and raise awareness through digital and print media in the form of an ongoing communication strategy utilising a wide spectrum of media including face to face, telephony, social media and digital
- ii. Identify risk and vulnerability in new tenancies
- iii. Instil confidence that inquiries will be treated sensitively and as a high priority and through learning and development equip staff to initiate conversations about abuse and deal with them confidently and sensitively

Aim 3:

Ensure that those experiencing domestic abuse can access empathetic, professional, and competent support from KNH

Objectives:

- i. Where victims wish to remain in their home, offer target hardening measures through additional security and signposting to financial and online security advice
- ii. Ensure that relevant employees understand the national and local regulatory and legislative framework
- iii. Offer impartial, discreet, sensitive, and non-judgemental advice and enable access to specialist sources of support through signposting and referral

Aim 4:

Establish close working relationships with key partners

Objectives:

- i. Work with police and legal services where action is sought against a perpetrator of domestic abuse
- ii. Prevent domestic abuse-related homelessness by supporting access to refuge and temporary accommodation and thereafter a return to a tenancy of equal security and length as that previously held
- iii. Where cases meet the threshold, work in partnership with the Daily Risk Assessment Management Meeting and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) processes

4. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

- 4.1 The KNH Board is responsible is responsible for mandating this policy and the Director of Neighbourhoods is the Executive lead.
- 4.2 It is the responsibility of service managers to implement procedures that effect the aims and objectives of this policy including the provision of ongoing learning and development.
- 4.3 The policy will be reviewed every 3 years, after a significant event or change to legislation.