

Domestic Abuse Policy

Document ID:	LAN-POL-1007					
Executive Lead (Owner):	Executive Director of Customer Service					
Author (Leadership Team member):	Director of Customer Service					
Which Strategy does this support?	Landlord Resident Strategy					
Review frequency:	Every 3 years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other (state period)			
Date created:	May 2019					
Previous review date:	March 2024					
Review date:	May 2025					
Next review:	March 2027					
Current status:	Draft	<input type="checkbox"/>	Final	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
IMPACT ASSESSMENTS						
Equality Impact Assessment						
STAGE 1 completed?	STAGE 2 required?	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		If not required, state reason:				
Customer Impact Assessment						
1) Is this one of the agreed policies requiring resident consultation? Please refer to: Our policies - Settle		Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2) If yes, please confirm resident consultation has taken plan		<input type="checkbox"/>	Briefly detail changes arising from resident feedback: (NOTE: CIA carried out in March 2024. This review was to move to the new template only.)			
APPROVAL						
Approval journey:	Executive Team	Committee				Board
		ARC	DAC	Ops	NRC	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Date approved:	ED Customer Services, 23 rd June 2025					
Which Regulatory Standard does this Policy support?	Economic					
	Governance & Viability	Rent		Value for Money		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Consumer					
	Neighbourhood & Community	Safety & Quality	Tenancy	Transparency, Influence & Accountability		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Associated legislation	• The Domestic Abuse Act 2021					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 • Protection from Harassment Act 1997 • The Family Law Act 1996 • Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 • Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 • Human Rights Act 1998 • The Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Policy • The Housing Act 1996 • The Equality Act 2010 • The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 • Neighbourhood and Community Consumer Standard
Associated procedure	A/A
Does this policy contain delegated authority?	

Domestic Abuse Policy

Introduction

Our purpose is to give residents a firm foundation on which to build their lives. Our vision is a safe, comfortable, and affordable home for every household.

This policy is aligned to our Landlord Resident Strategy and sets out our responsibilities and commitment to support residents who are victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

We're one of more than 300 housing associations that have signed up for the 'Make a Stand' campaign to support people experiencing domestic abuse. We made a pledge that we'll be clear about the support we offer and that our staff will be professionally trained to support victims of domestic abuse.

Purpose

Our duty when receiving a report of domestic abuse is to offer support within the scope of our role as a housing provider. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that when we are supporting victims/survivors of domestic abuse we act with compassion and that our response is impartial, proportionate and we provide appropriate information about the role of other services. The outcome we seek through our work with statutory agencies is to prevent and protect residents from domestic abuse.

We have increased our internal resource to 12 neighbourhood partners and 6 tenancy support partners, which allows us to support more victims/survivors and through increased contact, identify more cases of abuse. Alongside this, we have invested time and resources into:

- Enhanced training for colleagues to attend the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), ensuring we are always represented and acting in the best interests of the residents we are supporting.
- The SADA (Survivors Against Domestic Abuse) service through funding to support their ongoing work.
- Strong partnerships including with SADA, the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (IDVA), Adult and Child Social Services and local policing teams.

Scope

This policy applies to all residents living in a Settle home. It encompasses all forms of domestic abuse including, but not limited to:

- psychological/emotional
- physical
- sexual
- financial/economic
- harassment/stalking
- coercive control
- online/digital

The most dangerous time for a survivor of domestic abuse is when leaving the abusive partner.

All colleagues, including contractors and Board members, have a responsibility to those who are the victims of domestic abuse. Any concern or suspicion of abuse should trigger a response in every case.

We are committed to meeting the expectations of the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards in relation to domestic abuse.

Section 2 – Policy

2.1 Policy Principles

- Act in line with key legislation relating to domestic abuse and meet the obligations of the regulatory consumer standards.
- Identify and support those at risk of domestic abuse, with a focus on areas with higher deprivation levels.
- Help support victims/survivors to live in a comfortable and safe home.
- Offer a clear, accessible and safe environment for victims/survivors to contact us - including safe spaces where appropriate.
- Provide tailored support to residents when they need it, either directly from us or from one of our partner agencies; working in partnership to ensure specialist support is received.
- Safeguard victims/survivors of domestic abuse through joint working with partner agencies.
- Manage expectations of victims/survivors regarding the support we can provide within the scope of our role and in conjunction with specialist support partners, considering all appropriate options including safety measures to remain in their home, safe spaces and fleeing.
- Ensure a victim/survivor is comfortable with the actions we take.
- Take appropriate action against perpetrators where it is proportionate and our responsibility to do so; support our partner agencies to do the same.
- Case management monitored regularly through operational performance indicators.
- Apply learning from casework and reviews to improve the service.

2.2 Policy Detail and Outcome

Policy expectations:

- All front-line housing colleagues are trained and supported to respond to reports of domestic abuse, including training on providing advice regarding safety planning.
- Appointed domestic abuse champions are specially trained to provide additional support.
- Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) training for neighbourhood, tenancy support and community safety partners. MARAC is a meeting of professionals from various agencies to share information, assess risk and create action plans for high-risk domestic abuse cases.
- 100% of cases will:
 - Have an initial triage contact within 1 working day of receiving disclosure of domestic abuse.
 - Demonstrate evidence of the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) assessment being attempted with the victim/survivor and recorded on the case management system.
 - Have regular contact with victims/survivors; at least fortnightly, unless agreed otherwise.
 - Offer a referral to external specialist support such as SADA (Survivors Against Domestic Abuse) and IDVA services, ideally obtaining consent where possible.
- Increased referrals to perpetrator support programmes to reduce the reoccurrence of domestic abuse.
- Raised awareness through increased and targeted communication.
- Increased support offered to victims/survivors who have been identified in areas with higher levels of deprivation – utilising our data to identify at risk residents.

- Increased referrals made to partner agencies.
- Robust partnership working with relevant agencies, such as Police, safeguarding teams and specialist domestic abuse services.
- Increased support for colleagues who manage cases of domestic abuse, including the telephone counselling service and mental health first aiders.
- Survey feedback from victims/survivors and SADA case audits reviewed to identify areas for improvement and best practice and used to improve the service.

Desired outcomes:

- Victims and survivors feel safe and comfortable reporting domestic abuse – achieved through trained colleagues, effective case management and a multi-agency approach.
- Increased total number of colleagues who have completed MARAC training.
- Colleagues feel supported and capable in managing reports of domestic abuse.
- Victims/survivors are supported through increased contact and use of data.
- Partner agencies support residents for their areas of responsibility.
- Service improvements identified and implemented as a result of feedback received.
- Increased satisfaction from residents with the support provided.

During the last financial year (2024-25) we received 61 reports of domestic abuse. Our partner agency SADA audited a random sample of these cases each quarter. Overall, their feedback was positive with colleagues recording good case notes and ensuring that victims are supported and referred to specialist agencies as appropriate.

Section 3 – Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Key Roles and Responsibilities

We have a minimum of three colleagues who have received specialist training to attend MARAC meetings. This is to ensure victims are supported and information shared, ensuring our case management is effective.

We attend the Local Safeguarding Board. This partnership is made up of local key organisations and seeks to work together to keep adults, children and families safe from abuse. We also attend the North Hertfordshire Responsible Authorities group which is made up of the Police, Fire Brigade, Housing Associations and other partner agencies. North Hertfordshire is an area where 85% of our residents live.

Settle's Executive Director of Customer Services has strategic oversight of this policy as the policy owner and is responsible for conducting a review every 3 years, or sooner should there be a material change or if a more frequent review is required.

The Operations Committee, which operates under the jurisdiction of the Board, is responsible for reviewing and monitoring this policy.

Section 4 – Compliance and Enforcement

4.1 Compliance

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and Customer Impact Assessment (CIA) were conducted and the findings considered in developing this Policy. We are committed to doing as much as is practically possible to enable all residents to access and understand our services.

As part of this policy review, we gained feedback from an organisation we partner with, Survivors Against Domestic Abuse (SADA). SADA were supportive of the policy and the commitments we have made. They made three recommendations to increase its effectiveness:

- more information on safeguarding vulnerable individuals
- the link between deprivation and domestic abuse
- the use of surveys to capture the voice of the survivor

As a result of this feedback; increased reference to safeguarding vulnerable individuals has been made within the policy and we have included specific points on deprivation and using survey feedback.

We will monitor feedback from residents, including complaints, ensuring that we are continuing to improve the services and support we offer to all residents.

We will measure compliance with this policy through an annual self-assessment against the specific expectations of the regulatory standards.

Section 5 – Related Policies, Procedures and Key Documents

Related Policies

Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
Common Housing Allocations Policy
Complaints Policy
Data Protection Policy
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
Lettings Policy
Safeguarding policy

Related Procedures

Anti-Social Behaviour Procedure
Management Move Procedure
Safeguarding Procedure

Key Documents

Landlord Resident Strategy

Section 6 – Review, Approval, Publication

6.1 Review and Approval

This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner should there be a material change or if a more frequent review is required.

Section 7 – Document Control

Document Name	Domestic Abuse Policy
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Approval Date	23/06/2025
Approved By	Executive Director of Customer Services
Version Number	V1.0
Version History	May 2019
	March 2024
	May 2025

IMPACT ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE					
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT ATTACHED		Stage 1		Stage 2	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
CUSTOMER IMPACT ASSESSMENT Resident feedback		Attached <input type="checkbox"/>		N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
PUBLISHING REQUIREMENTS					
INTERNALLY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WEBSITE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SETTLE CONNECT	<input type="checkbox"/>

OFFICE USE ONLY	
RELEVANT 'APPROVAL LOGO' ADDED TO COVER	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Keywords for search function</i>	