

Domestic Abuse Policy

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the full version history of this policy, click HERE Please avoid referring to printed versions of this policy or saving it on shared/ individual drives. All policies and supporting resources can be found under 'Policy and Procedures' on the intranet. Printed and saved versions may quickly go out of date- contact policy@homegroup.org.uk for support and advice

1.0 Domestic Abuse policy statement

Home Group takes Domestic Abuse very seriously. We know that it can have a devastating impact upon those who are experiencing, have experienced, or are threatened with it.

We believe that all people have the right to live their lives safely and free from violence and abuse. We are committed to doing all we can to safeguard adults and children from the impact of Domestic Abuse whilst protecting and promoting individual human rights.

This policy reflects our approach to Domestic Abuse and how we do not tolerate it in any form. It demonstrates how we hold our customers who are perpetrators of Domestic Abuse accountable for their actions.

We recognise the different types of Domestic Abuse and are committed to understanding the dynamics of Domestic Abuse and the different tactics used by perpetrators to control their victims.

We know that Domestic Abuse can affect anyone and are dedicated to the equal protection from all types of Domestic Abuse regardless of **age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and/or sexual orientation**, as defined in The Equality Act 2010.

We are committed to raising awareness about Domestic Abuse. We make sure that information is publicly available to help our customers, colleagues, and the wider community recognise the signs of Domestic Abuse, know how to respond, the support we can provide and how other agencies can help.

We expect all colleagues to be responsible for raising concerns and reporting suspicions or disclosures of Domestic Abuse. Colleagues are required to act immediately without assuming that someone else will do it.

We make sure that our colleagues are trained to recognise the signs of Domestic Abuse and know how to respond appropriately. Colleagues have an enquiring approach particularly when responding to incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), rent arrears and repair types (i.e., repeated repairs) as we recognise these can conceal Domestic Abuse.

We recognise that Domestic Abuse is a largely hidden crime that takes place primarily in the home and is often not reported. As a provider of Housing, Care and Support we appreciate our important role in addressing the issue of Domestic Abuse. We understand that front line Home Group colleagues, Involved Customers, volunteers, contractors and others in our customers lives are well placed to identify concerns.

When Domestic Abuse is disclosed, reported, or suspected, our victim-centred approach considers and respects the needs and wishes of the victim. We treat all concerns sensitively, with a 'victim-believing' mindset and in a non-judgemental way.

We recognise that it can sometimes be difficult to establish the facts and with this in mind colleagues do not make assumptions. We work with partner agencies and follow best practice guidance to help understand the complexities of the situation. For example, if both parties identify as the victim.

We focus on increasing victim safety and helping to prevent further abuse. We collaborate with our partner agencies and other professionals to consider the safest options for victims. We report, escalate and share information in line with our Information Governance policy.

Where a customer has been identified as a perpetrator of Domestic Abuse in a Home Group property or service, we take action where possible in line with our Tackling ASB and Tenure policies. When required we escalate concerns with the Police and / or other

authorities to help enforce criminal or legal conditions. For example, if conditions in a Restraining Order or Bail Conditions have been breached.

We have robust processes and systems to report, monitor, review and learn from all incidents of Domestic Abuse in line with our Safeguarding procedures. We aim to help reduce the risk of Domestic Abuse and help prevent further incidents by encouraging early reporting.

We recognise that reporting incidents of Domestic Abuse can increase victim risk from the perpetrator/s. We are committed to doing all we can to help safeguard victims of Domestic Abuse from further harm by jointly creating, implementing and regularly reviewing Risk Management Plans.

We provide victims of Domestic Abuse with information on the support available from specialist providers and expert practitioners. With consent we will help customers who are affected by Domestic Abuse to access the right support for themselves, their children and others affected.

We contribute to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings, Local Authority Domestic Abuse panels, Domestic Abuse perpetrator panels and other relevant meetings when requested and will contribute to multi-agency victim safety planning.

We respond sensitively and promptly to any damage caused to Home Group properties because of Domestic Abuse related incidents, and where possible we work with Local Authority partners to access additional security measures to enhance safety.

We understand the direct link between safeguarding and Domestic Abuse. This means we apply a consistent approach to safeguarding people who are subject to or at risk from Domestic Abuse in line with our safeguarding policies, procedures, and other supporting resources.

This policy has been developed in consultation with customers and colleagues. It reflects best practice, our Customer Promise, and our organisational strategy.

2.0 Policy scope

This policy sets out our group wide approach to Domestic Abuse for **all** customers (**adults, children and young people**) in England and Scotland who:

- Are at risk of Domestic Abuse
- Are experiencing or have experienced Domestic Abuse
- Are affected by Domestic Abuse
- Are the perpetrators of Domestic Abuse

It includes responding to concerns of Domestic Abuse for individuals who come into contact with Home Group colleagues and services who are not our customers.

All colleagues, agency workers, volunteers, Involved Customers, contractors, and others directly involved with delivering Home Group activities are expected to be familiar with this policy. It should be used with supporting documents and procedures which support the policy standards.

We respect that not everyone who has experienced or is experiencing Domestic Abuse chooses to describe themselves as a 'victim' and prefer other terms, such as 'survivor'. We

recognise both terms, however, to be consistent and in line with English and Scottish Legislation this policy uses the term 'victim'.

Responding to colleagues who are experiencing Domestic Abuse is not covered within this policy. Human Resource processes are in place for these concerns. Home Group colleagues can access these on our intranet [here](#).

2.1 Compliance Requirements

Our approach reflects the statutory guidance where we operate in England and Scotland.

This policy is aligned with the statutory definition of Domestic Abuse as set out in The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (England) and the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018.

In England and Scotland, behaviour is abusive if it consists of any of the following:

- Physical; sexual; violent or threatening; psychological; emotional and coercive or controlling acts and Economic abuse.

Relationship context in England: The perpetrator of the abuse and the victim of the abuse have to be aged 16 or over and are 'personally connected' as intimate partners, ex-partners, family members or individuals who share parental responsibility for a child. There is no requirement for the victim and perpetrator to live in the same household.

Relationship context in Scotland: It is an offence consisting of abusive behaviour towards a partner or ex-partner (including same-sex relationships). Other family relationships and other types of relationship (e.g. between friends or business partners or work colleagues) are not covered by the offence.

Children and Domestic Abuse in England: The 2021 Act recognises that Domestic Abuse can impact on a child who sees or hears or experiences the effects of the abuse and it treats such children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right where they are related to or under parental responsibility of either the abuser or the abused.

Children and Domestic Abuse in Scotland: The 2018 Act does not recognise children as 'co-victims', however it frames the experience of children and young people as *experiencing* Domestic Abuse rather than *witnessing* it.

Other key legislative and regulatory requirements include but are not limited to, those set out below:

Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004; Protection from Harassment Act 1997; The Family Law Act 1996; Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014; Serious Crime Act 2015; Human Rights Act 1998; The Data Protection Act 2018; The Equality Act 2010; The Care Act 2014; The Housing Act 1996; Housing (Scotland) Act 2014; Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023; and Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021.

3.0 Standards

Standard 1: Victim Centred Approach

At Home Group we use a victim centred approach to Domestic Abuse. Colleagues engage with victims in a way that prioritises listening, focuses on their ongoing safety and well-being, and importantly aims to avoid re-traumatisation.

We recognise that although Domestic Abuse is widespread, many people who are experiencing it will try to keep it hidden. Our approach aims to offer an environment where customers feel safe to talk, feel believed, their experiences validated, and are treated with dignity and compassion.

We are led by the wishes of the person experiencing the abuse. Colleagues also consider risk, safeguarding, and child protection concerns, and help them to make informed decisions within the limitations of their roles. This approach does not detract from our duty of care, particularly around child protection or other actions taken to safeguard vulnerable individuals.

We acknowledge that victims of Domestic Abuse may decide to stay with the perpetrator, and we must respect and support that decision. This approach is all the more important should victims decide to leave the perpetrator in the future as they are more likely to engage with us when they do not feel judged.

Standard 2: Recruitment, Training and Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse

We recognise that Domestic Abuse can affect anyone and are committed to supporting all customers who are experiencing it, have experienced it, or are threatened with it.

Recruitment: Building trust with victims of Domestic Abuse is essential. Many people find it very difficult to discuss what is happening to them and some may not recognise Domestic Abuse is taking place.

We aim to recruit and develop colleagues who can demonstrate our organisational values, who recognise each customer is different, who listen, advocate, and amplify the voices for customers. Colleagues are expected to have a good understanding of and commitment to keeping our customers safe and free from abuse.

Colleagues will be subject to pre-employment checks, including referencing and criminal record checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Disclosure Scotland where required, and in line with the relevant legal framework and Home Group's Recruitment and Resourcing policy.

Board members, the executive team and senior managers are all committed to creating a culture that has zero tolerance to Domestic Abuse and actively empowers colleagues to confront and challenge it in all its forms.

Training: We ensure that colleagues receive Domestic Abuse training relevant to their role so that they are able to recognise, understand and respond to victims and their children in the most appropriate way.

We require our contractors to be sufficiently trained in Safeguarding. Contractors should be alert to, able to identify and report potential Safeguarding concerns, including Domestic Abuse, in line with procurement requirements.

Colleagues on our frontline Customer Service Centre helpline receive additional training to help identify the non-visible signs of Domestic Abuse. For example, active listening skills and how to identify concerning noise or activity in the background of a telephone call.

Colleagues are aware of local and national organisations who can provide specialist support and guidance from early intervention to crisis stage, and who can support with the long-term effects of Domestic Abuse.

We ensure that colleagues are clear that Domestic Abuse is not Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). They are aware of the differences, our approaches, and considerations to be taken into account. Colleagues are professionally curious and explore other potential causes of ASB allegations including Domestic Abuse.

Raising awareness: We provide our customers with information to raise awareness about Domestic Abuse. We let them know how to get help, support and advice from specialist Domestic Abuse services, other organisations, and what they can expect from us. We do this in different ways including social media campaigns, on our website, through our customer contact and work within our services and communities. We aim to make it easier for people to disclose concerns by providing information in accessible ways relevant to their specific needs.

Standard 3: **Recognising and Understanding Domestic Abuse**

We recognise that in order to respond to Domestic Abuse appropriately, our colleagues must be able to recognise and understand it.

Colleagues are aware that Domestic Abuse is a pattern of behaviours used to gain or maintain power and control and is something that remains largely concealed. We know Domestic Abuse is complex and that it can often be subtle and sustained with less obvious signs.

Types of Domestic Abuse: Colleagues are aware of the different types of Domestic Abuse where we operate in England and Scotland:

Physical; sexual; violent or threatening; psychological; emotional and coercive or controlling acts and Economic abuse, and that people can experience more than one of these at the same time.

We also recognise other forms of abuse including online abuse, stalking, and abuse relating to faith and 'honour', including forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM).

Domestic Abuse relationship contexts: We work in line with the statutory definitions of Domestic Abuse in England and Scotland as set out in the Policy Scope and acknowledge that relationship contexts differ in both countries.

We understand that whilst Domestic Abuse most commonly takes place in intimate partner relationships, including same sex relationships, it also happens in other relationship contexts, for example, within teenage relationships, older people, family members and child to parent abuse.

We also recognise that different relationship contexts can involve different dynamics. For example, disclosure of Domestic Abuse can be difficult for parents or carers not only because of the stigma of Domestic Abuse, but in addition the shame they may feel for having a 'troublesome' child.

Post separation Abuse: We recognise that Domestic Abuse can continue or intensify when a relationship has ended or is in the process of ending. We know this can be a very dangerous time for a victim, and often includes an increased risk to their physical safety. We understand our role in helping to keep the victim as safe as possible during this period and work with partner agencies to manage risk and safety.

Domestic Abuse as a crime: We know that while Domestic Abuse is not itself a specific criminal offence, criminal offences may be committed by perpetrators. Related offences could include but are not limited to, **controlling or coercive behaviour, harassment, stalking, criminal damage, physical assault, sexual assault, rape, and murder**. Where we suspect a crime has been committed, our actions could include reporting to the Police in line with our internal guidance and procedures.

We are aware that reporting to the police can increase risk to the victim. We aim to obtain the victim's consent wherever possible before reporting to the police and liaise with other professionals to help increase victim safety.

Understanding barriers to ending an abusive relationship: We recognise how difficult it is for those experiencing Domestic Abuse to seek and accept help. We know victims may live with the abuse for a long time before accepting effective support and we aim to understand the reasons and barriers to this. For example, victims might not acknowledge they are in an abusive relationship, or they may fear the consequences if they disclose the abuse. We know that barriers such as language, faith, age, pregnancy, disability, and sexuality can make it even harder to end an abusive relationship.

We recognise there isn't a 'typical' victim of Domestic Abuse and aim to actively challenge misleading myths, such as, 'if it was that bad, they'd leave', or 'Domestic Abuse is only perpetrated by men'.

We recognise that for a victim of Domestic Abuse talking about it to a professional who is the same sex as the perpetrator can be an additional barrier. We do all we can to respect individual preferences and offer same sex colleagues wherever possible and / or appropriate referral to a specialist Domestic Abuse agency.

Impact of Domestic Abuse: We understand that Domestic Abuse has a significant impact on those affected, including children, and can leave behind lifelong physical and emotional scars.

We are alert to the more obvious impact of physical abuse, for example bruises and broken bones, and also acknowledge that not all Domestic Abuse begins with or results in physical abuse. Colleagues consider the emotional and psychological impacts on adults and children including signs such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), trouble sleeping and eating disorders.

Perpetrator tactics: We are alert to the tactic's that perpetrators of Domestic Abuse may use to control victims and those around them.

We know perpetrators can be skilled at manipulating professionals to control victims further, for example, by making false allegations against the victim and playing different professionals off against one another.

We consider perpetrator tactics when responding to repeated or suspicious reports of noise, damage to a property and other Anti-Social Behaviour allegations.

Whilst we acknowledge that some perpetrators do not recognise their behaviour as being abusive and therefore often blame the victim, Home Group firmly believe it is never the victim's fault and that perpetrators should be held accountable for their actions. Where we know or have suspicions that Domestic Abuse is happening, we are cautious not to collude with the perpetrators and further control the victim.

Standard 4: Responding to Domestic Abuse

We take all reports of Domestic Abuse seriously and respond in a way that is tailored to the needs of the individual.

We are committed to doing all we can to protect the interests of our customers and avoid actions that could potentially place them, and any children involved at further risk. This includes:

Partnership Working: We acknowledge that tackling Domestic Abuse cannot be done in isolation and requires a coordinated multi-agency approach. This is both crucial in identifying victims and their families at any early stage and before abuse reaches crisis point, and in the event of an emergency.

We work in partnership with statutory and voluntary agencies and support their obligations to victims of Domestic Abuse and their children, and to ensure we are considering the overall picture.

Colleagues are required to have local knowledge of specialist Domestic Abuse organisations within the communities they work, including Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) services, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) and other specialist services.

We aim to contribute to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings, support adult and children's Safeguarding Reviews and Serious Case reviews and other relevant meetings when required.

We also contribute to multi-agency victim safety planning where consideration is given to individual circumstances and the different courses of action that may be possible.

We know that risk of harm is increased when a victim decides to leave a perpetrator. We will work with the victim and partner agencies to plan this in the most appropriate way and prioritise safety.

Risk assessment: We promote victim safety and manage associated risks with a collaborative and enquiring approach.

We recognise the importance of identifying changes in circumstances such as an increase in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) that could be concealing Domestic Abuse, or an escalation in severity or frequency of abuse.

We acknowledge each victim of Domestic Abuse will be facing different circumstances. For example, they may live alone in a Home Group Rented or Shared Ownership property, they may be in a Supported service or a Care service, there may be children involved and they could still be living with the perpetrator.

In our referral, assessment, and on-going risk management we aim to identify risks associated with Domestic Abuse, including risks to any children involved. Where Domestic Abuse has been identified we work with the customer to provide them with the information they need to help keep themselves safe. This may also include signposting to specialist services, developing risk management plans, support plans and offering regular reviews where required.

All reports of ASB are risk assessed which helps to identify if the underlying cause of the incident is Domestic Abuse related.

When Domestic Abuse is identified, Risk Management Plans are created to help keep those involved safe. Actions could include an immediate call to the emergency services, or with customer consent, a referral to a specialist Domestic Abuse organisation who would complete a Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Violence Risk Identification Checklist (DASH). The outcome of which can help us plan how we support the victim and help determine further actions, referral options and support plans where appropriate.

Both customer and colleague safety are of paramount importance to us. We recognise that if a victim is still living with a perpetrator, colleagues must be cautious and vigilant. We know that alerting the perpetrator of our involvement could heighten risk to the victim and our front-line colleagues.

We complete Risk Assessments in line with Health and Safety, Lone Working, and Local Procedures to manage safety and determine the preferred method of communicating with the victim to minimise risk. We record up-to-date comprehensive notes relating to risk for relevant colleagues to access prior to contacting or visiting a customer.

Safeguarding: We are aware that a significant number of adults and children who experience Domestic Abuse will also require safeguarding. Colleagues are trained to be aware of this and to make safeguarding referrals as required in line with our Safeguarding policy and procedures.

We recognise that some victims of Domestic Abuse will have care needs and / or lack mental capacity. We follow relevant legislation to ensure individuals needs and wishes are taken into account and are alert to their additional vulnerabilities. We recognise they may be particularly vulnerable to certain types of Domestic Abuse. For example, coercive or controlling behaviour and economic abuse from intimate partners or family members, who may use their caring responsibilities as a cover for perpetrating abuse.

Responding to children and young people: We are committed to recognising the impact of Domestic Abuse on children so that we can support them accordingly. We recognise

that a fundamental part of this is a multi-agency response which combines child safeguarding and Domestic Abuse expertise.

We act in accordance with key principles of the Children Act by “making Safeguarding everyone’s responsibility” and adopting a “child-centred approach”. In line with statutory guidance in Scotland, we aim to ‘get it right for every child’. We follow safeguarding, risk assessment and referrals processes and procedures.

We recognise that children and young people may be reluctant to discuss relationships or their concerns around Domestic Abuse with adults and may not be equipped to deal with certain practical challenges, for example moving home to escape the abuse or managing their own finances. Colleagues support them to understand what Domestic Abuse is and how they can report it.

Children and young people are offered support based on their individual needs so that they can access the specialised help required. For example, counselling or an Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) who is able to work with children and young people.

Responding in emergency situations: We recognise that emergency situations can arise for victims of Domestic Abuse and that colleagues could witness them in person or over a telephone. If a colleague believes someone is in immediate danger, they will advise the person to call 999 and ask for the police immediately or call on their behalf if appropriate.

For example, our telephony system enables Customer Services Advisors to remain on the call to the customer whilst alerting Customer Service Centre (CSC) managers that they need urgent help. Emergency services could then be contacted during a real time crisis by a CSC manager.

Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse who are Home Group Customers: We take firm action against customers who perpetrate Domestic Abuse in Home Group properties and services. We take appropriate action to address issues such as rent arrears and damage to property. Other actions may involve eviction, the involvement of the Police and the use of injunctions.

To ensure our actions are fair and in line with policy and legal constraints, we refer to other Home Group policies, (such as Arrears Management and Property Management), and seek guidance from our legal services.

We aim to prioritise victim safety when taking actions and work in partnership with other agencies to consider the unique context and needs of the victim. This includes safety planning and specialist support, for example, guidance when victims are experiencing ‘honour’-based abuse who may be at risk from several perpetrators, including extended family members and the wider community.

We recognise that perpetrators of Domestic Abuse may have care needs and / or lack mental capacity. We will consider this when taking action and will work with other organisations as appropriate.

If a perpetrator of Domestic Abuse recognises their abusive behaviours and wants to change them, we liaise with relevant agencies or signpost them where appropriate to specialist organisations.

Standard 5: Reporting, recording and sharing information

We recognise that our frontline colleagues and contractors are often well placed to identify Domestic Abuse. We expect all those who are directly involved with delivering Home Group activities to raise and report concerns and follow our Safeguarding procedures when required.

We report, escalate, and share information in line with our Information Governance policy and comply with regulatory requirements by notifying Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission of any incidents as required.

Customers who are experiencing Domestic Abuse, or others who witness or suspect it is happening, (such as concerned neighbours, family members or other professionals) can report Domestic Abuse to us in a variety of ways, including contacting the Customer Service Centre, via a Housing Manager, or a colleague within a Care or Supported service.

Colleagues are aware of the sensitivity around recording incidents of Domestic Abuse, particularly when it is a joint tenancy. We understand that victim risk can be heightened by inadvertently sharing information with people who do not need to know. For example, we are cautious not to disclose the safe location of a victim to the perpetrator.

In addition to case management systems, all incidents of Domestic Abuse are recorded on our Incident Management System in line with our Incident Management policy.

We record information that is fact based and without judgement or opinion of the abuse.

Standard 6: Housing

We recognise that Domestic Abuse often take place in the home. We know that the housing options for victims of Domestic Abuse are key in escaping their situation and is a main factor in their decision to stay or leave the perpetrator.

As a landlord and provider of Care and Supported services, we recognise our unique role in both helping to support victims of Domestic Abuse and report perpetrators of Domestic Abuse to the relevant authorities when appropriate.

We are alert to specific housing related signs of Domestic Abuse. For example, victims and / or perpetrators refusing to let colleagues into the property, neighbour complaints, or damage to property. We will work with other agencies and seek specialist guidance to consider customer engagement and safety planning in these situations.

We recognise the impact of wrongly criminalising victims. We are aware that treating incidents as Anti-Social Behaviour instead of Domestic Abuse can increase victim risk even further. They may feel reluctant to report future incidents for fear of losing their home and the possible shame they may feel about the Domestic Abuse.

Where emergency repairs are reported as a result of Domestic Abuse, for example a lock change or broken window, we do not re-charge the customer. All other repairs related to Domestic Abuse are handled in line with our Property Management policy.

We cooperate with Local Authorities to support them in meeting their duties for victims of Domestic Abuse and their children within safe accommodation.

We are committed to doing our utmost in the best interests of the victim and their children when considering alternative housing options and work in partnership with other agencies and specialist organisations.

Options could include Management Transfers, re-housing the perpetrator in certain circumstances rather than the victim, and where possible helping to identify emergency housing options such as refuge accommodation.

We are respectful of a victim's decision about the use of emergency accommodation and do not make assumptions about where they should go. For example, we do not assume that a victim from the BME community would want to flee to a specialist BME refuge, as this option could increase their risk.

We recognise that teenagers and young people can experience Domestic Abuse within their relationships, and that victims and perpetrators over 16 and can fall under both the Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse procedures.

Whilst adults who cohabit will often experience Domestic Abuse inside of the home environment, teenagers and young people are more likely to experience Domestic Abuse in other ways and places, particularly if they don't live with the perpetrator. For example via social media or at school or college.

Colleagues who provide support to children and young people are alert to the signs of Domestic Abuse. They work within our Safeguarding policy and procedures and comply with Ofsted regulatory requirements.

Standard 7: Legal and Financial Matters

We know that Domestic Abuse is a complex area requiring specialist knowledge. We signpost or when appropriate support victims, to access specialist advice and support that can help to keep them protected from further abuse. For example, a solicitor to assist with Non-Molestation Orders and Occupation Orders (in England), and Matrimonial Interdicts (in Scotland).

Colleagues are kept updated with changes to relevant legislation in a number of ways, for example via internal communication systems, team meetings and senior management briefings. They can also seek guidance from Legal Services for remedies that are available to us as a landlord. For example, where the victim is at risk of Domestic Abuse or threatened with it, and/or our customer is the perpetrator. Such remedies could involve injunctions and possession action against the perpetrator.

We know that victims of Domestic Abuse will often need financial guidance when leaving an abusive relationship. Colleagues are required to know which agencies can offer specialist information relating to benefits and other financial support. In addition, colleagues can contact our Financial Inclusion team on behalf of the customer.

We recognise that victims whose immigration status is undetermined and/or who have no recourse to public funds are likely to need advice from a specialist organisation, for example an immigration solicitor. Colleagues are required to work in partnership with

agencies who have specialist knowledge on this topic and will either refer or signpost victims to access the appropriate support.

Standard 8: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

We recognise that anyone can be a victim of Domestic Abuse. Colleagues are required to consider the different experiences and disadvantages faced by victims of Domestic Abuse due to their Protected Characteristics/s.

Whilst we acknowledge that Domestic abuse is most commonly perpetrated by men against women, we recognise that abusive behaviour can be perpetrated by women and can affect people in all communities regardless of their background, circumstances and personal traits.

We recognise that some adults may be at greater risk of Domestic Abuse because of a Protected Characteristic. We also appreciate that some children and young people are additionally vulnerable because of other factors. For example, children and young people from the LGBTQ+ community can face obstacles to seeking help when first coming out as they might not be able to confide in their peers or families for fear of their reaction.

Colleagues take into account a victim's personal situation and individual circumstances when recognising and responding to Domestic Abuse. We also recognise that different types of Domestic Abuse may be happening at the same time because of their Protected Characteristic/s and will seek guidance from specialist organisations when required.

4.0 Key definitions

Word / phrase	Definition
Domestic Abuse victim	Someone that has been hurt, damaged, killed or has suffered, either because of the actions or beliefs of someone else (<i>see Policy Scope for definition of Domestic Abuse</i>) – (add link)
Domestic Abuse perpetrator	A Domestic Abuse perpetrator is someone who purposely causes harm to another person or allows for harm to be done to someone else. (<i>see Policy Scope for definition of Domestic Abuse</i>) – (add link)
Physical Abuse	Any violence or intentional and unwanted contact with your body, for example, punching, biting, scratching, throwing objects at you, pushing and pulling.
Sexual Abuse	Any action that pressures you to do something sexually that you don't want to do. For example, rape or attempted rape, unwanted kissing or touching, using sexual insults towards you.
Violent and / or threatening behaviour	Any behavior by that threatens, harms or injures an individual or others, or for example destroys their property. Violent behavior often begins with verbal threats but over time escalates to involve physical harm.
Psychological Abuse	A person subjecting another person to behaviour which may result in psychological trauma including anxiety, chronic depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Examples include, name calling, endless questioning and gaslighting,
Economic Abuse	More commonly described as Financial Abuse and very commonly experienced by Domestic Abuse victims. The abuser might control or restrict

	how a victim gains money. They could limit how they use money and economic resources. Other examples include, forbidding victims to work, giving them an allowance and withholding money for food, medication or clothing.
Emotional Abuse	Includes threats, insults, humiliation, intimidation, isolation or stalking. Examples of emotional abuse include name calling, yelling & screaming, put downs and blaming you.
Coercive Control	A pattern of intimidation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence. Examples include, unreasonable demands, threats or intimidation and monitoring of time.
Online Abuse	The use of technologies such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner. Often a form of verbal or emotional abuse perpetrated online.
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	A procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured, or changed for non-medical reasons. FGM is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before puberty starts. It is illegal in the UK and is child abuse. It's very painful and can seriously harm the health of women and girls. It can also cause long-term problems with sex, childbirth, and mental health. It is sometimes stated that the purpose of FGM is to control women's sexuality.
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference. (MARAC) is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk Domestic Abuse cases between representatives of local police, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), probation and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors. The representatives discuss options for increasing the safety of the victim and turn these into a co-ordinated action plan. The primary focus of the MARAC is to safeguard the adult victim. The MARAC will also make links with other organisations to safeguard children and manage the behaviour of the perpetrator.
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) are a set of statutory arrangements to assess and manage the risk posed by certain sexual and violent offenders. MAPPA were established by Sections 325 to 327 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003.
DASH Risk Assessment	The DASH Risk Assessment tool (Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Violence Assessment) is part of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Co-ordinator (MARAC) referral. It is a risk assessment form to help professionals work out the risk level for the victim. The DASH form gives safeguarding professionals vital information.
No Recourse to Public Fund (NRPF)	If a person has a residence permit that allows them to live in the UK, it may include the immigration condition that you have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). NRPF means they will not be able to claim most benefits, tax credits or housing assistance that are paid by central government.
Non-Molestation Order	A non-molestation order is a type of injunction that victims of Domestic Abuse can apply for through the family court. These orders are granted in order to prevent a partner, or former partner (or other "associated person"), from causing the victim and/or their children harm.
Occupation Order	Victims of Domestic Abuse can apply for an Occupation Order if they meet the specific requirements. The order will say who can live in the family home or enter the surrounding area.
Matrimonial Interdicts	A Matrimonial Interdict can be used in Scotland to restrain or prohibit particular conduct from one spouse to the other, or any conduct towards any child of the family. For instance, an interdict could prohibit violent behaviour or conduct that places the spouse and/or any child of the family in a state of fear and alarm.

Independent Domestic Abuse/Violence Advisor (IDVA - England/ IDAA - Scotland)	The main purpose of these roles is to address the safety of victims at high risk of harm from intimate partners, ex-partners, or family members to secure their safety and the safety of their children.
Refuge Accommodation	A refuge is a safe house for women and children escaping Domestic Abuse. You do not need to have experienced physical violence to go into a refuge and you do not need to have children. There will be expert, staff at the refuge who can provide a range of emotional and practical support.

5.0 Supporting documents

In order to comply with Home Group's approach to Domestic Abuse and achieve the standards set out above, the relevant processes and policy compliance notes must be followed in line with stated roles and responsibilities. Colleagues should refer to our internal index for the full list of supporting documents.

6.0 Version history

Version Number	Effective Date	Amendment made by (job title)	Version approved by (job title)	Description of Changes
1.0	22/05/24	Policy Business Partner	Board	New policy