

WOMEN'S PIONEER HOUSING LTD

Title	Domestic Abuse Policy
Issue Date	26 th July 2023
Effective date	26 th July 2023
Document Owner	Lorna Morris
Post of Document Owner	Housing Inclusion Manager
Date approved by EMT	February 2023
Date approved by HASC	25 th July 2023
Version number	1
Date of next review	July 2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Domestic abuse (DA) is an abuse of human rights and can be a criminal offence. It often escalates over time in frequency and severity and affects the victim's mental, emotional and physical well-being. It can occur anywhere and in a variety of situations across society. It is about one person wanting power and control over another and can include, but is not limited to, physical, emotional, financial or sexual abuse.
- 1.2. DA tends to be gender specific, which means that it most commonly affects women and perpetrated by men. Perpetration happens against men by women, and can occur in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender relationships. DA is most commonly considered to involve partners (or ex-partners) although also refers to acts carried out by any relation or household member.

2. Definition of domestic abuse

- 2.1. In line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 we define domestic abuse as:

Domestic abuse involves any single incident or pattern of conduct where someone's behaviour towards another is abusive, and where the people involved are aged 16 or over and = are, or have been, personally connected to each other (regardless of gender or sexuality).

The abuse can involve, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional
- violent
- threatening
- controlling
- coercive behaviour.

'Personal connection' means the individuals concerned:

- are due to be, are currently, or have been, married or civil partners to each other
- are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- are, or have been, parents (or had a parental relationship) to the same child
- are relatives (the Act gives further definitions of 'relatives')

Children are recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse between two personally connected individuals who are aged 16 or over.

However, abusive behaviour directed at a person under the age of 16 is child abuse rather than domestic abuse.

3. Policy

- 3.1. We aim to create a safe environment where victims of domestic abuse feel they can approach us. They are encouraged to talk and are listened to, thus enabling them to make informed decisions about their lives and live more independently.
- 3.2. We will be non-judgemental and take all reports of DA seriously. The views of the victim will be central to any action taken. The victim's safety will be a primary consideration, whilst acknowledging our responsibilities to report to statutory services any risk of harm to children or adults at risk.
- 3.3. We will ensure that people experiencing domestic abuse can access appropriate services as early as possible and given advice to allow them to make choices about what to do next.
- 3.4. We will, follow the Safeguarding Policy if we believe either or both adult/s or child is at risk due to an abusive relationship.

- 3.5. We will maintain details of local and national services and support groups and work in conjunction with appropriate agencies such as the police, local authorities, voluntary agencies and support groups.
- 3.6. The Housing Officer for the patch is the primary contact and will be responsible for managing the casework. However, due to the sensitive nature of DA, another member of staff may carry out interviews if requested.
- 3.7. In recognition that one agency alone cannot effectively deal with the effects of DA, Women's Pioneer encourage a co-ordinated approach and will work with local police, local authority and voluntary and community groups to support their tenants. Details of a number of agencies the victim or we can contact are listed in the Domestic Abuse Procedure.
- 3.8. We will work with police to obtain Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders, which will exclude the perpetrator from the property for a set period.
- 3.9. Women's Pioneer Housing are committed to supporting women to stay in their home after domestic abuse if it is their wish to do so.

4. Governance

- 4.1. The CEO is overall responsible for the corporate strategy and the Domestic Abuse Policy.
- 4.2. Responsibility for corporate objective two – maintaining our residents independence and wellbeing and this policy are delegated to the Director of Housing.
- 4.3. The Housing Inclusion Manager is responsible for day-to-day implementation of the policy, alongside all frontline managers and staff.

5. Equality and Diversity

- 5.1. WPH will ensure that this policy applies fairly and consistently. We will not discriminate directly or indirectly against any person or group of people in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy. We will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities and will take positive action or make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

