



Domestic Abuse Policy for Residents

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy applies to all residents regardless of tenure and their household members.
- 1.2. LRHA firmly believe that all our residents and occupants should not live in fear of violence or abuse from a partner, former partner, or any other member of their household.

2. The aims of this Policy are to ensure that:

- 2.1. LRHA sets out our commitment to deal with all reports of domestic abuse effectively and efficiently. All reports of domestic abuse will be taken seriously and will provide person centred support tailored to the needs of the individual resident and other members of their household that may be affected.
- 2.2. LRHA's staff will work in partnership with specialist agencies, both statutory and voluntary, to develop a coordinated approach when responding to the needs of those experiencing domestic abuse.
- 2.3. LRHA is committed to providing a safe home for victims where they can rebuild.

3. Policy Statement

- 3.1. LRHA will implement measures to minimise risks or where elimination is not possible then to reduce the risks associated with domestic abuse.

4. Definition of Domestic Abuse

- 4.1. Domestic abuse is defined by the Home Office in 2021 as:

Behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and the behaviour is abusive.*

**Personally connected: They are, or have been, married; civil partners; have agreed to marry one another; have entered into a civil partnership agreement; are or have been in an intimate personal relationship; they have or have had a parental relationship in relation to the same child; or are relatives.*

- 4.2. Behaviour is "abusive" if it consists of any of the following:

- 4.2.1. physical or sexual abuse;
- 4.2.2. violent or threatening behaviour;
- 4.2.3. controlling or coercive behaviour;
- 4.2.4. economic abuse; and
- 4.2.5. psychological, emotional, or other abuse.

- 4.3. It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

- 4.4. Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
- 4.5. Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.
- 4.6. Stalking is also considered to be part of domestic abuse. Reported stalking activity may need further specialist advice and support for the resident and our staff member from the police.
- 4.7. Legislation changed in 2021 to recognise children related to the perpetrator or victim who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse as victims of domestic abuse in their own right. The offence of controlling or coercive behaviour was criminalised in 2015. In 2020 (via the Stalking Protection Act 2019) new civil protection orders were introduced to support victims of stalking and harassment.

5. Definition of Harm or Abuse

- 5.1. The common types of abuse are detailed below, LRHA recognise that a victim may be suffering one of more of the types of abuse at different periods of time during their relationship with the abuser:
- 5.2. Physical abuse can include assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, being locked in a room, inappropriate sanctions or force-feeding, inappropriate methods of restraint, and unlawfully depriving a person of their liberty.
- 5.3. Sexual abuse can include rape and coerced sex, forcing a victim/survivor to take part in unwanted sexual acts, refusal to practice safe sex or use contraception, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, sexual exploitation.
- 5.4. Coercive behaviour is an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. Victims of coercive control can have every aspect of life controlled by their partner, often being subjected to daily intimidation and humiliation. This can also include forced marriage and so called 'honour-based abuse'.
- 5.5. Controlling behaviour includes a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capabilities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
- 5.6. Psychological and emotional abuse can include isolation from support networks or services, gaslighting, use of threats, humiliation, blaming, telling them they are stupid, hopeless, unlovable, that no one would believe them, or that they are a bad parent.

5.7. Economic abuse can include controlling money and bank accounts, making a victim account for all their expenditure, running up debts in the victim's name, allowing no say on how monies are spent, refusing to allow them to study or work, refusing access to joint bank accounts or making fraudulent benefit claims in the victim's name.

6. Our Responsibility

6.1. LRHA commit to:

- 6.1.1. Taking a person-centred approach in responding to cases of domestic abuse to try and minimise any danger to them. A victim's disclosure alone is sufficient for them to be given priority advice and assistance in an empathetic, supportive and non-judgemental way.
- 6.1.2. Being guided by the victim/survivor in determining the most appropriate course of action, considering what the person experiencing the abuse wants and feels, and will refer to the specialist services as necessary.
- 6.1.3. Making sure all our services are accessible and inclusive to all.
- 6.1.4. Recognising that survivors' experiences of domestic abuse may be in part defined by their background and understand that certain individuals may face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and will recognise this intersectionality and tailor our service accordingly.
- 6.1.5. Respecting that victims/survivors of abuse may wish to speak and be supported in a neutral and safe venue by an employee of the same gender and/or similar ethnic or cultural background.
- 6.1.6. Ensuring that we take account of communication needs when communicating with those experiencing domestic abuse.
- 6.1.7. Making safeguarding referrals for children where appropriate (following LRHA safeguarding vulnerable adults and children procedures), to ensure that children and young people, who are affected by domestic abuse, have access to specialist support services as early as possible.
- 6.1.8. Ensuring that a range of public awareness materials are available and visible to residents.
- 6.1.9. Working with other relevant agencies to support victims/survivors of domestic abuse to rebuild their lives, e.g., Haven Domestic Abuse Service, Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Specialist Service, Lincolnshire Police, or other community-based specialist services.
- 6.1.10. Cooperating to improve the security of an LRHA property in conjunction with partner agencies for victims staying in their own home.
- 6.1.11. Ensuring that our staff, who may encounter incidents of domestic abuse, receive appropriate training to deliver person centred advice and support.

6.1.12. Taking firm action against anyone responsible for domestic abuse. This will only be done in cases where it is in the best interest of the victim/ survivor and where we can do so without compromising the safety of the individual. LRHA staff will work in cooperation with partner agencies.

7. Supporting Victims/Survivors of Domestic Abuse

7.1. LRHA will:

7.1.1. Listen to the victim/survivor to support them to access specialist advice and services.

7.1.2. Cooperate with partner agencies to enhance the home security should they wish to remain in their LRHA home.

7.1.3. Give clear and concise advice on the options relating to their tenancy agreement, and signpost them to specialist agencies for additional support.

7.1.4. Install additional security measures to the homes of survivors. If a resident comes to LRHA through a domestic abuse route, i.e. a refuge, these additional measures should be completed during the relet works. Those who experience abuse whilst in an LRHA home should receive these measures as a matter of urgency. The following should be implemented wherever possible;

7.1.4.1. Change the locks

7.1.4.2. Install a security chain to the front and rear door

7.1.4.3. Install a bolt and padlock on the back gate

7.1.4.4. Install motion sensor flood lights to front and rear of the property

7.1.5. Ensure that the Lead Officer and Domestic Abuse Champions have the necessary specialist training to be competent, knowledgeable and confident to effectively manage the support and cooperative partnership working that the victims / survivors of domestic abuse deserve.

7.1.6. Consider that any damage made to the property by the perpetrators of domestic abuse are repaired and the costs of the work sought from the perpetrator, not from the victim. This is particularly relevant where the victim is the main tenancy holder and the perpetrator a named or unnamed resident at the home. Each case will be considered and decided on individually.

8. Taking Action Against Perpetrators

8.1. LRHA will:

8.1.1. Hold perpetrators to account for their behaviour and take firm action (where evidence is available) against anyone responsible for domestic abuse in coordinated work with specialist agencies.

8.1.2. Make use of appropriate legislation relating to LRHA responsibilities as a landlord and within those boundaries, and in cooperation led by specialist agencies.

8.1.3. Support perpetrators of domestic abuse who recognise and seek to change their behaviour by signposting to specialist support agencies.

9. Stakeholders

9.1. LRHA will work in partnership with a variety of specialist agencies, Local Authorities and statutory organisations so that our residents receive the protection and support they need.

9.2. LRHA does not directly provide legal advice or counselling services, but we will ensure our Resident Engagement Team have access to specialist training to develop their knowledge and experience in this area, working closely with stakeholders such as social services, health and voluntary and specialist agencies such as Women's Aid.

10. Reporting

10.1. The activities of LRHA staff in this area will be reported to the Operations Committee three times per year, with any information disclosed about activities done so with respect to data protection principles and respect to the victims / survivors of domestic abuse.

11. Information Sharing

11.1. Information sharing agreements are completed with the Police as required.

12. Legislation, Statutory Regulatory Duties & References

12.1. This policy is in accordance with the Consumer Standards Code of Practice April 2024 and relevant to the Neighbourhood and Community Standard required outcome 1.4.1 and specific expectations 2.3.1 and 2.3.2.

- 2.3.1 Registered providers must have a policy for how they recognise and effectively respond to cases of domestic abuse.
- 2.3.2 Registered providers must co-operate with appropriate local authority departments to support the local authority in meeting its duty to develop a strategy and commission services for victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation.
- This policy has been written with reference to relevant legislation and guidance, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

13. Equality and Diversity Implications

13.1. LRHA are committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of their colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or belief, family circumstances or offending history. Our aim is to ensure that our policies and procedures do not create an unfair disadvantage for anyone, either directly or indirectly.

13.2. LRHA respects and values the differences of our residents, partners, and staff and LRHA will treat everyone LRHA work with fairly, and with respect. This policy has been considered in light of LRHA's equality and diversity policy and is compliant with its principles.

13.3. LRHA will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and will adapt our process or make reasonable adjustments to accommodate an individual's needs wherever possible and reasonable.

14. Monitoring and Review

14.1. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years and in the event of changes to our regulatory environment.

15. Associated Documents / Policies

15.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with:

15.1.1. LRHA Domestic Abuse for Staff Policy

15.1.2. LRHA Safeguarding Policy

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