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Tick one of the below for review/changes made : Full review and changes made ☐ (add changes summary to table below) Full review, no changes made ☐ Changes made but no full review ☐ (add changes summary to table below)	Reviewer / Editor: Manager, Housing Services Changes Approved By: Reviewed and edited in-line with the Beacon? ☒ Yes ☐ No	

Domestic Abuse Policy - Tenants

Document Change Details

Date	Summary of Changes Made
31/07/2024	First issue
August 2026	Full review

1 Introduction

Domestic abuse is an abuse of human rights, and in cases of physical and sexual abuse, economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour, it can be a criminal offence. It typically escalates over time in frequency and severity and affects the victim's mental, emotional, economic and physical wellbeing.

We will treat all domestic abuse disclosed to us as high priority. We will always work with victims and be guided by their wishes and act where we have the power to do so.

We recognise that domestic abuse can have a severe impact upon children, where they have exposure to incidents both in and out of the home.

2 Objectives

We are committed to responding to disclosures and incidents of domestic abuse in a responsive, victim-centred and supportive manner. Our responses will be guided by our organisational values and underpinned by the Southdown Beacon.

We will recognise domestic abuse as a separate issue from anti-social behaviour. Domestic abuse may initially present as antisocial behaviour, so such presenting issues must be investigated carefully.

This policy sets out the values and principles that underpin our approach to domestic abuse where it affects our tenants. We aim to:

- Ensure that those experiencing domestic abuse can access appropriate services as early as possible and are given information to allow them to make choices about what they want to do next.
- Support tenants who are/have experienced abuse to rebuild their lives by working in partnership with them and other agencies. We will assist them to reach a decision which best secures their safety by reviewing their accommodation and enabling the level of support they want.
- Support victims to access the use of civil and criminal remedies which can offer both protection and act as a preventative measure to avoid further abuse.¹
- Seek appropriate interventions for perpetrators of domestic abuse to reduce the risk that they pose.
- Follow our Safeguarding Children Procedure if we believe a child is at risk from seeing, hearing or experiencing the effect of domestic abuse.
- Follow our Safeguarding Adults Procedure if we believe the adult who is at risk of abuse has needs for care and support and, because of those needs, is unable to protect themselves from the risk, or experience, of abuse.

3 Key principles of our approach

- To promote the safety and welfare of all victims of domestic abuse who come into contact with us.
- To create a safe environment where victims of domestic abuse feel that they can approach us, are

¹ Some people will identify as a victim, while others identify as a survivor. We will be respectful and ask for a person's preference.

encouraged to talk, and are listened to.

- Provide timely and effective guidance by working in partnership with relevant agencies across Sussex to respond to any cases of abuse that may arise. Encourage accountability, transparency, and appropriate professional challenge.
- Seek to enhance the safety and security of those involved and support them to increase their confidence and resilience.
- Provide front staff with clear and practical guidance to ensure that we support and protect victims of abuse, allowing victims to have more information about their choices.
- Work in partnership with relevant agencies across Sussex to offer support to perpetrators of domestic abuse who recognise and seek to change their behaviour.
- The welfare of children exposed to domestic abuse is paramount.

4 Definition of Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse 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 - including:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse

(* it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct)

Two people are “personally connected” to each other if any of the following applies:

- they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
- they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child
- they are relatives
- they are, or have been, married to, or in a civil partnership with, each other;
- they have agreed to marry one another or enter into a civil partnership (whether, or not, the agreement has been terminated)

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours. It can but does not have to involve physical acts of violence and can include threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, emotional, psychological, sexual and/or economic abuse. Domestic abuse can involve abuse facilitated and perpetrated online or offline. It is widely recognised that the perpetrator’s desire to exercise power

and control over the victim is at the centre of abusive behaviours. Many victims will experience abusive behaviours simultaneously; perpetrators may demonstrate a wide range and use different tactics to gain power and control.

5 Confidentiality

Domestic abuse cases are particularly sensitive. All information provided by our tenant will be treated with the utmost confidence and only passed to external agencies with proper consent. The exceptions to this are where we consider a child is at risk in any situation or if there is a high risk of serious harm to anyone involved or we are obliged by law to disclose information.

We will adhere to our Data Protection Policy.

6 Training and competence

We will ensure that the Housing Team have clear procedures to follow; know what action to take; and that they follow agreed assessment and referral processes.

We will ensure that the Housing Team have a working knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse and are trained to respond as appropriate to their role.

7 Cross References

Legislation and Guidance

- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and Statutory Guidance
- The Stalking Protection Act 2019
- The Housing Act 1996
- The Family Law Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Police and Justice Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- The Care Act 2014
- Clare's Law (The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme)

This Policy should be cross referenced with our:

- [Safeguarding Adults Procedure 4-04b.docx](#)
- [Safeguarding Adults Policy 4-04a.docx](#)
- [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 4-13a.docx](#)
- [Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedure 4-13b.docx](#)
- [Health and Safety Policy 2-01.docx](#)
- [Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy 1-16.docx](#)
- [Data Protection Policy 1-20.docx](#)
- [Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 3-14a.docx](#)
- [Anti-Social Behaviour Procedure 3-14b.docx](#)
- [How we do things - Southdown](#)

8 Collaboration

We will collaborate with partners to provide a coordinated response to the accommodation/support/ other needs of tenants experiencing domestic abuse. Our tenants are much more likely to have physical or mental health disabilities or have other life experiences which have left them more vulnerable than the average person.

We will keep partner agencies informed of any action we propose to take on behalf of the victim to ensure that we can work together to make a resolution successful and to mitigate risk in the meantime.

We will contribute to the multi-agency risk led approach for domestic abuse in each locality, including Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC).

When we become aware of an adult or child safeguarding concern relating to a report of domestic abuse, this will be raised with the Local Authority in line with Pan Sussex safeguarding procedures

See our [Safeguarding Adults Policy 4-04a.docx](#) & [Safeguarding Adults Procedure 4-04b.docx](#) for further information.

9 Monitoring

All cases of domestic abuse are recorded on QL and monitored to ensure that appropriate action is taken based on the information provided by residents. This will help us to:

- Increase our understanding of who is experiencing domestic abuse.
- Tailor our services according to the needs our tenants.
- Identify performance issues and make improvements where needed.