

DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

Date of Approval: 22.09.25

Date of Next Review: July 2023

Craigdale Housing Association can provide this document on request, in different languages and formats, including Braille and audio formats.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This policy takes recognition of Scottish Housing Regulator's Housing Charter Standards 1,6,7,8,9 & 11 which state:

1 Equalities

Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:

- Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services

6 Estate Management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes

Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure as far as reasonable possible that:

- Tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel **safe**.

7,8,9 Housing Options

Social landlords work together to ensure that:

- People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them.
- Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.
- Social landlords ensure that people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.

11 Tenancy Sustainment

Social landlords ensure that:

- Tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their homes and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and other organisations.

1.2 Legislation

The following legislation is relevant to this policy;

- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- Children's Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011
- Forced Marriage etc. (Protection and Jurisdiction (Scotland)) Act 2001

- Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001
- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
- Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003
- Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021 (Part 2 when enacted)
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Housing Scotland Bill (2024)(in final reading stages)

1.3 Overview

This policy sets out how Craigdale Housing Association will take steps to assist and support any persons experiencing or threatened with domestic abuse or violence. The policy applies to all customers of the Association.

In Scotland, domestic abuse is legally defined as any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct, and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, cohabiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners.

Legislation known as DASA (Domestic Abuse Scotland Act) 2018 created an offence with respect to the engaging by a person in a course of behaviour which is abusive of the person's partner or ex-partner; and to make rules of criminal procedure for that offence and offences subject to the statutory aggravation involving abuse of partners or ex-partners.

Domestic abuse can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Psychological Honour based abuse
- Stalking

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 capabilities for personal gain.
- Depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance, and escape and
- Regulating their behaviour.

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 the victim.

Latest statistics published by Police Scotland show that in 2023/24 there were 63,867 incidents of domestic abuse reported. 81% involved a male perpetrator and female victim, 15% involved a female perpetrator and a male victim and 3% same sex couple and that 90% of all incidents took place in the home.

Research has shown that housing is a key resource in helping victims to escape violence and abuse and that the major reason that people stay in or return to a violent relationship is lack of access to safe, long term, independent and affordable accommodation (Nowhere to Turn Report 2024).

1.4 Aims of the policy

Craigdale Housing Association have pledged to '*Make A Stand*' against domestic abuse. Our Commitment is to:

- Make new tenants aware of our policies relating to rehousing, relationship breakdown and where applicable the implications of joint tenancies.
- Publicise this policy to all tenants and employees, highlighting the consequences for perpetrators.
- Provide advice and information within the office and make information about national and local domestic abuse support services available on our website.
- Appoint Senior Housing Officer as the lead staff member for our activities associated with domestic abuse.

By adopting this policy, we aim to:

- Improve overall safety and wellbeing by recognising that domestic abuse is a serious crime which has an adverse impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities.
- Increase awareness and understanding of this issue amongst residents and employees.
- Encourage residents and employees to report domestic abuse.
- Facilitate early identification of domestic abuse and offer support and effective intervention to reduce the risk of harm.
- Improve the safety and welfare of adults and children affected by domestic abuse and prevent further incidents by responding rapidly, effectively, and consistently to all reports.
- Empower victims by providing information on the options available to them.
- Improve the response to victims through effective engagement of appropriate external enforcement and support agencies.
- Create a consistent approach for recording and monitoring incidents of domestic abuse.
- Inform colleagues of best practice when responding to domestic abuse.

2.0 RESPONDING TO A REPORT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

We will adopt a survivor centred approach in dealing with domestic abuse whereby:

- If a person feels they are experiencing domestic abuse, we will deal with it under this policy.
- Individuals affected by domestic abuse will be offered the option to speak with either a male or female staff member, depending on their preference and availability.
- We will not require victims to contact the Police or to take legal action before we will provide assistance.
- Where a person is identified as the victim of domestic abuse, any interaction with them will be guided by best practice guidelines.
- Where appropriate individuals seeking support under this policy may be required to provide appropriate evidence of domestic abuse. This may include, but is not limited to, reports from police, support services, or other professionals.

2.1 Multi Agency Approach

We will adopt a multi-agency approach in dealing with victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse, to ensure the safety of the victims, meet their needs, access specialist services, and share best practice.

2.2 Confidentiality

Victims will be encouraged to allow Craigdale staff to share information with other agencies, including Police and Local Authority departments, to ensure that the full range of civil and criminal action can be pursued, and the appropriate assistance provided. However, all information provided will be treated with the utmost confidence and only passed to external agencies with their proper, informed consent.

The exceptions to this will be:

- If we are obliged by law to disclose information.
- Exceptions to standard procedures may be made where there is a risk of harm to a child or an adult. In such cases, appropriate safeguarding measures will be prioritised

The Chief Executive Officer or Senior Housing Officer must approve any disclosure that does not have the victim's consent.

Information will be shared with work colleagues on a 'strictly need to know basis'. We will adhere to all current data protection requirements.

2.3 Tenancies

If the individual experiencing domestic abuse is named on the tenancy agreement, they may be able to transfer the tenancy solely into their name.

**This will currently depend on:*

- The legal status of the relationship
- Whose name is on the tenancy agreement

If the tenant is married or has a registered civil partnership, the partner will currently have a right to live with the tenant within the family home, even if their name is not on the tenancy agreement. The tenant will need to apply to the court for an exclusion order to suspend the perpetrators rights to live in your home. The court will grant an exclusion order when it can be shown that it is necessary for a tenant's own protection or the protection of their children.

** Once the Housing Bill 2024 Part 5 (section 44) is enacted RSL's will be able to apply to the court for possession of a tenancy from the perpetrator and award the tenancy to the victim. Once this is enacted procedures will be put in place to guide staff on when and how to use these measures.*

As part of a tenancy agreement, tenants, those living with them and any visitors to a property must not harass or assault any person in the house or neighbourhood for any reason.

As our area of operation is confined to the Castlemilk area, discussions around a suitable location for rehousing may be required with the victim and decisions may be informed by external agencies. Our approach will be driven by the victim's choice, we will seek to prevent homelessness and remove the perpetrator. If this is not possible, we will use the allocations process to prioritise the victim for a new home.

We recognise that every case is different, and our response will be tailored to the individual circumstances and needs for the victim. Including:

- Deciding for their immediate safety
- Reviewing where possible improving the safety and security of their existing home to enable them to remain there safely
- We will not recharge for lock changes and damages due to domestic abuse
- Reporting incidents to the Police, which may result in criminal action against the perpetrator
- Where appropriate, we will work with the Police and other external agencies to seek legal action against the perpetrator, which may include recovery of
- possession where other members of the household have left the property due to domestic abuse
- When the victim requires emergency rehousing, we will provide advice and assistance on accessing emergency accommodation from Glasgow City Council or Women's Aid.

2.4 The Housing Scotland Bill (2024) Part 5 (section 41) will place an Ask and Act duty onto Social Landlords, Police and Health Boards. This means that there is a duty to ask about a person's housing situation and act to avoid them becoming homeless wherever possible. It also requires social landlords to put in place support for tenants if they are in arrears of rent due to domestic abuse. CHA has a variety of support in place for people in arrears currently and will put processes in place, prior to the enactment, for staff to ensure that domestic abuse is taken into consideration when dealing with tenants with arrears. Training will be put in place to ensure that the correct questions are asked, and the signs are recognised by staff when dealing with arrears cases.

2.5 Repairs

Repairs can offer an early indication of potential domestic abuse problems in the home. Frequent lock changes, glazing, internal and external door replacement and wall plaster patching can all be indications of problems. Regular monitoring of repair trends will take place and highlighted tenancies brought to the Housing Officers attention.

Staff will receive training on spotting early warning signs and around having safeguarding conversations with highlighted tenants. Contractors will also be encouraged to report any concerns to the Housing Team, referral pathways will be put in place for all CHA contractors to report any concerns.

2.6 Rent Arrears

Economic abuse is when a person interferes with their partner's ability to acquire, use and maintain economic resources. Research from Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA) suggests that 95% of women experience economic abuse as part of domestic abuse. The new housing bill has provision within it to ensure that domestic abuse is taken into account when staff are dealing with rent arrears cases. CHA will ensure that this is the case before the enactment of the legislation and that sufficient support is put in place to help tenants whose rent arrears

are as a result of economic and domestic abuse.

Other indicators of economic abuse may manifest in other areas of a tenancy for example a tenant not having credit on gas and/or electric meters when a gas service is due or repeated requests for support for top up vouchers or food bank referrals. Staff will receive training to identify trends and ensure support is put in place for tenants who may be experiencing economic abuse.

2.7 Anti-Social Behaviour

Domestic abuse can often manifest as anti-social behaviour (ASB). In cases of coercive control, a person may not have any control over what is happening in their tenancy. When receiving reports of anti-social behaviour staff will receive training to look for trends in a tenancy for example has there been a change in household makeup, are there any increases in repair reports or increased rent arrears.

Where domestic abuse is suspected staff will ensure that the adult members of the household are interviewed separately so that an opportunity to request support given.

3.0 STAFF

Employers have a duty of care to the people they employ. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 employers are responsible for the health and safety of their employees, be it physical or emotional. This gives employers legal responsibility to act, should an employee be targeted at work in order to protect both the person involved and other staff.

Staff experiencing abuse should always be encouraged to call the police but if there's a risk of immediate harm this should be by calling 999. The police have the power to arrest someone if they are committing violent or non-violent abuse.

Violent offences include:

- common assault
- battery
- assault occasioning actual bodily harm
- wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm
- sexual assault
- rape

Non-violent offences include:

- threat of imminent violence
- coercive and controlling behaviour (covered by the stalking and harassment laws)

Domestic abuse is often repeated, may continue after a relationship has ended, can result in serious injury, or even death. In some cases, it can also lead to further problems, such as depression, substance misuse or self-harm. Domestic abuse can also have a significant effect on children who may witness the violence, or be abused themselves.

Domestic abuse often has a significant impact on an individual's life. This can include an impact at work. Possible consequences include:

- Being off work/being late/leaving work early
- Physical and emotional exhaustion
- Unusual difficulty in managing workload
- Behavioural change
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence

Managers know their staff and should take a compassionate approach, using such indicators or other changes in behaviour as an opportunity to enquire about their staff's wellbeing and take appropriate supportive action. Where domestic abuse is disclosed (see below for examples), support will be offered. Domestic abuse may have long term effects on an individual and ongoing wellbeing support is important. An individual may disclose that they are experiencing domestic abuse with comments such as:

'I don't feel safe right now' 'I don't feel safe at home'

'I'm scared/frightened of my (ex) partner/family member'

'My (ex) partner/family member won't let me out of the house (or any other controlling measure mentioned, pick up prescriptions, do the shopping, see friends/family, go to work etc.)'

'My (ex) partner/family member hurt(s) me'

'My (ex) partner/family member controls everything I do'

'My (ex) partner/family member is always putting me down/makes me feel worthless'

Domestic abuse may also impact on the employee in the workplace for example:

- Employees receive harassing or repeated phone calls, emails, and unwelcome notes on their cars or unplanned and unannounced visits at work.
- This may also include being stalked or physically assaulted when travelling to or from work, or at work.
- Colleagues could also be followed to or from work, or subjected to questioning about how to contact the individual, or where he or she can be found.
- Perpetrators may also be using workplace resources e.g. phones, e-mail or other means to threaten, harass or abuse their current or former partners.
- Other employees may unintentionally aid abusers by assisting them to locate their partners etc.

As outlined above, should any employee be experiencing any of these situations, support will be provided on a case by case basis with advice from relevant stakeholders

4.0 DIRECTORY OF SERVICES

A directory of services which offers support in relation to domestic abuse can be found at Appendix 1 of this Policy. Information is also detailed on the Association's website.

5.0 COMPLAINTS

We have a separate Complaints Policy & Procedure. Leaflets and copies of the policy are available from the Association's office and on our website.

6.0 UKGDPR

The Association will treat personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own Data Protection Policy. Information regarding how data will be used and the basis for processing data is provided in Craigdale HA's privacy notice.

7.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Association is committed to ensuring equal opportunities and fair treatment for all. In implementing this policy, our commitment to equal opportunities and fairness will apply irrespective of factors such as gender or marital status, race, religion, colour, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other personal attributes.

8.0 REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner, in response to any change in legislation.

Appendix 1

Further information and Support

Support for Women Experiencing Domestic Abuse
<p>Glasgow Women's Aid</p> <p>Glasgow Women's Aid has over 35 years' experience in supporting women and children experiencing domestic abuse. The organisation provides information, support and refuge accommodation to women, children and young people who are experiencing domestic abuse.</p> <p>Telephone: 0141 553 2022 Web: www.glasgowwomensaid.org.uk</p>
<p>Scottish Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline</p> <p>Free 24-hour helpline on 0800 027 1234 and website offering straightforward advice and information for people facing domestic abuse.</p>
<p>Scottish Women's Rights Centre</p> <p>The Scottish Women's Rights Centre helps women aged 16 and over affected by violence and abuse by providing free legal information and advice.</p> <p>Freephone: 08088 010 789 www.scottishwomensrightcentre.org.uk</p>
<p>Rape Crisis Scotland</p> <p>Free, confidential information and support for girls and women who have undergone sexual abuse at any time in their lives.</p> <p>Telephone: 08088 010302</p>
<p>SAY Women</p> <p>SAY Women is a voluntary organisation which offers safe and secure accommodation for young women who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse, rape, or sexual assault and who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.</p> <p>Telephone: 0141 552 5803</p>
<p>The Daisy Project</p> <p>Originally called Castlemilk Domestic Violence Project the organisation was formed in 2000 out of a need identified within the local community. The project has evolved over the years and is now called the Daisy Project (Domestic Abuse Integrated Support for You). Services are offered to families across the south of Glasgow.</p> <p>Telephone: 0141 634 4053 E Mail: office@thedaisyproject.org.uk Web: www.thedaisyproject.org.uk</p>

Support for BME Women Experiencing Domestic Abuse

Hemat Gryffe Women's Aid

Hemat Gryffe Woman's Aid provides support and practical help to Asian, black, and ethnic minority women who have experienced mental and physical harassment and abuse either from their partner, ex-partner or within the extended family system.

They are based in Glasgow and their services include a drop-in centre and refuge. Hemat Gryffe have a 24-hour emergency helpline.

Telephone: **0141 353 0859**

Mina

The Muslim Women's Resource Centre offers a range of support services. You can call their free helpline and on Fridays there is an Imam you can speak to on the helpline. They have offices in Glasgow and Dundee. The languages spoken are Arabic, Bangla, English, Swahili, and Urdu.

Telephone: **0808 8010301**

Muslim Community Helpline

The Muslim Community Helpline aims to provide any Muslim girl or woman in crisis with a free, confidential listening service and referral to Islamic consultants, plus practical help and information where required.

Telephone: **0208 904 8193** or **0208 908 6715**

Shakti Women's Aid

This Edinburgh based services run by black women offers advice, information, counselling, support, and temporary accommodation for black and minority ethnic women and their children escaping domestic violence. Workers can provide information on housing, benefits, legal issues, immigration, nationality, racial harassment, and health. Their support services are available across Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fife, Central Belt and Tayside. Languages spoken include Arabic, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Singhalese, Swahili, and Urdu.

Telephone: **0131 475 2399**

24 hour domestic abuse helpline: 0800 027 1234

Support for Men Experiencing Domestic Abuse

Men's Advice Line

Support and advice for men experiencing domestic abuse.

Telephone: **0808 801 0327**

Survivors UK

Survivors UK provides support and resources for men who have been sexually abused or raped or experienced any form of sexual violence.

Telephone: 0203 598 3898

SMS Messaging: 020 3322 1860 Online chat: www.survivorsuk.org

Support for LGBT People Experiencing Domestic Abuse

Broken Rainbow

Support services and advice for lesbian, bisexual, gay and trans women experiencing domestic abuse.

Telephone: 08452 60 44 60

Support for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

The Respect Phoneline

Counselling project that helps men who are being abusive towards their partners to learn how to control their behaviour.

Telephone: 0808 802 4040

Support for Young People

The Hideout

Information for children and young people affected by domestic abuse. Telephone: **0800 1111 – Childline**