Domestic Abuse Policy

Housing Plus Group

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Housing Plus Group (‘the Group’) is committed to supporting tenants and customers who are experiencing domestic abuse. We aim to ensure that you feel listened to, respected and supported, and that your housing arrangements help to promote safety and stability. Our Domestic Abuse Policy outlines the approach we take, the support available, and what you can expect from us if domestic abuse is affecting you or your household.

2.0 Policy Statement

2.1 Housing Plus Group believes that there are no excuses for domestic abuse and that residents of our homes, including their children, should not live in fear of abuse or violence from someone they are, or were, personally connected to. This may be a current or former partner or any other member of the household. We will look to assist and support any person experiencing, or who has experienced/been subjected to abuse or violence. Perpetrators of domestic abuse will be held to account and action against them will be taken where appropriate.

2.2 This policy aims to ensure that anyone experiencing domestic abuse is supported with empathy, dignity and respect. We are committed to listening without judgement, believing people when they disclose abuse and responding with integrity. Our approach is person-centred, meaning we work in partnership with individuals, responding to their needs, choices and circumstances.

3.0 Policy Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all Group customers, household members and to those accessing the services of Housing Plus Group.

3.2 In instances of staff experiencing domestic abuse, please refer to the Domestic Abuse Policy for employees and / or contact the People Services Team.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 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. This is because children are legally considered vulnerable and witnessing or experiencing domestic violence causes significant emotional, psychological and physical harm. It is defined as a form of child abuse rather than domestic violence because it impairs a child's safety, development and wellbeing.

4.2 Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person feel inferior and/or dependent by keeping them apart from friends, help and support. It can include taking advantage of their money and things they have, stopping their independence and controlling what they want to do.

4.3 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. This definition includes so called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. Victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

4.4 Economic abuse is any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect of an individual's ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property or obtain goods or services.

4.5 Stalking is repeated, unwanted contact from one person to another which causes the victim to feel distressed or fearful. It differs from harassment in that a perpetrator of stalking will be obsessed with or fixated on the individual(s) they are targeting. Stalking behaviour can include nuisance telephone calls, sending excessive emails, being followed, sending gifts or letters, death threats, monitoring behaviour, visiting places of work, sexual assault, physical assault and computer hacking.

4.6 Child to Parent Abuse (CPA) is where a child of any age displays repeated abusive behaviours towards a parental figure.

4.7 Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is a national process that is delivered locally to help people at high risk of murder or serious harm. This includes a domestic abuse specialist (Independent Domestic

Violence Advisor – IDVA), policy, children's social services, health, housing and other relevant agencies.

5.0 Policy Approach

5.1 Reports made of Domestic Abuse will always be taken seriously. We will:

- Listen, believe and respond sensitively;
- Treat every customer with fairness and respect;
- Ensure our services are accessible and responsive to individual needs, making reasonable adjustments where needed;
- Work collaboratively to assess risk and agree appropriate actions;
- Encourage and support engagement with specialist services.

5.2 We will encourage customers to report all incidents of threatened or actual domestic abuse and will offer a confidential service to ensure that those experiencing domestic abuse are given support and advice to allow them to make choices about what to do next.

5.3 We will be guided by the customer and appropriate professionals in determining the most appropriate course of action in responding to an incident of domestic abuse.

5.4 We will support victims to access the use of civil and criminal laws which can offer them protection and act as a preventative measure to avoid further abuse.

5.5 We will always seek to support victims to remain in their homes if it is safe to do so. Domestic Abuse is not just physical violence. It takes many forms such as coercive and controlling behaviour and emotional abuse and we will work to keep you safe in your home in these circumstances. We will work with partner agencies and victims to consider target hardening and other preventative measures to protect victims of domestic abuse and sustain tenancies. Target hardening of victims' properties may include advice, installation of assistive technology, physical changes to properties such as increased security and imposing preventative measures against perpetrators of domestic abuse.

5.6 Where there is an immediate risk and it is unsafe for a person to remain in their home, we will seek support from Local Authority Housing Options Teams and refuge to find suitable emergency accommodation.

5.7 We will consider re-housing those experiencing domestic abuse if they are at risk in their current homes. In these cases, the Group will undertake an assessment of how the risk will be mitigated if a move is arranged. This will be managed in line with our Allocations and Lettings Policy and Procedure.

5.8 We will ensure that if a person is re-housed due to being a victim of domestic abuse, their new tenancy will have the same security of tenure as their previous tenancy.

5.9 We will hold perpetrators of domestic abuse to account and will take the most appropriate and proportionate action in line with relevant legislation where we have sufficient information to do so. We will also ensure that perpetrators are aware that they can disclose their behaviour and seek help via the pathways available.

5.10 We will follow all relevant policies including the Adult and Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures where we are aware that vulnerable adults or children are experiencing domestic abuse.

5.11 We will remain a fully supportive and participating member of the Safer Partnership Group in the areas we operate and play a key role in the delivery of some of the partnerships' overarching priorities to protect vulnerable people from a range of issues including domestic abuse.

5.12 We will follow the review process for the policy to ensure that any changes in research, national legislation and policy, and local support and service provision are accounted for.

5.13 We will participate in meetings that aim to tackle domestic abuse. This can be the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which is a local process to help people at high risk of murder or serious harm. This includes a Domestic Abuse Specialist (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor – (IDVA), the police, children's social services, health and other relevant agencies. We will also attend meetings regarding the perpetrator programme.

5.14 The sharing of information with organisations and within partnership meetings will be in line with relevant Information Sharing Agreements and the General Data Protection Regulations.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The **Group Chief Executive** is responsible for:

- Ensuring sufficient resources are provided for those working directly with the Group's customers and tenants;
- Ensuring the policy is applied consistently and aligns with the Group's vision and values;
- Creating the sufficient structure with delegated organisational responsibilities for the implementation of this policy.

6.2 The **Executive Director of Customer Experience** is responsible for ensuring the necessary level of focus and sufficient allocation of resources are available to deliver the service.

6.3 The **Regional Directors** are responsible for:

- Ensuring the sufficient allocation of resources are available to deliver all the necessary activities;

- Ensuring suitable monitoring and reporting mechanisms are in place to measure activity, performance and satisfaction with the service.

6.4 The **Regional Teams** will be responsible for:

- Reviewing the policy and making sure it recognises changes in statutory and legal requirements;
- Ensuring the policy is up to date and relevant in terms of best practice, both within and outside of the sector, with a particular focus on new, and changes in, legislation;
- Ensuring that the policy is publicised internally and externally;
- Ensuring that there is appropriate training, guidance and support available to allow for the policy to be delivered on a day-to-day basis;
- Ensuring cases are recorded on the appropriate system and undertaking case audits.

6.5 The **Regional, Retirement Living and ShireLiving Teams are responsible for:**

- The day-to-day case recording and management in accordance with the policy;
- Ensuring that the best practice promoted in the policy is delivered on a daily basis;
- Ensuring there is the necessary focus on communication in all cases with all affected parties.

6.6 All **Teams/staff** must:

- Refer to the policy and procedure;
- Contact the regional teams for advice;
- Raise a concerns alert via the intranet if they have concerns about a customer.

7.0 Compliance

7.1 This policy complies with the following legislation:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003;
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004;
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997;
- Serious Crimes Act 2015;
- The Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Policy;
- The Family Law Act 1996;
- The Housing Act 1996;
- Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy 2025-2030.

	Policy Control Sheet **Domestic Abuse Policy** **Policy reference number - 2026/017**
Policy Author	Philip Heywood - Neighbourhood Manager Jill Harvey – Community Safety Manager
Direct Lead	David Wells Executive Director of Customer Experience
Version	1.0 – July 2026
Target audience	Customers and Staff of Housing Plus Group
Consultation	Wrekin Voices Customer Partnership Panel (CPP) Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Domestic Abuse Ambassadors Health and Safety Team / Customer Services Team / Lettings Team / Care and Support Teams Directors SPaCE Committee
Date of Equality Impact Assessment	An EIA was completed on the 30th April 2026.
Date of Data Privacy Impact Assessment	A Data Privacy Impact Assessment is not required.
Approving Body	Executive Management Team
Date of final approval	16th July 2026
Implementation date	July 2026
Monitoring and Reporting	Regional Boards Executive Management Team EDI Assurance Reviews
Review date	January 2029
Expiry date	July 2029
Review cycle	Three-year review cycle or sooner if there are legislative, regulatory or other significant impacts on the business
Policy category	Housing Management
Associated policies and procedures	Allocations and Lettings Policy ASB Policy Repair and Maintenance Policy Safeguarding Policies
Policy location	SharePoint HPG Hub Housing Plus Group website

Summary of changes table

Revision history			
Author	**Summary of changes**	**Version**	**Authorised by & date**
Phil Heywood – Neighbourhood Manager Jill Harvey – Community Safety Manager	New Housing Plus Group Policy – bringing together the legacy approaches of HPG and Wrekin.	1.0 – July 2026	Executive Management Team – 16/07/2026