



The Trust

Domestic Abuse Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Domestic abuse is a serious crime. It shatters the lives of its survivors and, in some cases, leads to tragic deaths, serious injury and significant impact on emotional wellbeing.
- 1.2. This policy sets out how Peaks & Plains Housing Trust (the Trust) will take steps to assist and support any person suffering from or threatened with violence or abuse.
- 1.3. There is a separate policy for staff and contractors.
- 1.3. The policy sets out the action we may consider taking against perpetrators of domestic abuse to hold them to account. It applies to all Trust customers, non-tenants living with Trust customers, anyone receiving a service from us and members of staff. The key points of the policy are that the Trust will:
 - Take appropriate action to reduce the risk of abuse where it is considered it might happen.
 - Aim to keep the survivor of domestic abuse safe by working proactively with them, identifying the risk of further abuse.
 - Provide the survivor of domestic abuse with options and empower them to make choices so that they can identify the option that best meets their individual circumstances.
 - Liaise with the lead statutory agency and other relevant local bodies, including charities, to reduce risk, ensuring DASH (domestic abuse, stalking and honour-based violence) risk assessments are completed where appropriate.
 - Support the lead statutory agency in taking action against perpetrators of abuse. This includes taking tenancy enforcement action against perpetrators where it is appropriate to do so.
 - Continually improve the Trust's response to domestic abuse by learning from survivor feedback and the feedback from a range of other agencies.

The Trust, recognising the vital role of values and behaviours towards survivors, actively applies the following principles when staff handle domestic abuse cases:

- Integrity: ensuring transparency and honesty towards all.
- Empathy: Actively listen and strive to understand survivor experiences.
- Empowerment and Collaboration: Partner with survivors, ensuring their perspectives are heard and valued. Acknowledge their expertise in navigating their situation and respect the steps they've already taken for safety.
- Accountability: Take ownership of our actions and openly discuss options while being honest about our capabilities.
- Survivor Safety First: Prioritise survivor safety above all else, ensuring their voices are central to what we do, and their well-being underpins every decision.
- Non-judgmental Support: Providing unwavering support without judgment, seeking to understand each survivor's unique experience.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This document should be used by all employees, contractors and volunteers of the Trust to understand the obligations placed upon the organisation to maintain a safe environment for its customers.

3. LEGAL AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1. This policy supports the delivery of the Trust's strategic objective to meet its legal and regulatory requirements and should be read in conjunction with the Workplace Guidance for supporting staff at risk of domestic abuse.

- 3.2. This Policy aligns to the Regulator's Consumer Standards:

Neighbourhood and Community Standard

- 1.4 Domestic abuse
- 1.4.1 Registered providers must work co-operatively with other agencies tackling domestic abuse and enable tenants to access appropriate support and advice.
- 2.2 Domestic abuse
- 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.

The Trust will work within existing regulatory requirements and legislation including:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Domestic Violence Crime and Victim Act 2004 (s9 implemented in 2011 Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997and Victims Act 2004 (s.9 implemented in 2011)
- Equality Act 2010
- The Care Act 2014
- Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Serious Crime Act 2015 (Part 5, Section 76)
- Domestic Abuse Bill 2019
- Police and Justice Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Data Protection Act 2018

- Sexual Offences Act 2003

3.3. The Trust is committed to the values and principles of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance [DAHA - Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance \(dahalliance.org.uk\)](http://dahalliance.org.uk). These are integral to and underpin our approach to supporting survivors of domestic abuse.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as the following:
Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if:
(a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
(b) the behaviour is abusive.

4.2. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines abusive behaviour as any of the following:

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

4.3. Domestic abuse can encompass but is not limited to the above types of abuse. It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

4.4. For the definition to apply, both parties must be aged 16 or over and ‘personally connected’.

4.5. “Personally connected” is defined in the act as parties who:

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

4.6. Domestic Abuse can also occur between adult children and parents, or those in similar relationships

4.7. The term ‘violence against women and girls’ refers to acts of violence or abuse that we know disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, ‘honour’-based abuse, as well as many others, including offences committed online.

- 4.7. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims/survivors of domestic abuse. Any reference in the Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who (a) sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse, and (b) is related to either of the parties. Children living in households where domestic abuse occurs are recognised as victims of that abuse in their own right and our policy reflects this.

5. THE POLICY

- 5.1. The aim of this policy is to promote the health, safety and well-being of the Trust's customers. The policy reflects local, national, strategic and operational guidance produced in response to the growing recognition of the detrimental effects that domestic abuse has on adults, children and society. Domestic abuse and violence is unacceptable behaviour and this policy promotes that everyone has a right to live free from fear and abuse.
- 5.2. The Trust understands that people have different experiences of disadvantage and discrimination depending on their characteristics, identity and background. In keeping the approach person centred, the aim to acknowledge and understand the individual needs of survivors and offer services and approaches that take account of their identity as a whole, is paramount. This includes considering specific and intersecting needs based on race, gender, sexuality, religion and culture.
- 5.3. Recognising domestic abuse as a community issue, the Trust will forge partnerships with national and local agencies. This includes specialist services run by Black, minority ethnic, LGBTQ+, Deaf, and disabled groups ("For and By Services"), local authorities, police, and health services.
- 5.4. The Trust recognises the need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies in order to reduce the risk of harm to survivors. Domestic abuse is a criminal offence and subsequently also a breach of our tenancy agreement. It is recognised that as a landlord the Trust plays a significant role in identifying domestic abuse issues and supporting those at risk.
- 5.5. This policy is supported by a Safeguarding Procedure, Domestic Abuse Procedure, Domestic Abuse Within the Workplace Procedure, which must always be read in conjunction with this policy.
- 5.6. The Trust is committed to identifying potential problems of domestic abuse at the earliest opportunity, making positive interventions where possible to prevent situations escalating.
- 5.7. The Trust is committed to working with survivors and perpetrators to assist the response in dealing with specific incidents of domestic abuse and to ensure all survivors are supported fully in the process.
- 5.8. The Trust will establish clear lines of responsibility and accountability for the detection, recording and reporting of a domestic abuse incident and subsequent action. The Trust

will accept reports and disclosures of domestic abuse through any available communication channel

Where a member of staff suspects or witnesses domestic abuse taking place in a Trust property or neighbourhood, they must log the incident by emailing the safeguarding inbox.

- 5.9. Appendix A provides a non-exhaustive list of agencies that can offer support to both survivors and perpetrators of abuse. This can also be found on the Trust external website.
- 6.1. Domestic abuse cases will be opened on the Trust's housing case management system and the case managed by the Support and Enforcement Team.
- 6.2. The Trust will take a person-centred approach in responding to cases of domestic abuse to try and minimise any danger to them. Advice and assistance will be given in an empathetic, supportive and non-judgemental way.
- 6.2. The Trust understands the need to work in partnership and share information where necessary with specialist agencies to reduce the risk of harm to survivors. The Trust's aim is to support survivors by:
 - Speaking to survivors and taking account of any safety concerns around communication
 - Listening, believing their account without judgement
 - Working with survivors to assess risk and agreeing an appropriate plan of action / support
 - Sharing and working in partnership with appropriate agencies in line with GDPR responsibilities
 - Take a strong focus on being survivor led, assessing individual needs and needs of the family

7. IDENTIFYING RISKS

- 5.2. The Trust will provide clear guidance and training for all relevant staff on how to identify signs of domestic abuse, how to report their concerns, and how relevant staff can manage cases of domestic abuse. Dealing with issues of domestic abuse or violence requires a multi-agency approach and the Trust will work with any useful local agencies in individual cases, where appropriate, to ensure they are dealt with in the most effective and efficient way.

6. MULTI AGENCY WORKING

The safety of all survivors is the Trust's priority, and any concerns will be shared with relevant agencies where it is believed that a child or vulnerable person is at risk and will be managed in line with the Trust's Safeguarding Policy and procedure.

- 6.1. The Trust will complete a Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment Risk Indicator Checklist (DASH RIC) assessment when domestic abuse is reported and then work with specialist external agencies in order to develop an action plan to find a solution for the survivor. In some cases the DASH RIC may have already been completed by another agency, for example the police, in which case an additional DASH RIC would only need to be completed if another incident had occurred .
- 6.2. If the risks are high, the Trust will refer details to the local Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). This is a regular local meeting to discuss how to help people at high risk of murder or serious harm. Agencies in attendance are Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA), police, children's social services, health and other relevant organisations.
- 6.3. The Trust will always accept the survivor's account as a true reflection of actual events upon receiving their reports.
- 6.4. The Trust will help survivors to tell us about the abuse quickly and safely so that making the report doesn't put them at further risk.
- 6.5. As part of the action plan, the Trust will agree with survivors how future contact can be made safely. The risk assessment and action plan will be repeated at appropriate points throughout the Trust's involvement as necessary to ensure the appropriate action continues to be taken. This is coordinated by the local authority (or police) for the area where the survivor is housed.
- 6.6. The Trust will also liaise with the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) where the local threshold is met, where there are serious concerns, or if the risk of harm originates from them. The Trust will carry out the multi-agency action plan actions assigned to them by the MARAC and will ensure the Trust's role is understood and the correct processes followed.
- 6.7. The Trust will actively participate in other relevant local partnerships where appropriate and will work with specialist support agencies such as Victim Support, identifying support needs and vulnerability. They will make child safeguarding referrals to the relevant local authority when the need to protect a child or children is identified, or the domestic abuse may be having a negative impact on the child or children.
- 6.8. The Trust will offer domestic abuse survivors the opportunity to access translation services or to speak to an employee of the same gender and/or sexual orientation.

- 6.9. If the survivor disengages from their agreed support plan, and that places them or their family at greater risk, or the abuse is having a negative impact on the wider community, the Trust will review what action to take to most effectively manage that risk and impact.

7. PERPETRATOR ACCOUNTABILITY

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 specifically states that perpetrators of domestic abuse must be held to account. Committing domestic abuse in a property owned by the Trust is a crime and a breach of tenancy. The Trust is committed to managing domestic abuse cases on an individual basis, with a survivor focused approach whilst holding perpetrators to account.

- 7.1. To demonstrate the Trust's commitment to holding perpetrators to account we will:

- Embed the principle of perpetrator responsibility through training, publicity, and awareness campaigns.
- Ensure that case management prioritises survivor support by minimising disruption and signposting legal resources for empowerment.
- Collaborate with partner agencies, including the Police, to share relevant information or evidence that may support perpetrator prosecution.
- Where appropriate, take action to end a perpetrator's tenancy.

The Trust will consider the available legal action or remedies (both civil and criminal) available to them to deal with perpetrators of domestic abuse. They will monitor and seek to understand what action is being taken by the statutory agencies (such as supporting victims to apply for non-molestation orders and/or occupation orders - available under part IV of the Family Law Act 1996) and ensure joint working is a priority. Any breaches of tenancy agreement will be managed in line with the Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Policy and procedure, to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their behaviour and actions.

The Trust is committed to involving the wishes and feelings of the survivor when considering appropriate action to maintain a person centred approach.

In circumstances where it is appropriate to do so, referrals to domestic abuse perpetrator programmes may be made.

Perpetrator programmes are not always successful however they can help support and have positive benefits and lead to :

- Increased Safety for Survivors: While not a guarantee, successful perpetrator programs can lead to a decrease in future violence and abuse. This translates to a safer environment for survivors and potentially their children.
- Reduced Re-offending: Programs aim to address the root causes of abusive behaviour, like anger management, unhealthy relationship patterns, or power imbalances. By equipping perpetrators with tools for change, they can potentially reduce the risk of future abuse.

- Breaking the Cycle of Violence: Domestic violence/ abuse can occur across generations. Perpetrator programs can interrupt this cycle by helping individuals develop healthier relationship skills.
- Accountability for Perpetrators: These programs hold perpetrators accountable for their actions and provide a path towards positive change.

8. TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO REDUCE RISK

- 8.1. The Trust will act to secure the survivor’s home and may implement target hardening where a domestic abuse incident has been reported.
- 8.2. The Trust will promote the opportunity for the survivor to remain in their home where it is their choice and it is safe for them to do so. This may involve putting in place additional security measures. Where it is agreed with the survivor that rehousing is the best option, other housing opportunities will be explored which may be in a different location from the current home in order to provide protection to the survivor (refer to the Allocations Policy and/or Transfer Policy). The Trust will work with the survivor to decide whether security measures (such as lock changes or blocking letterboxes) are required to reduce or remove the risk of harm to the survivor in the homes managed by the Trust.
- 8.3. The Trust will explore the use of new technologies to support survivors and manage risk. This includes promoting new mobile applications available to survivors for them to record incidents such as Bright Sky or Hollie Guard. Survivors may also use these applications to access help and support services.

9. FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

- 9.1. The Trust is committed to continually improving and learning in its handling of domestic abuse cases. This includes embedding feedback from agencies such as Domestic Homicide Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews, and Serious Case Reviews to identify areas for improvement in procedures, communication, and risk assessment. Regular audits will be undertaken to ensure that cases are being dealt with in line with the latest policies and procedures.
- 9.2. The Trust aims to meet the needs of its customers by providing an excellent service. However, it is acknowledged that occasionally our processes are not fully followed, and customers may wish to complain. Should the need arise to make a complaint, please refer to the Group’s Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy

10. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- 10.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.
- 10.2. We will make sure all our services are accessible and range of options are available for reporting domestic abuse. Information will be supplied in other languages and formats as required. Interpreters and translation services will be arranged to ensure we do not

create any unnecessary barriers to report domestic abuse and make our services accessible and inclusive to all.

- 10.3. We are committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of economic status, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion, ethnic group or immigration status. We recognise that survivors' experiences of domestic abuse may be in part defined by their background. We understand that certain individuals may face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and will recognise this intersectionality and tailor our service accordingly.

11. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 11.1. All Trust staff are responsible for adhering to this policy and being vigilant in identifying and reporting incidents, and discussion should be made with the line Manager. If any member of staff has any concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child and/or adult at risk, they must immediately follow the Safeguarding Procedure.
- 11.2. Responsibility for the operational implementation of this policy lies with the Head of Neighbourhoods, supported by the Customer Support and Enforcement Manager.
- 11.3. As legislation and best practice are formulated it will be the responsibility of the Head of Neighbourhoods, to ensure any necessary updates to this policy are made in a timely manner.
- 11.4. The Trust's Executive Management team will be responsible for the approval of this policy.
- 11.5. The Customer Support and Enforcement Manager will be responsible for completing regular audits to ensure that cases are being dealt with in line with the latest policies and procedures.
- 11.6. The Trust's Customer Support and Enforcement team, led by the Customer Support and Enforcement Manager will be responsible for the operational implementation of measures contained within this policy.
- 11.7. The Customer Support and Enforcement Team will attend relevant external meetings and ensure the Trusts housing management system is updated.

12. MONITORING AND REPORTING

- 12.1. Cases of abuse will be logged by the individual officers and monitored regularly by the Customer Support and Enforcement Team. The effectiveness of this policy will also be monitored through sampling of case records and quality checks by the Customer Support and Enforcement Manager.
- 12.2. Key performance monitoring information will be shared with the Trust's Performance Management Group.

- 12.3. The Trust will share relevant information with local agencies such as the police where necessary, to deal with cases effectively by either gathering extra evidence to carry out enforcement measures against the perpetrator or sharing information in the interests of the survivor and/or their dependants to provide better or more effective support.
- 12.4. Training on domestic abuse is available to all staff in addition to training on safeguarding. The Trust is committed to have arrangements in place to ensure effective training of all staff. Training levels will be determined by the responsibilities set out in job descriptions/role functions. The domestic abuse training is designed to ensure that all staff working are alert to domestic abuse and the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults and are appropriately skilled and competent in carrying out their responsibilities for safeguarding appropriate to their role.
- 12.5. The operation of this policy and assurance that it is being applied will be reported to Executive and the Board on no less than an annual basis.
- 12.6. Challenge Group receive quarterly updates on safeguarding, including domestic abuse.

13. CONSULTATION

- 13.1. This policy will be reviewed in consultation with customers, staff voice and partner agencies of the Trust every 3 years, unless significant changes in legislation can be completed sooner.
- 13.2. This policy has been reviewed by customers, health and wellbeing group, EDI Forum, all mangers, senior managers and approved by Executive Management Team

14. REVIEW

- 14.1. This policy will be reviewed in consultation with customers, staff voice and partner agencies of the Trust.
- 14.2. This policy will be reviewed every three years unless significant changes in legislation.

15. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- 15.1.
 - Safeguarding Policy
 - Safeguarding Procedure
 - Domestic Abuse Procedure
 - Staff Domestic Abuse Policy
 - Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Policy
 - Complaints Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - Workplace Violence and Abuse Policy
 - Lone Working Procedure

- Data Protection Policy
- Mutual Exchange, Assignment and Succession Policy
- Rent Collection and Arrears Management Policy
- Tenancy Agreement
- Data Protection Policy
- Data Sharing Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Transfer Policy
- Allocations Policy
- Vulnerable Persons Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy

POLICY INFORMATION

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