



Dunbritton Housing Association Limited

Name of Policy	Domestic Abuse Policy
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
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Section	All
Reference	Domestic Abuse Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Dunbritton Housing Association (DHA) recognises that its employees may be amongst those affected by domestic abuse; for example through working with customers experiencing domestic abuse, as a survivor of domestic abuse, an individual who is currently living with domestic abuse, someone who has been impacted upon by domestic abuse or as an individual who perpetrates domestic abuse.
- 1.2 We understand that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse. Abusers and victims can be male or female, any race or religion and from all different types of background. DHA recognises that domestic abuse is an equalities issue and undertakes to not discriminate against anyone who has been subjected to domestic abuse in terms of current employment or future development.
- 1.3 We are committed to developing a workplace culture in which there is zero-tolerance for abuse and which recognises that the responsibility for domestic abuse lies with the perpetrator. DHA has a 'zero tolerance' position on domestic abuse and is committed to ensuring that any employee who is the victim of domestic abuse has the right to raise the issue with their employer in the knowledge that they will receive appropriate support and assistance.

2. Definition

- 2.1 DHA follow the Scottish Government's definition of Domestic:
"Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse), can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family or friends)."

3. Scope

- 3.1 The principles of this Policy are incorporated into many organisational policies and procedure. This ensures that we address any form of domestic abuse as part of our mainstream services. This policy's principle of providing support also applies to employees and Board members. Such support will be provided through our Corporate Services Department.

4. Customers Facing Domestic Abuse

- 4.1 DHA's policies and procedures separately consider assisting customers that may be facing domestic abuse.
- 4.2 DHA will adopt a multi-agency approach in dealing with victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse, to ensure the safety of the victims, co-ordinate available resources, access specialist services, and take action against perpetrators.

- 4.3 Where a resident reporting domestic abuse needs emergency accommodation DHA will provide advice and assistance on accessing such accommodation.
- 4.4 We will offer assistance to those experiencing domestic abuse by not recharging them for lock changes and damages due to domestic abuse. Where the Police have been involved and there is an incident number and locks are changed, where appropriate, we will charge costs to the perpetrator.
- 4.5 DHA hold all customers information securely and privately in accordance with the principals of GDPR. Where a customer has highlighted concerns over domestic abuse, we may incorporate further safeguards to ensure their details remain private.

5. Customers Perpetrating Domestic Abuse

- 5.1 DHA will work with the Police and other external agencies in dealing with perpetrators of domestic abuse. Action against perpetrators will depend upon individual circumstances. This may include legal action for recovery of possession against a perpetrator, where other members of the household have left the home because of domestic abuse.

6. Employees Experiencing Domestic Abuse

- 6.1 Employees who disclose experiencing abuse can be assured that the information they provide is confidential and will not ordinarily be shared with other members of staff without their permission.
- There are, however, some circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be assured. These occur when there are safeguarding concerns about children or vulnerable adults or where the employer needs to act to protect the safety of employees.
- In circumstances where DHA has to breach confidentiality, it will seek specialist advice before doing so. If it decides to proceed in breaching confidentiality after having taken advice, it will discuss with the employee why it is doing so and it will seek the employee's agreement where possible.
- 6.2 As far as possible, information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis. Improper disclosure of information i.e. breaches of confidentiality by any member of staff will be taken seriously and may be subject to disciplinary action.
- Where domestic abuse in a same-sex relationship is disclosed, due regard will be paid to the double disclosure of confidential information.
- 6.3 DHA recognises that developing a life free from abuse is a process, not an event and DHA will provide ongoing support for employees who disclose abuse. DHA will respond sympathetically, confidentially and effectively to any member of staff who discloses that they are experiencing domestic abuse.
- Where domestic abuse has been reported line managers will treat unplanned

absences and temporary poor timekeeping sympathetically.

6.4 Line managers may offer employees experiencing domestic abuse a broad range of support. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Special paid leave for relevant appointments, including with support agencies, solicitors, to rearrange housing or childcare, and for court appointments.
- Temporary or permanent changes to working times and patterns.
- Changes to specific duties, for example, to avoid potential contact with an abuser in a customer-facing role.
- Redeployment or relocation.
- Measures to ensure a safe working environment, for example changing a telephone number to avoid harassing phone calls.
- Using other existing policies, including flexible working.
- Access to counselling/support services in paid time.
- Access to courses developed to support female survivors of domestic abuse.

6.5 Line managers will respect the right of staff to make their own decision on the course of action at every stage.

Other existing provisions (including occupational health, independent counselling service, others) will also be signposted to staff as a means of support.

6.6 In cases where both the victim and the perpetrator of domestic abuse work in the organisation, DHA will take appropriate action. In addition to considering disciplinary action against the employee who is perpetrating the abuse, action may need to be taken to ensure that the victim and perpetrator do not come into contact in the workplace. Action may also need to be taken to minimise the potential for the perpetrator to use their position or work resources to find out details about the whereabouts of the victim. This may include a change of duties for one or both employees or withdrawing the perpetrators access to certain computer programmes or offices.

6.7 DHA encourages all employees to report if they suspect a colleague is experiencing or perpetrating abuse. Employees should speak to their line manager about their concerns in confidence. In dealing with a disclosure from a colleague, employers should ensure that the person with concerns is made aware of the existence of this policy.

7. Employees Perpetrating Domestic Abuse

7.1 Domestic abuse perpetrated by employees will not be condoned under any circumstances nor will it be treated as a purely private matter. DHA recognises that it has a role in encouraging and supporting employees to address violent

and abusive behaviour of all kinds.

7.2 If an employee approaches DHA about their abusive behaviour, DHA will provide information about the services and support available to them.

7.3 DHA will treat any allegation, disclosure or conviction of a domestic abuse-related offence on a case-by-case basis to reduce risk and support change.

7.4 DHA's Code of Conduct is intended to inform all staff of the standards of conduct expected of them. It identifies a set of principles governing behaviour by which staff members are expected to abide. Staff members are expected at all times to present high standards of personal integrity and conduct that will not reflect adversely on the organisation and its reputation.

8. Preventing Domestic Abuse

8.1 In our efforts to reduce and prevent domestic abuse we will:

- Make all new tenants aware of our policies relating to rehousing, relationship breakdown and where applicable the implications of joint tenancies.
- Publicise this domestic abuse policy to all tenants and employees.
- Provide advice and information within our office.
- Work with specialist organisations and charities to reduce domestic abuse.

9. Equal Opportunities Statement

9.1 As a service provider and employer we recognise the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, oppose any form of discrimination and will treat all customers, internal and external, with dignity and respect. We recognise diversity and will ensure that all of our actions ensure accessibility and reduce barriers to employment and the services we provide.