



Domestic Abuse Policy

1.0 Purpose and scope

This policy outlines Notting Hill Genesis' (NHG) principles for addressing and managing cases of domestic abuse.

We have a zero tolerance attitude towards domestic abuse.

This policy applies to all residents.

2.0 Definitions

Domestic abuse: Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

3.0 Key Commitments

We commit to:

- Creating an environment where individuals that are experiencing or have witnessed domestic abuse feel supported and believed from the outset.
- Making sure when dealing with cases of domestic abuse, any actions are customer led and aim to empower the individual.
- Working collaboratively with external agencies, participate in Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings and the police and where appropriate take legal action against perpetrators.
- Where there are children or an adult at risk living at the property, a referral will be made to the Local Authorities' safeguarding team in keeping with the requirements of the Care Act 2014.
- Ensuring that there is a culture of awareness throughout NHG.

- Training being provided for staff to ensure they are familiar with our policy and procedures on domestic abuse.
- Ensuring that any staff experiencing domestic abuse are supported, this is covered in our wellbeing policy.

3.1 Make a stand pledge

We have signed up to the Chartered Institute of Housing's 'Make a stand' pledge.

The pledge was created in partnership with Women's Aid and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance to encourage housing organisations to make a commitment to support people experiencing domestic abuse. The four pledge commitments are:

1. Put in place and embed a policy to support residents who are affected by domestic abuse.
2. Make information about national and local domestic abuse support services available on your website and in other appropriate places so that they are easily accessible for residents and staff.
3. Put in place a HR policy, or amend an existing policy, to support members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse.
4. Appoint a champion at a senior level in your organisation to own the activity you are doing to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

4.0 Responding to a report of domestic abuse

There are a number of ways that we might receive a report of domestic abuse taking place in one of our properties. It may be made by the individual experiencing the abuse or by the perpetrator disclosing their own behaviour. It may be by a concerned neighbour, relative, or the police. Suspected cases may be brought to our attention by repeat repairs, repeated reports of loud noises, banging or shouting or a member of staff noticing a change in behaviour of a resident.

We treat all reports of domestic abuse seriously, sympathetically and in confidence. We endeavour that our residents are safe in their homes.

All cases are different, and depending on the situation, staff will respond accordingly, ensuring at all times that any action is resident led.

It might be that more information is needed, this is true especially where it has been brought to our attention by a third party or suspected domestic abuse taking place due to noise reports or repeated repairs.

When an individual experiencing domestic abuse discloses this to a member of staff, we will:

- Ask them if they are in immediate danger, if there is immediate threat to life staff will encourage the individual to call the police, or call the police on their behalf.
- Find out if there are any vulnerable adults or children living at the property. If staff believe there is a safeguarding concern of an adult at risk or a child at risk living in the property where the domestic abuse is taking place, we have a duty of care to raise this concern with the Local Authority.

- Offer to meet the individual at a place that they feel safe, it is important to offer the resident to meet with a member of staff that they feel comfortable with, it may be that they would prefer to meet with someone of the same or opposite gender.
- Find out the safest way to contact them going forwards
- Find out the name of the perpetrator and their relationship to the individual
- Let them know of local and national support agencies, and where they can find more information on agencies to help them.

4.1 The perpetrator

We provide general housing advice to perpetrators when requested. Where the perpetrator is willing to confront their abusive behaviour, we refer them to appropriate support services.

If the perpetrator is the tenant of the property we will consider taking appropriate tenancy action including possession action.

4.2 Privacy Impact

Domestic abuse cases are particularly sensitive. We take extra care to maintain confidence of information. However where there are safeguarding concerns or a crime has been committed we will follow our duties with sharing this information with the relevant authorities.

Where possible, we will seek to establish information sharing protocols with relevant external agencies to help in managing domestic abuse cases.

Personal or sensitive data will be processed in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 (as amended) and NHG's Data Protection Policy.

5.0 Working in partnership

We endeavour to work with other agencies, such as the police, local authorities, domestic abuse agencies, and health services to tackle domestic abuse.

6.0 Alternative housing options

Where the individual experiencing the abuse is unable to remain in their home owing to the ongoing presence of the abuser or the threat of future abuse, we ensure they are aware of various housing alternatives available to them to access.

Where appropriate and possible we collaborate with other registered providers as part of the Pan-London Housing Reciprocal agreement to find alternative accommodation in areas that are safe for them, whilst allowing them to keep the same security of tenure.

7.0 Monitoring

All cases of domestic abuse are recorded and monitored to ensure appropriate action is taken based on information provided by residents. We analyse this data in order to:

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

8.0 Raising awareness

We are committed to eradicating domestic abuse and a key part of this is ensuring that our residents and communities are clear on our position. This includes giving information in newsletters, resident handbooks, and on our website.

9.0 Our approach

In writing this policy we have carried out assessments to ensure that we are considering:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Privacy & Data Protection please see section 4.2 of this policy

For further information please email policy@nhg.org.uk

10.0 Reference

The legal framework for dealing with domestic abuse is contained in the following legislation:

- Family Law Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Housing Act 1996
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Children Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Care Act 2014

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