

Midlands Rural Housing

Domestic Abuse Policy June 2026

This policy is implemented by Midlands Rural Housing (MRH) on behalf of four independent partner associations: Leicestershire Rural Housing Association, Northamptonshire Rural Housing Association, Peak District Rural Housing Association and Warwickshire Rural Housing Association. Midlands Rural Housing provides the full range of housing and management services for these four associations in line with a procedure agreement.

Document Title	Domestic Abuse Policy
Version number	2
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Author title & issuing department	Housing Manager
Target audience	All MRH, website

Approved by	Managing Director
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Links to Regulatory Standards – Economic/ Consumer Standards	Neighbourhood and Community Standard Registered providers must set out how we recognise and effectively respond to cases of Domestic Abuse.
Outcomes for Customers	The policy sets out how MRH will respond to reports of Domestic Abuse and what action may be taken.
How were tenants, residents and service users involved in the review/development of this document	Via EMH residents consultation panel
Training provision	Heads of Service across the business will be responsible for cascading the policy to their teams, ensuring all colleagues understand and adopt the principles of the policy.
Links to key values	Clarity: sets out clearly how emh will support victims of Domestic Abuse. Accountability: makes clear what is our responsibility, what lies with tenants and with other third parties.

1. Introduction

Introduction to the topic

- 1.1 At Midlands Rural Housing we believe that our customers should not live in fear of abuse or violence from a partner, former partner, or other members of the household. We will take steps to assist and support any person suffering from or threatened with Domestic Violence and or Abuse.

The purpose of the Policy

- 1.2 This policy sets out the aims, principles and values that will be adopted by the association in managing incidents of Domestic Abuse.

Why Midlands Rural Housing is issuing the Policy

- 1.3 The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England (Neighbourhood and Community Standard) requires registered providers to work in partnership with other agencies to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhoods where they own homes. Regulatory action may be taken where failure to meet the standard has caused, or could have caused, serious harm to tenants.

Relevant legislation

- ▶ The Housing Act 1996
- ▶ The Family Law Act 1996
- ▶ Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- ▶ Human Rights Act 1998
- ▶ Data Protection Act 2018
- ▶ Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- ▶ Police and Justice Act 2006
- ▶ The Equality Act 2010
- ▶ Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- ▶ Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- ▶ Serious Crime Act 2015
- ▶ The Care Act 2014
- ▶ Clare's Law (also known as Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme)
- ▶ The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

2. Definitions and scope

Definitions

- 2.1 Midlands Rural Housing has adopted the Government's definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse which states: Domestic Abuse, or Domestic Violence, is defined across Government as any incident of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of their gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- ▶ Physical Abuse – slapping, pushing, kicking, punching, stabbing attempted murder or murder, and abduction
- ▶ Sexual Abuse – rape and non-consensual sexual acts
- ▶ Emotional or psychological abuse – intimidation, isolation, verbal abuse, humiliation, not allowing friends / relatives to visit, destruction of belongings, threats of legal sanctions e.g. deportations, custody of children etc.
- ▶ Financial abuse – denial of rights or restriction of personal freedom e.g. withholding money or medical help.

- 2.2 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 capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 This policy on Domestic Violence and Abuse also covers what is commonly referred to as Honour Based Violence and forced marriage.
- 2.5 The Government defines Honour Based Violence as a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and / or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.
- 2.6 We recognise that Honour Based Violence has many similarities to other forms of Domestic Violence / Abuse but is also very different. We will adopt the same principles outlined in this policy when dealing with a case reported to us; but we also recognise that additional sensitivity and expertise in this area may be required. This would also include female genital mutilation.
- 2.7 We acknowledge that Domestic Violence / Abuse can happen to anyone regardless of gender or transgender status, social group, class, economic status, age, race, disability, religion or geographic location. We recognise that Domestic Violence / Abuse is under-reported.

Scope

- 2.8 It is a condition of the association's tenancy agreements that residents must: 'not threaten, abuse, or commit any act of violence against any other person living in your home, including a joint tenant. If any member of your household has left because of violence towards them or threats of violence towards them or a member of their family who was living with them, and we are satisfied that the person who has left is unlikely to return, we may take action to regain possession of your home.'
- 2.9 This policy applies to all the association's customers who are victims of Domestic Violence / Abuse perpetrated by a spouse or partner, former spouse or partner or other member of their household / family. The perpetrator may be someone living in the same property as the victim, or be a visitor to their home, estate or neighbourhood.

- 2.10 This policy should be read in conjunction with the association's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

3. Specifics of the Policy

Commitment to supporting victims of Domestic Abuse

- 3.1 We have signed up to the 'Make a Stand' pledge which was launched in June 2018 by the CIH in partnership with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) and Women's Aid.
- 3.2 We have committed to the four key pledges:
- ▶ Put in place and embed a policy to support residents who are affected by Domestic Abuse.
 - ▶ 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.
 - ▶ Put in place a HR policy, or amend an existing policy, to support members of staff who may be experiencing Domestic Abuse.
 - ▶ Appoint a champion at a senior level in your organisation to own the activity you are doing to support people experiencing Domestic Abuse.
- 3.3 We recognise that not all our staff will be experts in this area and that we do not have the resources to deal with all aspects of Domestic Abuse. We will work in partnership with legal, statutory and voluntary services to ensure services are provided in a co-ordinated way. We will ensure that we will signpost to support agencies. This may include the national Domestic Violence helpline, Women's Aid and Refuge.
- 3.4 We will ensure all housing officers have received training appropriate to their role in order to:
- ▶ Recognise early signs of abuse
 - ▶ Understand how housing circumstances like joint tenancies may be used as coercive tactics
 - ▶ Conduct sensitive inquiries safely, understanding the importance of making contact in the right way at the right time in order to keep the victim(s) safe at home.

Dealing with incidents of Domestic Abuse

- 3.5 We will encourage people to report incidents of Domestic Abuse. We will work to create an environment, which encourages victims to seek support and assistance by ensuring that:
- ▶ We explain the conditions in our tenancy agreement to new and existing tenants.
 - ▶ Where there is an immediate concern for safety we will contact the Police to report the incident and will provide the victim's emergency contact numbers
 - ▶ We will complete a Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour Based Violence ([DASH](#)) risk assessment

- ▶ All reports of abuse will be recorded as a high-level Anti-Social Behaviour as outlined in our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- ▶ We will consider completing a lock change and other security measures following consultation from police, residents or support services
- ▶ All staff have a responsibility to inform the housing management team when made aware of, or are concerned about, Domestic Abuse
- ▶ Offer a named officer as the point of contact who will deal with the report and remain the consistent point of contact for the victim
- ▶ We recognise that evidence of Domestic Abuse may be required for certain legal action but may not always be available in the first place. We will accept the report as detailed by the victim, without formal evidence until further investigations prove otherwise. This does not mean that the alleged perpetrator is immediately assumed to be guilty, but it does require that staff provide support, advice and assistance to victims
- ▶ Our service to those experiencing Domestic Abuse is available to all customers and translated information or information in other formats (Braille etc.) will be provided where required.

3.6 Our first priority is the safety of the person(s) experiencing Domestic Abuse including their families, where appropriate, and where the victim wishes it, we will:

- ▶ Liaise with specialist agencies to provide support and or housing
- ▶ Help those threatened with or suffering abuse or violence, where it is not safe for them to return home to access temporary accommodation with the Local Authority or other agency such as a refuge. We do not have emergency accommodation
- ▶ Safeguard and refer to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) or relevant Police team where appropriate. We will ensure all Domestic Abuse cases are monitored by Housing Officers
- ▶ Provide advice to our tenants who wish to move permanently to alternative accommodation if they feel unable to remain in their home. This is likely to be through Choice Based Lettings (CBL); if permanent re-housing is required, we will consider requests for a managed move in line with our Lettings policy and managed move procedure
- ▶ Offer information at community and estate events and promote local and national domestic abuse services.

3.7 We will deal with all reports of Domestic Abuse seriously and confidentially, unless there is a legal obligation to disclose information to statutory services. We will not judge the victim and we will ensure that our response and actions focus on their needs. This may include:

- ▶ The option of meeting with someone of the same gender or of a similar ethnic or cultural background or sexual orientation, where this is possible
- ▶ An in-person meeting at a location of their choice (subject to safety concerns).
- ▶ The option to have a friend or advocate present at the meeting if they wish
- ▶ Accurate and appropriate advice about their housing options and about their legal rights and responsibilities and appropriate financial and benefit advice
- ▶ Repairs to the property which affect a person's security and health and safety and treat these as an emergency
- ▶ Support to arrange repairs to leaseholders' homes including communal areas but the cost of doing so will be the responsibility of the leaseholder.

- 3.8 All cases of Domestic Abuse will be kept under review until agreed that the problems have been resolved satisfactorily or where no further action can be taken.

Equality and diversity

- 3.9 We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently to all our customers. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion / faith, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or any other grounds set out in our Equality and Diversity Policy.

- 3.10 When applying this policy, we will:

- ▶ Act with respect and consider the diverse needs of individuals and communities
- ▶ Take positive action to reduce the discrimination and harassment in local communities.

Confidentiality and information sharing

- 3.11 In managing cases of Domestic Abuse, we work with other statutory agencies to share relevant and required information as and when appropriate which helps tackle domestic violence/abuse effectively. We follow the national support framework on information sharing for community safety guidelines laid down by the Home Office.

- 3.12 The type of information shared can vary on a case-by-case basis, but where possible, and in the first instance, we will share anonymised information (where others are not able to identify the individual the details relate to). This is also known as **depersonalised information**. There will be the exception where anonymised information is not possible and **personalised information** (that which can directly identify an individual) needs to be shared in order to achieve the required outcomes. We aim to protect survivors' data and gain consent where possible.

- 3.13 Prior to sharing information, we will ask ourselves whether there is a need to share information; what type of information should be shared; and if it is personalised information, whether it is within the law. Typically, we will take into account the following issues before reaching a decision:

- ▶ Is there a need to prevent and/or contain a crime, disorder or other public safety threat?
- ▶ Is it necessary to protect vulnerable people?
- ▶ Is there another way of tackling the problem?
- ▶ In order to remove the 'threat', is it necessary to share information with statutory authorities to tackle the problem?
- ▶ If sharing is required, can we share using depersonalised information (both in terms of perpetrator and victim information)? Will it achieve the required outcome? If **not**, what is the minimum amount of personalised information that would need to be shared to achieve the required outcome?

- 3.14 Our commitment to confidentiality extends to all communications. Staff will not produce any communications (internally or externally) that could potentially identify

a victim by publishing victim or family names / location of the incident, or the location to which the victim has moved.

4. Implementation

Performance monitoring

- 4.1 MRH will keep a record of all domestic abuse and monitor data to improve performance and may tailor services to the needs of our customers.
- 4.2 All cases will be managed and monitored through our central IT systems. We will report to Board on Domestic Abuse reports, themes and risks on a quarterly basis.
- 4.3 MRH will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and recommending policy changes to improve services and to reflect the changing external environment.

Staff training

- 4.4 MRH is committed to providing staff with the necessary training required to be able to effectively deal with Domestic Abuse and related issues. This training will be regularly refreshed and updated to ensure officers are kept abreast of changes to legislation or policy.
- 4.5 Training needs are regularly explored with officers during one-to-one meetings, appraisals and team meetings.
- 4.6 Managers will ensure this policy is promoted, understood and implemented by all relevant employees ensuring consideration is given to any implications arising from policy decisions.

Compliments, suggestions and complaints

- 4.7 If you're dissatisfied with the service you have received, you can raise a complaint by completing the complaints form on the relevant association's website:

- ▶ [Warwickshire Rural Housing Association](#)
- ▶ [Peak District Rural Housing Association](#)
- ▶ [Leicestershire Rural Housing Association](#)
- ▶ [Northamptonshire Rural Housing Association](#)

Other ways you can tell us about a complaint are:

- ▶ By telephone: 0300 1234 009
- ▶ In writing: Midlands Rural Housing, Memorial House, Stenson Road, Coalville, LE67 4JP

- 4.8 Any feedback which is considered to be a complaint will be dealt with in accordance with our Complaints Policy.

Review

- 4.9 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years to ensure compliance with national best practice and legislation. This review may take place earlier if a significant change to legislation or policy occurs.

Responsibilities

- 4.10 The Housing Manager is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy.
- 4.11 The Director of MRH is responsible for oversight and governance of the policy including reviewing this document.

Associated documents

- ▶ Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- ▶ Hate Crime Policy
- ▶ Acceptable Behaviour Procedure
- ▶ Vulnerable Residents Policy
- ▶ Tenancy agreement