

CROYDON COUNCIL HOUSING

Domestic Abuse Policy



This policy was reviewed with the help of Croydon Housing Residents

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 **Prevent domestic abuse** - while housing services will often interact with survivors at crisis point, we will aim to prevent domestic abuse by taking a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and by focusing on early intervention and preventing re-victimisation.
- 1.2 **Support victims and survivors** - housing services interacting with survivors will provide appropriate support, maintain good knowledge and awareness of options available to survivors, and will ensure they are working jointly with domestic abuse services, including by-and-for services, to provide coordinated support.
- 1.3 **Hold perpetrators to account** - we will try to take proactive action against perpetrators, where possible depending on the needs or wishes of the survivor, to reduce the disruption that domestic abuse causes to the survivor's life, and ensure that perpetrators access support they need, including for behaviour change.
- 1.4 **Collaborate to create change** - we will continue to build on our existing partnerships with domestic abuse and community-led services, create opportunities to work with survivors to review how our response is working and how it could be improved, and will play an active role in multi-agency safeguarding forums.
- 1.5 **The Croydon Housing Domestic Abuse Policy aligns with the four priorities in the [Tackling violence against women & girls plan 2024-2027](#)**
 - Strengthening prevention and earlier intervention
 - Pursue perpetrators
 - Supporting and protecting Victim/Survivors and their families
 - Partnership working and enhancing our coordinated community response to Domestic Abuse

2. Statement of Intent

- 2.1 This Domestic Abuse policy seeks to reduce risk to victim/survivors of abuse. It has been developed with a survivor-centred approach. We are grateful for the support of the Family Justice Service, the Croydon BAME Violence Against Women and Girls Forum, the Croydon Violence Against Women and Girls Forum, and the Croydon Expert by Experience Panel in developing this policy.
- 2.2 It will clearly define domestic abuse and the responsibilities of all staff and contractors working for the Housing Directorate to support victim/survivors.
- 2.3 This Policy defines the relationship between the Family Justice Service (FJS) which is a dedicated domestic abuse service in Croydon offering independent, confidential and non-judgemental support to people of all genders, and the Housing Directorate.

3. Scope and definition

3.1 The Housing Directorate’s Domestic Abuse Policy applies to Council tenants in the Council’s managed properties.

Domestic abuse is a crime and never the fault of the person experiencing it. We use the Government’s definition of domestic abuse which includes many behaviours beyond physical violence.

3.2 The behaviour of a person towards another person is ‘domestic abuse’ if:

- they are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- the behaviour is abusive.

3.3 Personal connection is defined as any two adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members. This includes:

- are married to each other or in a civil partnership
- have previously been married or entered a civil partnership with one another (whether the agreement has been terminated or not)
- are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- have, or have had, a family relationship with each other
- have a child (whether they share parental responsibility or not)
- are relatives

3.4 Behaviour is abusive if it consists of any of the following, although this list is not exhaustive:

Types of domestic abuse	Examples
Physical or sexual abuse	Hitting, kicking, giving someone too much or unnecessary medication so they find it difficult to do things, touching someone where they do not wish to be touched, non-consensual sexual activities
Violent or threatening behaviour	The use of threats of violence, use of weapons including knives and irons, objects being thrown.
Controlling or coercive behaviour	Controlling or monitoring the victim-survivors’ daily activities, dictating what they can wear, or

Types of domestic abuse	Examples
	when they can eat. Coercion and control are not always violent.
Economic abuse	Controlling the family income, running up bills or debts such as credit/store cards in a victim's name without them knowing. Economic abuse involves any behaviour which has an adverse effect on the survivor's ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services.
Psychological, emotional, or other abuse	Being stopped from seeing friends, relatives or care workers, repeatedly being belittled, persuading a victim to doubt their own sanity or mind including "gaslighting", invalidating or manipulating the victim/survivor by "breadcrumbing".
Stalking and harassment	Following someone or monitoring their movements, waiting outside their home or workplace, spying on their activities such as looking through windows or using technology to track them. This also includes cyberstalking such as sending repeated unwanted messages or emails, using social media to track or harass someone, creating fake profiles to impersonate someone.
Forced marriage	Forcing someone into a marriage this can involve using violence, abuse, bribery, humiliation, or being told that they will bring shame on their family or the community, threats, financial control, being disowned or cut off, neglect or abduction.
Female genital cutting	The deliberate cutting or removal of a female's external genitalia.

Types of domestic abuse	Examples
Honour based abuse	<p>Honour-based abuse (HBA) refers to harmful behaviours, such as violence, threats, coercion, or emotional abuse, carried out to protect or restore the perceived honour of a family or community. It often targets individuals seen as violating cultural or familial expectations, and may be triggered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refusing an arranged marriage • Being in a relationship deemed inappropriate • Identifying as LGBTQ+ • Pregnancy outside marriage • Adopting "westernised" behaviours <p>Victims are frequently accused of "bringing shame" or "dishonouring" their family or community.</p>
Technological abuse	<p>Hacking, video and image-based abuse online including deepfakes, revealing personal information about someone without their consent (also called doxing), being trolled, use of hidden cameras.</p>

- 3.5 It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct. It can happen at any point in a relationship, including after the relationship has ended.
- 3.6 As stated in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, children are to be recognised as victims in their own right if they are living in a home where abuse is occurring between two parties over 16. This will be relevant when making any necessary safeguarding referrals to both children’s and adult services.
- 3.7 Recognising that that people’s understanding of domestic abuse may be influenced by their culture and beliefs and as a result, some people may not recognise themselves as a survivor of abuse. We will work sensitively with those experiencing abuse to promote their safety and enable them to access adequate services.
- 3.8 Acknowledging that some residents are more likely to experience domestic abuse than others. There are multiple dynamic factors which can increase or decrease the likelihood that an individual will experience abuse, including economic, social, and structural reasons.

4. Legal framework

4.1. This Policy will ensure compliance with the following standards and legislation and promote good practice.

Legislation:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Family Law Act 1996
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Housing Acts 1985, 1988 and 1996, and
- Localism Act 2011
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- [Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities](#)
- Home Office: Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance, July 2022
- Regulator for Social Housing Consumer Standards, 2024

4.2 We will manage cases of domestic abuse in line with our safeguarding policies and procedures, and the Care Act 2014, where appropriate.

4.3 The Care Act 2014 sets out the specific safeguarding duties that apply to any adult who is 18 years or over who:

- has care and support needs
- is experiencing, or is at risk of abuse or neglect
- is unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs.

4.4 If a survivor of domestic abuse meets the criteria above, we will refer them to the Council's safeguarding services

4.5 [Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities:](#)

Local authority duty	Responsible service
Make, or cause to be made, enquiries if it has reasonable cause to suspect that the adult is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect.	Shared responsibility – Housing approach detailed in the Safeguarding Policy: Housing Management.

Local authority duty	Responsible service
<p>Determine whether any action should be taken, if so by whom, and what that action should be. All local authorities have safeguarding adult procedures to support such enquiries and coordinate action with partner organisations.</p>	<p>Adult Health and Social Care Safeguarding Policy: Housing Management</p>
<p>Arrange for independent advocacy to be available to adults who have difficulty in taking part in the process, and where there is no other appropriate adult to assist.</p>	<p>Adult Health and Social Care Family Justice Service can provide residents with Independent Domestic Violence Advocates. Housing can also facilitate for residents to be supported by a third party or advocate where necessary.</p>
<p>Co-operate with other agencies.</p>	<p>Co-operation across Croydon Council and with external services. Including cooperation between FJS and Housing and work with the Police.</p>
<p>Establish a Safeguarding Adults Board for its area to provide assurance that local safeguarding arrangements and partners are acting to help and protect adults that are at risk of abuse or neglect. Safeguarding Adult Boards also have the authority to carry out Safeguarding Adult Reviews where an adult with care and support needs has suffered serious harm, neglect, or death.</p>	<p>Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board (CSAB)</p>
<p>Establish and maintain a service for providing people in its area with information and advice, including on how to raise concerns about the safety or wellbeing of an adult who has needs for care and support.</p>	<p>Facility in place for members of the public to raise a safeguarding concern about an adult online. An online form also available through the Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board.</p>

5. Supporting Victim-Survivors to remain safe and sustain their tenancy

5.1 If the survivor agrees, they will be referred to the FJS. This is a specialist service within Croydon Council which can provide advice and support to survivors, this can include:

- work with Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs)
- risk and safety planning
- legal remedies
- emotional support
- exploration of other options for support and advice. This may include contacting specialist community-based abuse services.

5.2 Remaining safe in their home

- Security measures available to victim/survivors will be recommended through the FJS in conjunction with the Tenancy Management team.
- If survivors would like to remain in their home, they will be referred to the FJS to access the Sanctuary Fund to make their home more secure.
- We will utilise legal powers available to us to prioritise safety.
- With their consent, we will refer survivors of domestic abuse to the FJS for ongoing support and risk management.

5.3 Finding alternative accommodation

- When safe to do so, the option of moving to another home will only be explored if this is agreed with the survivor.
- A management transfer is a case in which a tenant is moved quickly to another social housing property due to urgent circumstances that make their current home unsafe. The resident's safety must be assessed through a risk identification checklist for the identification of high-risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour-based' violence. Residents who wish to request a management transfer and meet the agreed risk threshold will be considered for a transfer to another property.
- Requests for management transfers will be brought to a case panel in cases where the appropriate risk threshold is met.
- Support the use of schemes enabling Council Tenants to move homes (including out of the borough), such as the Housing Moves Scheme.
- We will ensure that survivors have a secure social tenancy and need to be rehoused due to domestic abuse will be offered the same tenancy type when we make an offer of a new permanent home, in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

5.4 Ending joint tenancies and starting new tenancies

- A perpetrator is still a joint tenant even after they move out unless the survivor takes steps to end or transfer the joint tenancy.
- A survivor of domestic abuse can end a joint tenancy and can be moved to another property to begin a new sole tenancy. This can be done through a notice to quit which would end the tenancy on behalf of both tenants, on the condition that a new sole tenancy is granted. The usual conditions for ending a tenancy by notice to quit must be met.
- A mutual surrender to end the tenancy is possible when there is agreement from both parties.
- Where appropriate, records of a history of abuse will be considered when housing former or current perpetrators of domestic abuse. This will especially be taken into account when considering the location of their placement.

6. Supporting leaseholders

- 6.1. Leaseholders can access the same support services as Council Tenants offered through the Family Justice Service.

7. Approach to perpetrators of domestic abuse

- 7.1 Perpetrators of domestic abuse are accountable for their actions.
- 7.2 Where the available evidence supports it, we will use the legal tools and powers available to us, including evicting or excluding perpetrators from the home.
- 7.3 With permission of the victim-survivor when appropriate, we will take a robust stance against perpetrators of domestic abuse; where possible we'll take actions against individuals committing domestic abuse, including non-residents.
- 7.4 If the perpetrator is a resident of our property, we'll consider taking appropriate tenancy action against them, including evicting and excluding them from the home.
- 7.5 We will provide general housing advice to the perpetrator when requested.
- 7.6 Where the perpetrator is willing to confront their abusive behaviour, the FJS can offer referrals to the appropriate support services. Any support or action plan offered to the perpetrator will be centred around the voice and safety of the survivor of domestic abuse.

8. Training and culture: A survivor- centred approach

- 8.1 All housing staff and contractors will undertake mandatory Domestic Abuse Awareness training. Training will be culturally sensitive and delivered and informed by a diverse group of professionals with the varied needs of Croydon's residents in mind.

- 8.2 Staff will be supported to access training and resources on the needs of marginalised communities experiencing abuse.
- 8.3 Staff in resident-facing roles will all undertake training relevant to their roles.
- 8.4 Training records will be maintained.

9. Identification and disclosure of domestic abuse

- 9.1 All staff in the Housing Directorate are responsible for raising safeguarding concerns in cases where domestic abuse is suspected, known or disclosed.
- 9.2 Staff and contractors are responsible for following our relevant safeguarding policies and procedures and the Care Act 2014.
- 9.3 Survivors/victims of domestic abuse can disclose abuse or request support through any avenue in the Housing directorate. With permission, a referral to the Family Justice Service will be made. Residents experiencing Domestic Abuse will be supported by staff in the Family Justice Service who specialise in this.
- 9.4 Staff recognise that some residents face additional barriers to disclosing domestic abuse and asking for support. The service endeavours to reduce the impact of these barriers.
- 9.5 Where the risk or evidence of domestic abuse is identified by staff members, survivor-led action will be taken.

10. Responses to domestic abuse

- 10.1 Croydon will not pressure victim/survivors to take legal action but will support them if this is a course of action they wish to pursue.
- 10.2 The voice of the survivor will be centred in our approach to domestic abuse and all people who choose to disclose domestic abuse will be treated in a sensitive, supportive, and non-judgemental manner. Victim/survivors' disclosures will be taken seriously.
- 10.3 We operate will a survivor-centred approach to domestic abuse. Victim/Survivors will be listened to and treated in a sensitive, supportive and non-judgemental way.
- 10.4 Victim/Survivors will be supported through the Family Justice Service.
- 10.5 If a resident has no recourse to public funds or is seeking asylum, the Family Justice Service will be able to advocate on their behalf and discuss the options available to them. The service is open on Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (apart from bank holidays).

Contact details:

- Telephone: 020 8688 0100
- Email: fjc@croydon.gov.uk

Outside of these hours call the 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247 or 999 in an emergency.

Specialist services for victim/survivors can be found through our: [domestic abuse and sexual violence webpage](#).

- 10.6 If the survivor is pregnant and/or has children, the team can also refer the survivor to Children's Services who will assess if there are needs under the Children's Act 1989.

11. Information storage and review

- 11.1 Domestic abuse cases will be logged, managed and reported in line with GDPR and data protection policies and data retention schedules.

12. Partnership working – roles and responsibilities

- 12.1 We will work with and collaborate with external support agencies, legal representatives, and the police.
- 12.2 We will work in line with the objectives of the Council's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy.
- 12.3 The Council works in partnership with the Family Justice Service which is made up of specialist domestic abuse services to support survivors of domestic abuse.
- 12.4 Information sharing arrangements are in place with other agencies where required. These include risk management panels such as the Domestic Abuse Protection Order Panel.

13. Competence

- 13.1 All staff undertaking roles where they could be expected to refer a resident to domestic abuse support will undertake mandatory training, this will enable all staff to be competent in identifying the signs of domestic abuse.

14. Quality assurance

- 14.1 We will review this policy periodically to ensure that it remains compliant with the latest legislation, regulations and best practice developments.
- 14.2 We will regularly review this policy to reflect feedback, local Domestic Homicide Review and Serious Case reviews, where recommended.

15. Performance reporting

- 15.1 The outcomes of this policy and the efficacy of our approach will be regularly reviewed.

- 15.2 Judgements on the efficacy will be based on reporting on the outcomes of disclosures.
- 15.3 Updates on the progress of imbedding this policy will be reported to the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Board.

16. Roles and responsibilities

16.1. Director of Housing Management

The Director of Housing Management will have overall responsibility for the implementation of the Domestic Abuse policy.

16.2 Heads of Service

The Head of Tenancy will develop, implement, and monitor the effective management of domestic abuse in council tenancies, including appropriate management of domestic abuse referrals and service level agreements with partnering contractors, to ensure the Council delivers an efficient and value-for-money service, by exceeding key performance indicators (KPI's) and financial targets.

The Head of Tenancy will ensure the services comply with all property-related health and safety legislation and regulations and has an up-to-date knowledge of Policy at a national and local level, to inform the Council of any changes. The Domestic Abuse policy and associated procedures are embedded within the operational delivery of tenancy management, and all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are adequately trained to carry them out

16.3 Council staff and Contractors

Will follow the Domestic Abuse Policy and related Policies, the associated rules, and procedures, and have an awareness of property-related legislation and regulations to ensure the operational delivery is fair and consistently delivered across our services. Staff and contractors are aware of their roles and responsibilities and regularly carry out mandatory and personal development training offered to them.

17. Related documents

- [Tackling violence against women & girls plan 2024-2027](#)
- [Safeguarding policy](#)
- [Tenancy management policy](#)
- [Conditions of Tenancy - Clause 26](#)
- [Anti- Social Behaviour Policy](#)
- [Housing Allocations Scheme](#)

18. Equalities

- 18.1 The Council is committed to promoting fair and equal access to services and equal opportunities in employment, the procurement of goods and as a community leader. The Council's policies, procedures and day to day practices have been established to promote an environment which is free from unlawful and unfair discrimination, while valuing the diversity of all people.
- 18.2 Discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexuality, disability, and age is not acceptable: the Council will take action to ensure no person using the council's premises or services receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by requirements or conditions that cannot be justified. The Council will tackle inequality, treat all people with dignity and respect and continue to work to improve services for all service users.
- 18.3 The legal framework for the Council's approach is provided by the Equality Act 2010 and specifically by the Public Sector Equality Duty, under which a public authority must work consciously to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with differing characteristics.
- 18.4 Further detail on the Duty, and the Council's approach to fulfilling its requirements, can be found on our website [Equality and diversity | Croydon Council](#).

19. Appeals and complaints

- 19.1 Should there be a complaint from a tenant concerning, any aspect of domestic abuse handling, this will be dealt with via the [Council's Corporate Complaints Policy](#).

20. Consultation

- 20.1 The document has been co-produced with the Family Justice Service, Croydon VAWG Network, Croydon BAME VAWG Forum, and the Croydon Expert by Experience Panel
- 20.2 Stakeholders with responsibility and operational knowledge of Domestic Abuse and victim/survivors have, have been consulted during the development of this policy.
- 20.3 Residents have also been engaged and consulted in the review of the Domestic Abuse Policy.

21. Monitoring and review

- 21.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if required by statutory, regulatory, best practice, emerging developments, or circumstances arising from reviews of other Council wide policies.

21.2 Arrangement for a full internal audit of our domestic abuse processes will be undertaken by the Council's Internal Auditors. The full scope of the audit will be agreed upon with the Internal Auditors, Director of Housing Management, and Heads of Service.

22. Document control

22.1. This is a controlled document and should not be changed unless by authorisation of the policy owner

Monitoring		
Approved Date:	08.01.2026	
Next Review Date:	January 2029	
Effective date:	09.01.2026	
Consultation Review		
Stakeholders review:	September 2025	
Legal review:	08 October 2025	
Residents reading group:	16 September 2025	
Policy owner:	Director of Housing Management	
Ratified by:	Housing DMT	
Equality impact assessment:	The impact of this policy will be measured as it is implemented and used as part of a scheduled 1-year implementation compliance review.	
Version History		
Version Number	Summary of change	Author and Approver
1.0	New Policy	Co-produced with the Family Justice Service, Croydon VAWG Network, Croydon BAME VAWG Forum and the Croydon Expert by Experience Panel. Residents have also helped review the Domestic Abuse Policy.

Appendix A: Glossary of Key Terms Related to Domestic Abuse

This glossary provides definitions of terms that may be referenced in this policy. Understanding these terms is essential for recognising the varied forms of abuse that individuals may experience.

Term	Definition
Gaslighting	A form of psychological manipulation in which the perpetrator causes the victim to doubt their own memory, perception, or sanity.
Doxing	The act of publicly revealing private or identifying information about an individual online without their consent, often to intimidate or harass.
Breadcrumbing	A manipulative behaviour where minimal affection or attention is given to maintain emotional control or dependency, without genuine commitment.
Love Bombing	Excessive displays of affection and attention used to quickly gain trust and emotional attachment, often followed by controlling behaviour.
Hoovering	Attempts by an abuser to re-establish contact or reconciliation after a period of separation, often using guilt, false promises, or affection.
Trauma Bonding	A strong emotional connection formed through repeated cycles of abuse and reconciliation, which can result in loyalty to the abuser.
Coercive Control	A pattern of controlling behaviours that isolate, intimidate, and dominate the victim, including monitoring, threats, and restriction of freedoms.
Deepfakes	Are digitally altered videos, images, or audio recordings that use artificial intelligence, particularly deep learning, to convincingly mimic real people's appearance, voice, or actions.
Trolling	Deliberately posting provocative, offensive, or disruptive messages online to upset others, start arguments, or derail conversations.