

Domestic Abuse Policy

Version Number	2
Revision Date	April 2026
Department	Customer Services
Author	Head of Housing/Head of HR and OD
Reason for Policy Creation/Revision	Updated following publication of Domestic Abuse Reflective Toolkit (SFHA) and amendment to the Housing Scotland Act 2025
Proof Read By	
Board/Committee Approval Required	No
Upload onto Website	Yes
Date Approved	30.4.2026
Approved By	SLT
Next Review Due	30.4.2029
Audience – Training and Awareness Approach	All employees will be emailed the updated policy for reading and understanding.
Effective Date	30.4.2026
Internal References – Policies & Procedures (Located on HAPI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure Data Protection Policy and Procedures Allocations Policy Adult Support and Protection Policy Dementia Plan Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy Flexible Working Policy and Procedure Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedure Dignity at Work Policy Employee Code of Conduct Disciplinary Policy
External References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Scotland Act 2025 Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 Chartered Institute of Housing “Make a Stand” SFHA Domestic Abuse Reflective Toolkit

DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

Additional Considerations

	yes	no	Link or further info
Archiving requirements	Y		Previous version to be archived
Audience – Training and Awareness Approach	Y		All employees within Customer Services will be advised of the updated policy
Consultation with external stakeholders required		N	
Equalities Impact Assessment required	y		EQIA -DOMESTIC ABUSE.docx
Modern Slavery Statement considerations		N	
Data Protection Compliance	Y		Any information obtained under this policy will be held and used according to Hanover's Data Protection Policy and Procedure
Sustainability Impact Assessment required		N	

Revision History

Version Number	Revision Date	Approval Date	Approved by	Review Reason
1	June 2023	26 July 2023	SLT	New
2	March 2026	30 April 2026	SLT	Updated following Domestic Abuse Toolkit and Housing (Scotland) 2025 Act
3				
4				

DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

1. Policy Purpose

- 1.1. We recognise that domestic abuse is a serious issue and that incidents of domestic abuse are common and negatively affect many people's lives.
- 1.2. This policy reflects the aims of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018, Which makes domestic abuse, whether physical or emotional, a criminal offence.
- 1.3. Our customers and employees of all genders, backgrounds, and circumstances can experience domestic abuse. We acknowledge that domestic abuse can affect people differently depending on their identity and circumstances. We are committed to ensuring equal access to safety and support for all survivors in protected characteristic groups, including those with insecure immigration.
- 1.4. The purpose of this policy is to:
 - provide channels of support for customers and employees experiencing domestic abuse;
 - aid managers seeking to help customers or employees experiencing domestic abuse;
 - reinforce organisational culture and values via the support we provide to customers and employees during difficult periods;
 - enable employees experiencing domestic abuse to remain productive and at work.

2. Policy Scope, Explanations or Requirements

- 2.1. This policy applies to:
 - All Hanover customers.
 - All Hanover employees.
 - Incidents occurring at or outside work that may affect employees' safety or wellbeing.
- 2.2. We will take the strongest action possible against perpetrators of domestic abuse where it has the power to do so and with the consent of the abused.
- 2.3. For the purposes of this policy, domestic abuse is defined as:

“Domestic abuse is any pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading or violent behaviour. It includes physical, verbal, sexual, psychological, emotional, or financial abuse, carried out by a partner, ex-partner, family member, or another person in a close relationship. It can happen in person or through technology, and can affect anyone regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or background.”
- 2.4. Terminology: In this policy, we use the term *survivor* to describe people who have experienced domestic abuse, as it reflects their strength, agency, and dignity. Where legal processes or statutory definitions require, the term *victim* will be used to reflect legal terminology.

2.5. This policy aims to:

- improve overall safety and wellbeing by recognising that domestic abuse is a serious crime which has an adverse impact on the health of individuals, families, and communities;
- increase awareness and understanding of this issue amongst customers and employees;
- encourage customers and employees to report domestic abuse;
- facilitate early identification of domestic abuse and offer supportive and effective intervention to reduce the risk of harm;
- improve the safety and welfare of adults and children affected by domestic abuse and prevent further incidents by responding rapidly, effectively and consistently to all reports;
- empower those experiencing domestic abuse by providing information on the options available to them;
- improve the response to those experiencing domestic abuse through effective engagement of appropriate external enforcement and support agencies;
- create a consistent approach for recording and monitoring incidents of domestic abuse;
- inform colleagues of best practice when responding to domestic abuse;
- ensure that all employees are clear regarding their roles in tackling and responding to issues around domestic abuse.

3. Managing Reports of Domestic Abuse from Our Customers

3.1. Employee Responsibility

3.1.1. We will deal with all reports of domestic abuse with sensitivity and as an emergency and respond to them within 24 hours. We will assist the customer experiencing domestic abuse to reach a decision which they feel best secures their safety by:

- reviewing their accommodation,
- enabling the level of assistance they want,
- working in collaboration with key partners such as Women's Aid, Health and Social Care Partnership, and Police Scotland to allow survivors to access a range of advice, information, and support,
- acting against the perpetrator of the customer experiencing domestic abuse.

3.1.2. Our approach to reports of domestic abuse will be managed in accordance with our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy and our Allocations Policy and all other associated policies.

DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

3.1.3. We will deal with all reports in a non-judgemental manner and in confidence. We will not require customers who are experiencing domestic abuse to take legal action or to contact the Police prior to providing assistance.

3.1.4. We will only act with the customer's consent. The exception to this general rule is where we consider a child is at risk in any situation or if there is a high risk of serious harm to anyone involved. Where a person is identified as experiencing domestic abuse, any interaction with them will be guided by best practice guidelines.

3.2. Confidentiality

3.2.1. Customers experiencing domestic abuse will be encouraged to allow us to share information with other agencies, including the Police and local authority teams, to ensure that the full range of civil and criminal action can be pursued, and appropriate assistance provided. However, all information provided by the customer will be treated with the utmost confidence and only passed to external agencies with their proper, informed consent.

3.2.2. The exceptions to this will be as follows:

- where we consider a child is at risk in any situation, or
- if there is a high risk of serious harm to anyone involved, or
- if we are obliged by law to disclose information.

3.2.3. Any disclosure that does not have the customer's consent must be in line with our Adult (and child) Support and Protection Policy and Procedure.

3.3. Options for Action

3.3.1. We recognise that every reported case of domestic abuse will be different. Our response will therefore be tailored to the individual circumstances and needs of the customer experiencing domestic abuse. When a customer or household member reports domestic abuse all available options will be discussed and considered with them, including:

- making arrangements for their immediate personal safety;
- reviewing and where possible improving the safety and security of their existing accommodation, to enable them to remain there safely and to prevent them presenting as homeless to the local authority;
- supporting survivors to make a housing application in a method which best suits their needs. Existing customers, joint tenants or members of their households who are survivors (who are partners of customers who are perpetrators) will be supported to seek alternative accommodation if required;
- supporting existing customers who are survivors to transfer an existing tenancy into their own name if it is a joint tenancy and the perpetrator has left the home. If substantial rent arrears would normally be a barrier to such a

DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

move, we work sensitively to offer a longer-term repayment arrangement so a transfer can take place;

- under our Allocations Policy, we will offer the same level of priority to survivors of domestic abuse as we do to homeless applicants, reflecting the critical nature of rehousing survivors;
- supporting survivors to access legal advice, where required. This may include signposting to Shelter Scotland or other agencies;
- enabling survivors to access specialist domestic abuse support from local or national agencies;
- removing the perpetrator (where possible) from the property, with support to terminate any current tenancy and rehouse the perpetrator, if required (subject to relevant legislation and legal processes);
- reporting incidents to the Police, which may result in criminal action against the perpetrator;
- where appropriate, legal action against the perpetrator by us.

3.3.2. The safety of our customer and their dependents will be our priority. An Action Plan setting out further actions will be agreed with the customer, and we will regularly contact them and keep them updated with progress.

3.4. Remaining in their home

3.4.1. Many customers will want to remain in their own home. We will offer assistance to anyone experiencing domestic abuse by not recharging them for lock changes and damages due to the domestic abuse. Where appropriate we will charge such costs to the perpetrator.

3.4.2. We will request the support of Police Scotland to provide recommendations on how to improve safety at the property. This may include works such as additional external or internal door locks or safety equipment. Any additional security measures will be installed at no charge to the survivor.

3.4.3. In partnership with Police Scotland or specialist partners we will facilitate personal safety planning for survivors and their households.

3.5. Emergency rehousing

3.5.1. Where a customer reporting domestic abuse needs emergency accommodation we will provide advice and assistance on accessing such accommodation provided by the local Council or by a women's refuge. We will provide a referral letter where appropriate and advocate on our customer's behalf.

3.6. Permanent rehousing

3.6.1. Where a customer reporting domestic abuse requests permanent rehousing, we will prioritise their application as a special let. There will normally be a limit on the

DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

number of occasions we will offer this to a customer, typically it will only be offered once.

3.6.2. Under exceptional circumstances where more than one offer is made this requires to be authorised by the Head of Housing.

3.7. Multi-agency approach

3.7.1. We will adopt a multi-agency approach in dealing with customers experiencing domestic abuse and perpetrators of domestic abuse, to:

- ensure the safety of our customers,
- meet their needs,
- co-ordinate available resources,
- access specialist services,
- take necessary action against perpetrators and
- share best practice.
- Active promotion of available support, such as helpline posters, to encourage disclosure without requiring proof.

3.7.2. Where a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) involving statutory agencies has taken place to discuss a case of domestic abuse, we will consider and implement all reasonable recommendations identified including recommendations on the location of re-housing of a perpetrator.

3.8. Action against perpetrators

3.8.1. We 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 due to domestic abuse.

3.8.2. Subject to data protection requirements, we will share information with other relevant agencies so that serial perpetrators are identified and dealt with appropriately.

3.8.3. Policies often extend to managing employees identified as perpetrators, ensuring the workplace is not used to facilitate abuse.

4. Supporting & Managing Our Employees who are Experiencing Domestic Abuse

4.1. Recognising the signs of domestic abuse

4.1.1. Signs that an employee may be experiencing domestic abuse include but are not limited to:

- Unexplained injuries;

- Decreased productivity;
- Frequent lateness or absence; and/or
- Behavioural changes

4.1.2. These behaviours may reflect a range of issues, some of which could be managed under the disciplinary procedures, it is therefore important to establish if there are any underlying circumstances.

4.1.3. A detailed list of potential signs of domestic abuse is available in **Appendix 1**.

4.2. **Manager's Responsibilities**

4.2.1. Managers are accountable for ensuring the application of this policy in a consistent manner.

4.2.2. Managers have a role to address the needs of employees who have experienced abuse. Where an employee discloses any experience of abuse, managers should not counsel, but endeavour to provide flexible support, tailored to meet the circumstances of everyone taking account of any additional needs they may have.

4.2.3. Managers should be aware of the potential barriers that make it difficult for employees to seek support and should be conscious not to make judgements or provide counselling or advice but seek expert input where appropriate. Sometimes an employee experiencing domestic abuse may confide in a colleague, or a colleague may notice changes in their behaviour. The colleague should encourage the employee to speak directly to their manager and can also signpost them to the external support.

4.2.4. We accept that not all employees experiencing domestic abuse will share their information at work. However, in the event that they do share and to support them, we will:

- Create an environment where employees feel safe to open up about such a difficult subject. Those reporting the abuse should never feel they have to prove the abuse, be forced to accept help or think that our employees would contact the abuser.
- As far as possible, information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis. All records concerning domestic abuse will be kept strictly confidential. No local records will be kept of absences related to domestic abuse and there will be no adverse impact on the employment records of survivors of domestic abuse.
- There are circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. 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 we must breach confidentiality, we will seek specialist HR advice before doing so. If we decide to proceed in breaching

DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

confidentiality after having taken advice, we will discuss with the employee why we are doing so and will seek the employee's agreement where possible.

- Support employees to select a suitable course of action for themselves. Managers and colleagues should signpost the employee to available support.

4.3. Training

4.3.1. We are committed to ensuring all employees are aware of domestic abuse and its implications in the workplace. Information, briefings, and awareness raising sessions will ensure that all relevant employees are able to identify possible signs of abuse such as:

- a decline in productivity,
- frequently late or absent and
- changes in behaviour

4.3.2. We will source training from external expert source, such as Women's Aid, HSCPS, or other specialist partners. This training will be available to frontline employees and managers to help them identify and support those experiencing domestic abuse.

4.4. Entitlement

4.4.1. Employees experiencing domestic abuse are entitled to up to 10 days of paid **Safe Leave** per leave year

4.4.2. Safe Leave may be used flexibly to attend:

- Police or legal appointments
- Medical appointments
- Meetings with support services
- Court proceedings
- Emergency relocation or making a safety plan
- Counselling
- Any other activity required to secure the employee's safety or wellbeing subject to line manager approval.

4.4.3. Safe leave

- Does not impact annual leave or sick leave
- Can be taken as a block or in short, flexible periods
- Will be paid at the employee's normal contractual rate

4.5. Possible Work-Related Adjustments

4.5.1. It may be necessary when supporting an employee experiencing domestic abuse to consider the need for making work related adjustments. Following consideration of the circumstances, examples of work-related adjustments are:

- Reasonable time off to attend appointments related to the employee's circumstances. Managers should refer to the appropriate leave policies (Maximising Attendance Policy; Flexible Working Policy and Procedure; Compassionate Leave Policy) and consult with our HR team.
- Agree periods of extended leave in line with our policies and procedures.
- Change work patterns or adjust workload for a temporary period to make it more manageable.
- Change telephone numbers/divert phone calls.
- Approve requests for advance of pay.
- Review the security of information held such as temporary or new home addresses.
- Consider implementing security measures, such as screening calls, blocking abusive emails, and ensuring employees do not work alone.
- Consider changing the employee's place of work where possible.
- With the employee's consent, advise colleagues of the situation on a need-to-know basis and agree the response should the perpetrator / alleged perpetrator contact or visit the workplace; and/or
- Making emergency and safe contact arrangements.

4.5.2. We would welcome the consideration of any possible work-related adjustment presented by any affected employee to best support their needs.

4.6. Counselling for Employees experiencing domestic abuse

4.6.1. Employees will be encouraged to contact our Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) for confidential advice, support, and counselling.

4.7. Employees who are perpetrators of abuse

4.7.1. Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a way that will not adversely reflect on our business and reputation.

4.7.2. We will treat any allegation, disclosure, or conviction of a domestic abuse related offence on a case-by-case basis. The aim is to reduce risk and support change by encouraging employees to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds. If an employee approaches us about their abusive behaviour, information about services and support available will be provided.

DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

4.7.3. Where an employee has been charged or convicted of an abuse related criminal offence, the case will be considered individually as to whether the employee's conduct warrants disciplinary action.

5. Data Protection

5.1. Issues raised under this policy will be treated in strict confidence. In exceptional cases where employees or customers experiencing domestic abuse and/or children who may be considered as a high risk of serious harm, named disclosure without consent may be considered. Examples of extreme circumstances are:

- If it is believed the customer, employee and/or colleagues are at risk of serious injury or death; and/or
- If it is believed that there is a substantial risk of harm to any children involved in, or witnessing, the violence/abuse.

5.2. Improper disclosure of information i.e., breaches of confidentiality by any employee will be taken seriously and maybe subject to disciplinary action.

5.3. Where managers/colleagues have concerns about the risk to any customer or employee, they can confidentially seek advice from the organisations listed in **Appendix 2** without disclosing the person's name.

5.4. All Customer and Employee data will be managed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and Procedure and our Fair Processing Notices for Customers and our Employees.

6. Monitoring & Evaluation

6.1. Any findings from any investigations following a disclosure of domestic abuse which may require changes to policy or process will be discussed at Senior Leadership Team.

7. Reporting Requirements

7.1. The number of customers housed because of domestic abuse per annum will be included in the Annual Allocation Report submitted by the Head of Housing to ELT.

7.2. Any reports of behaviours that affect our employees that fall under this policy will be reported to the Head of HR & OD and the relevant Director or CEO if appropriate.

7.3. Updates on progress and findings in relation these cases will be given regularly as is appropriate.

8. Review

8.1. This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if required.

Appendix One

INDICATORS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

- Persistent injuries
- Persistently late without explanation and/or needing to leave work early
- High absence rate without explanation
- Regular time off for appointments
- May exhibit fearful behaviour such as startled reactions
- Changes in quality of work performance for unexplained reasons, e.g. may start missing deadlines and show additional performance difficulties despite a previously strong record
- Interruptions at work, e.g. repeated upsetting calls/texts/emails
- Increased hours being worked for no apparent reason (fear of going home)
- Wearing clothes that are not appropriate for the weather
- Crying at work
- Obsession with time
- Secretive regarding home life
- Fear of partner/references to anger
- Unable to attend social events with colleague

Appendix Two

HELP AND SUPPORT

- Scotland's Domestic Abuse & Forced Marriage Helpline – 0800 027 1234
- [Scottish Women's Aid](#)
- Men's Advice Line - 0808 801 0327
- www.respect.uk.net
- www.lgbtdomesticabuse.org.uk
- [FearFree](#)