

Domestic Abuse Policy

Summary	<p>Domestic abuse is a serious crime that often takes place in the home. It impacts on the safety of individuals, households, and communities.</p> <p>We take reports of domestic abuse or sexual violence seriously and believe everyone should feel safe in their home and local community regardless of age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership or any other protected characteristics.</p> <p>We are committed to providing the right advice and support, to minimise the risk of further incidents and to help our residents stay safe in their home where appropriate, by encouraging early reporting and a rapid response to include signposting to appropriate specialist agencies.</p> <p>Appendix 1 - Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment (DASH) Risk Assessment</p>
Effective date	
Review	We will review this Policy every 3 years or earlier if there has been an update to legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational changes.
Version	1.0

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1. Scope

This policy applies to all reports of domestic abuse (DA) that:

- involve Portsmouth City Council tenants or members of their household

Any reference in this policy to 'we', 'our' or 'us' refers to Portsmouth City Council. Local Authority Housing.

2. Purpose

Domestic abuse is a serious crime that often takes place in the home. It impacts on the safety of individuals, households, and communities. We want all our residents to feel safe in their homes and local community.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Improve the safety of our residents affected by domestic abuse.
- Support and empower victims / survivors to report and engage with us to minimise the risk of further incidents by encouraging early reporting and a rapid response.

We will:

- provide residents with appropriate confidential supports, and referrals to other specialist agencies where appropriate and giving wellbeing support and advice, in line with our regulatory and legal requirements.
- support tenants to sustain tenancies and feel safe in their home
- work in partnership with specialist agencies where appropriate
- take action against perpetrators of domestic abuse in line with our tenancy agreement and responsibilities as a social housing provider

3. Definitions

We use the cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse, which says that domestic abuse is defined as :

The behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if:

- A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- The behaviour is abusive.

Behaviour is "abusive" if it consists of any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour

- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological, emotional, or other abuse

And it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

“Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to

- Acquire, use, or maintain money or other property, or
- Obtain goods or services.

For the purposes of this Part A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B’s child).

A child who sees or hears or experiences the effects of domestic abuse and is related to the person being abused or the perpetrator, is also to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse.

‘Personally connected’ means that the two people are:

- they are, or have been, married or civil partners to each other
- they have agreed to marry one another or have entered into a civil partnership agreement (even if it didn’t go ahead)
- they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- they are or have been parents or guardians to the same child
- they are relatives

Victim and survivor – these terms are used to describe people directly affected by domestic abuse, including those who have witnessed it. We will follow the lead of the person seeking support, since the journey of the victim to survivor is unique to each person.

Domestic abuse can also occur through the actions of immediate and extended family members through unlawful acts including, but not limited to:

- Forced marriage
- Honour-based abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM).

The full legal definition can be found [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

4. What you can expect from us

We recognise that access to safe accommodation plays an important part in reducing the risk to victims / survivors and their families, but housing is not the solution on its own. We are part of a framework of specialist agencies working in partnership and using their individual powers to help keep you safe and prevent

domestic abuse.

Whilst we encourage all victims / survivors of domestic abuse to report incidents to the Police, we will provide appropriate supports and will be led by the victim / survivor even if you don't want to involve the Police.

We will use the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment (DASH) risk assessment and the Domestic Abuse Referral Pathway to assess each individual victim / survivor's specific support needs. This will also help in determining any appropriate actions, based on knowledge of the circumstances in each case, linking with the [Introduction to domestic abuse in portsmouth \(saferportsmouth.org.uk\)](https://www.saferportsmouth.org.uk)

- High Risk – DASH score 14+ or professional judgment
- Medium Risk - DASH score 10 - 13
- Standard Risk - DASH score 0-9

If it is assessed as high risk, we have a duty to refer to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and do not need the victim / survivor's consent.

We will assess the circumstance and take appropriate action in domestic abuse situations. This is to help keep tenants safe and may include victim / survivor contact and keeping you informed, case management, additional security requests, tenancy changes and alternative accommodation requests, if required and within our ability as your landlord. We will seek your consent before we take any action ***unless there is a safeguarding concern and there may be a need to share the information with other specialist agencies.***

If feel more comfortable, you can contact [Stop Domestic Abuse](#) directly to receive supports and advice.

We can offer advice, refer you to specialist agencies, and help make your home secure where appropriate so that you can stay safe.

We are aware of the damaging effect on children and young people of witnessing and growing up in a family affected by domestic abuse. We realise that young people themselves can be victims of domestic abuse. We will refer to our Safeguarding policy and work with specialist agencies to help keep children and young people safe.

If you are reporting domestic abuse on behalf of someone and wish for your details to remain confidential, these would not be disclosed.

5. If you don't feel safe in your home

Domestic Abuse can be reported to the Housing Office by a resident, third parties or by a member of staff observing or experiencing it.

In situations where someone or a property is in danger, a serious disruption to the public is likely or when a crime is taking place, the police should be called on 999 before contacting us or call 101 for non-emergency enquiries.

We will look at security measures to allow the victim / survivors to remain in their homes wherever possible and we will discuss the tenancy options. We will make repairs where needed and will not usually charge tenants where the need for these repairs have been caused by the perpetrator.

Emergency housing

Anyone who has left home following domestic abuse are treated as homeless. If they apply out of office hours then their immediate, “overnight” problem may be resolved using B&B or a guest room in a sheltered housing scheme that evening, via the Out of Hours service on 02392 824244.

The following day, contact will need to be made to Housing Needs and advice to seek support and advise on the next steps beyond the emergency “overnight” problem, in line with the Accommodation Policy.

Emergency housing may be a hostel, this can provide space for the victim / survivor, an opportunity to contact other specialist agencies and allows time for long term housing needs to be assessed, in line with the Allocations Policy.

6. What action do we take to prevent domestic abuse?

We will ensure our employees receive appropriate supports and training on domestic abuse.

We make new tenants aware of key policies and the implications of joint tenancies.

7. Your voice

- We will respect the experiences of victims / survivors and use their feedback to improve and shape our services
- We will be sensitive to the situation of the victim / survivor and recognise that asking for feedback may not always be appropriate or safe.

8. What have we done to make sure this Policy is fair?

We completed an Integrated Impact Assessment to consider the positive and negative impacts this Policy may have on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. This Policy should have direct and positive equality and diversity impacts.

9. Support

- Stop Domestic Abuse Phone number: 0330 0533 630
Supports Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton areas
[Stop Domestic Abuse](#)

- Stop Domestic Abuse - Up2U: My Choice operates throughout Portsmouth, Havant, Fareham, Gosport and East Hants
- Stop Domestic Abuse should be contacted directly for discreet and confidential support and advice to meet support needs.
- Housing Needs & Advice can help with homelessness applications if the individual needs to flee their home due to their safety. The individual can also call the police if they feel they are at immediate risk and need support immediately.
- Women's Aid, Safe Lives and Refuge offer online information to help support victims of Domestic Abuse.
- Find out more about domestic abuse on the Safer Portsmouth website [Domestic Abuse - Safer Portsmouth](#) and [Domestic and sexual abuse - Portsmouth City Council](#)
- [HIVE Portsmouth](#)]

10. Regulation and legislation

We recognise the vast amount of legislation regarding Domestic abuse and we will continue to monitor relevant legal guidance. The list below reflects some of the existing legal framework and relevant publications:

- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- Family Law Act 1996 Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Domestic Abuse Crime and Victims Act Housing Act 1996
- Domestic Abuse Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Crime and Security Act 2010
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Clare's Law 2017 - also known as Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) Homelessness Reduction Act General Data Protection Regulation (2018)
- The Secure Tenancies (Victims of Domestic Abuse) Act 2018
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Family Law Act 1996
- Civil Partnership Act 2004

11. Related documents

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Tenancy Agreement
- [Housing policies and privacy notices - Portsmouth City Council](#)
- LAH Landlord Safeguarding Policy - Adults and Children's
- Lettings Policy

12. How to feedback

Compliments:

Complaints:

Housing Ombudsman:

Domestic Abuse Policy Appendix 1 - Domestic Abuse Stalking & Harassment (DASH) Risk Assessment

Risk Indicator Checklist for use by professionals to assess risk when domestic abuse, 'honour' based violence and/or stalking are disclosed

Please explain that the purpose of asking these questions is for the safety and protection of the individual concerned. Tick the box if the factor is present. Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer. It is assumed that your main source of information is the victim. If this is not the case , please indicate in the right hand column	YES	NO	DON' T KNOW	For YES answers please give details and state source of info if not the victim (e.g. police officer)
1. Has the current incident resulted in injury? Please state what and whether this is the first injury. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When did the incident occur?</i> • <i>What injuries have been sustained?</i> • <i>How does this compare to previous injuries?</i> • <i>Do they need medical attention?</i> • <i>Has the incident been reported to the police?</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Are you very frightened? Comment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What/Who are you frightened of?</i> • <i>Who are you fearful for?</i> • <i>What do you think the perp might do?</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. What are you afraid of? Is it further injury or violence? Please give an indication of what you think [name of abuser(s)] might do and to whom, including children. Comment:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Do you feel isolated from family/friends? i.e. does [name of abuser(s)] try to stop you from seeing Friends/family/doctor or others? Comment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dependence on perp through lack of financial resources; social or geographical separation from friends</i> • <i>No support networks</i> • <i>Kept away from support networks</i> • <i>Concerned about upholding family honour?</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Are you feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Has there been a previous suicide attempt?</i> • <i>Is there sleep disruption?</i> • <i>How definite are your plans?</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you spoken to your GP about it? • Is there a history of drug or alcohol abuse? • Is there a history of previous psychiatric treatment? 				
<p>Please explain that the purpose of asking these questions is for the safety and protection of the individual concerned. Tick the box if the factor is present. Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer. It is assumed that your main source of information is the victim. If this is not the case, please indicate in the right hand column</p>	YES	NO	DON' T KNOW	State source of info if not the victim (e.g. police officer)
<p>6. Have you separated or tried to separate from [name of abuser(s)] within the past year?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When did you separate? • Are you currently leaving or planning on leaving? • Does the perp threaten what they may do if you leave? • Are you prevented from leaving due to threats? • Does your dependence on perp for physical care prevent you from leaving? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>7. Is there conflict over child contact?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many children do you have? DOB, names • Is the perp biological father to all of your children? • Does the perp have parental responsibility? • Does the perp know where the children go to school? • Has the perp threatened to kidnap them/go to Social Care or Courts and claim that you are a bad parent? • Are there any threats of children being sent overseas? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>8. Does [name of abuser(s)] constantly text, call, contact, follow, stalk or harass you? Please expand to identify what and whether you believe that this is done deliberately to intimidate you? Consider the context and behaviour of what is being done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the perp vandalise/destroy your property? • ... turn up unannounced/follow you? • ... text/email/call continuously? • ...threaten suicide/homicide/sexual violence? • ...send letters/notes/gifts? • ...making contact around anniversaries? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>9. Are you pregnant or have you recently had a baby (within the last 18 months)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the EDD? • Does the perp know about the pregnancy? Is the baby their child? • Does the perp target any attacks or abuse towards your stomach? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>10. Is the abuse happening more often?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was this the most severe incident? • How many have there been in the last 12 months? • Are they increasing? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<p>11. Is the abuse getting worse?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was this the most severe? • Are the incidents getting worse? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Please explain that the purpose of asking these questions is for the safety and protection of the individual concerned. Tick the box if the factor is present. Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer. It is assumed that your main source of information is the victim. If this is <u>not the case</u>, please indicate in the right hand column</p>	YES	NO	DON' T KNOW	<p>State source of info if not the victim (e.g. police officer)</p>
<p>12. Does [name of abuser(s)] try to control everything you do and/or are they excessively jealous? <i>For example: in terms of relationships; who you see; being 'policed' at home; telling you what to wear. Consider 'honour'-based violence (HBV) and specify behaviour.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you made to account for your time and whereabouts? • Are you isolated from friends/family? • Does the perp accuse you from infidelity? • Are you prevented from taking medication? • Are there threats that the children will be taken away if you report this? • Is there extreme jealousy? • Does the perp use your religion/sexual orientation as a way of control? 				
<p>13. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever used weapons or objects to hurt you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider ashtrays, children's toys, phones, remote control, glass, plate, lighter, etc. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>14. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever threatened to kill you or someone else and you believed them? If yes, tick who:</p> <p>You <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Children <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What threats does the perp make? • Who else have the perp told about their plans to kill you/other? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Tick the box if the factor is present. Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer.</p>	YES	NO	DON' T KNOW	<p>State source of info</p>

<p>15. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever attempted to strangle / choke / suffocate / drown you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What led to being strangled/choked/suffocated/drowned?</i> • <i>How did this happen? Was anything used to assist, e.g. shoe laces?</i> • <i>How often does the perp do this?</i> • <i>Did you lose consciousness/stop breathing?</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Please explain that the purpose of asking these questions is for the safety and protection of the individual concerned. Tick the box if the factor is present. Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer. It is assumed that your main source of information is the victim. If this is <u>not the case</u>, please indicate in the right hand column</p>	YES	NO	DON' T KNOW	<p>State source of info if not the victim (e.g. police officer)</p>
<p>16. Does [name of abuser(s)] do or say things of a sexual nature that make you feel bad or that physically hurt you or someone else? If someone else, specify who.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Intimidation/pressure to have sex including using weapons</i> • <i>Use of sexual insults</i> • <i>Unwanted sexual touching, including the use of objects</i> • <i>Inflicting pain during sex</i> • <i>Exposing children or you to pornographic material</i> • <i>Exploiting you through us of pictures/videos taken</i> • <i>Forcing you to have sex with other people</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>17. Is there any other person who has threatened you or who you are afraid of? If yes, please specify whom and why. Consider extended family if HBV.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consider known associates</i> • <i>Family-Honour Based Violence</i> • <i>Gang members</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>18. Do you know if [name of abuser(s)] has hurt anyone else? Consider HBV. Please specify whom, including the children, siblings or elderly relatives:</p> <p>Children <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Another family member <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Someone from a previous relationship <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are the victims children? Their details needed</i> • <i>How and when were they harmed?</i> • <i>Current whereabouts of the other victims?</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>19. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever mistreated an animal or the family pet?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>20. Are there any financial issues? <i>For example, are you dependent on [name of abuser(s)] for</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<p><i>money/have they recently lost their job/other financial issues?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Can you claim benefits? Do you jointly claim benefits?</i> • <i>Do you jointly claim benefits?</i> • <i>Does the perp restrict/withhold or deny money?</i> • <i>Forced to take out any loans that you are now responsible for?</i> 				
<p>Please explain that the purpose of asking these questions is for the safety and protection of the individual concerned. Tick the box if the factor is present. Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer. It is assumed that your main source of information is the victim. If this is not the case, please indicate in the right hand column</p>	YES	NO	DON' T KNOW	<p>State source of info if not the victim (e.g. police officer)</p>
<p>21. Has [name of abuser(s)] had problems in the past year with drugs (prescription or other), alcohol or mental health leading to problems in leading a normal life? If yes, please specify which and give relevant details if known.</p> <p>Drugs <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Alcohol <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Mental health <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How often does the perp use alcohol/drugs?</i> • <i>Do they have an addiction?</i> • <i>Are the drugs illegal or on prescription?</i> • <i>Are there any diagnosed mental health concerns?</i> • <i>Are they receiving support?</i> • <i>Is this a trigger in the change of behaviour</i> 				
<p>22. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever threatened or attempted suicide?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When was this?</i> • <i>Was it at point of separation/threats of leaving?</i> • <i>Was it a threat or attempt?</i> 				
<p>23. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever broken bail/an injunction and/or formal agreement for when they can see you and/or the children? You may wish to consider this in relation to an ex-partner of the perpetrator if relevant.</p> <p>Bail conditions <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Non Molestation/Occupation Order <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Child contact arrangements <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Forced Marriage Protection Order <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How many times have they broken a condition?</i> • <i>Have there been reported?</i> <p><i>Was it in relation to the survivor?</i></p>				
<p>24. Do you know if [name of abuser(s)] has ever been in trouble with the police or has a criminal history? If yes, please specify:</p> <p>Domestic abuse <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Sexual violence <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other violence <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

- 1. Be safe in your home -

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>When was this?</i>• <i>Was there a custodial sentence?</i>• <i>How many convictions have there been?</i>				
Total 'yes' responses				

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For consideration by professional

<p>Is there any other relevant information (from victim or professional) which may increase risk levels? Consider victim's situation in relation to disability, substance misuse, mental health issues, cultural / language barriers, 'honour'-based systems, geographic isolation and minimisation. Are they willing to engage with your service? Describe.</p>	
<p>Consider abuser's occupation / interests. Could this give them unique access to weapons? Describe.</p>	
<p>What are the victim's greatest priorities to address their safety?</p>	

<p>Do you believe that there are reasonable grounds for referring this case to Marac?</p>		<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If yes, have you made a referral?</p>		<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Signed</p>		<p>Date</p>
<p>Do you believe that there are risks facing the children in the family?</p>		<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If yes, please confirm if you have made a referral to safeguard the children?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Date referral made</p>
<p>Signed</p>		<p>Date</p>
<p>Name</p>		

<p>Practitioner's notes</p>