

Policy: Domestic Abuse Policy

1. Adopted by the following group entities:

Name	Date Approved
Change Housing	08.07.2025
Hilldale Housing Association	08.07.2025
Quays Housing	08.07.2025

2. Purpose and Objectives

- 2.1 This Policy sets out how Hilldale and Quays will take steps to assist and support any person experiencing or being threatened with domestic abuse. It applies to all tenants regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability or financial status.
- 2.2 Hilldale and Quays adopts the statutory definition of domestic abuse outlined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which is based on the existing cross-government definition. This 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.*

‘Abusive behaviour’ is defined in the act as any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse
- violent or threatening behaviour
- controlling or coercive behaviour
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse.

For the definition to apply, both parties must be aged 16 or over and ‘personally connected’.

‘Personally connected’ is defined in the act as parties who:

- are married to each other
- are civil partners of each other
- have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- are or have been in an intimate personal relationship with each other

Title: Domestic Abuse Policy		Version: 1	Date approved: 08.07.2025
Prepared By: Anne-Marie Holyoak	Approved By: Policy Approval Group		Page 1 of 6

- have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child
- are relatives.

- 2.3 Anyone can be affected by domestic abuse; it happens in all types of relationships and from all backgrounds. The impact that it can have on survivors and their families is far reaching and can last throughout their lives.
- 2.4 Preventing and ending domestic abuse is everybody's responsibility and we recognise the critical role we can play in tackling this issue. As a specialised housing provider, we are well placed to recognise the signs of domestic abuse, through the regular contact our front-line housing teams and contractors have with tenants in their homes.
- 2.5 We recognise that we cannot tackle all of the issues relating to domestic abuse alone, and we are committed to working collaboratively with agencies and partners through a coordinated approach in our response to reports of domestic abuse.
- 2.6 In line with organisational practice, we will seek to identify and prevent incidents of domestic abuse through close and careful tenancy management. Where it is in our power to do so, we reserve the right to use enforcement action against perpetrators of domestic abuse to protect vulnerable tenants, including the use of civil injunctions and possession proceedings.
- 2.7 Our approach to dealing with domestic abuse is driven by Hilldale/Quays individual values, which include - *Honesty, Empathy, Accountability, Respect, Collaboration and Inclusion*. This work is further supported by our overarching corporate priorities, policies and procedures.
- 2.8 We will treat all concerns of domestic abuse as high priority and any concerns will be dealt with in line with Our Safeguarding Policy and Procedure and Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure.

3. Our Commitment

- 3.1 Is to promote the welfare of tenants who have experienced domestic violence and abuse by:
- Creating a safe environment where tenants feel that they can approach us. Are encouraged to talk and are listened to, thus enabling them to make informed decisions about their lives and live as independently as possible.
 - Providing timely and effective guidance to tenants by working in partnership with the relevant partner agencies to respond to any cases of domestic abuse that may arise, and in line with our safeguarding policy and procedure.

Title: Domestic Abuse Policy		Version: 1	Date approved: 08.07.2025
Prepared By: Anne-Marie Holyoak	Approved By: Policy Approval Group		Page 2 of 6

- Where applicable, providing access to dedicated in-house support teams, such as those within Quays Housing, who offer tailored, direct support for tenants experiencing domestic abuse as part of their wider support needs.

3.2 We are committed to responding to all concerns of domestic abuse in a responsive, person-centred and supportive manner to:

- Ensure that tenants experiencing domestic abuse can access appropriate services as early as possible and are given advice to allow them to make choices about what to do next.
- Assist tenants who are / have experienced abuse to rebuild their lives by working in partnership with them, adult social care and other support agencies.
- Ensure that tenants experiencing abuse are not deterred from reporting abuse by regularly talking to tenants about the importance of keeping safe and explaining what they can expect from us as their landlord in helping them to stay safe.
- If applicable, seek appropriate support solutions for perpetrators of domestic abuse, by working in partnership with other professionals, to prevent abuse recurring.
- Follow the relevant safeguarding policy and procedure if we believe a tenant is at risk due to an abusive relationship.

3.3 When dealing with reports our colleagues must be led by the wishes of the person experiencing abuse. Colleagues will need to consider risk, safeguarding and child protection concerns, and deal appropriately with those concerns. Where these concerns do not exist, the guiding principle should be that our response to domestic abuse is customer led.

4. Monitoring and Review

- 4.1 We will seek feedback from tenants, families, support providers and local authority and safeguarding colleagues on how cases of domestic abuse were handled and identify areas for improvement. We will monitor the effectiveness and implementation of this policy to ensure that we continue to provide the best possible services to tenants surrounding domestic abuse and any other type of abuse.
- 4.2 We will provide awareness, policy and procedure training for all staff within the organisation on the different types of abuse and safeguarding matters. We will ensure training is provided to all relevant staff on accurately recording cases and ensuring they are passed to the relevant team to manage. Individual cases will be discussed between the Housing Officer/Support Staff and their line manager through 1:1s, seeking support from the Head of Operations/Operations Manager where appropriate.
- 4.3 When domestic abuse is disclosed, we will be clear about confidentiality and our safeguarding obligations. It is preferable to obtain consent when making referrals for individuals experiencing domestic abuse and sharing information with external agencies. However, referrals can be made

Title: Domestic Abuse Policy		Version: 1	Date approved: 08.07.2025
Prepared By: Anne-Marie Holyoak	Approved By: Policy Approval Group		Page 3 of 6

without consent if staff believe the tenant is at immediate risk of harm or they believe a criminal offence has taken place.

- 4.4 Hilldale and Quays have a separate safeguarding policy and procedure; this should be adhered to whenever there are any concerns of domestic violence and abuse or any other type of abuse.

5. Responsibility

- 5.1 The Head of Operations/Operations Manager is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy. The Housing Services Manager/Service Managers will be responsible for the associated procedures.
- 5.2 Housing Officers/Support Staff and all other frontline colleagues, have a responsibility for adhering to this policy and the associated procedure.
- 5.3 Contractors and Direct Labour Operatives (DLOs) also have a responsibility to be aware of the Domestic Abuse Policy and should share any concerns with Hilldale and Quays via their line manager.

6. Equality and Diversity

- 6.1 Hilldale and Quays value the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion of our tenants and we are committed to promoting equality of opportunity, to ensure all tenants are treated fairly when dealing with any reports of domestic abuse.
- 6.2 Hilldale also recognises that people with long term illness or disability who are living in a domestic setting may be at increased risk of domestic abuse. Appropriate steps will be taken to support anyone in these circumstances.

7. Data Protection

- 7.1 Under the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018, organisations have to process personal information ‘lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner.’ Hilldale and Quays are committed to respecting the privacy of our tenants and we will protect their personal data.
- 7.2 In certain circumstances, we may be required to share personal data with other statutory agencies. Where practical, consent from the Data Subject will be obtained prior to the information being shared, however, there may be instances where we have a statutory duty to share information without the individuals consent e.g. if there is any reason to suspect children are at risk, if the individual does not have capacity, or if an individual is in immediate risk of abuse or for the prevention and detection of crime. An assessment will be made in each case to decide which information is necessary to be shared, referring to the Data Protection Officer for further guidance as required.

Title: Domestic Abuse Policy		Version: 1	Date approved: 08.07.2025
Prepared By: Anne-Marie Holyoak	Approved By: Policy Approval Group		Page 4 of 6

7.3 Tenants also have the right to know what Information Hilldale and Quays hold about them. Consequently, we have a separate Data Protection Policy which should be adhered to when investigating complaints of domestic abuse.

8. Complaints

8.1 Victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse can make a complaint to us, in accordance with the Complaints Policy if they are unhappy with the way in which their case was handled.

9. Cross Reference

- 9.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with:
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
 - Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Allocations and Lettings Policy and Procedure
 - Complaints Policy

10. Legislation and Guidance

10.1 This policy reflects the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing's revised Neighbourhood and Community Standard and Tenancy Standard which come into force on 1st April 2024.

- 10.2 Laws and further guidance:
- The Housing Act 1996
 - The Family Law Act 1996
 - Protection from Harassment Act 1997
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Data Protection Act 2018
 - Protection from Harassment Act 1997
 - Sexual Offences Act 2003
 - Domestic Abuse Act 2021
 - Police and Justice Act 2006
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
 - Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (s.3)
 - Stalking Protection Act 2019
 - Family Law Act 1996

Title: Domestic Abuse Policy		Version: 1	Date approved: 08.07.2025
Prepared By: Anne-Marie Holyoak	Approved By: Policy Approval Group		Page 5 of 6

- 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

11. Document Change History

Version	Date	Change	Owner
V0.1	21.05.25	New document	Anne-Marie Holyoak
V0.2	22.07.25	Amend subject to PAG feedback	Anne-Marie Holyoak
V1.0	08.07.2025	Approved at Policy Approval Group	

Title: Domestic Abuse Policy		Version: 1	Date approved: 08.07.2025
Prepared By: Anne-Marie Holyoak	Approved By: Policy Approval Group		Page 6 of 6