



Policy: **Domestic Abuse Policy**

Approved by: Leadership Group

Date Approved: April 2021

Last Full Review: N/A New Policy

POLICY STATEMENT:

Broadland is committed to supporting customers who are affected by Domestic Abuse. We recognise that domestic abuse is one of the leading causes of homelessness. BHA is committed to developing our policies and practices to end homelessness.

Domestic abuse is often described as 'hidden' due to it mainly being perpetrated at home. This leaves housing providers in a unique position to work with other agencies to identify abuse, disrupt perpetrator behaviour quickly and ensure victims receive the support they need.

Every year nearly two million people in the UK experience domestic abuse. Seven women a month are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales and 85 per cent of victims have to seek help five times on average before they get effective support.

We recognise that women are more likely to be victims of Domestic Abuse, however we will support anyone experiencing domestic abuse, our support is not limited to just women.

This policy has been developed to ensure BHA complies with current legislation, regulatory expectations, and good practice, and will be subject to ongoing review.

SCOPE:

- This policy applies to all customers and members of their household.
- To ensure BHA customers are aware of our approach to dealing with domestic abuse.
- To ensure BHA meets our statutory safeguarding requirements where there are suspicions or evidence of domestic abuse.
- To ensure that victims of domestic abuse are dealt with in a sympathetic and sensitive manner, in accordance with their needs. BHA aims to ensure all employees act in a non-judgemental way.

KEY STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES:

Board

The Board is responsible for ensuring the continued development of BHA.

Senior Management

Policy Name: (Template)
Latest Revision: April 2021

Revised by: Stephanie Davis
Verified by: Catherine Little

The Senior Management Team are responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures are followed by staff.

Staff

Employees are responsible for ensuring they are fully aware and adhere to the terms set out in the policy.

All employees have a duty to act upon and report actual, suspected or allegations that they come across in their role. We recognise that staff who spend more time in our homes such as repairs staff, contractors and cleaners will see more and have a significant role in reporting concerns.

Neighbourhood Officers, Scheme Managers, Tenancy Support Co-ordinators, and Local Delivery Managers (Housing Specialism) have additional responsibilities in working with other agencies as part of their role.

Domestic Abuse Champions are trained to support and provide advice and guidance to their colleagues.

DEFINITIONS:

ASB – Anti-social behaviour

BHA – Broadland Housing Association

DASH – Domestic Abuse, stalking and Honour based violence.

Domestic Abuse - Behaviour of a person ('A') towards another person ('B') is 'domestic abuse' if –

- (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- (b) the behaviour is abusive.'

EIA – Equality Impact Assessment

IDVA – Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

MARAC – Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee

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

Safeguarding – Protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse or harm.

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) - refers to the following range of serious crime types which are predominantly, but not exclusively, experienced by women and girls: Domestic Violence and Abuse; Sexual Offences; Stalking; Female Genital Mutilation (FGM); Crimes Said to be Committed in the Name of ‘Honour’; Forced Marriage; Prostitution; and Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation.

RELVANT KEY LEGISLATION AND RELATED DOCUMENTS: (not limited to)

Legislation	Documents
The Care Act 2014 Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Protection from Harassment Act 1997 The Family Law Act 1996 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 Human Rights Act 1998 The Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Policy The Housing Act 1996 The Equality Act 2010	Anti-Social Behaviour Policy BHA Safeguarding Policy BHA Safeguarding Adults Procedure BHA Safeguarding Children’s Procedure Confidential Reporting and Whistleblowing Policy Data Protection Policy Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy Recruitment Policy and Procedures Homes for Cathy Commitments Repairs Policy Tenancy Agreement Employee Welfare Support Guidance

EIA – EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to consider the positive and negative impacts this Policy may have on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES:

- We recognise that men and women can be victims of domestic abuse.
- We will recognise the difference between ASB and domestic abuse.
- We will work in partnership with other agencies to signpost tenants to appropriate support and respond to reports we receive.
- We will provide staff with training relevant to their role to ensure they know how to spot the signs of domestic abuse.
- We will use our professional curiosity to identify domestic abuse and be open with our customers that we do so.

- We will provide a sensitive and confidential response to anyone approaching us for assistance in cases of domestic abuse or VAWG.
- While women and girls are disproportionately affected by all forms of VAWG, and some are gender specific such as FGM, we will support those individuals experiencing VAWG or domestic abuse irrespective of age, gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, religion, social background or any other protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act.
- We will report incidents to the police on behalf of individuals or support them in doing so (with their permission), where they feel too intimidated to report incidents themselves.
- We will monitor routine repairs and rent arrears data which may be an indicator of domestic abuse and follow up with customers using our professional curiosity.
- We will train staff across the business to act as Domestic Abuse Champions.
- We will monitor data we have on reports of domestic abuse to ensure our service is accessible to anyone who needs it.
- We recognise staff may be victims of domestic abuse and they should refer to the Employee Welfare Support Guidance and can seek confidential advice and support from their line manager, HR or the Domestic Abuse Champions.
- We will deliver on the commitments in the CIH Make a Stand Charter.
- We will raise awareness of safeguarding issues in our communities through information and advice. All of our Safeguarding Policies and Procedures will be available on our website and customers can request a copy at any time.
- Our Policy and Procedures will be reviewed annually.

DATA PROTECTION

A Privacy Impact Assessment should be completed for all new policies or policy revisions which include any use of personal data (this will be the majority).

This policy (and associated procedures) requires a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) and one was completed on 1 April 2021 and appropriate risk mitigations implemented.

Please refer to the Tenant and Employee Privacy Notices, and the Data Protection Policy and Procedures, for details on Broadland's use, security, sharing and retention of personal data.

Please refer to the Data Protection Policy. This will inform you about BHG's approach to securing your data, the appropriate use of data, how long we store and retain your data, and your rights regarding your data.

Policy Name: (Template)
Latest Revision: April 2021

Revised by: Stephanie Davis
Verified by: Catherine Little