



**Halton**  
Housing

# Policy

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Halton Housing believes that its Customers and other householders should not live in fear of violence or abuse.
- 1.2 We take domestic abuse very seriously and are committed to providing a sensitive and confidential response to anyone approaching us for help with cases of domestic abuse.
- 1.3 One in five adults experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. This equates to one in four women and one in six/seven men.
- 1.4 Domestic violence and abuse are when your partner, ex-partner or a family member hurts you or threatens to hurt you, scares, humiliates or controls you. It is not always physical.
- 1.5 Any person, including both men and women, can experience domestic violence and abuse regardless of race, ethnic or religious group, wealth, sexual orientation, age, disability or lifestyle.
- 1.6 It may include:
  - Physical or Sexual abuse
  - Emotional / psychological abuse
  - Controlling or Coercive behaviour · Financial abuse
  - Harassment and stalking
  - Honour based violence
  - Forced marriage
  - Female Genital mutilation
- 1.7 Within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021: Transforming the Response to Domestic Abuse, a new statutory definition of Domestic Abuse has been introduced: “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.”
- 1.8 The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:
  - psychological,
  - physical,
  - sexual,
  - economic and
  - emotional forms of abuse including:

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- 1.9 Controlling behaviour - is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance, and escape, and regulating their everyday behaviour.
- 1.10 Coercive behaviour - is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten a person.' This includes a range of behaviour which makes a person reliant and/or dependent on another person by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacity for personal gain, depriving them of the means need for their resources and capacity for personal gain, depriving them of the means need for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
- 1.11 This can also include forced marriage and, so called 'honour violence'.

## 2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 This policy sets out how Halton Housing will take steps to assist and support any person suffering from or threatened with domestic violence or abuse, it applies to all customers, and people living with our customers.
- 2.2 Upon receipt of a report of domestic abuse this will be handled sensitively, and Halton Housing staff will offer a range of support services to anyone disclosing domestic abuse including:-
- Specialised Tenant Support Officers (TSO) who are trained to deal with the complexity of many domestic abuse cases.
  - Advice and support on a range of support organisations within the statutory and voluntary sector, offering information to help customers access appropriate support, or making a direct referral with on-going support and involvement dependant on need.
  - Identifying and providing additional security measures to enable the victim to remain safe within their home if they wish to do so.
  - Consideration of rehousing requests, taking account of the need to remove the victim from potential danger and any bad memories that the property will hold, minimising upheaval and understanding the benefit of social and family networks to enable the long-term break from abusive relationships.
  - Encouraging the victim to report any criminal offence to the police and supporting any prosecution as appropriate. Where there is a danger reporting this directly to the police, ensure that a quick response to any calls is achieved.

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- Working in partnership with agencies presenting cases at MARAC meetings, and providing a response to customers as well as ensuring any recommended actions are acted upon in a timely way.
  - Supporting victims to take legal action against perpetrators whilst taken action as appropriate including, seeking possession action against known perpetrators when appropriate.
  - Identify and support any underlying issues which may contribute to any abuse for example drug and alcohol abuse or mental health concerns.
- 2.3 Halton Housing encourage customers and staff to consider utilising the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, or 'Clare's Law' as it is known. The scheme gives people a formal way to apply for a police check into the past of a person where there is a concern that a relationship may be or may become abusive. This is available to anyone in a relationship, or anyone who has concerns for another person who is in a relationship.
- 2.4 We will also take appropriate action against the perpetrators of domestic abuse including: -
- Supporting the Police to take legal action against perpetrators to prevent on-going abuse including removing the perpetrator from the tenancy agreement.
  - Identify organisations that can support perpetrators to challenge and change their behaviour.
  - Identify and support any action to resolve underlying issues which may have been perceived to have contributed to any abuse for example drug and alcohol abuse or mental health concerns. Alcohol and drugs can make existing abuse worse, or be a catalyst for an attack, but they do not cause domestic abuse. Many people use alcohol or drugs and do not abuse their partner, so it should never be used to excuse violent or controlling behaviour.
- 2.5 Halton Housing works in partnership with organisations to tackle domestic abuse and actively participates in local groups including Halton Domestic Abuse Forum (HDAF) and MARAC.
- 2.6 Actions taken to resolve domestic abuse will be recorded on QL to enable on-going monitoring and management of cases.

### 3. Responsibility

- 3.1 The overall responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy will lie with the Director of Customer Experience. The day-to-day responsibility for implementing and monitoring the use of this policy lies with Head of Neighbourhoods and Senior Managers within the Customer Experience Directorate.

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## 4. Regulatory and/or Legal Compliance

4.1 Halton Housing Domestic Abuse Policy and its associated procedures are compatible with obligations imposed by existing legislation, including: -

- Housing Act 1985 (as amended by the Housing Act 1996)
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Protection from Eviction Act 1997
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Domestic Abuse, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Serious Crime Act 2015 (Section 76 relates controlling or coercive behaviour)
- Care Act 2014
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Police Act 2014
- Clare's Law
- Criminal Justice Act 2003
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation 2016

## 5. Diversity Considerations

5.1 An initial screening checklist has been completed on this policy which confirms that a full Equality Impact Assessment does not need to be carried out.

## 6. Links to Strategies, Policies and Associated Documents

6.1 The policy underpins the following priorities within our Corporate Plan:-

- Customer

6.2 Other policies, procedures or documents that are associated with this policy are:-

- Domestic Abuse Procedure
- Anti-Social Behaviour & Hate Crime Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Property Pool Plus Allocation Policy
- Lettings Policy



Translations available on request by phoning 0303 333 0101 or  
via email at [info@haltonhousing.org](mailto:info@haltonhousing.org)

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