

# Melville Housing Association



## Policy : Domestic Abuse

<b>Subject:</b>	Domestic Abuse
<b>Section:</b>	Housing Services
<b>Objective:</b>	To respond swiftly and appropriately to all reported incidents of domestic abuse.
<b>Scottish Social Housing Charter</b>	Outcome 7,8, 9 Housing Options
<b>Issue Date:</b>	September 2017
<b>Review Date:</b>	September 2020
<b>Policy Ref No:</b>	HSG 008

## **1.0 Policy**

1.1 Domestic abuse can be defined as threatened or actual abuse carried out by a member of a household against another member of the same household.

1.2 We will take a supportive, non-judgemental and positive approach to all persons who approach us for help and advice on domestic abuse. We will treat complaints seriously, sensitively and in confidence. We will not ask for evidence of violence or abuse but if the victim offers any information or documents which could help with investigating the complaint, then we will accept these.

1.3 We will deal with domestic abuse by:

- Supporting and offering appropriate advice and assistance to the victim
- Working in partnership with the police, social work, Women's Aid and other organisations as appropriate.
- Making sure that the confidentiality of both the victim and perpetrator is respected
- Monitoring all reported domestic abuse incidents and taking action as appropriate

1.4 We will support victims of domestic abuse by:

- Encouraging them to seek help from specialist counselling and support agencies
- Making sure that their home has appropriate security precautions, such as adequate door and window locks  
Treating any repairs required to make safe the property as emergency repairs. These will not be recharged to the victim.
- Assisting them to obtain temporary housing or alternative suitable, permanent accommodation as appropriate.

## **2.0 Scope of policy**

2.1 Our policy applies to all of our tenants, their partners and other members of the household.

## **3.0 Procedure**

3.1 When we receive a complaint of domestic abuse our first priority will be to make sure that the victim has somewhere safe to stay for the night. If the victim decides to stay in the home, then we will repair any damage relating to the security of the property as an emergency. The victim will not be charged for these repairs.

3.2 We will carry out an assessment interview immediately, but if this is not possible we will arrange it within 2 working days of the first contact. We will give victims the choice of being interviewed by someone of the same sex, wherever possible. If there is hearing or language difficulties, then we will arrange for an interpreter to be present.

- 3.3 We will help and support the victim in any practicable way. If a victim expresses the wish to move, temporarily or permanently, then we will assist them to obtain alternative accommodation any offer of alternative accommodation by us will be in line with our Allocations policy.
- 3.4 We will not take any action without the express consent and support of the victim.
- 3.5 As domestic abuse is a form of harassment, we will consider taking legal action for a breach of tenancy conditions against any alleged perpetrator who is a tenant of ours.
- 3.6 We will support any action taken by the victim, the police or other agencies against perpetrators of domestic abuse who are tenants of ours.
- 3.7 We are not able to take legal action against perpetrators of domestic abuse who are not tenants of ours, but will support, wherever possible, any action taken against these perpetrators by the victim, police or other agencies.
- 3.8 We will keep victims informed at each stage of our investigation into their domestic abuse complaint. We will also advise victims of action taken by us, in particular, the dates and outcomes of any court hearings.

#### **4.0 Complaints & Appeals**

- 4.1 If a victim is unhappy with the way we deal with their complaint of domestic abuse they should contact the Housing Services Team who will investigate their complaint in line with our Complaints Policy

#### **5.0 Equality & Diversity**

- 5.1 We are committed to Equality and Diversity and will not discriminate in the operation of this policy on the basis of age, gender, gender reassignment, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, marital status, family circumstances, political belief or affiliation, sexual orientation, medical condition or disability or Trade Union Membership. We aim to promote equal opportunities and comply with all current legal requirements relating to equal opportunities.

#### **6.0 Training**

All appropriate staff, particularly the Housing Services Section, will receive training for them to understand and apply our policy appropriately.

#### **7.0 Tenancy sustainment**

- 7.1 We are committed to assisting tenants, where possible, to remain in their homes. We recognise the individual needs of tenants and take these into account in all aspects of our service. Where we are unable to offer direct assistance we will signpost tenants to other agencies and services. We have a partnership agreement with CHAI (Community Help and Advice Initiative) to provide Tenancy Support and Money Advice services.

## **7.0 Policy Review**

The Chief Operating Officer will ensure this policy is reviewed every three years or earlier if there are any changes to legislation. The Senior Management Team have delegated authority to approve minor changes to this policy. Significant changes will be submitted to the Board for approval.