

Domestic Violence Policy

Who does this policy apply to:	Staff, Tenants, and Contractors
Review Date (minimum every three years)	January 2029
Policy Author/Reviewer and Job Title	Sally Rowe, Head of Housing

Purpose and Scope of the Policy:

This policy sets out how WFHA will respond to domestic violence and abuse. The Association is committed to providing a safe environment and ensuring victims are supported, protected, and not disadvantaged as a result of abuse.

1.0 Details:

- 1.1 This policy aims to outline WFHA's approach to dealing with cases of domestic violence abuse.
- 1.2 We recognise that domestic abuse can have a devastating impact upon individuals and WFHA is committed to providing a sensitive and confidential response to anyone approaching us for support.
- 1.3 We take all reports seriously and work with other organisations to support individuals and their families.
- 1.4 Taking appropriate action in relation to domestic abuse is vital in our efforts to achieve stable balanced communities where people feel safe and secure.
- 1.5 Our Operations team are ideally placed to help identify signs of domestic abuse in our properties. Alternatively, a tenant may make a disclosure that they are experiencing domestic abuse, and our staff must be able to deal with the disclosure appropriately.
- 1.6 Male and same sex individuals have the same rights and will receive the same level of support from WFHA.
- 1.7 We will seek to accommodate specific cultural and faith issues and fully recognise "honour" based violence as a form of domestic abuse which carries an extremely high level of risk.

2.0 Definitions:

2.1 The Domestic Abuse Act (April 2021) introduces the statutory definition of domestic abuse. This recognises the wide range of abusive, coercive, or controlling behaviours beyond the use of physical violence.

2.2 Definition of domestic abuse

'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

2.3 For the definition to apply, both parties must be aged 16 or over and 'personally connected'. An intimate personal relationship between the individual and perpetrator is the key definition of domestic abuse. People who are 'personally connected' are defined as:

- intimate partners
- ex-partners
- relatives
- individuals who share parental responsibility for a child.

There is no requirement for the victim and perpetrator to live in the same household.

2.4 There is no statutory definition of 'controlling or coercive' behaviour or psychological abuse. However, the Domestic Violence Act suggests that:

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting the resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

2.5 Coercive behaviour is an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten their victim.

2.6 Honour Based Abuse and Violence is a term describing harmful behaviours used to control and punish a family member or social group to protect cultural and religious beliefs in the name of honour. Honour Based Violence can be distinguished from other forms of abuse as it is often committed by multiple perpetrators, often family members, with the approval of family and/or community members.

2.7 Women are particularly at risk of 'honour-based violence, and as such it is important to recognise this form of abuse within the wider context of violence perpetrated against women and girls, resulting from an underlying denial of their human rights.

2.8 The UK Home Office provides the following definition of forced marriage: ' A forced marriage is where one or both people do not or cannot consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used to force them into marriage'

3.0 Responsibilities

3.1 All staff and contractors have a responsibility in identifying domestic abuse. The Head of Housing will oversee the policy, and the Operations Manager will deliver the associated processes contained within this policy. The Chief Executive has overall responsibility.

Related Policies:

Safeguarding
Lone Working
Health and Safety Statement
Complaints
Data Protection
LBWF Community Safety Protocol (Appendix 1)
LBWF Housing Compact Domestic Abuse Protocol (Appendix 2)

Document History:

Date of Last Review: January 2026

Equality Impact Statement:

WFHA must ensure all individuals are treated fairly and in line with legislation relating to the nine protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 and with the Association's Equality policies and procedures. You must comply with the law and Association policies and procedures governing equality and diversity. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.