



# **Domestic Abuse Policy**

**April 2025 – 2028**

## Domestic Abuse Policy

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| <b>Adopted / Date Reviewed:</b> | May 2025  |
| <b>Review Period:</b>           | 3 Years   |
| <b>Next Review:</b>             | May 2028  |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>         | Strategic Lead - Place  |
| <b>Policy Version:</b>          | Third version of policy   |
| <b>Version Reviewed by:</b>     | CLT   |
| <b>Version Approved by:</b>     | CLT   |
| <b>Policy Links:</b>            | Anti-Social Behaviour Policy<br>Safeguarding Policy<br>Lettings Policy<br>Lone Working Policy<br>Mutual Exchange, Assignment and Subletting Policy<br>Disciplinary Policy<br>Family Leave Policy<br>Health and Safety Policy<br>Equality and Diversity Policy<br>Complaints Policy<br>Code of Conduct<br>Tenancy Policy |

### Brief Policy Summary:

Our Policy is to commit to the principles that Domestic Abuse is unacceptable behaviour and that everyone has the right to live free from fear and abuse.

We will ensure that those suffering from Domestic Abuse are provided with a fair, victim centered, confidential and supportive level of service within the constraints of current legislation and the resources available to us.

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## Purpose and Statement

1. The purpose of this policy is to outline how Lincolnshire Housing Partnership (LHP) will manage reports of domestic abuse. We are committed not only to responding effectively, but also to prevention and early intervention. Our aim is to ensure that those affected by domestic abuse receive the right support, while holding perpetrators to account for their behaviour.
2. By adopting this policy, LHP aims to:
  - Develop a consistent, fair, and compassionate approach to addressing domestic abuse.
  - Provide comprehensive training to ensure all colleagues understand their role in identifying and responding to domestic abuse
  - Improve the safety, wellbeing and outcomes for adults and children affected by domestic abuse
  - Raise awareness and understanding of domestic abuse within the communities we serve
  - Enhance LHP's response to domestic abuse by providing tailored support to customers who experience domestic abuse, taking account of their individual needs and circumstances.
  - Work in partnership with specialist agencies to deliver coordinated, expert support to those affected by domestic abuse.
3. Domestic abuse is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It represents an abuse of power within relationships and, in many cases, may constitute a criminal offence. Domestic abuse occurs across all communities and affects individuals regardless of background. Its impact extends beyond the person experiencing it – affecting children, families and the wider community. LHP is committed to holding perpetrators to account, while also engaging with those who recognise their behaviour and are willing to change.
4. While domestic abuse often occurs between partners or ex-partners, it can also take place between other family members — for example, abuse by a child towards a parent. Importantly, the perception of the person experiencing the abuse must be central at all times when assessing and responding to domestic abuse.

## Objectives

5. We will ensure that individuals experiencing domestic abuse are provided with a fair, consistent and compassionate service. Within the constraints of the law and the resources available to LHP, we will offer all appropriate

assistance to help to resolve their situation.

6. Individuals approaching LHP for support will have access, if they prefer, to a designated colleague of the same sex who has received appropriate domestic abuse training.
7. LHP will work in partnership with specialist counselling agencies, the Local Authority, Social Care (Adult and Children), Police specialist units and relevant organisations, to ensure that those affected by domestic abuse have access to appropriate advice and support.
8. LHP recognises that each case of domestic abuse is unique and complex. Therefore, all reports, will be assessed and managed individually using this policy and the Domestic Abuse procedure as a guideline for the appropriate to guide appropriate action.
9. Where appropriate, individuals will be advised to seek legal advice and speak with the Local Authority in respect of their position under homelessness legislation.
10. LHP will use the terms of the tenancy agreement to support victims/survivors in cases of domestic abuse.
11. LHP will initiate court proceedings against unauthorised occupants including cases where one joint tenant has relinquished the tenancy or left due to abuse or threats. (please refer to Domestic Abuse Procedure, LHP Mutual Exchange, Assignment and Subletting Policy and Procedure)
12. We will not recharge victims/survivors of domestic abuse for lock changes or property damage. Where appropriate, costs will be pursued from the perpetrator. In high-risk situations, we will offer additional safety support such as Lifeline (Lincolnshire) or referral to Carelink (North East Lincolnshire).
13. We recognise that victims/survivors may retract disclosures. Our colleagues will respond in a non-judgmental supportive manner and continue to offer support and safeguarding measures.
14. LHP's approach to perpetrators of domestic abuse includes the following commitments:
  - Colleagues/Contractors will report any incidents of domestic abuse they witness or are made aware of
  - We will hold perpetrators accountable, and where appropriate take firm action supported by evidence. This will always be done in consultation with the victim/survivor and in line with their best

interests.

- We will use legal and civil remedies to sanction perpetrators compromising the safety of the person affected.
  - We will support perpetrators who recognise their behaviour and are willing to by signposting to specialist support agencies.
15. We will support individuals to remain in their own home wherever it is safe to do so. We will consider installing additional security measures and will work with local police to bring compensation for damage caused to LHP properties.
16. We will provide support to any LHP colleagues who are experiencing Domestic Abuse through our internal network of dedicated Domestic Abuse Champions and separate Domestic Abuse Policy for colleagues.

### Scope

17. This policy extends to all LHP customers.
18. While evidence shows that domestic abuse is most commonly perpetrated by men against women, LHP recognises that it can affect individuals of any genders, sexual orientation or background. This policy covers abuse in all forms, including between family members -such as from children to partners or between siblings and or perpetrated by carers.

### Definition

19. LHP adopts the statutory definition of domestic abuse as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.:
- A person ("A") is considered to have carried out domestic abuse towards another person ("B") if:
- A and B are each aged 16 or over,
  - A and B are personally connected\*, and
  - The behaviour is abusive.
20. Abusive behaviour may consist of a single incident or a pattern of incidents and includes:
- **Physical or sexual abuse**
  - **Violent or threatening behaviour**
  - **Controlling or coercive behaviour**
  - **Economic abuse**
  - **Psychological, emotional, or other abuse**

This includes acts such as hitting, choking, intimidation, manipulation, denial of access to money or essentials, gaslighting, and non-fatal strangulation. More examples and detailed descriptions are available in the Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance ([Domestic Abuse: statutory guidance \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK](#)).

**Personally connected** means individuals who:

- Are or have been married or civil partners
- Are or have been in an intimate personal relationship
- Have agreed to marry or enter a civil partnership
- Are or were co-parents or guardians of the same child
- Are relatives (including parent-child relationships)

The **Act also recognises children as victims in their own right**. A child (under 18) who sees, hears, or experiences the effects of domestic abuse and is related to either the person being abused or the perpetrator, is legally considered a victim.

**Controlling behaviour** is a range of acts intended to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from support, exploiting resources, and regulating everyday life.

**Coercive behaviour** is a pattern of acts (including threats, humiliation, or intimidation) used to harm, punish, or frighten the victim.

### **Associated Forms of Domestic Abuse**

21. In line with sector guidance, LHP recognises that domestic abuse can include a wide range of associated behaviours beyond the core statutory definition:

#### **Teenage abusive relationships**

Abuse in relationships involving those aged 16 or 17 can mirror adult experiences and may include sexual coercion, controlling behaviour, verbal abuse, and online harassment.

#### **Abuse through technology**

Abusers may use digital technologies to threaten, stalk, intimidate, or control. This includes abusive texts, location tracking, online harassment, and image-based abuse.

#### **Child to Parent or Carer Abuse**

While the Act applies to those aged 16 and over, LHP recognises

instances where younger children may perpetrate abuse against parents or carers and will respond accordingly, including making safeguarding referrals.

### **Stalking or Harassment**

Defined as persistent, unwanted behaviours that cause fear, distress, or anxiety, stalking may include repeated contact, following, surveillance, property damage, or threats.

### **Forced Marriage**

A forced marriage occurs when one or both people do not consent and pressure or abuse is used. This includes physical, emotional, sexual, or financial coercion.

### **Honour Based Abuse**

Crimes or incidents committed to protect perceived family or community honour. This may involve forced marriage, violence, abduction, and even murder. LHP will respond urgently where there is a risk of serious harm.

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

**FGM is a form of child abuse and gender-based violence. It involves non-medical procedures that intentionally alter or injure female genital organs and is illegal in the UK.** Female genital mutilation (FGM) is child abuse and violates the rights to health, security and physical integrity of the person and to be free from torture, cruel and degrading treatment.

### **Intersectionality and Barriers to Support**

LHP recognises that an individual's experience of domestic abuse may be shaped by factors such as race, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or immigration status. We are committed to tailoring our services to meet the needs of trans and non-binary people and others who may face multiple forms of discrimination or exclusion.

## **Relevant Legislation**

22. This policy document takes into account the following legislation:
  - a) Domestic Abuse Act 2021
  - b) Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014



- c) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- d) Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- e) Data Protection Act 1998 & 2018
- f) Equalities Act 2010
- g) Housing Act 1985, 1988, 1996
- h) Human Rights Act 1998
- i) Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- j) Children Act 1989 & 2004
- k) Care Act 2014

## Service Standards

23. When we receive a report of domestic abuse LHP will:

- Take a person-centered approach, providing advice and support in an empathetic and non-judgmental and trauma-informed way.
- Respect the confidentiality of victims/survivors and complainants. However, where there are safeguarding concerns, in respect of either adults or children we will make the necessary referral, regardless of whether consent has been given.
- Listen to and be guided by the victim/survivor empowering them to make informed decisions and take an active role in identifying solutions that prioritise their safety and wellbeing.
- Respect individual preferences including offering support from a colleague of the same gender and where possible, someone of a similar ethnic or cultural background, ensuring a neutral and safe environment for any conversations.
- Take firm and prompt action against perpetrators where appropriate. We will:
  - Use legislation and / or civil remedies where possible to sanction perpetrators.
  - work in partnership with other agencies to coordinate a safe and informed response.
  - Signpost perpetrators who recognise their behaviour and wish to change to accredited specialist support services.
- Carry out emergency repairs where necessary to protect the safety of the victim/survivor and their household.
- Work in partnership with agencies to support victims/survivors of domestic abuse i.e. Womens Aid, Police or other specialist services.

- Make safeguarding referrals for children/adults where appropriate in line with LHP's Safeguarding Policy and procedures.
- Ensure that all colleagues who may encounter incidents of domestic abuse receive regular, role-appropriate training to deliver person centered advice and support.

### Partnership Working

24. LHP recognises that no single organisation or agency can address domestic abuse in isolation. We are committed to working collaboratively without partners to safeguard adult and child(ren) victims/survivors. Our key partners include, but are not limited to:
  - specialist domestic abuse advice and support agencies,
  - Humberside and Lincolnshire Police,
  - Lincolnshire County Council,
  - Boston Borough Council,
  - North East Lincolnshire Council,
  - Children and Adult Social Care services
  - and other local housing providers.
25. LHP actively participates in multi-agency forums and initiatives to ensure coordinated response to domestic abuse including:
  - Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which focus on the highest-risk cases to improve safety planning and reduce harm.
  - and multi-agency tasking and co-ordination panel (MATAC) aimed at managing and disrupting repeat or high-harm perpetrators.

### Legal Remedies

26. LHP has a range of legal tools available to help manage and respond to cases of domestic abuse. We will always act proportionally and investigate each report thoroughly before any action is taken. This may include support from a partner agency.

Available legal remedies include:

- Possession action or eviction, where necessary and lawful
- Seeking or supporting injunctions to protect victims/survivors.
- Joint working with the Police and other statutory agencies to coordinate enforcement.

- Supporting applications for Non-Molestation Orders, Restraining Orders and Protection from Harassment Orders
  - Resolving tenancy and occupancy issues
  - Re housing survivors in exceptional circumstances, where it is not safe for them to remain in their current home.
27. All legal action will be appropriately authorised by either the Anti-Social Behaviour Manager or Strategic Lead - Place.

### **Monitoring**

28. Reporting and monitoring will be carried out through the Anti-Social Behaviour system in accordance with the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.
29. This policy is reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, statutory guidance, or significant organisational or regulatory developments.

# Lincolnshire Housing Partnership (LHP) Equality and Quality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Title of Policy/Event/Decision: Domestic Abuse Policy (2025-2028)

Lead Officer(s): Susan Sendall, Anti-Social Behaviour Manager

Date of EQIA: June 2025

| Scope and Purpose  |  |
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| <b>Briefly describe the policy/event/decision being assessed:</b>  | This policy outlines how LHP will respond to, prevent, and intervene early in cases of domestic abuse affecting our customers. It includes guidance for supporting victims, managing perpetrators, and working with partners to ensure a coordinated and trauma-informed approach.   |
| <b>What is the aim or purpose of this policy/decision?</b>   | To make sure victims and survivors get compassionate, timely, and tailored support that recognises how different factors, like age, disability, gender identity, race, sexuality, or cultural background, can combine to shape their experience of domestic abuse. The policy also makes clear that children are recognised and supported as victims in their own right. It sets out how we will hold perpetrators to account, improve safety and wellbeing for everyone affected, and help colleagues feel confident to respond fairly and sensitively. The policy aims to equip colleagues to respond confidently, consistently, and in line with best practice. |
| <b>Which departments or groups will be affected by this policy/event/decision?</b>   | Neighbourhoods and Allocations, ASB & Safeguarding, Customer Contact Centre, and all front-facing colleagues.  |
| Data Collection and Evidence   |  |
| <b>What data or evidence have you used to identify how different groups may be affected? (e.g., tenant demographic data,</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal domestic abuse case information recorded through the ASB system (noting current gaps).</li><li>• Feedback from our network of Domestic Abuse Champions.</li><li>• An external specialist review (MyCWA) and comparisons with good practice in other housing organisations.</li><li>• The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Equality Act 2010, and Care Act 2014, which together set out LHP's legal duties to protect</li></ul>  |

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| service usage statistics, consultation feedback) | <p>victims/survivors, safeguard children and adults, and prevent discrimination.</p> <p><b>Data limitations:</b></p> <p>We know access to detailed, case-level domestic abuse data has been limited due to how cases have historically been recorded and stored. This means we could not fully cross-check DA cases against customer demographic data to see if any groups are under- or over-represented.</p> <p>However, the policy commits to improving how we record, track, and monitor domestic abuse cases. A wider review of our ASB and safeguarding systems is already under way to address this and ensure better insight in future.</p> |
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| <b>What does this data tell you about the potential impacts on different equality groups?</b> | Domestic abuse disproportionately impacts women, though all genders and identities are affected. Some groups (e.g., LGBTQ+, disabled customers, ethnically minoritised communities) face additional barriers to disclosure and accessing support. Tailored and inclusive approaches are necessary to reduce inequality. |
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## RAG Impact Assessment on Protected Characteristics

Use the RAG system to assess the level of potential impact for each protected characteristic:

- **Red (High Risk):** Significant potential for negative impact requiring immediate action to mitigate.
- **Amber (Medium Risk):** Some potential for negative impact, which can be mitigated with changes.
- **Green (Low or No Risk):** Little to no negative impact identified.

Ensure that you state reasons (the why) for your justifications.

| Protected Characteristic | Impact (Positive, Negative, Neutral) | RAG Rating | Description of Potential Impact  | Mitigation/Enhancement Actions                 | Responsible Officer |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|--|--|---------------------|
| Age                      | Positive                             | Green      | Older and younger customers may face specific vulnerabilities or barriers, such as isolation or lack of knowledge about support options. | Include age-specific resources and signposting | ASB Manager         |

|                                |          |       |   |  |             |
|--------------------------------|----------|-------|---|--|-------------|
| Disability                     | Positive | Green | Disabled customers may face accessibility barriers or dependence on perpetrators  | Use accessible formats, train colleagues on hidden disabilities  | ASB Manager |
| Gender Reassignment            | Positive | Green | Trans people are at increased risk and may fear discrimination  | Inclusive language, training, access to trans-competent services   | ASB Manager |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | Neutral  | Green | Generally neutral, but some cultural contexts may create added pressure or barriers to leaving an abusive relationship. | Ensure staff are aware of cultural sensitivities, and that signposting includes faith and family mediation services if appropriate | N/A         |
| Pregnancy and maternity        | Positive | Green | Pregnancy is a known risk factor for DA escalation  | Prioritise safeguarding and multi-agency support   | ASB Manager |
| Race                           | Positive | Green | Cultural stigma and language barriers can prevent help-seeking  | Translation access, culturally sensitive services  | ASB Manager |
| Religion or Belief             | Neutral  | Green | While no direct negative impact identified, some faith communities may present additional cultural pressures around     | Ensure awareness of religious considerations in support planning   | ASB Manager |

|                    |          |       |   |   |                                   |
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|                    |          |       | family honour or staying in a relationship                        |   |                                   |
| Sex                | Positive | Green | Women most commonly affected; men underreport                     | Trauma-informed, non-gendered but gender-sensitive approach | ASB Manager/ DA Champions Network |
| Sexual Orientation | Positive | Green | LGBTQ+ customers may fear discrimination or lack tailored support | Training, signposting to LGBTQ+ specific services           | ASB Manager/ DA Champions Network |

## Mitigating Negative Impact

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| <b>What actions will you take to reduce or mitigate any identified negative impacts?</b><br>Provide specific mitigation measures for each characteristic where a negative impact (Red or Amber rating) was identified. | No Red or Amber risks have been identified. However, to strengthen positive impact and ensure equitable access, LHP will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide refresher training for all customer-facing colleagues, including on intersectionality, hidden barriers, and cultural awareness.</li> <li>• Embed clear, inclusive communication guidance, including the use of professional translation and interpreting services where needed.</li> <li>• Offer customers the option to be supported by a colleague of the same sex or a similar cultural background, in line with the policy commitment.</li> <li>• Maintain a network of Domestic Abuse Champions across departments to ensure consistent practice and peer support.</li> <li>• Strengthen links with specialist and intersectional services (e.g., LGBTQ+ groups, faith-based or culturally specific providers).</li> <li>• Promote and maintain safe spaces for private disclosure and support planning.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Who is responsible for implementing these actions?</b>  | ASB Manager, with support from HR and DA Champions.   |

## Consultation and Engagement

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| <b>Have you consulted any stakeholders or equality groups? If so, who and how?</b> | Yes. Consultation included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MyCWA (external DA specialists)</li> <li>• Internal DA Champions</li> <li>• Cross-team staff feedback</li> <li>• Customer insight gathered through ongoing engagement: with no change requests or concerns raised by customers</li> </ul> |
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|   | when the policy was shared in summary form for feedback, as noted in the CLT summary.  |
| <b>What feedback have you received, and how has this influenced your assessment?</b>            | Feedback emphasised the need for trauma-informed responses, flexibility in rehousing, and support for both victims and perpetrators. This was incorporated into training expectations and operational standards.   |
| <b>Decision Making</b>  |  |
| <b>How has this EQIA informed or influenced the final decision?</b>                             | The EQIA confirmed that the revised Domestic Abuse Policy supports equality, reduces the risk of indirect discrimination, and actively addresses barriers faced by different groups. While no major changes were needed at this stage, the EQIA has reinforced the importance of improving how we record and analyse domestic abuse data, including plans to use tools like Power BI and future demographic overlays, to inform service improvements and ensure our approach remains evidence-led. |
| <b>Were any changes made to the policy/decision as a result of the EQIA?</b>                    | No, the policy was already updated to reflect inclusive and intersectional good practice.  |
| <b>Monitoring and Review</b>  |  |
| <b>How will you monitor the actual impact of the policy/decision once it is implemented?</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual review of DA case trends</li> <li>• Six-monthly DA Champion feedback loop</li> <li>• Customer satisfaction/safety outcomes</li> <li>• EQIA refresh on review</li> </ul>  |
| <b>When will the policy/decision be reviewed?</b>   | May 2028, or earlier if legislation or practice changes.   |
| <b>Sign-Off EQIA Completed By:</b><br><i>Lead Officer(s)</i><br><i>Name(s):</i><br><i>Date:</i> | Susan Sendall, ASB Manager<br>17 <sup>th</sup> June 2025   |
| <b>Approved By:</b><br><i>Approval Name:</i><br><i>Date:</i>                                    | <i>Abigail Iyaho</i> , Strategic Lead- Customer Inclusion and Insight<br>10 <sup>th</sup> July 2025  |