

Policy Name:	Version:	1.0
Domestic Abuse Policy	Date approved by Board:	July-2024
	Date of next review:	July-2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document outlines Fairplace Homes Ltd's (Fairplace) approach to safeguarding our customers who may be at risk of or experiencing domestic abuse.
- 1.2 Fairplace condemn all incidents of domestic abuse and will take all reports of Domestic Abuse seriously. We will take steps to assist and support any person in our properties through a victim centred approach in all cases of domestic abuse.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 Fairplace are committed to working towards preventing and combating, domestic abuse to ensure that everybody is allowed to live free from fear, intimidation and violence.
- 2.2 The aim of this policy is outlined as follows:
- To provide a fair, confidential, and empathetic response to all customers who are experiencing any form of domestic abuse or violence.
 - To ensure all staff have the information and support they need to understand their role in identifying and responding to domestic abuse.
 - To outline how we work in partnership with other agencies to support victims/survivors and tackle domestic abuse.
 - To take firm and effective action against perpetrators where possible.
 - To meet our legal and regulatory requirements.

3. Definition of Domestic Abuse

- 3.1 Fairplace has adopted the definition of Domestic Abuse as issued by the Home Office, which states that domestic abuse is "Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or 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".
- 3.2 It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.
- 3.3 Categories of harm or abuse relating to domestic abuse are (but are not limited to):
- 3.4 **Physical:** includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, scalding, burning, biting, misuse of medication, being locked in a room, inappropriate sanctions or force-feeding, sleep withdrawal, inappropriate methods of restraint, and unlawfully depriving a person of their liberty.

- 3.5 **Sexual:** rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, sexual exploitation, sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.
- 3.6 **Controlling behaviour:** is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support (such as family, friends and co-workers), exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance, and escape, and regulating their everyday behaviour.
- 3.7 **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 (such as family, friends and co-workers),, exploiting their resources and capacity for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. This can also include forced marriage and so-called 'honour violence'.
- 3.8 **Financial or economic:** theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits. Acquire, use, or maintain money, goods or services.
- 3.9 **Psychological or emotional:** threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, rejection, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, indifference, harassment, verbal abuse (including shouting or swearing), cyber bullying, sleep withdrawal, isolation or withdrawal from services or support networks.

4. Supporting those experiencing Domestic Abuse

- 4.1 When an incident of Domestic Abuse is reported to us, our priority is the safety of the customer. We will always believe the customer and will identify a safe method of communication and make contact to agree an action plan where it is assessed as safe to do so. We rely on specialist domestic abuse support services and will encourage tenant involvement at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.2 Fairplace will signpost tenants to agencies involved in tackling domestic abuse who are able to give them the most appropriate support and assistance when faced with domestic abuse.
- 4.3 Where appropriate we will work with those experiencing domestic abuse and make full use of the range of civil and legal remedies available to us to safeguard the victim(s) /survivor(s) against the perpetrator.
- 4.4 Where necessary and safe to do so we will offer a management move to another tenancy under section 79 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the DLUHC guidance for social landlords 2022.

4.5 We will support a customer to find safe alternative accommodation as required. This may be within a refuge or as a direct referral to another social landlord as outlined within Domestic Abuse legislation. This may be outside of area to ensure the safety of the customer.

4.6 We will work with the Police, as appropriate, to support criminal proceedings, as well as specialist agencies to ensure appropriate support is available.

5. Customers who are alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse

5.1 Where a customer is an alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse, we will work with the Police and local authorities who will be the lead partner to advise relating to the protection of the person being abused.

5.2 Where there is a risk to one customer from another we will ensure that the customer being abused is safe as our priority.

5.3 Where the customer who is the alleged/confirmed abuser remains in our property we may take action as defined in grounds 14a of the Housing Act to remove their right to accommodation, seeking an injunction as required.

6. Multi-Agency partnership working

6.1 Fairplace recognises the roles of other agencies and we are committed to working in partnership with them at strategic and operational levels aiming to protect our residents experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse. Where it is deemed appropriate, reports will be referred to partner agencies, such as the local authority and the Police. In these cases, we will support and work with them and our own actions will be guided by their findings and outcome.

6.2 We will always seek the customer's consent to share information about them and their situation, however there may be occasions where we may have to inform others without your agreement. When we share information with other agencies we will comply with Data Protection legislation and our own Data Protection policies and procedures.

7. Care & Support

7.1 Due to the complex needs of customers in our supported housing accommodation, many require specialist care support with at least one carer with them at all times. All third parties are required to provide evidence that carers have undergone domestic abuse and safeguarding training and are DBS checked prior to working with our customers.

7.2 Third parties delivering care services will maintain clear, open and transparent communications with Fairplace to ensure Fairplace are effectively informed about any concerns and incidents relating to domestic abuse in its properties.

7.3 Staff and third parties working on our behalf must also be trained to look out for signs of domestic abuse from carers to the residents and report it to the officer responsible for safeguarding at the property and the appropriate agency.

8. Legal and Regulatory Requirements (not exhaustive)

8.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following legislative and regulatory documents and policies:

- Regulator of Social Housing’s Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Family Law Act 1996
- Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Housing Act 1988 and 1996
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

9. Training

9.1 We will ensure that all our staff have training in working with victims and perpetrators of Domestic Abuse that is appropriate to the requirements of their role. Training will be refreshed in line with best practice.

10. Impact upon staff

10.1 We recognise the impact that working with a victim or perpetrator of Domestic Abuse can have upon a staff member. We will offer support to staff members via debriefs, 1:1’s and specialist support if required. We will ensure that all staff are offered our employee support processes and encouraged to use them.

11. Impact upon other customers

11.1 We recognise that living next to a household where there is domestic abuse can be distressing for other customers. We will signpost to customers to agencies that can offer support and guidance.

12. Policy Review

12.1 This policy will be reviewed every 2 years unless legislation, business or sector developments require otherwise – to ensure that it continues to meet the stated objectives and take account of good practice developments.

Equality Impact Assessment Summary	
Protected characteristic	Impact (positive, negative, neutral)
<i>Age</i>	Neutral
<i>Sex</i>	Neutral
<i>Religion or belief</i>	Neutral
<i>Gender reassignment</i>	Neutral
<i>Marriage / civil partnership</i>	Neutral
<i>Disability</i>	Positive
<i>Race</i>	Neutral
<i>Sexual orientation</i>	Neutral
<i>Pregnancy / maternity</i>	Neutral