



Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy

SER-POL-33

Version 4.0

Date approved: 4 February 2020

Approved by: People and Places Committee

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out how the Trust will respond to and safely manage reports of domestic violence and abuse. It provides a definition of domestic violence and abuse and stalking.
- 1.2 The Trust will support Manchester City Council (MCC) in delivering its Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy.
- 1.3 In August 2018 the Trust signed up to Make a Stand, the Chartered Institute of Housing's pledge to tackle domestic abuse to:
 - Make information about support services available on our website and other places
 - Put in place a policy to support members of staff
 - Appoint a champion at a senior level in the organisation.
- 1.4 This policy and the accompanying procedure provides staff with clear guidelines to follow when responding to reports of domestic abuse, which reflect best practice.
- 1.5 The Trust recognises that other statutory and voluntary agencies may be better placed to respond to domestic violence and abuse and our actions will be taken in partnership as part of a coordinated response to ensure the safety of the survivor.

2. Legal Requirements and Definition

2.1 The Trust has a legal requirement under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to respond to reports of domestic abuse as a member of the local community safety partnership.

2.2 The Trust has adopted the extended definition of domestic abuse and violence set out within Home Office guidance in March 2013:

‘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. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional
- Discriminatory

2.3 Controlling behaviour is defined as an act 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 or regulating their everyday behaviour.

2.4 Coercive behaviour is defined as acts of assault, threat, humiliation, intimidation or other abuse that are used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

2.5 Home Office guidance also includes culturally specific forms of harm which impact upon black and minority ethnic (BME) women. This can include, but is not limited to, forced marriage, dowry related abuse, honour crime and female genital mutilation.

2.6 Stalking is defined as a course of conduct which is defined in the Protection from Harassment Act 1997). The Trust’s response to reports of stalking behaviour will be, on a case by case basis, either in line with this policy or the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

- 2.7 Adults with care and support needs and children at risk of abuse and neglect are more likely to be affected by Domestic Abuse and Violence. In these cases, the Trust will also refer to its Safeguarding Policy.

3. The Trust's Approach

Responding to Reports

- 3.1 The Trust will use the Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Toolkit (Appendix A) to respond to and safely manage reports of domestic violence and abuse.
- 3.2 On receipt of a domestic abuse disclosure Officers will assess whether there is an immediate danger and if so contact the Police using 999. In addition, Officers can assist with contacting Manchester Women's Aid and / or the National Domestic Violence Helpline (0808 2000 247) to secure a place of safety.
- 3.3 The Trust will have well trained and competent staff who provide an effective service and a sensitive response to reports of domestic abuse and violence.
- 3.4 The Trust will provide a safe environment where survivors are encouraged to talk and are listened to. Reports can be made at our offices or in a safe venue of their choice. Survivors will be given the opportunity to ask for a staff member of the same gender to deal with their case. Officers will agree a contact method and a timescale for keeping in touch.
- 3.5 Officers will respect confidentiality and only divulge information with the consent of the person concerned. The only exception to this would be if when it is necessary to safeguard survivors or their family.

Early Intervention and Support

- 3.6 As early as possible the Trust will complete a Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour based risk identification checklist (DASH) and agree an action plan. Officers will provide safety planning advice and practical support.
- 3.7 As part of a coordinated response to risk management, Officers will provide:
- Tenancy support
 - Benefits and money advice
 - Referrals to specialist support agencies.

- 3.8 When survivors are referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), the Trust will share information and ensure that all actions assigned to the Trust are prioritised and completed.
- 3.9 If the survivor wishes to stay in their current home, Officers will provide support including but not limited to
- Safety planning
 - Target hardening
 - A sanctuary scheme
 - Taking legal action against the perpetrator.
- 3.10 If the survivor requires a move, the Trust will work closely with partner agencies to assist in securing temporary or alternative accommodation through rehousing, in line with Manchester's Allocation Policy. Survivors can be rehoused in the area they currently live in if there is sufficient legal protection in place to prevent further incidents occurring.

Legal Action and Enforcement

- 3.11 Legal action against the perpetrator or to end a joint tenancy will be taken on a case by case basis in consultation with the survivor and partner agencies.
- 3.12 Action against the perpetrator includes, but is not limited to:
- An injunction against the perpetrator
 - An application for possession of a perpetrator's property
 - Placing on the Rehousing Review List.
- 3.13 Officers will provide advice and support to survivors who chose to use other civil and criminal laws to protect them and their families and prevent further incidents.

4. Partnership Working

- 4.1 The Trust will work in partnership with other agencies, including MCC, Greater Manchester Police, and specialist agencies such as Early Help, Women's Aid and Saheli.

5. Staff Training and Continuous Improvement

- 5.1 The Trust will ensure that we have sufficient staff in place to respond effectively to reports of domestic violence and abuse within a 24-hour period and in emergencies.
- 5.2 The Trust will have a procedure which includes the Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Toolkit (Appendix A). The procedure will state which staff members have responsibility for:
- Receiving and responding to reports,
 - Case management – enforcement
 - Case management - providing support.
- 5.3 Staff directly involved in the delivery of the service will be provided with domestic abuse and violence and safeguarding training.
- 5.4 Cases and incidents will be reviewed and monitored on a regular basis and the Trust will collect satisfaction feedback about the way cases have been handled to enable lessons learned and improve performance.

6. Equality and Diversity

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to ensure that all appropriate actions are put in place to support those tenants who have protected characteristics.

7. Related Policy Documents

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure
- Employee DV&A Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Tenancy Support Policy
- Hate Crime Policy and Procedure
- Single Equality Scheme
- Manchester Allocation Scheme
- Southway Tenancy Agreement

POLICY REVIEW HISTORY	
<i>To be completed during each review</i>	
<p>Previous versions (version number – approved by – approval date – title if different)</p> <p>v1 – Shadow Board – 17/07/2007 (later incorporated into the ASB Policy) v2 – Board – 18/03/2014 – Domestic Abuse Policy v3 – Board 21/02/2017 – Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy v4 – Board – DATE</p>	
Date of last EIA:	
Review lead by:	Claire Davies – Age Friendly and Tenancy Support Lead
Main points or amendments made and reasons	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of terminology from Victim to Survivor • Section changes are no longer based on the Manchester Strategy pledges but are in line with the Trust’s Approach in our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal requirements and Definition • Inclusion of stalking • How we will respond to reports • How we will intervene early and provide support • How we will manage cases • Staff Training and Procedures • Continuous Improvement 	
Next review due:	Q4 2022/23
Review Level:	People and Places Committee