

Hackney Housing Services

Domestic Abuse Policy

Related policies /
procedures /
documents:

Policy and Procedure

- Allocation scheme [here](#)
- Tenancy Management Policy [HERE](#)
- Supporting residents with additional needs to thrive Housing [Policy](#)
- Joint Working Protocol Between Hackney Council Housing Services team, Adult Social Care and ELFT [here](#)
- Anti Social Behaviour Policy [HERE](#)
- Domestic Abuse Procedure [HERE](#)
- Housing Services Adults Safeguarding Procedure [here](#)
- Housing Services Children Safeguarding Procedure [here](#)
- Domestic Abuse Policy for Employees [here](#)

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1. Introduction	
1.1	Hackney Council's Housing Services team is committed to enabling our residents to live well and thrive in their homes and communities. This policy has been developed in line with Hackney Council's Housing Services values, which are: ● Fairly and with respect ● Easy to do business with ● Keeping people safe ● Keeping our promises ● Anti-racist
1.2	Safe accommodation plays an important role in reducing the incidence of domestic abuse within our community and in supporting survivors of Domestic Abuse (DA). We know that DA is widespread and underreported. Victim / Survivors (V/S) can face many barriers that prevent them from telling someone about the abuse. One of the main barriers is housing, and we recognise we have a role to play in supporting survivors.

1.3	Housing Services are well placed to identify DA. Our aim is to contribute to the reduction of harm and preservation of life by focusing on early intervention through a multi-agency response and partnering with specialist DA services.
1.4	DA is a crime and is never the fault of the person experiencing it. We use the Government's definition of DA which includes many behaviours beyond physical violence.
1.5	We also know that our staff may experience domestic abuse and we will support them in accordance with the Council's Domestic Abuse Policy for Employees , which also outlines our procedures for instances where staff members perpetrate DA.
1.6	The policy must be read in conjunction with the range of other policies and documents set out here. It is underpinned by a suite of procedures, also included above, which set out in detail how our staff apply the policy, ensuring compliance and quality. Specifically, this includes our DA procedure, which provides guidance to our staff on how to properly support residents experiencing DA.
1.7	The policy has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA - here), formal consultation and sign off by Hackney Council Cabinet. It will be disseminated via the Council's website and via a range of other channels.
2. Scope	
2.1	This policy applies to secure and introductory tenants, in housing owned by Hackney Council. This includes homes managed by Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs). Where the document refers to 'The Council' taking various actions, this includes via its managing agents such as TMOs. The policy applies to Hackney Council leaseholders / home owners, noting that some interventions may be tenure specific and where the policy applies specifically to tenants, this will be the term used. The policy applies to homeless households living in temporary accommodation which is managed directly by Hackney Council Housing Services. It does NOT apply to homeless households in temporary accommodation owned and managed by other landlords, residents living in housing association homes or in the private sector. It does NOT apply to the subtenants of Hackney leaseholders / home owners as the Council's Tenancy & Home Ownership service has no direct relationship with these individuals. Any such households needing support will be referred to appropriate services.

2.2	The overall strategic oversight of this policy is shared by senior managers within the Climate, Homes and Economy Directorate, and the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategic Board.
3. Policy, Regulatory and Legal Context	
3.1 Equalities	
3.1.1	Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) the council has a duty to consider how our policies and decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010 “the Act” . Hackney’s Equality Plan is here .
3.1.2	While offering a service to all regardless of sex and gender, Hackney Council adopts a gendered analysis of DA and recognises that women are disproportionately victimised through DA. We are committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality for all via our inclusive practices and in the context of this policy we will: • Support all individuals experiencing DA regardless of their age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religion, disability, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, and other protected characteristics. • Acknowledge the multitude of barriers experienced by V/S when seeking support, including where these intersect, and provide a supportive and enabling environment to encourage people to report DA. • Acknowledge that some groups including, but not limited to, older people, Black/Global Majority, LGBT+ communities and disabled people may have additional barriers to make a disclosure because of, for instance, language barriers, fear of rejection by their community, cultural expectations, reliance on the abuser for care and support. While we acknowledge statistical gender disparities, protective measures, options and support systems will be applied with equal rigour and neutrality to all V/S irrespective of sex, gender identity or sexual orientation.
3.2. The Regulator of Social Housing	
3.2.1	From 1st April 2024, the Regulator of Social Housing will inspect landlords with 1,000 or more social homes at least once every four years to ensure they are meeting a set of consumer standards and Tenant Satisfaction Measures . This policy reflects expectations set out by the Regulator of Social Housing.
3.3. Legislation	

3.3.1	There is a range of legislation with relevance to the management of domestic abuse within our Housing Service, which staff will have due regard to when undertaking their duties. This includes: • The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 • The Consumer Standards Code of Practice (2024) • Public Sector Equality Duty and Hackney's Equality Plan • The Housing Act 1985 & 1988 • The Housing Act 1996 • Housing Act 1996 as amended by Homelessness Act 2002, The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) • Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 • Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 • Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984 • Civil Partnership Act 2004 • Equality Act 2010 • Data Protection Act 2018 • UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
4. Review & implementation	
4.1	This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or when there are changes to the tenancy or the law, whichever is sooner and takes effect from XX DATE When reviewing the policy, best practice guidance will be taken into account alongside feedback from residents affected by DA, for example, obtained via complaints and our casework.
5. Definition	
5.1	This policy adopts the definition of DA in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021: Behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if: A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other (partners, ex-partners, family members), and the behaviour is abusive. Behaviour is "abusive" if it consists of any of the following: • physical or sexual abuse; • violent or threatening behaviour; • controlling or coercive behaviour; • economic abuse; • psychological, emotional or other abuse; and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct. "Economic abuse" means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B's ability to: acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services.

	For the purposes of this definition A's behaviour may be behaviour "towards" B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B's child). Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts 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 and regulating their everyday behaviour. 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 their victim. The definition of DA also includes other forms of violence and abuse such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and "so called" honour based violence, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims of DA whenever they see, hear or experience the effects of the abuse and are related to the victim/survivor or to the perpetrator of domestic abuse.
6. How to report domestic abuse	
6.1	Full details of how to report DA can be found on our website at: https://www.hackney.gov.uk/community-safety-and-environment/domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-support. For those who cannot access the internet, these details are included here in Appendix 1
7. Our approach	
7.1	We take a trauma-informed, person-centred approach that prioritises safety, dignity, and choice, ensuring residents are heard, believed, and supported in ways that reflect their individual needs and circumstances. When responding to reports of DA we will: • treat all individuals with respect, regardless of ethnicity, culture, age, disability, gender identity, religion or belief; • adopt a holistic, person-centred and non-judgemental approach towards V/S

	• ensure that all disclosures are addressed in a sensitive and effective manner; • engage with perpetrators, reducing the risk they pose through deterrence, sanctions and provision of services to address their behaviour As part of our intervention, we may assess the risk posed to V/S by completing DASH risk assessment forms. This assessment process will allow us to better support our tenants.
7.2	We also recognise that people's understanding of DA may be influenced by their culture and beliefs and as a result, some people may not recognise themselves as a survivor of abuse. We will work sensitively with those experiencing abuse to promote their safety.
7.3	We will ensure that all our housing employees receive appropriate DA training, including how to spot the signs of abuse, understanding intersectionalities and barriers experienced by some groups, and how to identify and respond to identified risk.
7.4	We will continue to train 'champions' who will be located across our housing teams and will be confident in advising both staff and residents on DA issues. We will continue to promote awareness around DA by joining initiatives such as the White Ribbon campaign and by rolling out public facing campaigns, such as the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based violence campaign.
8. Our Service Standards	
8.1	When an incident of DA is reported, we will contact the V/S or referring agency within one working day. • If we believe there is an immediate risk to life, we will call the relevant emergency services. • We will discuss the specialist DA service provided in Hackney, as well as other support options related to their needs, and we will refer the V/S to the appropriate services. • We will discuss a range of housing options such as: increased security via the Sanctuary Scheme/target hardening, refuge accommodation, temporary accommodation and internal transfers. • We will write to the victim/survivor or referring agency within two working days of the report, to confirm the next steps and our commitments. • We recognise that experiencing DA is traumatic and our teams will manage all cases with empathy and compassion. • We will tailor our action plan and response to each case, adopting a person-centred approach and recognising that each individual and their situation is unique.

	• Our approach will be holistic and will consider and seek to address all support needs including finances / rent arrears, tenancy issues, safety, wellbeing, health and children. • We will ensure ongoing support and contact is provided to the victim/survivor. We will agree with them on how often to contact them, safe communication methods and whether they would like us to contact their caseworker, social worker or independent domestic violence advocate or any other support agency.
8.2	We will utilise the Domestic Abuse Intervention Service to consult on DA cases to identify risk and promote appropriate intervention, including completing DASH risk assessment with victim/survivor, discussing safety plans, engaging with the wider professional network to address their safety. The Domestic Abuse Intervention Service may also be able to work with perpetrators of DA who wish to change their abusive behaviour, thus reducing the risk posed to V/S.
8.3	Domestic abuse victim/survivor can request to: • Be interviewed by someone of the same sex or gender • Receive confidential translation services including various languages or British Sign Language (BSL) - we will not allow family or friends to interpret in domestic abuse cases or cases which we think may involve abuse due to safety reasons. • Be contacted via a safe telephone, email or address that does not increase the risk of DA and specific to their individual needs • Be interviewed in a private safe space where they feel safe • Have a friend / support worker present to provide emotional support in the interviews.
9. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) & Partnership Working	
9.1	Hackney MARAC co-ordinates service provision in DA cases where the V/S is at high risk of homicide or serious injury. We are a core member at MARAC and we will ensure that representatives from appropriate teams will attend every conference held. Any identified high risk V/S will be referred to MARAC for information sharing to incorporate a multi agency safety plan. Further information on this is available on Hackney MARAC Protocol. We will attend Hackney Intergenerational Domestic Abuse Panel, which meets to ensure a lead professional is in place to coordinate service provision to address the perpetrators' abusive behaviour in order to reduce risk to V/S.
9.2	We will work collaboratively with internal and external partners to respond effectively to V/S and their families and we will continue to participate in relevant multidisciplinary strategic and operational groups, including VAWG (Violence

	against Women and Girls) Strategic Board and Operational Group, MARAC Steering Group, City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership, City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board, Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings within GP practices across the Neighbourhoods.
10. Confidentiality and safeguarding responsibilities	
10.1	All staff will respect confidentiality protocols including the Data Protection Act 2018¹, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018², and the London Borough of Hackney Information Sharing Policy 2019. Disclosures will be treated in the strictest confidence unless there is a safeguarding concern that has to be reported to statutory services. Where safeguarding concerns have been identified we will disclose concerns to the relevant teams in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.
10.2	Where safeguarding concerns in relation to a child or a vulnerable adult are identified, we will follow the relevant Children and Adults Safeguarding policies and procedures and the Hackney Domestic Abuse and Adult Safeguarding Pathway, making referrals as appropriate. We will follow the Hackney Intergenerational Domestic Abuse Protocol, in order to properly address the complexity of familial and intergenerational DA cases.
10.3	Any referrals made and information shared should be with consent and in a proportionate way. However if consent is not granted and there is an immediate or potential risk (to the V/S, their family member, any child or a vulnerable adult) a referral may be made without their consent to protect them or the individual at risk from potentially serious harm. We will only hold information for as long as is required by law and to provide the necessary services. Further information on this is available on Council's privacy notice homepage.
11. Perpetrator Management	
11.1	Hackney Council will hold perpetrators of DA to account for their use of violence and abuse. We will discuss any proposed actions against the perpetrator with the V/S beforehand, and will not take actions that might jeopardise the V/S's safety. We will offer perpetrators of DA access to interventions to change their abusive behaviour, as well as any support to identify barriers to access interventions.
11.2	Housing staff who are working directly with perpetrators should contact The Domestic Abuse Intervention Service (DAIS) for advice and information about

¹ [Data Protection Act 1998](#)

² [Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation](#)

	how to safely engage perpetrators in a way that does not increase the risk to V/S, including children.
11.3	As part of Hackney's whole systems partnership approach we may offer housing support to perpetrators of DA to reduce the risk of homelessness, thus reducing the risk of them returning to V/S' properties. Any action regarding perpetrators will be managed with multi-agency partners and safeguarding professionals.
11.4	We will take action against perpetrators where we can do so, without compromising the safety of the individual experiencing abuse. This may include, but will not be limited to: • Reporting crimes to the Police • Supporting survivors to apply for Non Molestation Orders and Occupation Orders • Applying for Closure Orders to remove perpetrators from property / exclude them from the area. • Where a perpetrator is a Hackney Council Council tenant, we will take action to end their tenancy where the evidence allows this. Where enforcement action is taken against a perpetrator, the Council will conduct a comprehensive additional needs and equality impact assessment to assess any care, health or disability needs to ensure all enforcement action is proportionate. • In cases where the parties hold a joint tenancy, we may allow, depending on the circumstances, the V/S to end the tenancy on behalf of both tenants and then issue a new sole tenancy to the V/S. Such cases will be managed in line with our Tenancy Management Policy, Allocations Policy and associated procedures.
12. Data, service quality and monitoring	
12.1	In 2020, Hackney Council suffered a criminal cyber attack that devastated our records and IT systems. We are still in recovery from this. During 2026/27, Hackney Housing Services commenced implementation of new digital systems that will enhance our ability to make records, collect data and monitor performance and outcomes. This includes rollout of an industry-standard Housing Case Management system which will be used to manage all DA-related casework moving forwards. As part of the rollout, the Council is reviewing how we collect, store and use resident data, identifying gaps and planning how those gaps can be filled. The diagram at appendix 2 sets out why this is important.
12.2	During 2026/27 Tenancy Services is changing the way it delivers services to our tenants. From 1st June 2026, a new specialist team will be established to

	manage all DA-related casework within Tenancy Services. This is because we recognise that the work requires specialist skills and knowledge to be truly effective - and that the staff operating the service themselves require specialist support to perform at their best.
12.3	Alongside this, a new Customer Services & Quality Team will be established which will review the existing quality and monitoring of our response to domestic abuse and establish a refreshed programme of quality checking and auditing. The Tenancy Service will develop this collaboratively with the DAIS service using best practice as a guide and will utilise a range of methods including qualitative methods such as dip sampling of case work / case audits, monitoring of outcomes and resident feedback as well as quantitative monitoring. The Tenancy Service will produce a biannual report on the quality of the service which will be reported to the Housing Leadership Team (biannually) and the VAWG Board (annually).
13. Accessibility statement	
13.1	Our aim is to make our services easy to use and accessible for everyone. We will take steps to make any reasonable adjustments needed for you to contact us, access our policies, or any requests to provide responses in other formats. Depending on the individual's needs, these might include: • Using larger print, or a specific colour contrast • Giving more time than usual to provide information or comments on a complaint • Using the telephone rather than written communication • Communicating with a person through their representative or advocate • Arranging a single point of contact • Having an 'easy read' version of the document If you would like to contact us about reasonable adjustments or alternative formats, please email: neighbourhood@hackney.gov.uk or call us on: 020 8356 3330 If you prefer to write to us, send your letter to: Housing Services Hackney Service Centre 1 Hillman Street E8 1DY

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14. Appendix 1. How to report Domestic Abuse

How to contact us if you are being hurt

You can contact us directly, or you can ask someone else. For example, your doctor, housing officer or social worker.

- we're open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm
- our telephone numbers are 020 8356 4458, 020 8356 4459 or 0800 056 0905 (free from a landline)
- our email is da.vawg@hackney.gov.uk

If you are in immediate danger, always call the police on 999.

If you want to speak to someone outside office hours:

- call the National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247. It is free to call and always open. They can help you find a women's refuge.
- call us on 020 8356 2300. We can help you with emergency housing

How to contact us if somebody you know is being hurt

You can contact us. Or, you can ask someone else to contact us. For example, your doctor, housing officer or social worker.

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If you would like to speak to someone confidentially for advice then please call [Respect](tel:08088024040) on 0808 802 4040. It's free to call.

How to get help if you think your partner has hurt somebody before

The domestic violence disclosure scheme (DVDS) is often called 'Clare's Law' after the landmark case that led to it.

It gives you the right to ask the police:

- if your partner has a history of domestic abuse

- if a close friend's partner or family member's partner has a history of domestic abuse

You can submit a request for this information via the [Metropolitan Police website](https://www.met.police.uk), [met.police.uk](https://www.met.police.uk) or by calling 101.

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15. Appendix 2. Why is data important?

Why is data important?



- So we know where to **focus**
- E.g. Hackney's Anti-racism work is rooted in evidence around inequality

- So we can **redesign services** to better meet the needs of potentially disadvantaged groups
- EG culturally competent Domestic Abuse services

- So we can make **reasonable adjustments** for specific residents
- EG arranging a translator for someone

- So we continue to **iterate and learn**
- Monitoring outcomes to ensure what we are doing is working