



# DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

REVIEW DATE - JULY 2027



## **1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1 This policy recognises the impact Domestic Abuse can have on victims and the potential significant harm or fatal outcomes that may occur.
- 1.2 This policy applies to anyone living in a Community Gateway Association (CGA) home.
- 1.3 CGA recognises the need to work collaboratively in partnership with other specialist agencies to reduce the risk of harm to survivors and their families.
- 1.4 CGA's aim is to support survivors of domestic abuse by:
  - Liaising with our customers whilst recognising the importance of safe communication
  - Listening and believing
  - Working with them to assess risk and agree an action plan to reduce risk.
- 1.5 We will work with relevant external agencies, appropriately share information in line with CGA's information sharing protocols and GDPR.
- 1.6 This Policy is for CGA employees, contractors and volunteers to understand how CGA responds to disclosure of, or incidents of domestic abuse relating to anyone living in a CGA property.

## **2. Definitions**

- 2.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines abusive behaviour as any of the following:
  - Physical or sexual abuse
  - Violent or threatening behaviour
  - Controlling or coercive behaviour
  - Economic abuse
  - Psychological, emotional or other abuse.
- 2.2 Domestic Abuse can encompass, but is not limited to, the above types of abuse. Domestic Abuse may be a single incident or a series of abusive behaviour.
- 2.3 Both parties must be 16 and over and "personally connected", defined as being married or civil partners; or have agreed to a marriage or civil partnership; are or have been in an intimate personal relationship with each other; or have a parental relationship with same child; or are relatives. Domestic Abuse can also occur between adult children and parents, or those in similar relationships.

- 2.4 The term 'violence against women and girls' refers to acts of violence or abuse that we know disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, 'honour'-based abuse, as well as many others, including offences committed online.

## **Children**

- 2.5 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims/survivors of domestic abuse. Any reference in the Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who (a) sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse, and (b) is related to either of the parties.
- 2.6 Children living in households where domestic abuse occurs are recognised as victims of that abuse in their own right and our approach reflects this. The safety of all survivors is our priority, and we will inform statutory services where we believe that a child is harmed or at risk due to domestic violence.
- 2.7 CGA will also make appropriate safeguarding referrals in respect of any vulnerable adult who may also be impacted by the abuse.

## **3. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

- 3.1 We recognise that the experience and impact of domestic abuse is not the same for everyone. Therefore:
- We acknowledge that women are disproportionately affected, but men and non-binary people also experience abuse and may face additional barriers to support.
  - We recognise that over 50% of LGBTQ+ survivors report abuse from partners or family including threats to "out" and identity-based control.

- We recognise that disabled people experience higher rates of domestic abuse and for longer periods, and will make reasonable adjustments to support survivors with disabilities, including accessible communication and adaptations to housing.
- We recognise the additional risks faced by people from ethnic minority groups, including language barriers, and cultural pressures.
- We are aware of the specific vulnerabilities of older people for whom abuse may be hidden and for young women who experience the highest rates of domestic abuse.
- We are aware that pregnancy can be a trigger for domestic abuse.
- We will not discriminate on any basis including age, sex, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, or immigration status.

#### **4. Policy Principles**

- 4.1 This policy sets out how CGA will help and support its customers who are experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse. This includes considering the needs of children and others impacted by the abuse.
- 4.2 It is our intention to work in line with the following principles:
- Integrity - we will be open and honest in our dealing with customers and colleagues
  - Empathy - we will listen and try to fully understand their situation
  - Empowerment and respect - we will work together with survivors and ensure that their wishes are acknowledged and understood, recognising the insight they have into their situation, and the steps they've already taken to keep themselves safe
  - Accountability - we will be accountable and willing to discuss options and be honest about what we are able to do

- Focus on Survivor Safety - we will ensure survivor safety is our priority, ensuring their voices are heard and their well-being is at the heart of what we do
- No Judgement - we will be non-judgemental and seek to understand the survivor's experiences.

4.3 CGA understands that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, and that people have different experiences of disadvantage and discrimination depending on their characteristics, identity and background. CGA will aim to acknowledge and understand the individual needs of survivors and offer services and approaches that take account their holistic identity. This includes considering specific and intersecting needs based on race, gender, sexuality, religion and culture.

## **5. Reporting Domestic Abuse**

- 5.1 Anyone can report suspected domestic abuse through our website [www.communitygateway.co.uk](http://www.communitygateway.co.uk), by emailing [tenancy.management@communitygateway.co.uk](mailto:tenancy.management@communitygateway.co.uk) , calling 0800 953 0213 and speaking to an officer, in person at our offices - Harbour House, Port Way, Preston or by speaking to any CGA colleague.
- 5.2 Where a CGA employee suspects, witnesses or has a concern that domestic abuse is taking place in our homes, they must report this through Speak-Out.
- 5.3 All employees will receive training on spotting signs of domestic abuse, how to deal with disclosures and how to report concerns.

## **6. Assessing Risk**

- 6.1 CGA will work with survivors to assess the risk to them and their household members, each case will receive a risk rating based on the information known at the time which will dictate a crisis management action plan.
- 6.2 Survivors who are considered high to medium risk and are not being supported by a specialist service, once consent is obtained will be DASH (The Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence) risk assessed for consideration for a MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) referral.
- 6.3 CGA will work in partnership with agencies such as the Police, Social Care, Children's Services and other specialist support with the objective of reducing the risk to the survivor.

## **7.0 Ongoing work with survivors**

- 7.1 CGA acknowledges that not all survivors of domestic abuse end the relationship with the perpetrator, and we will work to support and maximise survivor safety whilst being respectful of their decision.
- 7.2 CGA understands that the survivor may have practical and emotional reasons which they feel stops them making the decisions and taking the action they want to take. CGA will work with survivors to provide advice and support on any barriers and challenges they have.

## **8.0 Working in partnership to provide a community response**

- 8.1 CGA will work with local agencies or partnerships to ensure survivors are supported in the most effective way. CGA will identify specialist domestic abuse support agencies and develop links and working relationships, to enable survivors to be referred to services that reflect their own identities and characteristics and who are better placed to understand and meet their

needs. This could be specialist services based on survivors' gender, age, sexuality, culture, religion, race or ethnicity.

## **9.0 Action against the perpetrator**

9.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 specifies that as a Social Landlord, CGA must hold perpetrators of domestic abuse to account. Committing domestic abuse in a CGA property is a crime and a breach of tenancy. CGA are committed to managing domestic abuse cases on an individual basis, with a survivor focused approach whilst holding perpetrators to account.

9.2 In holding perpetrators to account we will:

- Ensure that CGA colleague training reflects the principle that responsibility for domestic abuse lies with the perpetrator
- That CGA's publicity and awareness raising on domestic abuse puts an emphasis on perpetrator responsibility
- Case management focuses on ways to support survivors so disruption to their lives is minimised including sign posting to legal help to enable this
- Work with partner agencies including the Police to share information or evidence that may support perpetrator prosecution
- Consider taking action to end a perpetrator's tenancy where appropriate.

9.3 CGA will work alongside survivors to ensure that any action we take is done so in partnership with them and their wishes will be considered.

9.4 CGA will consider appropriate action to take against the perpetrator. However, following liaison with other specialist agencies CGA will not take action against the perpetrator if it may increase the risk to the survivor. CGA's priority is to ensure the survivor's safety and wellbeing.

## **10.0 Responsibilities**

10.1 Responsibility for this Policy is as follows:

- Head of Housing Services - Responsible for the service implementation of this Policy
- Tenancy Services Manager - Responsible for the operational implementation of this Policy.
- Safeguarding Lead Officer – Incorporation of Domestic Abuse in Safeguarding training.

## **11.0 Data Protection**

11.1 The tenancy provides the legal basis for processing of information aligned to this Policy. The retention of information will be the length of the tenancy plus six years.

## **12.0 Monitor & Review**

12.1 This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, with a full review taking place every 2 years, to ensure accuracy and that CGA complies with relevant legislation.

12.2 Internal oversight will be delivered through the monitoring of the Customer Services Promises, safeguarding monitoring, satisfaction surveys, complaints, dissatisfaction and internal audits.

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