



Rural Stirling
Housing Association



Quality property
management services

GROUP DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

Rural Stirling Housing Association, Stirling Road, Doune, FK16 6AA Registered as a Scottish Charity No. SC037849	
Policy Name	Group Domestic Abuse Policy
Policy Category	Corporate Services & Housing Services
Date First Approved by Board	21 March 2019
Date Policy Reviewed	19 May 2022
Review Period	Three Years
Review Date	2025

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out how we will take steps to assist and support any person experiencing or threatened with domestic abuse, it applies to all customers including those living with our tenants and our employees.
- 1.2 Domestic abuse is still a largely hidden crime and measuring the true scale of the issue is difficult. Domestic abuse happens in all communities, regardless of gender, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership and pregnancy or maternity.
- 1.3 As a housing provider we are well placed to recognise the signs of domestic abuse. It is absolutely essential that we take all reports of domestic abuse seriously and work positively and pro-actively with the victim to offer support.
- 1.4 In addition, we will seek to assist perpetrators of domestic abuse who wish to positively change their behaviour by helping them access support and assistance.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 For the purposes of this policy, domestic abuse is the abuse of power and control over one person by another and can take many different forms including physical, sexual, emotional, verbal and financial abuse as well as mental abuse/coercive control. The definition also includes any gender based violence and brutality between genders.

3. Scope

- 3.1. We will enable residents to report domestic abuse to us in different ways.
- 3.2 We will initiate an investigation of all reports of domestic abuse that we receive and work in partnership with other agencies to ensure investigations are conducted to the highest possible standards.
- 3.3 We will ensure that our staff receive specialist training on domestic abuse. We will develop clear procedures including a Domestic Abuse Checklist to ensure our staff have the information and guidance that they need to support victims.
- 3.4 We will support those individuals experiencing domestic abuse irrespective of age, gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, religion, social background or any other characteristics identified in the Equality Act.

- 3.5 We will work with our partners to support individuals experiencing domestic abuse and, where appropriate, take action against perpetrators, where we can do so without compromising the safety of the individual experiencing domestic abuse. RSG aims to become a Third Party Reporting Centre for victims of Domestic Abuse. Third Party Reporting Centres are organisations that have agreed to make reports to the police on behalf of victims who do not want to go directly to the police.
- 3.6 We will create a safe environment where victims of domestic abuse feel they can approach us, are encouraged to talk and are listened to, thus enabling them to make informed decisions about their lives and live more independently. Advice and support will be provided in a caring and non-judgemental way with the agreement of the individual concerned.
- 3.7 We will provide employees with clear and practical guidance to ensure we support and protect victims of abuse, allowing victims to have more information about their choices. This support will also apply to our employees and will include consideration of impacts and reasonable adjustments and support required during Hybrid Working /Working From Home.
- 3.8 We will signpost the individual experiencing domestic abuse to relevant organisations to provide legal advice as appropriate. We will Signpost to other local, Scottish and UK wide organisations e.g., Domestic Abuse Helpline 08000271234 and publish information on our website and in our publications.
- 3.9 We will advise people experiencing domestic abuse of external agencies who can offer further advice and support dependent upon their needs, and work with our partners to ensure co-ordinated services to prioritise the safety of the person who is experiencing domestic abuse and the safety of their children, where present.
- 3.10 We will provide a sensitive and confidential response to anyone approaching us for assistance in cases of domestic abuse. If we have safeguarding concerns, we have a legal duty to share information with relevant agencies.
- 3.11 We will give people experiencing domestic abuse the opportunity to opt for a staff member of the same gender to deal with their case.
- 3.12 We will ensure that people experiencing domestic abuse know that they can meet staff in confidence at our office or at an agreed choice of safe venue. We will also agree the method of contact that the individual wishes us to use to stay in contact with them.
- 3.13 We will provide improved security to a resident's home in conjunction with partner agencies, where required.
- 3.14 We will make a referral to our Income Maximisation Officer for any required support relating to financial issues.

- 3.15 We will agree an action plan with the person experiencing domestic abuse, monitor the situation and review at a frequency agreed with them.

4. Relevant Legislation

- Domestic Abuse Scotland Act 2018

5 SHR Regulatory Standards

- 5.1 The SHR's regulatory framework sets out Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management to be achieved by all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). The Board accepts that it is responsible for ensuring that the Association complies with these standards. The standards of direct relevance to this policy are noted below:

- *Standard 1: The Governing Body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.*
- *Standard 2: The RSL is open and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.*
- *Standard 4: The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.*
- *Standard 5: The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.*
- *Standard 6: The governing body and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective.*

6. Equality and Diversity

- 6.1 We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently. In implementing this policy, we will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, or any other grounds. Our commitment to equality and fairness will apply irrespective of factors such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or other personal attributes.

This policy and any other Rural Stirling Group (RSG) publication is available in other formats e.g., other languages, Braille, large print, audio.

- 6.2 Our Domestic Abuse Policy will ensure that customers are treated as individuals and with fairness and respect.
- 6.3 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out with respect to the introduction of this policy and is attached as **Appendix 1**.

7. Related Documents

- **Domestic Abuse Procedures**
- **Domestic Abuse Checklist**

8. Monitoring and Review

- 8.1. We will review and update this policy every 3 years. More regular reviews will be considered where, for example, there is a need to respond to new legislation/policy or regulatory guidance.