

TUNTUM HOUSING ASSOCIATION

DOCUMENT CONTROL		
Policy Name	Domestic Abuse Policy	
To be read in conjunction with which procedure:	Domestic Abuse Procedure	
Version:		
Author:	Nkosana Mthimkhulu (Housing Services Manager)	
Approved by:	10 March 2025	Board (virtual)
Effective date:	10 March 2025	
Date of next review:	February 2028	
Customer facing:	Yes	

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines Tuntum Housing Association (The Association)'s commitment to tackling domestic abuse within the social housing sector, ensuring compliance with legal requirements and best practices. It provides guidance for supporting victims and managing perpetrators while ensuring a coordinated response with partner agencies.
- 1.2 Tuntum adopts a **victim-centred approach**, ensuring all interactions are sensitive, supportive, and non-judgmental. We recognise the unique challenges faced by victims and tailor our services to meet diverse needs, incorporating an **intersectional and anti-racist practice** to ensure inclusivity and fairness.

2 Policy Statement and Aims

This policy sets out Tuntum's approach to:

- 2.1 All persons have the right to live their lives free from violence and abuse. This right is underpinned by the Human Rights Act (1998) and the duty of agencies to intervene proportionately to protect the rights of citizens. The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) defines the first statutory definition of domestic abuse, which includes physical violence, emotional, coercive or controlling behaviour and economic abuse, which may be limited to a single event or a series of actions.
- 2.2 The Association is committed to recognising and responding to incidents of domestic abuse affecting our customers and will:
- Work in a victim-centred approach in all cases of domestic abuse

- Consider the safety of the individual experiencing domestic abuse and respond to any damage caused to our properties
- Replace locks where required and work with our Local Authority partners to access target hardening/additional security offers
- Work with our customers who may be perpetrating domestic abuse and refer them to RESPECT-accredited support programmes

2.3 We are committed to:

- Working within a multi-agency coordinated community response framework and will attend MARAC meetings, Local Authority domestic abuse panels and perpetrator panels where requested.
- Supporting residents experiencing domestic abuse with confidentiality, respect, and autonomy in decision-making.
- Aligning with the latest UK legal frameworks, including the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs).
- Providing emergency housing solutions, out-of-hours support, and security enhancements to affected residents.
- Embedding domestic abuse specialists within key service areas to ensure timely expert support.
- Ensuring all frontline staff receive ongoing specialist training in domestic abuse awareness and safeguarding.

3 Legislation or Regulatory Requirements

3.1 The following key legislation and regulations inform this policy:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

- Care Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Family Law Act 1996
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Serious Crime Act 2015

4 Scope

4.1 This policy defines The Association's approach to supporting customers following reports of domestic abuse, which includes gender-based violence, and how we will hold perpetrators to account. There is a separate Domestic Abuse Policy relating to staff.

The policy applies to all customers living in The Association's properties, regardless of tenure, any adults and/or children living with them, and customers receiving services from The Association's Specialist Housing teams. This also includes children who are statutory recognised as 'victims' rather than witnesses if they see, hear, or experience abuse in the home.

4.1.1 Responsibilities and risk Responsibilities

- All colleagues for raising concerns and reporting suspicions or disclosures of domestic abuse. If you suspect domestic abuse, you must act on it and must not assume that someone else will do it.
- The Housing Services Manager is the overall domestic abuse lead to organise and coordinate organisational and inter-agency domestic abuse arrangements.

4.1.2 Failure to identify and respond to domestic abuse will have several potential consequences:

- Adults, children, and young persons' needs are not being addressed or risk of further harm
- Breach of legislative and statutory reporting requirements
- Reputational damage in multi-partner agency work
- Negative impact on tenancy sustainability

4.2 Policy details and guidance Domestic abuse

- 4.2.1 Domestic abuse is a largely hidden crime, meaning that the accurate scale of the issue is difficult to measure. It is estimated that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 7 men will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. It 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.
- 4.2.2 Domestic abuse is a form of gender-based violence. Whilst both men and women may experience domestic abuse, women are more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of abuse. There are differences between male violence against women and female violence against men:
- Women experience higher rates of repeated victimisation and are more likely to be seriously hurt or killed than male victims of domestic abuse
 - Women are more likely to experience higher levels of fear and are likely to be subjected to coercive and controlling behaviours

4.3 The Association's commitment

- 4.3.1 The Association is committed to responding to domestic abuse in line with the Domestic Abuse Act (2021). It recognises all persons have the right to live their lives free from violence and abuse.
- 4.3.2 The Care Act (2014) conveys a responsibility on The Association that we will ensure that our customers are safeguarded against risk of abuse by means of taking reasonable steps to identify the possibility of abuse, prevent it before it occurs and respond appropriately to any allegation of abuse.
- 4.3.3 As part of our commitment to preventing and responding to domestic abuse we have:
- Developed policies, procedures and blended training to assist colleagues working with and supporting individuals who may be experiencing abuse
 - Provided training for the housing services team to respond to Domestic Abuse and support customers
 - Promoted awareness of domestic abuse and its different forms (and will continue to do so) through posters, leaflets, articles in customer magazines and on our website and social media sites
- 4.3.4 This policy has been developed using the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance's (DAHA) resources and guidance.

4.4 Reporting Domestic Abuse

4.4.1 Domestic abuse can be disclosed to The Association through any contact, ie our website, telephone, email, in person or writing. We will ensure anyone can report domestic abuse to us and will provide interpreters and translate information into other languages or formats as needed.

4.5 How we will respond

4.5.1 We take all reports of domestic abuse seriously and will always respond in a sympathetic, supportive and non-judgemental way. We will respect the victim's views, and actions will be victim-led based on their concerns and wishes.

4.5.2 We will:

- Respond to reports of domestic abuse within one working day
- Arrange to meet in a safe location, either in private at our offices or an agreed safe place
- Agree how we can stay in contact in a safe way
- Only share information with permission unless there are safety concerns for the victim, children or vulnerable adults or where we have a legal duty to share information, such as safeguarding concerns
- Arrange for one of the housing services team to complete a risk identification checklist
- Signpost to other organisations for legal advice as appropriate
- Manage appeals and complaints in line with The Association's Complaints Policy

4.5.3 All reports of domestic abuse will be referred to our qualified Domestic Abuse Coordinator who will:

- Provide information about various options available based on individual circumstances
- Provide information about other agencies (including local culturally specific and specialist domestic abuse services) that can offer further advice and support
- Make a referral to other services with consent
- Establish working partnerships with any other agencies involved, such as the Police and specialist domestic abuse support services, and for those who are a high risk of further

abuse, we will make a referral to a Multi-Agency Risk Conference where professionals meet and co-ordinate their roles to minimise risk to victims/victims of domestic abuse

- Review the home security and may recommend and install additional security measures or make a referral to the local authority and/or Police to install them
- Make a referral to the Income Management Team or other relevant agency if support relating to financial issues is needed
- Complete and agree a safety plan which sets out the support we offer, and provide a copy of the plan if it is safe to do so
- Maintain contact at a minimum of every 10 working days until case closure and seek feedback 4 weeks after case closure

4.5.4 If alternative accommodation is required we will provide information, advice and support to:

- Access emergency safe accommodation and/or a property if it is not safe to remain in the home
- Apply for a transfer either with The Association, other housing providers or the local authority and with permission, we will share relevant information regarding any safety plan and risk assessment with any new housing provider

4.5.5 We may take appropriate legal action against the alleged perpetrator of the abuse and hold them to account which may include:

- Seeking eviction of the alleged perpetrator if they are still residing in the home
- Seeking protection for the victim in the home by obtaining a civil injunction to protect them against the actions of the alleged perpetrator
- The housing services team will terminate the alleged perpetrator's tenancy where appropriate. The victim's safety is our main concern, so we will not inform the alleged perpetrator of any discussion or contact we have had. We will not act against this alleged perpetrator without consulting the victim first.

4.5.6 We will work in partnership with appropriate RESPECT accredited services to support or signpost perpetrators of domestic abuse who recognise and want to change their behaviour.

4.5.7 Staff must have regard to The Association's policies and procedures relating to data protection and confidentiality, which enable information to be shared and stored for domestic abuse purposes, including information that may be sensitive or personal. Information about specific residents, customers, service users, children and young persons, applicants, colleagues, other individuals and commercially sensitive information will only be divulged to third parties following The Association's policies.

4.6 New Tuntum tenancies following recent domestic abuse

4.6.1 We will offer a home security review for customers with a new Tuntum tenancy allocated as a result of recent domestic abuse. We may recommend and install additional security measures or make a referral to the local authority and/or Police to install them.

4.6.2 Customers will also be referred to our Case Review Panel, which will:

- Listen to concerns and wishes
- Seek permission to liaise with support agencies at the previous address, ie Police, housing, local authority or specialist domestic abuse services
- Contact the support agencies so we can be aware of and contribute to any current safety plan and risks
- Provide information about other agencies (including culturally specific and specialist domestic abuse services) that can offer further advice and support
- Make a referral to other services with consent
- Provide interpreters and translate information into other languages or formats as needed

4.7 Training

4.7.1 The Association offers training to staff. All staff will receive domestic abuse training regardless of their job role. In addition, the housing services team receive domestic abuse support through the internal case review mechanism

4.8 Recording

4.8.1 The Association will record all allegations and incidents of domestic abuse as follows:

4.8.2 For all departments, any allegations or incidents regarding customers should be reported to the relevant officer in the housing services team. The officer will open a safeguarding contact on Pyramid.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Senior Management Team (SMT): Responsible for policy implementation and oversight.

5.2 Housing Officers and Support Staff: Ensure compliance with the policy, provide direct support to residents, and liaise with partner agencies.

5.3 Compliance and Safeguarding Leads: Monitor policy effectiveness and ensure adherence to legal requirements.

5.4 All Staff that investigate domestic abuse cases: Expected to undertake regular specialist training and follow best practices when handling domestic abuse cases.

5.5 Domestic Abuse Specialists: Embedded within key service areas to provide expert guidance and support internally and externally.

6 Monitoring, Audit, and Review

6.1 This policy will be reviewed on a three-yearly cycle or sooner if legislative updates require amendments.

6.2 Compliance monitoring will be conducted through case reviews, victim feedback, and audits.

6.3 Performance related to domestic abuse support services will be reported to the Board and Audit & Risk Committee.

6.4 The review process will integrate Victim engagement and feedback to ensure policy effectiveness and relevance.

7 Equality Impact Assessment

Tuntum Housing Association is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and will make reasonable adjustments to the policy to recognise, accommodate and support individual needs where needed. This Policy adheres to the Association's approach to Equality and Diversity. All staff members will take a proactive approach to ensure that no individual or group is discriminated against or treated differently as a direct or indirect result of this Policy.

8 Contacts

For any inquiries or concerns regarding this ASB and Hate Crime Policy, please contact:

- General Housing Team generalhousingteam@tuntum.co.uk
- Asset Management assetmanagement@tuntum.co.uk

Customer Services Team customerserviceteam@tuntum.co.uk

9 References

RELATED EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS	
Reference	Link to reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Abuse Act 2021 • Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 • Protection from Harassment Act 1997 • Children Act 1989 & 2004 • Equality Act 2010 • Crime and Disorder Act 1998 • Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 • Care Act 2014 • Data Protection Act 2018 • Family Law Act 1996 • Human Rights Act 1998 • Serious Crime Act 2015 	
RELATED INTERNAL DOCUMENTS/RESOURCES	
Reference	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuntum Tenancy Agreement • Tenancy Management Policy • Safeguarding Adults Policy • Safeguarding Children Policy • Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy • Complaints & Customer Feedback Policy 	

Appendix 1

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 – Part 1 Definition of Domestic Abuse

1 Definition of “domestic abuse”

- (1) This section defines “domestic abuse” for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if—
 - (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
 - (b) the behaviour is abusive.
- (3) Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following—
 - (a) physical or sexual abuse;
 - (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
 - (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
 - (d) economic abuse (see subsection (4));
 - (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse;and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.
- (4) “Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to—
 - (a) acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
 - (b) obtain goods or services.
- (5) For the purposes of this Act 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).
- (6) References in this Act to being abusive towards another person are to be read in accordance with this section.
- (7) For the meaning of “personally connected”, see section 2.

2 Definition of “personally connected”

- (1) For the purposes of this Act, two people are “personally connected” to each other if any of the following applies—
 - (a) they are, or have been, married to each other;
 - (b) they are, or have been, civil partners of each other;
 - (c) they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
 - (d) they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
 - (e) they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
 - (f) they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child (see subsection (2));
 - (g) they are relatives.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(f) a person has a parental relationship in relation to a child if—
 - (a) the person is a parent of the child, or
 - (b) the person has parental responsibility for the child.
- (3) In this section—
 - “child” means a person under the age of 18 years;
 - “civil partnership agreement” has the meaning given by section 73 of the Civil Partnership Act 2004;

- “parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act);
- “relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996.

3 Children as victims of domestic abuse

(1) This section applies where behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is domestic abuse.

(2) Any reference in this 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 A or B.

(3) A child is related to a person for the purposes of subsection (2) if—

- (a) the person is a parent of, or has parental responsibility for, the child, or
- (b) the child and the person are relatives.

(4) In this section—

- “child” means a person under the age of 18 years;
- “parental responsibility” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act);
- “relative” has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996