

at home with...



Domestic Abuse Policy

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 This policy fulfils Fife Housing Group's (FHG) statutory duty to maintain and publish a Domestic Abuse Policy under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2025.
- 1.2 Throughout this policy, the term 'victim-survivor' is used to recognise that individuals affected by domestic abuse may identify as a victim, a survivor, or both, depending on their circumstances and preferences.
- 1.3 We are committed to providing safe homes and services for tenants, household members and others affected by domestic abuse. We will take a trauma-informed, person-centred and safety-led approach, recognising that domestic abuse may affect a person's housing, finances, health, children, support networks and ability to engage with us.
- 1.4 We will not tolerate domestic abuse. Where it is safe and appropriate to do so, we will support victim-survivors to remain in their home, or to move to suitable alternative accommodation if that is their preference. We will endeavour to use our tenancy management powers fairly and proportionately to protect victim-survivors and hold perpetrators to account.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all tenants, joint tenants, household members, applicants, service users and others who may be affected by domestic abuse in connection with our housing services. It applies to Scottish secure tenancies, short Scottish secure tenancies and wider housing management functions, including allocations, transfers, rent arrears, repairs, anti-social behaviour, complaints and safeguarding.
- 2.2 This policy will work in conjunction with the Fife Housing Register (FHR) protocol and working instruction agreed by all partners. By adopting this policy, FHG aims to adopt a preventative approach to all cases of domestic abuse by ensuring that tenants are well informed about their tenancy rights and obligations.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

- 3.1 This policy has been prepared with regard to the relevant housing, homelessness, equality, human rights, child protection, adult support and protection, data protection and tenancy legislation, regulations and guidance, including:
 - Housing (Scotland) Act 2001;
 - Housing (Scotland) Act 1987;
 - Housing (Scotland) Act 2010;
 - Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018,

- Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021;
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995;
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014;
- Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018

Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021

This introduces a new tenancy ground relating to abusive behaviour and amends the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to allow social landlords, in appropriate cases, to seek recovery of possession or termination of a joint tenant's interest in a tenancy where the statutory conditions are met. The policy also takes account of the Scottish Government's statutory guidance, **Domestic Abuse – Social Housing Tenancy Provisions: Statutory Guidance for Social Landlords**, published in June 2026, including guidance on identifying cases, considering housing options, gathering evidence, data protection, notices, court action, advice and assistance, and the streamlined process available in appropriate cases.

Housing (Scotland) Act 2025

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2025 introduces further duties and safeguards relevant to tenants affected by domestic abuse, including provisions requiring domestic abuse to be considered in social housing rent arrears cases, supporting tenants affected by domestic abuse through the Scottish Social Housing Charter, and strengthening approaches to housing applications, homelessness and access to housing where abuse is a factor. This policy will be reviewed – and, where appropriate, updated - as those provisions are commenced and further guidance is issued.

4. Definition of Domestic Abuse

- 4.1 For the purposes of this policy, domestic abuse includes behaviour which is abusive and is likely to cause physical or psychological harm. Abuse may include physical violence, threats, intimidation, coercive or controlling behaviour, isolation from family or support, monitoring day-to-day activities, restricting freedom, financial abuse, emotional abuse, harassment, damage to property, abuse through children or third parties, and behaviour intended to frighten, humiliate, degrade or punish.
- 4.2 Domestic abuse may be a single incident or a course of conduct. It may occur regardless of gender, age, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status, income or tenure. We recognise, however, that domestic abuse disproportionately affects women and children, and that

children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse may be victims in their own right.

5. Our Principles

5.1 We will:

- listen to victim-survivors, without requiring them to prove abuse before we offer support.
- provide a proactive housing response to preventing and addressing domestic abuse;
- put safety, choice, dignity and confidentiality at the centre of our response, in including any actions we may take.
- avoid actions that increase risk or place responsibility on the victim-survivor for the perpetrator's behaviour.
- consider the needs and wishes of children and take safeguarding action where required.
- provide a sensitive and supportive response to those affected by domestic abuse; to access a range of housing options, advice, information and support;
- work collaboratively with other organisations such as Police Scotland, Fife Women's Aid, Fife Violence against Women Partnership (FVAWP), Men's Advice Line (AIMS), Fife Council Public Protection Team, Fife Safer communities team and Safe, Secure and Supported@Home (SS&S@H).
- create a consistent approach for recording and monitoring incidents of domestic abuse;
- consider the use of legal and other remedies available to us in a manner that is proportionate, including tenancy action against perpetrators where the statutory tests are met.
- consider the impact of domestic abuse when dealing with arrears, property damage, complaints, anti-social behaviour and other tenancy issues.

6. Identifying Domestic Abuse

6.1 We may become aware of domestic abuse through a direct disclosure, reports from neighbours or family members, police or social work involvement, repairs records, rent arrears, complaints, anti-social behaviour reports, homelessness or transfer applications, contact with support agencies, or colleague observations during home visits or other contact.

6.2 All colleagues within the organisation will receive training on how to supportively engage and support victims of Domestic Abuse. How to recognise possible indicators of domestic abuse, which can include but not limited to: unexplained arrears, repeated damage to doors or windows, frequent emergency repairs, a tenant appearing unable to speak freely, withdrawal from services, threats from a partner or ex-partner, repeated complaints linked to the household, or a sudden request to leave or remain in the home. This training will be recorded within our in-house HR system

Training and Development record for each colleague. Refresher training will be given bi-annually and where any changes in legislation arise.

7. Responding to Disclosure

Where someone discloses domestic abuse, colleagues will respond calmly, respectfully and without judgement. Colleagues will ask about immediate safety, agree safe methods of contact, avoid contacting the alleged perpetrator without considering risk, and explain what information may need to be shared where there is a safeguarding concern or serious risk of harm.

We will not require a victim-survivor to take criminal, civil or tenancy action before support is offered. Where a victim-survivor does not want action taken, we will respect that choice unless there is a legal duty or safeguarding reason to act. We will keep decisions under review where risk changes. All details will be held within a confidential area of our housing management system. A household alert will be added to the tenancy to ensure colleagues are aware that there is a Domestic Abuse concern within the household. FHG will determine who should have access to this information.

8. Support and Signposting

- 8.1 We will offer practical housing support and signposting based on an individual's circumstances, needs and wishes. This may include safety planning, arranging emergency repairs, changing locks where appropriate, (once legal advice has been sought) to ensure we are not creating an unlawful eviction situation, improving home security, discussing transfer or management move options, making homelessness referrals, supporting applications for benefits or financial assistance, and signposting to specialist domestic abuse, legal, money advice, mental health, children's services and advocacy organisations.
- 8.2 We will maintain up-to-date local and national signposting information, including specialist domestic abuse services, Police Scotland, social work, child protection services, adult support and protection services, homelessness services, legal advice providers, advocacy services and emergency support. Colleagues will check with the victim-survivor how information can be provided safely.

9. Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

- 9.1 We recognise that domestic abuse can cause serious harm to children and adults at risk. Where we believe a child or adult may be at risk of harm, we will follow our safeguarding procedures. We will share information with statutory agencies where required or justified by risk, while keeping the victim-survivor informed where it is safe and appropriate to do so.
- 9.2 We will consider the impact of domestic abuse on children when making housing management decisions, including decisions about tenancy action,

transfers, repairs, anti-social behaviour, arrears and support needs. The safety and welfare of children will be central to our assessment.

10. Children's Rights

- 10.1 We are committed to respecting, protecting and helping to fulfil the rights of children and young people, and to embedding a child rights-based approach across relevant areas of policy, decision-making and service delivery. Where our decisions, actions or services may affect children directly or indirectly, we will have regard to the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We will seek to ensure that relevant decisions are informed by consideration of children's rights, that the views of children and young people are taken into account in a way that is appropriate to their age and circumstances, and that our practice supports fair, transparent and child-conscious decision-making.

11. Housing Options and Tenancy Remedies

- 11.1 We will discuss housing options with the victim-survivor, including whether they wish to remain in the home, move temporarily, move permanently, and/or access other support. We will consider emergency accommodation, management transfers, mutual exchanges, allocations, homelessness duties and partnership working with other landlords or local authorities.

11.2 The Abusive Behaviour Ground for Repossession

Where the statutory conditions are met, we may consider using the abusive behaviour ground (ground 15A) introduced by Part 2 of the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021. This may allow us to seek an order for recovery of possession or, in the case of a joint tenancy, termination of the abusive tenant's interest in the tenancy, with the aim of allowing the victim-survivor to remain safely in the home where that is appropriate.

Before deciding whether to use this ground, we will consider the victim-survivor's wishes, safety risks, available evidence, the position of children, any relevant criminal, civil, family or protective proceedings, whether the property is the only or principal home of relevant parties, proportionality, equality and human rights considerations, and whether there are safer or more suitable alternatives.

Any notice of proceedings that we may serve with a view to commencing repossession proceedings in terms of this ground, will only be served following notification of the decision to serve such notice being given to the victim-survivor, with a clear indication of timing of delivery of the notice to them, the perpetrator tenant/ joint tenant and any others. This is to ensure that the victim-survivor has prior notification to allow them to ensure their safety, the safety of others, and have sufficient time to engage further with their support network, including organisations supporting them. We will offer support and signposting again at this stage to appropriate organisation if such organisations are not already part of the victim-survivor's network.

We will at all times take into account the views of the victim-survivor and any others adversely impacted by domestic abuse, including children, throughout the process for seeking a repossession Order.

11.3 Housing Options – Advice and Assistance to Perpetrators

Where proceedings for recovery of possession are raised using the abusive behaviour ground, we will provide advice and assistance to the tenant / joint tenant and any relevant qualifying occupier(s) about finding alternative accommodation, in line with statutory requirements and guidance. In doing so, we will ensure such advice and assistance is provided in a manner that does not compromise the safety, confidentiality or support needs of the victim-survivor and any children or others who may be adversely impacted.

11.4 Alternatives

Where we cannot, or do not feel in a position to, proceed with seeking a court Order to recover possession of, or their interest in (if a joint tenant), the house from the perpetrator, using the abusive behaviour ground, we will consider other options available to us in accordance with relevant policies and procedures, including management transfers and allocation of properties. Where appropriate, we may support the victim-survivor to obtain independent advice on their own options in addition to those alternatives we can consider.

12. Rent Arrears, Property Damage and Other Housing Management Issues

- 12.1 We recognise that domestic abuse can directly contribute to rent arrears, rechargeable repairs, property damage, missed appointments, complaints, neighbour reports or other tenancy issues. Examples may include financial control, interference with rental payments, damage caused by the perpetrator, forced absence from the home, or the victim-survivor being unable to engage safely with colleagues.
- 12.2 Where domestic abuse is known or suspected, we will consider whether the housing management issue has arisen because of abuse before taking enforcement action. Before any legal action relating to rent arrears is authorised, colleagues must consider whether domestic abuse has contributed to the arrears and record that consideration. We will consider reasonable adjustments to our usual housing management approach, including pausing or tailoring arrears action, agreeing safe and affordable repayment arrangements, signposting to money advice, reviewing rechargeable repair decisions, considering whether damage should be treated as abuse-related, and avoiding correspondence or visits that may increase risk.
- 12.3 Where court action for rent arrears is being considered and domestic abuse may be a factor, we will follow all applicable pre-action requirements, including any additional requirements introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2025 and any related guidance. We will ensure the court is provided with accurate information about compliance where required.
- 12.4 We will not treat a victim-survivor as responsible for the perpetrator's behaviour without first fully considering the circumstances, evidence, safety

risks and legal duties. We will balance support for the victim-survivor with our responsibility to manage tenancies, protect neighbours, recover rent lawfully and maintain our housing stock.

13. Evidence and Record Keeping

- 13.1 We will gather and record information sensitively, lawfully and only where necessary. Evidence may include information from the victim-survivor, police, social work, health professionals, specialist domestic abuse services, court orders, repairs records, photographs, tenancy records, reports from neighbours, colleague observations and other relevant sources.
- 13.2 We will not place unnecessary evidential burdens on victim-survivors when offering support. Where tenancy action is being considered, we will assess whether there is sufficient evidence to meet the relevant statutory and court requirements, and we will seek legal advice where appropriate. Each case will be determined on its own merits, taking into account the specific circumstances of that case.

14. Confidentiality, Data Protection and Safe Contact

- 14.1 We will handle personal data, special category data and criminal offence data in line with data protection law and our privacy procedures. Information about domestic abuse will be shared only where there is a lawful basis and it is necessary, proportionate and safe to do so. Information may require to be shared for a number of reasons, including ensuring appropriate safety measures are in place, obtaining updates regarding ongoing issues, and ingathering evidence from third parties such as Police Scotland, Social Work or other supporting agencies e.g. Women's Aid.
- 14.2 We will agree safe contact arrangements with the victim-survivor, including preferred telephone numbers, email addresses, postal addresses, times of contact and whether voicemail, text messages or letters are safe. We will take care not to disclose a victim-survivor's location or personal information to the perpetrator.

15. Multi-Agency Working

- 15.1 We will work with relevant agencies to support safety and effective housing outcomes. This may include Police Scotland, local authority homelessness teams, social work, child protection, adult support and protection, health services, specialist domestic abuse services, legal advisers, advocacy organisations, money advice services and other registered social landlords.
- 15.2 Where a case presents serious risk, we will consider referral to appropriate local risk management arrangements in accordance with local protocols and the victim-survivor's safety needs.

16. Colleague Training and Responsibilities

- 16.1 All relevant colleagues and contractors will receive training appropriate to their role. Training will cover recognising domestic abuse, responding to disclosure, safe contact, safeguarding, housing options, tenancy remedies, arrears and repairs issues, data protection, record keeping, equality and trauma-informed practice.
- 16.2 Managers will support colleagues dealing with domestic abuse cases, ensure appropriate supervision and case review, and seek specialist or legal advice where required. Colleagues must follow this policy, related procedures and any relevant statutory guidance.

17. Equality, Human Rights and Accessibility

- 17.1 We will deliver this policy fairly and without discrimination. We will make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, provide interpretation or translation where needed, and consider barriers linked to language, culture, disability, age, immigration status, digital exclusion, geographical location or isolation.
- 17.2 We will act compatibly with human rights and equality duties, including the right to respect for home and family life, the right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions where relevant, protection from discrimination, and the need to protect life and prevent inhuman or degrading treatment where serious risk is present.

18. Charter Outcomes

- 18.1 This policy aims to meet the following outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

Outcome 1 – Equalities

Outcome 2 – Communication

Outcome 7 - Housing Options

Outcome 9 – Tenancy Sustainment

Outcome 6. Estate management, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes:

Social landlords working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure as far as reasonably possible that tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhoods, where they feel safe;

Outcome 7, 8 9. Housing options

Social landlords work together to ensure that people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them and tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options. RSL's ensure that people at risk of losing their home get advice on preventing homelessness.

Outcome 9. Tenancy sustainment

Social landlords ensure that tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home and ensure suitable support is available including services provided directly by their landlord and by other organisations.

19. Communication and Publicity

- 19.1 We will publicise our approach to domestic abuse through appropriate channels, including our website, homehub, tenant information, colleague guidance and partnership networks. We will make clear that domestic abuse is not tolerated, support is available, and tenants can contact us safely to discuss their housing options. We will work collaboratively with colleagues within the Fife Housing Association Alliance and Fife Council to ensure a consistent approach is taken across the partnership.

20. Monitoring and Review

- 20.1 We will monitor the operation of this policy, including the number and type of domestic abuse cases identified, support offered, tenancy remedies considered or used, outcomes for victim-survivors, arrears and repairs decisions, safeguarding referrals, complaints and learning from case reviews.
- 20.2 This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or earlier if there are changes in legislation, statutory guidance, regulatory standards, good practice or organisational learning. Where required, the policy will be updated to reflect commencement and implementation of relevant Housing (Scotland) Act 2025 provisions and any further Scottish Government or Scottish Housing Regulator guidance.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Name of policy to be assessed:	Domestic Abuse Policy	Is this a new policy or a review?	Review of existing policy following new legislation
Person completing the assessment:	Beverley Graham	Date of assessment:	5 August 2026

Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy:	To set out Fife Housing Group's statutory and organisational approach to preventing and responding to domestic abuse. The policy establishes a trauma-informed, person-centred and safety-led response; explains housing options and tenancy remedies; supports safe disclosure, confidentiality and safeguarding; and ensures domestic abuse is considered in rent arrears, property damage, antisocial behaviour and other housing management matters.
Who is intended to benefit from the policy? (e.g. colleagues, applicants, tenants, contractors)	Tenants, joint tenants, household members, applicants and other service users affected by domestic abuse, including children and adults at risk. Colleagues and relevant contractors benefit from clear expectations, training and decision-making guidance. Partner organisations benefit from a consistent multi-agency approach.
What outcomes are expected from this policy? (e.g. benefits to customers)	Earlier identification; safer and more consistent responses to disclosure; improved access to housing options, support and specialist services; greater tenancy sustainment; proportionate use of legal remedies; reduced risk of victim-survivors being disadvantaged by abuse-related arrears, damage or engagement issues; and improved safeguarding, recording and partnership working.

Which protected characteristics could be affected by the policy? (check all that apply)

Age: ☒
 Disability: ☒
 Gender: ☒
 Marriage/civil partnership: ☒
 Maternity/pregnancy: ☒

Minority ethnic: ☒
 Religion/belief: ☒
 Sexual orientation: ☒
 Transgender: ☒

If the policy is not relevant to any of the protected characteristics listed above, state why and end the process here.

	Positive impacts	Negative impacts
Describe the likely positive or negative impacts the policy could have on the groups identified above:	All groups: Person-centred support, safe contact and individual assessment improve safety and access. Age: Recognises children as victims in their own right and considers adults at risk. Disability: Requires reasonable adjustments and consideration of communication and mobility needs. Gender: Recognises the disproportionate impact on women and children while supporting all genders. Marriage/civil partnership: Covers partners, ex-partners and joint	No direct discriminatory impact is intended or identified.

	tenancies. Pregnancy/maternity: Supports safety and housing stability where risks may be heightened. Minority ethnic/religion: Provides interpretation and considers cultural, language and immigration barriers. Sexual orientation/transgender: Supports confidential, non-discriminatory access.	
What actions are required to address the impacts arising from this assessment?	• Finalise and implement the supporting Domestic Abuse Procedure, including safe contact, risk assessment, referral, recording and authorisation arrangements. • Provide role-appropriate training and refresher training for colleagues and relevant contractors, including inclusive practice and barriers experienced by protected groups. • Ensure reasonable adjustments, interpretation and translation are available and offer safe, accessible and non-digital contact routes where required. • Apply strict access controls to domestic abuse records and alerts and review data-sharing for necessity, proportionality and safety. • Monitor cases, referrals, housing outcomes and available equality data to identify disproportionate or unintended effects.	

Signed: Beverley Graham

Date: 5 August 2026