

Grosvenor Hart Homes: Domestic Abuse Policy



GROSVENOR

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Domestic Abuse Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy is designed to provide a set of principles and a framework to ensure that Grosvenor Hart Homes (GHH) manages cases of domestic abuse effectively and appropriately.

1.2 GHH believes that our tenants and/or service users should not live in fear of violence or abuse. Therefore, we take domestic abuse extremely seriously and are committed to providing a trauma-informed, person-centred, and confidential response to anyone approaching us for assistance in cases of domestic abuse. We want to achieve a community that does not tolerate domestic abuse and that affords effective support to all of its victims (whether adults or children) whilst at the same time holding perpetrators to account.

1.3 GHH recognises that domestic abuse has a significant impact on children and young people of all ages and that children are victims in their own right if they see, hear, or experience the effects of domestic abuse. We are committed to safeguarding children and ensuring that children as victims receive the support they need.

1.4 This policy reflects the changes brought about by the enactment of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

2 Scope

2.1 Inclusions - This policy applies all GHH tenants and those living with them. It also applies to everyone who receives a service from GHH (for example, non-GHH tenants who are engaged with one of our support services).

2.2 Modern Slavery - This policy will consider any Modern Slavery impact and in line with the Grosvenor Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement Policy GHH has adopted will promote positive behaviour amongst colleagues, within its local multi-agency partnerships and supply chain to support GHH's approach in identifying and tackling Modern Slavery.

3. Definitions

3.1 Domestic Abuse is defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 as the following: *Behaviour by one person towards another where they are over 16, personally connected and the behaviour is abusive.*

3.2 A personal connection between two people under the Act is where someone is or has been:

- Married to the other person;
- Civil Partner of the other person;
- Agreed to marry the other person (whether or not the relationship is still ongoing);
- Entered into a civil partnership agreement with the other person (whether or not the relationship is still ongoing);
- Been in an intimate relationship with the other person; -
- They have or have had a parental relationship with the other person in relation to the same child;
- They are relatives.

3.3 Abusive behaviour is defined under the Act if it consists of any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse; (including the use of force that may result in injury, pain or impairment and /or forced and/or undesired sexual behaviour) –
- violent or threatening behaviour; -
- controlling or coercive behaviour; -
- economic abuse (which is any behaviour that has an impact upon the other person's ability to acquire, use or maintain money/property and/or obtain goods and services);
- psychological, emotional or other abuse;(such as isolating someone or threatening them or their loved ones or pets and being made to feel afraid, unhappy, anxious, depressed humiliated, guilty or devalued)
- This definition includes 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct. It is also considered domestic abuse where the behaviour may be directed at another party in order to cause distress to other person (for example, the other person's child).

3.4 Children are considered victims of abuse where they see/hear/experience the effects of the abuse and are related to the victim of the domestic abuse, or the victim has parental responsibility for the child.

4. Principles

4.1 GHH will offer advice and support to tenants who disclose Domestic Abuse during the GHH referral, application and lettings process and the safety of potential tenants who have experienced domestic abuse and the wider GHH community will be discussed as part of the multi-agency GHH Matching Panel, which includes representatives from the police and local authority. This will ensure any potential risks can be identified early and mitigations and support can be put in place as required.

4.2 As per the GHH criteria for a tenancy, where a prospective tenant has a history of serious, significant and/or serial domestic abuse, they may be excluded from receiving a GHH property whereby the GHH Matching Panel believes the candidate poses a risk to the GHH community.

4.3 GHH encourages tenants to report domestic abuse to us in person, in writing, by telephone for the attention of the GHH Family Assistant service, and via third parties such as their social worker, the Police or their Independent Domestic Violence Advocates.

4.4 GHH will provide a sensitive and confidential response to those disclosing current or historic domestic abuse. This may include giving an option for a staff member of a preferred gender to deal with their case and/or holding meetings at an agreed choice of 'safe' venue or a time and method that they feel is right and safe for them.

4.5 GHH will work in collaboration with external agencies to ensure the safety of tenants and service users. This includes working directly with external agencies supporting tenants including the police, participating in Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and other multiagency forums.

4.6 GHH will work closely with relevant local authority teams to meet the local authority's duty to develop and commission services for victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation through its allocation and matching process and ongoing strategic partnership with the local authority.

4.7 GHH will provide trained staff who will complete a Domestic Abuse, Stalking and 'Honour' based violence (DASH) Risk Identification Checklist where it has been assessed as required and take appropriate action.

4.8 GHH will provide a safety first and trauma-informed approach in all cases of Domestic Abuse and take a victim centred approach. GHH recognises that both those who are the subject of domestic abuse allegations and survivors may both be tenants of GHH and our primary concern will be to ensure the safety of victims and the wider GHH community. GHH will provide support to those who harm to ensure that risks are managed, information is shared and appropriate support is offered.

4.9 GHH will offer a variety of ways to enhance the physical security of the property and provide reassurance for the victim and their family, led by the GHH Family Assistant service in close collaboration with GHH's Housing Team. GHH are only able to offer such measures to GHH tenants. Those who are accessing other GHH support services but who are not GHH tenants will be signposted to appropriate external providers, with referrals made by GHH as appropriate.

4.10 GHH will look to take appropriate enforcement action in cases of Domestic Abuse where it constitutes a tenancy breach and/or where the victim/s has left their home due to domestic abuse.

4.11 GHH is not able to take action to exclude a joint or sole tenant from their home unless specifically directed to by a court order (such as a Domestic Abuse Protection Order or Occupation Order)– this includes such measures like changing the locks on a property to prevent the perpetrator from re-entering the property. GHH will work with agencies to ensure the safety of the victim in such circumstances.

4.12 GHH staff will follow the GHH Safeguarding Policy and procedures for reporting a safeguarding concern about Children and Vulnerable Adults Procedures if staff believe a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm due to an abusive relationship.

4.13 GHH will ensure that domestic abuse awareness training is provided to all relevant staff to ensure they are able to recognise and respond to the signs of domestic abuse.

4.14 GHH will endeavour to put in place necessary measures to ensure landlord services are accessible and available to all GHH services e.g. translation services when required.

4.15 GHH is committed to continually improve our response to domestic abuse by learning from survivor feedback, feedback from other agencies and learning from local and national practice learning reviews.

5. Our Approach

5.1 GHH will accept the victim's report to be true and accurate and respond accordingly. (This would only change if evidence later revealed that the victim report was untrue).

5.2 Tenants and service users can report incidents of domestic abuse with confidence that we will listen and respond promptly and positively.

5.3 Tenants find it easy to report incidents of domestic abuse and are able to exercise choice around what happens.

5.4 We take effective action in response to reports of domestic abuse.

5.5 Children are recognised and supported as victims in their own right, children have trust in GHH staff, feel believed and receive the support they need.

5.6 If it is their wish to remain, victims feel safe and supported in their own home.

5.7 Perpetrators will be made aware that our policy states domestic abuse in our properties is not acceptable, and we will take action against perpetrators who break tenancy conditions.

5.8 Domestic abuse complainants feel that they are dealt with in a fair, consistent and timely manner.

5.9 We will seek appropriate solutions for perpetrators of domestic abuse to prevent abuse recurring.

6. Data Protection and Safeguarding

6.1 GHH must follow the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018. We also recognise that maintaining confidentiality and building trust are essential when responding to disclosures of domestic abuse.

6.2 GHH will agree with the victim how we will communicate with them and will aim to obtain their consent before sharing information with other parties. However, in high-risk cases or where there are professional concerns, GHH may share information without consent to ensure the safety of the person(s).

6.3 Where GHH believes there is a risk of significant harm to a child or vulnerable adult, we will share relevant information with statutory agencies including Children's and Adults' Social Care and the Police to safeguard the individuals at risk.

6.4 GHH may also share information without the subject's consent if requested to do so by a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) or by a statutory agency in order to safeguard a child or vulnerable adult.

7. Responsibility

7.1 Everyone who works for or on behalf of GHH has a responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. This includes taking appropriate action where domestic abuse is disclosed or suspected.

7.2 The Director of Support Services in collaboration with the Director of Housing is responsible to the Chief Executive and the Board for ensuring the effective implementation of this policy through the Executive Leadership Team and Head of Functions teams.

7.3 To ensure the continued development of this policy and our approach to Domestic Abuse, GHH will ensure that the Director of Support Services will act as a Domestic Abuse Lead and the Family Support and Social Care Lead will act as a Domestic Abuse Champion.

8. Links to other GHH Policies

8.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- GHH Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- GHH Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- GHH Safeguarding Policy
- GHH Allocations and Lettings Policy

9. Monitoring & compliance

GHH will monitor the following related to its domestic abuse policy:

For GHH tenants impacted by domestic abuse, GHH will monitor on an individual basis the extent to which the tenant feels safe and secure in their home through the regular individual My Plan review sessions.

GHH will also monitor referrals into the local Domestic Abuse Intervention and Prevention Service (DAIPS).

10. Review schedule

This policy will be reviewed every three years or more frequently as a result of feedback obtained, especially from tenants, internal/external audits, reviews of customer data and experience change in legislation or regulatory requirements or any national and local learning from practice reviews and domestic homicide reviews. This process ensures the policy's continuing suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness.

The Director of Support Services has responsibility for this policy, and ultimate responsibility for performance and compliance sits with the board.

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