



Committee Approver	Operations Committee
Stakeholder Consultation	External Legal advice Viewpoint staff
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Title	Domestic Abuse Policy
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Revised by	Housing Team Leader and Head of Housing
Next Revision Date	December 2027
Related Documents	Child Protection Policy Adult Support and Protection Policy
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1. **Viewpoint's Values**

Viewpoint is here to help people enjoy their later years. Everything we do is about realising this vision, which is supported by the following straightforward set of values:

- Inspire with positive smiles and words;
- Say 'yes I can and I will';
- Celebrate age, experience and wisdom;
- Do according to our customers' wishes and ambitions;
- Treat people (everyone is a VIP) as we would a "loved one";
- Work hard, have fun and laugh;
- Stay courageous, creative and ahead of the game; and
- Work with those that share our values.

These promises shape us. They are a commitment to our residents, staff and suppliers. They are fundamental to every single plan, decision and project we embark on.

Ensuring that we have systems and processes in place to manage risk effectively will support us to deliver those plans, decisions and projects, in accordance with our vision and values.

2. **Policy Statement**

This policy sets out how Viewpoint views domestic abuse and how we will respond to and seek to deal with any reports of such abuse affecting tenants or members of their households. We understand that anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse and this policy aims to provide a proactive, collaborative response to preventing and addressing domestic abuse in the home, ensuring victims/survivors are fully supported to make informed choices in regard to their housing needs and options.

3. **Aim (sometimes called Purpose)**

The aim of this policy is to:

- Improve overall safety and wellbeing by recognising that domestic abuse is a serious crime which has an adverse impact on the health of individuals, families and communities;
- Increase awareness and understanding of this issue amongst residents and employees;
- Encourage residents and employees to report domestic abuse;
- Facilitate early identification of domestic abuse and offer supportive and effective intervention to reduce risk of harm;
- Improve the safety and welfare of adults and children affected by domestic abuse and prevent further incidents by responding rapidly, effectively and consistently to all reports;

- Empower victims/survivors by providing information on the options available to them;
- Improve the response to victims/survivors through effective engagement of appropriate external enforcement and support agencies;
- Create a consistent approach for recording and monitoring incidents of domestic abuse;
- Inform colleagues of best practice when responding to domestic abuse; and
- Ensure that all colleagues are clear regarding their roles in tackling and responding to domestic abuse.

4. Legislation/related policies

This policy has been developed taking into account the following legislation:

- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018
- Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021
- Equality Act 2020
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014

The Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) uses outcomes and standards as set out in The Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) to assess the performance of social landlords. We aim to ensure that this policy meets the required outcomes and standards as follows:

Outcome 1: Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

Outcome 6: 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.

Outcomes 7, 8 and 9 reflect social landlords' duties to provide information and advice to people looking for housing or those at risk of becoming homeless. These duties include helping tenants and people on housing lists to review their options to move within the social housing sector or to another sector

Outcome 11: 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 the landlord and by other organisations.

Additional support to develop this policy has been drawn from the

5. Scope

This policy applies to all tenants and sharing owners.

6. Definition

The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 (2018 Act) states Domestic Abuse requires the presence of “abusive behaviour against a partner or ex-partner” as well as two other factors. The first additional factor is that “a reasonable person would consider the behaviour likely to cause B physical or psychological harm”. The second is that behaviour has been “intended to cause the physical or psychological harm or, A was so reckless as to whether the course of behaviour caused B the physical or psychological harm”

The 2018 Act then defines abusive behaviour further, noting that while it can include physical violence, sexual violence, threatening or intimidating behaviour against B it can also involve behaviour directed at B’s child or another person linked to them if it has the purpose of achieving any of the following:

- (a) making B dependent on, or subordinate to, A,*
- (b) isolating B from friends, relatives or other sources of support,*
- (c) controlling, regulating or monitoring B's day-to-day activities,*
- (d) depriving B of, or restricting B's, freedom of action,*
- (e) frightening, humiliating, degrading or punishing B*

This wider definition of what domestic abuse in Scotland means police and courts can investigate and prosecute domestic abuse more readily.

This policy is designed to ensure our organisation supports any victim of domestic abuse, as defined above, as fully as possible.

7. Policy Framework

Viewpoint encourages all tenants, household members and staff to report domestic abuse, whether they are victims of, or witnesses to, such incidents. We will deal with all reports of domestic abuse with sensitivity.

Prevention

We are committed to working with partner agencies in our areas of operation to implement multi-agency policies and protocols to prevent domestic abuse.

Viewpoint recognises that working in collaboration with others is the most effective way to support victims/survivors of domestic abuse. To ensure appropriate support is in place whilst housing issues are resolved, our staff will encourage individuals to allow us to share information with other agencies. However, all information provided by the victim/survivor will be treated with the utmost confidence and only passed to external agencies with their consent.

The exceptions to this will be:

- Where we consider a child is at risk in any situation;
- If there is a high risk of serious harm to anyone involved; and
- If we are obliged by law to disclose the information.

In these cases, reference should be made to our Child Protection Policy and Adult Support and Protection Policy.

We will:

- Publicise this domestic abuse policy to all tenants, highlighting the consequences for perpetrators;
- Provide information and advice through our newsletter and our website; and
- Provide training and access to resources for staff

Supporting Victims/Survivors of Domestic Abuse

We will deal with all reports of domestic abuse in a non-judgmental manner and in confidence, adopting a 'survivor-centered' approach. If a person feels they are experiencing domestic abuse, we will deal with it under this policy. We will not treat domestic abuse as anti-social behaviour.

Housing Options and Preventing Homelessness

Viewpoint recognises that every case will be different and our response will be tailored accordingly. Our policy aims to reduce the impact of homelessness on victims/survivors of domestic abuse. When a tenant or household member reports domestic abuse, all available options will be discussed and considered with them including:

- Encouraging victim/survivors to access specialised support, information and advice;
- Making arrangements for their immediate personal safety;

- Reviewing and, where possible, improving the safety and security of their existing accommodation to enable them to remain there safely;
- Responding sensitively to rechargeable repairs by assessing them on a case by case basis and considering whether a recharge is appropriate;
- Strengthening the victims/survivors' right to remain in their own home by, for example, transferring their tenancy into their own name, where possible and making effective use of management transfers so that planned moves can be made;
- Providing advice and assistance on emergency temporary accommodation;
- Provide advice and assistance on permanent rehousing through local protocols as appropriate;
- Review allocations for rehousing to ensure that victims/survivors of domestic abuse will no longer be at risk; and
- Facilitate and support access to assistance through partner and specialist agencies to reduce the financial consequences of homelessness as a result of domestic abuse

Effectively working with perpetrators of domestic abuse

We will work with and provide support to Police Scotland and other external agencies in dealing with the perpetrators of domestic abuse.

The approach taken with perpetrators will depend on individual circumstances. This may range from support to access specialised help to stop the offending behaviour, to housing options advice and support to move away from a tenancy to legal action for recovery of possession against a perpetrator.

8. Compliance & Support

It is the responsibility of all staff to familiarise themselves with the content of this policy and to ensure that they comply with the policy and associated procedures.

If advice or support is required, this is available through the Housing Team Leaders in the first instance, or Head of Housing.

9. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Viewpoint will treat all customers with fairness and respect in line with its Equality and Diversity Policy. Viewpoint recognises that it has an ethical and a legal duty to advance equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination. .

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed.

10. Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)

N/A

11. Monitoring & Evaluation

Operational delivery and monitoring of actions taken under this policy is undertaken primarily by the Housing Team Leaders. The performance will be reviewed by the Housing Team Leaders and Head of Housing.

This policy will be reviewed 3 years from the date of implementation. In the event that this policy is not formally reviewed within 3 year timescale, the latest approved policy will continue to apply.