



PRIMA
GROUP

**Domestic Abuse
Policy**

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Domestic Abuse Policy

1 Aim of the Policy

The aim of this Policy is to improve the safety of our tenants affected by domestic abuse and prevent further incidents by encouraging earlier reporting and responding rapidly.

We will work with other agencies and aim to ensure the safety of survivors of domestic abuse, meet their needs, and take action against perpetrators where possible.

2 Who does this Policy apply to?

This Policy relates to all Prima Group tenants.

3 Policy Statement

Definition of Domestic Abuse

We use the Government's definition of domestic abuse as outlined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Domestic abuse is defined within the Act as behaviour towards another person if both people are aged 16 or over and are personally connected and that behaviour is abusive.

People are personally connected if they are intimate partners, ex-partners, family members or individuals who share parental responsibility for a child. There is no requirement for the victim and perpetrator to live in the same household.

Behaviour is abusive if it consists of any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological, emotional, or other abuse

It does not matter whether the behaviour is one single incident or a course of conduct.

The following explains the different types of abuse and the forms that it can take:

Physical abuse:

Violent or threatening behaviour are forms of abusive behaviour. This can include:

- Being or threatened to be kicked, punched, pinched, pushed, dragged, shoved, slapped, scratched, choked, or bitten
- The use of or threats of used of weapons including knives and irons

- Being burned, scalded, or poisoned
- Objects being thrown
- Causing harm by denying access to medical aids or equipment
- Harming someone whilst performing 'caring' duties, this is especially relevant for disabled victims and may involve force feeding, withdrawal of medicine or over-medication
- Violence or threats against family members and/or pets

Sexual abuse

Victims of domestic abuse often experience behaviour that is sexually abusive. This can involve:

- Rape
- Being pressured into sex or sexual acts
- Being forced to take part in sexual acts because of threats to others, including children
- Unwanted sexual contact or demands
- Hurting a victim during sex including non-fatal strangulation
- Intentional exposure to HIV or sexually transmitted infections
- Forced involvement in making or watching pornography
- 'Corrective' rape (the practice of raping someone with the aim of 'curing' them of being LGBT)
- Being pressurised or tricked into having unsafe sex, including deception over the use of birth control

Controlling or Coercive Behaviour

Coercive or controlling behaviour is common in domestic abuse and can coincide with many of the other behaviours. The following are behaviours that are considered to be coercive or controlling, this list is not exhaustive:

- Controlling or monitoring the victim's daily activities, this can include making them account for their time, dictating what they can wear, what and when they can eat, when and where they can sleep
- Isolating a person from family, friends and professionals who may be trying to support them, intercepting messages or phone calls
- Using substances to control a person through dependency, or controlling their access to substance
- Preventing a person from taking medication, or accessing medical equipment or over-medicating them, or preventing a person from accessing health or social care
- Using children to control their victim, e.g., threatening to take the children away or manipulating professionals to increase the risk of children being prevented from having contact with the victim
- Intentional undermining of the victim's role as a partner, spouse, or parent
- Refusing to interpret, and/or hindering access to communication
- Preventing the victim from learning a language or making friends outside of their ethnic/ or cultural background
- Threatening precarious immigration status against the victim, withholding documents, giving false information to a victim about their visa

- Threats to expose sensitive information (e.g., sexual activity, or sexual orientation) or make false allegations to family members, religious or local community including via photos or the internet
- Intimidation and threats of disclosure of sexual orientation and/or gender identity to family, friends, work colleagues, community, and others
- Using pets to control or coerce a victim, e.g., harming, or threatening to harm or give away pets
- The use of technology and social media as a means to control or coerce a person

Economic Abuse

Economic abuse commonly involves behaviours that interfere with a person's ability to acquire, use, and maintain economic resources such as money, transportation, and utilities. Such abuse often makes the person economically dependent on the abuser. The following are some examples of economic abuse:

- having sole control of the family income
- preventing a victim from claiming welfare benefits
- not allowing or controlling a victim's access to mobile phone/transport/utilities/food
- interfering with a victim's education, training, or employment
- damage to a victim's property

Emotional or psychological abuse

Domestic abuse often involves emotional or psychological abuse. The following are examples of such abuse, the list is not exhaustive:

- Being insulted, including in front of others. This includes insulting someone about their race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, faith or belief, ability to parent and ability to work
- Repeatedly being belittled
- Manipulating a person's anxieties or beliefs
- Keeping a victim awake/preventing them from sleeping
- Using social media sites to intimidate the victim
- Persuading a victim to doubt their own sanity or mind (including "gaslighting")
- Turning children and friends against the victim including falsely and without justification telling a child that the other parent abandoned them, never loved them, or never wanted them
- Distorting a child's memories about the victim parent, including telling a child the other parent will pick them/meet them, when that was not true, falsely telling medical/school staff they have sole custody of a child so that no information is provided to the other parent, painting the other parent in a negative light to the child, including mocking their personality characteristics, job, friends, family and belittling them
- Spiritual abuse uses religion and faith systems to control a person and is deemed psychological abuse. This can include preventing a person practicing their faith or religious obligations or forcing the victim to act or behave in ways which contradict

religious beliefs and or spiritual rituals and practice; for example, forcing a person to transgress religious dietary observations

Our approach to Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse presents a significant risk to personal safety, we will therefore deal with all reports of domestic abuse as an emergency. All reports of domestic abuse will be dealt with sensitively and in confidence.

We will operate a victim centered approach by working with our tenants to reach a decision that best secures their safety. We will help our tenants to obtain advice from a domestic abuse specialist and wherever possible we will offer the option of being interviewed by an officer of the gender requested. We will not require those subject to domestic abuse to take legal action before we provide assistance.

We will work with the victim to review their current housing situation, to assess the level of support required and to take action against the perpetrator that the victim feels is most appropriate. In working with those experiencing domestic abuse, we will not interview perpetrators for their account of events as we would for other types of anti-social behaviour.

We will take the strongest action possible against perpetrators of domestic abuse, whilst respecting the wishes of the victim.

Where a tenant does not feel safe to remain in their home, we will assist the tenant to access emergency accommodation either through the Local Authority or a refuge. Prima does not own any emergency accommodation. If the tenant requires permanent rehousing priority will be given for any suitable available accommodation.

Should the tenant wish to remain in their home, we will work with the tenant and statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure that it is safe to do so; this may include additional security and target hardening measures. Where damage has been caused to the property by the perpetrator, we will not usually seek to recover the costs of this damage from the victim.

We will assist the Local Authority in discharging their statutory duty by offering an assured tenancy to those who have been nominated because of domestic abuse

4 Making sure we do what we say

This policy will be reviewed as and when needed but as a minimum of every 3 years.

This policy replaces the previous Domestic Abuse Policy and takes into account the new legislation introduced in 2021.

All customer facing staff will receive training on how to recognise domestic abuse and the action they must take depending on their role. Refresher training will be carried out every 2 years.

A case management approach will be taken, and all cases will be recorded and reported to the Customer Voice Board and the Common Board as part of the operations report.

5 Other things to consider

5.1 Prima policies and procedures

This policy must be read together with:

- Domestic Abuse Procedure
- Safeguarding Policy

5.2 Legislation and Guidance

The following legislation and guidance have informed this policy including:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

6 Consultation

This policy has been consulted on with the Housing team, Customer Voice members and has been published on Prima's website for feedback, between the period 01 02 22 to 15 02 22. Two responses were received, both were positive, one commented that they didn't know they were in an abusive relationship until they worked with Prima. There were no changes to the policy due to the consultation.

7 Equality Impact Assessment

Prima welcomes feedback on this policy and the way it operates. We are interested to know of any possible or actual adverse impact that this policy may have on any groups in respect of gender or marital status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, or other characteristics.

The policy has been screened to determine equality relevance for the following equality groups: gender or marital status, race, disability, maternity or pregnancy, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, or other characteristics.

8 Data Protection

In taking applications under the policy, we are aware that we will be handling personal information. All handling of personal data will be conducted under the Group's Data Protection Policy ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Personal data that is inappropriately accessed or disclosed may constitute a data breach. The UK GDPR (United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation) requires organisations to keep a record of all data breaches and, where the breach is likely to result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, the organisation must notify the Information Commissioner within 72 hours of becoming aware of the breach. If the data breach results in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, those individuals must be notified without undue delay.

9 Document Control Data

Version:	V22022
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Owner of the policy:	Group Director of Housing and Growth
Consultation Panel:	Neighbourhood Housing Officers, Housing Manager, Tenancy Sustainment Officer
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Control Log: (For when a policy is reviewed, if you are not reviewing the policy then please delete this section)

Review Date:	January 2022
Name of Reviewer:	Louise Hooton Group Head of Housing
Change Log:	This policy has been rewritten to take account of the new legislation introduced by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021
Date due for next review:	January 2025