

City Of York Council Domestic Abuse Resident & Tenant Policy 2025 - 2028



Contents

Introduction and policy purpose

Policy Scope

Definition of Domestic Abuse

Our Values

Our Aims & Practices

Standards for responding to Domestic Abuse

Support Services

How to access support if you are concerned about your own behaviour or that of someone you know

Confidentiality and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Consultation

Link to other policies and policy review expectations.

Housing Services City of York Council

Date: February 2025

Version: 1.0

Current Document Status			
Version	1.0	Approved	
Issue Date	Oct 2024	Date of Formal Approval	

Version History			
Date	Version	Reviser	Comments
09.10.24			

Review History			
Review Period: 3 Years		Next Review Date:	
Date Reviewed	Reviewed By	Next Review Date	Comments

Introduction and Policy Purpose

We believe that everyone has the right to live free from fear of abuse or violence. We know that domestic abuse can be experienced by anyone, regardless of gender, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership and pregnancy or maternity differences. Although it can happen to anyone, we acknowledge the gendered nature of domestic abuse and that it disproportionately affects women and girls.

In November 2023 the Office for National Statistics reported that between March 22 – March 23 an estimated 4.4% of people aged 16 years and over (5.7% women and 3.2% men) experienced domestic abuse in 2023 in England & Wales. This equates to an estimated 2.1 million adults (1.4 million women and 751,000 men).

We believe that as a local authority and housing provider, we are best placed to recognise and respond to domestic abuse. We have a duty to support our tenants in social housing by training our staff to identify domestic abuse and respond appropriately. We recognise that there are many barriers to disclosing domestic abuse and certain characteristics may make someone more vulnerable to abuse, such as a physical disability, a language barrier, immigration status etc. We want to reassure our residents, tenants, leaseholders, and members that any concerns they raise will be met with an empathetic and appropriate response. City Of York Council will recognise the need to take these barriers into account when responding to Domestic Abuse and offering support services to victims and survivors.

This policy acts in the intention of reducing the risk of domestic abuse and outlines how we will respond to domestic abuse when it affects our residents, tenants, leaseholders, and members. The policy details the support we will provide to those victims and survivors of domestic abuse. We take a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse and this policy outlines how we will hold perpetrators of abuse accountable for their actions.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to residents within the York area, City of York Council tenants and leaseholders, and City Of York Council officers.

Although this policy is primarily for City Of York residents, the national support services listed within this policy can be used by anyone who needs to access support as a victim of domestic abuse or information is available on our website; <https://www.york.gov.uk/DomesticAbuse>

Definition of domestic abuse

This policy uses an abridged version of the definition of domestic abuse provided by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents/enacted>

Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if “A” and “B” are each aged 16 or over and are “personally connected” to each other:

“Personally connected” means:

- they are, or have been, married to each other
- they are, or have been, civil partners of each other
- they have agreed to marry one another (whether the agreement has been terminated or not)
- they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether the agreement has been terminated or not)
- they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child
- they are relatives

And

- the behaviour is abusive

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 a single incident or a course of actions: behaviour of this kind is domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse includes ‘Honour Based Violence’. There is currently no statutory definition of Honour Based Abuse in England and Wales, but

Karma Nirvana, along with partners from the domestic abuse sector, have come together to adopt the following definition:

This is an incident or pattern of violence, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion, control or abuse (including but not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, economic, spiritual, faith-related or emotional abuse) motivated by the perpetrator's perception that an individual has shamed, or may shame, the perpetrator, the family, or the community, or has otherwise broken, or may break, the perceived norms of the community's accepted behaviour's. Including by speaking out about the abuse and where the perception of shame may also prevent a victim from accessing support or help. For further information:

<https://karmanirvana.org.uk/get-help/what-is-honour-based-abuse/>

It can be distinguished from other forms of violence, as it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/or community members. Women, men, and younger members of the family can all be involved in the abuse. (Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy July 2021).

More information about domestic abuse, "Honour Based Violence" and other forms of abuse is included in our joint multi-agency safeguarding adults' policy and procedure, (West Yorkshire, City of York and North Yorkshire) available on this link: <https://www.york.gov.uk/DomesticAbuse>

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises that children can be victims of domestic abuse, even when the abusive behaviours are not directly aimed at them.

They can also be victims if they:

- See, hear, or experience the effects of abuse
- Are related to the victim or perpetrator of the abuse (or both)

Our Values

Our values and key priorities are at the core of our organisation, guiding what we do, how we engage with our communities, our residents and each other, including how we support those affected by domestic abuse.

We will:

- Work together with our council services departments, specialist domestic abuse services and partner agencies to provide a co-ordinated community response to domestic abuse as it requires a multi -agency response to best support those affected.
- Continuously seek opportunities to improve our response to domestic abuse. This includes considering feedback and guidance to support improvement and having the voice of the victims at the heart of our response.
- Be honest and transparent with the guidance, help and options available to those affected by domestic abuse.
- Strive for all York residents to enjoy, happier, healthier, longer lives in homes that meet their needs including those affected by domestic abuse. Ensuring we are considering the needs of victims/survivors to achieve this.
- Respect Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in everything we do, including how we recognise and respond to domestic abuse. We will consider intersectional needs when responding to domestic abuse by understanding how a person's experience of domestic abuse may be impacted by their sex, age, gender identity, race, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, pregnancy status, social background, or a combination of these differences. We will stand up to hate and work hard to champion our communities.

Our Aims & Practices

We will:

- Support our employees to confidently recognise and appropriately respond to domestic abuse by providing domestic abuse training for all employees in housing roles. The training will be relevant to the employee's role and their level of engagement with residents, tenants, leaseholders, and members. This policy will be supported

by internal procedures and guidance that our employees can refer to.

- Strive towards providing a trauma informed response. Empowering victims by building trust and working in collaboration regarding their housing needs.
- Enable and support victims to disclose domestic abuse. Ensuring victims especially our City of York tenants, feel confident and reassured that disclosing domestic abuse will not negatively affect their tenancy.
- Provide relevant advice and help, including information about victims' rights and options to remain in their home where it is safe, and their wish to do so. This could include discussions and signposting regarding protection orders (such as Non-Molestation Orders or occupation orders), including additional security measures in the home if appropriate and suitable, as well as ongoing support from specialist organisations.
- Help victims consider their housing options if there is a feeling of immediate or near future fear for them and their households' safety. This could include a homeless application, temporary accommodation, refuge, or a managed move if there is no prospect of a safe return.
- Be honest and realistic regarding housing options, being realistic about options available and time scales, which can support victims making informed choices about next steps and taking that first step towards regaining control of their future.
- Strive towards achieving the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation which began as of 2023. This will enable us to provide our residents, tenants, leaseholders, and members with an exemplary response to domestic abuse.
- Work closely and in partnership with local specialist domestic abuse services and agencies (such as the Police, IDAS & Probation Services) to provide a co-ordinated response to domestic abuse. Completing referrals where appropriate for

ongoing support, this could include referrals for mental health or substance misuse to ensure wrap around support is offered. We will have suitable representatives attending and contributing to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), being active contributors in the Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination process of identifying and tackling serial perpetrators of domestic abuse perpetrators (MATAC) and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

- Take a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse and will hold perpetrators of abuse to account while ensuring victims safety. Further information on how we may do this is cited within our standards for responding to domestic abuse.
- Ensure safeguarding referrals are completed when needed to protect and support vulnerable adults and children. As a significant number of adults or children who experience domestic abuse will also require safeguarding.
- We will make sure anyone can report domestic abuse to us and that our services are accessible and inclusive. By providing interpreters and translating information into other languages or formats as needed.
- Provide advice and signposting to all including those that may not be eligible for housing assistance. For example, for victims who may be subjected to immigration control, there are avenues for support available, such as, the home office or specialist by and for services. We will strive to provide everyone with practical forms of advice especially in cases of domestic abuse disclosures.

Standards for responding to Domestic Abuse for our tenants.

If you believe that you are a victim of domestic abuse, and you decide to share your experience with us, you can expect:

- To be treated empathetically with a believing and nonjudgmental response

- To be able report domestic abuse in various ways that best suit you. For example, this could be via telephone, email, in person and if you are a City of York council tenant, via your housing portal.
- For your disclosure to be treated as a priority. We will respond within 24 hours during working hours, including the option outside of working hours, via our out of hours services for emergencies.
- Us to discuss and agree safe methods of contact you wish to use when communicating with us. This could include the type of communication, safe locations, safe dates/times, safe words, and any other reasonable adjustments tailored to your circumstances.
- A victim centred approach, wherever possible, considering your views and ensuring your ongoing safety when deciding the most appropriate course of action.
- To be signposted or referred to local and national domestic abuse specialist services, including by and for specialist services where appropriate. Employees will be working with and be guided by partners specialist advise, the police, as well as senior officers and domestic abuse champions to provide the best outcome.
- To have the option to receive assistance, where possible, from a member of staff of a specific gender or the same ethnic origin, alternatively from referrals to specialist advocacy services to provide this representation, where not possible through a City Of York employee.
- If you have disclosed domestic abuse we will remain in regular contact, agreeing frequency and safe methods. Providing alternative contact arrangements in case of absences, for reassurance of continued support.
- To be provided information and reassurance on any safety measures, if residing in temporary accommodation provided by City of York Council.
- Your rights to privacy to be respected in line with our Data Protection Policy. Your information will be sensitively handled,

reassuring your confidence to be able to disclose domestic abuse if you are personally or professionally connected to City of York council or partners. Information will only be shared with your permission unless there is a risk and need for safeguarding out of our duty of care.

- Us to hold perpetrators to account for their behaviour in various ways. This may include the right to take enforcement action against City of York tenants, using the powers available under the Housing Act, up to and including recovering possession of a property, for domestic abuse related offences. If taking any action against perpetrator/s, we will prioritise the safety and wishes of their victim/s and ensure that their wishes and housing needs are considered.
- To consider and refer perpetrators to specialist support for positive engagement as we recognise that long-term domestic abuse prevention requires behavioural change from those who cause harm. Where its safe and appropriate to do so without increasing risk to that victim, this can be discussed and actioned for those who recognise their behaviour and would like support. Further information regarding our local specialist service 'Foundation, +Choices' can be found within the policy.
- Those from specific housing services, such as housing options, to have trained housing employees to carry out a Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence Risk Identification Checklist, which is a UK wide accredited form used by us and partner organisations. This will support with assessing risks, discussions for further support/signposting and to help create a plan on how we will support you and any children.
- If you are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse and you are a City of York Council employee. We have a domestic abuse charter that is available to you which details the support and actions we can take as an employer. This can be found on the intranet; if you wish you can also discuss your situation with an internal domestic abuse champion. More information can be found on the internal intranet.

Support Services from other organisations:

If you are at immediate risk of harm, please contact the police by dialling 999 (If it is not safe to speak press 55 when prompted) If you have a hearing impairment text register to 999 then send a text using relay.

Support is Available from the following organisations:

Local Support:

- Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS) 03000 110110, specialist support agency in Yorkshire - <https://idas.org.uk/> - Adding a line on specialists IDAs
- North Yorkshire Fire Service – provide fire safety advice - <https://www.northyorksfire.gov.uk/your-safety/book-a-visit/domestic-abuse-arson-threat-referral/>
- [Halo](#) – 01642 683045 - advice about forced marriage, honour-based violence, female genital mutilation - www.haloproject.org.uk
- Sexual Assault Referral Centre - Bridge House – 0300 2230099 confidential healthcare and support for people in York or North Yorkshire who have experienced sexual assault or rape www.bridgehousesarc.org
- Kyra Women's Project - a registered charity in York that exists to help local women make positive and lasting improvements to their lives. <https://www.kyra.org.uk/>
- Changing Lives Wellness Centre - [Changing Lives](#) - 01904 526259 Is an inclusive and supportive service that provides holistic, trauma-informed pathways for women.
- [City Of York Council Housing Options](#) - 01904 554500 - Advice about your housing options if you are homeless or threatened with homelessness - <https://www.york.gov.uk/>
- [North Yorkshire Police](#) – co-ordination (MARAC) Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences where there is a high risk of domestic abuse identified <https://www.northyorkshire.police.uk/police-forces/north-yorkshire-police/areas/about-us/marac/>

- [City Of York Safeguarding Adults Board](https://www.safeguardingadultsyork.org.uk/safeguarding) - Guides are available on various topics including Domestic Abuse
<https://www.safeguardingadultsyork.org.uk/safeguarding>

National Support Available:

- [Childline](http://www.childline.org.uk) – 0800 1111 - support for children - www.childline.org.uk
- [Citizens advice](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) - 0800 144 8848 - www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- [National Domestic Abuse Helpline](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk) - 0800 2000247 - free 24 hr helpline - www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk
- [Galop](http://www.galop.org.uk) – 0800 9995428 - support for LGBT+ experiencing domestic abuse – www.galop.org.uk
- [GOV.UK's Forced Marriage Unit](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage#contact) – 0207 0080151- public helpline - www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage#contact
- [GOV.UK website](http://www.gov.uk) for easy read, information in languages other than English and British Sign Language
- [Hourglass](http://www.wearehourglass.org) – 0808 8088141 - support for older people – www.wearehourglass.org
- [Karma Nirvana](http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk) – 0800 5999247 - national honour-based abuse helpline – www.karmanirvana.org.uk
- [Loving Me](http://www.lovingme.uk) – 07902 478958 - Domestic Abuse Service Support for trans and non-binary victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence www.lovingme.uk
- [Men's Advice Line UK](http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk) – 0808 8010327 – for male victims of domestic abuse – www.mensadviceline.org.uk
- [NSPCC](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe) - 0808 8005000 – advice for anyone concerned about child abuse - www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe
- [National Stalking Helpline](http://www.suzylamplugh.org/refer-someone-to-us) – 0808 8020300 – advice for anyone affected by stalking www.suzylamplugh.org/refer-someone-to-us
- [Refuge](https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/en) - 0800 2000247 - support for women and their children affected by domestic abuse - <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/en>
- [Relay](http://www.relayuk.bt.com) - enables people with hearing or speech impairment to contact emergency services – www.relayuk.bt.com
- [Respect](http://www.respect.org.uk) – 0808 8024040 – confidential support for men to stop violence - www.respect.org.uk

- [Revenge Porn Helpline](http://www.revengepornhelpline.org.uk) - 0345 6000 459 – support for adults experiencing intimate image abuse
www.revengepornhelpline.org.uk
- [Surviving Economic Abuse](http://www.survivingeconomicabuse.org) – support and advice about financial abuse and information about [how financial institutions can provide support](http://www.survivingeconomicabuse.org) www.survivingeconomicabuse.org
- [Vesta](http://www.vestasfs.org) – 0754 5075093 - advice about domestic abuse for the Polish community www.vestasfs.org
- [Victim Support](https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/) – 0808 1689111 – provide specialist advice for victims of domestic abuse - <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>
- [Women's Aid](http://www.womensaid.org.uk) – national charity working to end domestic abuse against women and children – website has comprehensive advice and links to specialist support www.womensaid.org.uk
- [Refugee Council](https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/) -national charity which works to support refugee and asylum seekers. The website has detailed advice and links to specialist support <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/>
- [Rights of women](https://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk/) – National charity dedicated to providing frontline legal advice to women and girls experiencing all forms of violence against women and girls in England and Wales.
<https://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk/>

How to access support if you are concerned about your own behaviour or that of someone you know:

We understand that it may be difficult to recognise and acknowledge that you, or someone you know is acting, or has acted abusively. If you or someone you know are displaying behaviours listed under the definition of the domestic abuse act 2021, there is support available.

Positive Choices (+Choices) is available for anyone aged 16 years or above, regardless of gender or sexuality, who are engaged in abusive behaviour towards their current or former intimate partners, or immediate family members, providing the opportunity to recognise, acknowledge and change that behaviour. Positive Choices provides Respect accredited commissioned perpetrator services in the City of York and

North Yorkshire. These services are designed to reduce risk to the victim-survivor and to work with the perpetrator in changing their behaviour.

Positive Choices provides support to a person causing harm, at all risk levels, offering different pathways of support including disrupt, triage and short-term support, one to one or group interventions, with the opportunity to then become a peer mentor. These services work alongside other agencies, including social care where there are children involved, specialist victim based domestic abuse services (IDAS) and the criminal justice system.

The aims are for individuals to be better able to recognise, acknowledge and change their abusive behaviours and to maintain a positive behaviour change. The service offers, a non-judgemental and supportive approach, whilst holding people to account and providing opportunities for them to choose to change.

Individuals must voluntarily want to address their behaviours in their relationships to engage with this service. An individual can self-refer or be referred by another professional or service.

If you are concerned about your own behaviour, or that of someone close to you, we would encourage you to contact +Choices program, telephone 01904 557491 or email foundationdapp@foundationuk.org.

For more information visit their website

<https://www.foundationuk.org/team/choices-domestic-abuse-perpetrator-programme/>

Respect is a national charity which also provides support to those who cause harm whilst holding them to account. For more details, please contact their helpline or visit their website: 0808 8024040

<https://www.respect.org.uk/>

Confidentiality and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Any information related to domestic abuse will be treated with sensitivity, and if it is recorded, it will be stored securely on our systems in accordance with GDPR. We will maintain confidentiality and prioritise gaining consent from victims/survivors before making referrals or taking further action, as far as it is practicable to do so.

We may have to share information with agencies such as the Police or City of York Council if an adult, with care and support needs is at risk of, or experiencing abuse or neglect, or a child is at serious risk of harm.

An adult safeguarding concern may be raised without consent, if you are concerned about an adult, (with care and support needs) and there is a vital interest, risk to life or it is in the public interest as others at risk, or if there was a concern that the person lacked mental capacity to consent, their capacity had been assessed and it was in their best interests. For more information, please visit: <https://www.york.gov.uk/adult-social-care/report-adult-abuse-york-safeguarding-adults>
<https://www.york.gov.uk/ChildProtection>

If an instance of domestic abuse meets the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) risk threshold or if there are child protection concerns, we have a legal duty to share information with relevant partner agencies in the interest of reducing risk to those concerned. We will ensure to inform those that may meet the MARAC risk threshold prior to any referral being made, as well as providing information on why this referral is being made and the support that can be available following on from this referral. For further information please visit: <https://www.northyorkshire.police.uk/police-forces/north-yorkshire-police/areas/about-us/marac/>

Consultation

We involved employees from across our organisation, including residents of the City, when developing this policy. We also consulted with key staff across the council including specialists in safeguarding and local statutory and non-statutory agencies. We worked with members of our Local Domestic Abuse Partnership and sought feedback from the national specialist agency the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) and consulted local specialist domestic abuse support

services. All the feedback which we received during consultation was used to improve and adapt the original draft document and provide clarity on the support the council will provide to victims of domestic abuse.

Link to other policies and policy review expectations.

We will review this policy, related strategy, and information sources every three years at minimum to ensure that it aligns with changes in research, national legislation, policies and local support and service provision.

We may also review this policy in response to (but not limited to): employee and resident/tenant/leaseholder feedback; local Domestic Abuse Related Death Review; Serious Case Review and Safeguarding Adult Review recommendations and findings.

This policy can be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- City of York & North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2028: <https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/9587/north-yorkshire-and-city-of-york-domestic-abuse-strategy-2024-2028>
- City Of York Safeguarding Children Partnership Policies & Procedures CYSCP: <https://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/resources/cyscp-documents-resources>
- City Of York Safeguarding Adults Board Policies & Procedures: <https://www.safeguardingadultsyork.org.uk/policy-procedures-4>
- City of York Allocations Policy: <https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/7784/city-of-york-council-housing-allocations-policy>
- City Of York ASB: <https://www.york.gov.uk/AntiSocialBehaviour>

This policy supports the following legislation:

- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

- Homeless Reduction Act 2017
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Anti-Social Behaviour and Policing Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- Care Act 2014 and Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2024.
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Violence Against Women and Girls National Statement of Expectations 2022