

Domestic Abuse Policy

Policy Name	Domestic Abuse Policy
Effective from <i>Month & year the policy runs from</i>	May 2025
Effective to <i>Month & year the policy runs to</i>	May 2027
Approved by <i>The group that gave final approval, e.g. Group Board / Risk & Compliance Group</i>	Customer Services Committee
Date Approved <i>Date the above group gave approval</i>	8 May 2025
Policy Owner/Department <i>The Director, department or team of YHG whose remit / responsibility covers the subject matter of the policy</i>	Housing Management
Policy Author <i>The individual responsible for the development and writing of a policy</i>	Sharon Wheeler, Service Manager, Safeguarding and Support
Version Number	V1

Version Control

Version	Date	Changes <i>Provide details that make clear all changes made to this version</i>	Reason for the changes <i>e.g. as a result of customer consultation, legislation etc.</i>	Approver <i>The group that approved the changes</i>
V1	May 2025	Section 1 Purpose of the Policy, then throughout. Change from referring to those experiencing domestic abuse from “survivors” to “victim/survivors” to reflect that we work with people currently experiencing domestic abuse and also those who need support following previous experiences. This is in line with DAHA guidance.	DAHA good practice	Customer Services Committee

	May 2025	Section 6 Background and Context Inclusion of statement that men can experience domestic abuse and it can happen in heterosexual, same sex and also family relationships. This is to ensure understanding that any YHG customer experiencing domestic abuse will be supported regardless of gender.	Colleague feedback	Customer Services Committee
	May 2025	Section 6 - Background and Context Removal of the statistics re domestic abuse. This was in response to EIA feedback that the statistics could be distracting or off putting to someone who wanted to understand what support we deliver, and they should be included in other awareness information.	Equality Impact Assessment and Colleague Feedback	Customer Services Committee
	May 2025	Section 7 -Policy Detail Ongoing work with victim/survivors of domestic abuse. Paragraph on the need to take a victim/survivor led approach. This is to emphasise that YHG will take the lead from victim/survivors regards what support is offered.	DAHA good practice	Customer Services Committee
	May 2025	Section 7 – Survivor Feedback	DAHA feedback	Customer Services Committee

		Reference to the need to obtain feedback from people with lived experience. This ensures that our service is relevant and aligns with DAHA standards.		
	May 2025	Section 8- Responsibilities under this Policy Change from “Safeguarding Champions” to “Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Champions” to recognise dual role.	DAHA feedback	Customer Services Committee
	May 2025	Section 14- Performance Management of this Policy Reference to domestic abuse cases being logged on our case management system, Datix.	Colleague feedback	Customer Services Committee
	May 2025	Section 14- Performance Management of this Policy Reference to ensuring policy is implemented through colleague training and awareness raising. This is to ensure that relevant colleagues are trained and aware of the service we offer in relation to domestic abuse.	DAHA feedback	Customer Services Committee
	May 2025	Section 14- Performance Management of this policy Reference to raising awareness with customers via social media, YHG website and newsletters.	DAHA good practice	Customer Services Committee

	May 2025	Appendix 1 Statement of role and responsibilities of statutory services	Colleague feedback	Customer Services Committee
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The YHG Plan <i>Please indicate where the policy aligns with the YHG Plan</i>	
Passionate people <input type="checkbox"/>	Efficient business <input type="checkbox"/>
Safe buildings <input type="checkbox"/>	Viability <input type="checkbox"/>
Safe environment <input type="checkbox"/>	Advocating <input type="checkbox"/>
Secure and connected <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Working in Partnership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Growth <input type="checkbox"/>	

Relevant National Standards or Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy Standard • Neighbourhood and Community Standard
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Relevant Legislation	Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) Data Protection Act 2018 Modern Slavery Act 2015 Serious Crime Act 2015 Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing 2014 Protection of Freedoms Act 2014 Equality Act 2010 Police and Justice Act 2006 Child Safeguarding legislation including Children Act 2004 The Children Act 2004 Domestic Violence Crime and Victim Act 2004 (S9 implemented in 2011 Sexual Offences Act 2003 Human Rights Act 1998 Protection from Harassment Act 1997 The Care Act 1996 Housing Act 1996
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Partner Responsibilities	See Appendix 1 - Roles and responsibilities of statutory agencies
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1. Purpose of the Policy

Perpetrators of domestic abuse can have a devastating impact on the lives of their victim/survivors and their actions can result in injury, trauma and potentially death. The policy applies to anyone living in our properties or receiving a service from us. We have a separate policy which applies to YHG colleagues, contractors, and volunteers.

This policy sets out how YHG will respond to anyone experiencing domestic abuse and the key principles that underpin our response. The policy also sets out how we will hold perpetrators to account.

It recognises the need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies with greater experience of domestic abuse in order to reduce the risk of harm to victim/survivors.

Our aim is to support victim/survivors of domestic abuse by:

- Speaking to the customer and taking account of any safety concerns around communication
- Listening and believing their account
- Working with them to assess risk and agree an appropriate action plan.

We will work with relevant external agencies, share information appropriately and in line with GDPR and our data sharing protocols.

We will work with victim/survivors ensuring we stay focused on their individual needs and the needs of their family/ household.

This policy is supported by YHG's Domestic Abuse Procedure and the Safeguarding Procedure.

2. Scope of the Policy

This document should be used by employees, contractors and volunteers of YHG to understand how YHG should respond to disclosures or incidents of domestic abuse relating to those living in our properties or receiving a service from us.

A separate policy "Colleague Disclosure of Domestic Abuse" details our response to colleagues, contractors and volunteers who disclose that they and their household are affected by domestic abuse.

3. Definitions

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines abusive behaviour as any of the following:

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

Domestic abuse can encompass, but is not limited to, the above types of abuse. It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

Both parties must be 16 and over and “personally connected”, defined as being married or civil partners; or have agreed to a marriage or civil partnership; are or have been in an intimate personal relationship with each other; or have a parental relationship with the same child; or are relatives. Domestic Abuse can also occur between adult children and parents, or those in similar relationships.

The term ‘violence against women and girls’ refers to acts of violence or abuse that we know disproportionately affect women and girls. Crimes and behaviour covered by this term include rape and other sexual offences, domestic abuse, stalking, so called ‘honour’-based abuse, as well as many others, including offences committed online.

Children

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victim/survivors of domestic abuse. Any reference in the Act to a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who (a) sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse, and (b) is related to either of the parties.

Children living in households where domestic abuse occurs are recognised as victim/s of that abuse in their own right and our approach reflects this. The safety of all victim/survivors is our priority, and we will inform statutory services where we believe that a child is harmed or at risk due to domestic violence.

We will also make appropriate safeguarding referrals in respect of any vulnerable adult who may also be impacted by the abuse.

YHG will ensure that relevant employees are familiar with the statutory definition of domestic abuse, and with the abusive behaviours detailed within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and the Government’s strategy on Tackling Violence against women and girls’ strategy (2021).

4. Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) values and principles

YHG is committed to the values and principles of the [Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance](#). These are integral to and underpin our approach to supporting victim/survivors of domestic abuse.

5. Consultation

Consultation has taken place with the Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Group, YHG Equality Impact Assessors Group, Local Authority Safeguarding Boards. We have also consulted with customers as well as specialist domestic abuse services.

6. Background and Context

This policy sets out how YHG will help and support YHG customers who are experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse. This includes considering the needs of children and others impacted by the abuse.

We understand that our offer to victim/survivors needs to come from a place of understanding and respect.

It is our intention to work in line with the following principles:

- Integrity- we will be open and honest in our dealing with customers and colleagues
- Empathy- we will listen and try to fully understand their situation
- Empowerment and respect- we will work together with victim/survivors and ensure that their wishes are acknowledged and understood, recognising the insight they have into their situation, and the steps they've already taken to keep themselves safe
- Accountability- we will be accountable and willing to discuss options and be honest about what we are able to do
- Focus on victim/survivor Safety- we will ensure victim/survivor safety is our priority, ensuring their voices are heard and their well-being is at the heart of what we do
- No Judgement- we will be non-judgemental and seek to understand the victim/survivor's experiences.

We understand that people have different experiences of disadvantage and discrimination depending on their characteristics, identity and background. In keeping our approach person centred, we will aim to acknowledge and understand the individual needs of victim/survivors and offer services and approaches that take

account of their identity as a whole. This includes considering specific and intersecting needs based on race, gender, sexuality, religion and culture.

We recognise that domestic abuse is a largely gendered crime with the vast majority of victim/survivors being women and girls. However, we understand that anyone can be a victim/survivor of domestic abuse regardless of age, gender, race or sexuality. Men experience domestic abuse as well as women. Domestic abuse can occur in heterosexual and in same sex relationships. It can also occur in family relationships.

We understand that domestic abuse is a crime that happens within a community, and we will work in partnership with national and local agencies such as specialist services run by Black, minoritized, LGBT+, Deaf or disabled groups for people in those communities, (‘For and By Services’) local authorities, the police, and health services, to provide a co-ordinated community response.

7. Policy Detail

Disclosures of Domestic Abuse

We will accept reports and disclosures of domestic abuse through any available communication channel and ensure all incidents are logged.

Where a colleague suspects or witnesses domestic abuse taking place in our homes, they must log the incident onto our risk reporting system.

We will provide clear guidance and training for all relevant colleagues on being alert to the signs of domestic abuse, how to report concerns and disclosures and how relevant colleagues manage cases of domestic abuse.

Where disclosure is made or YHG become aware that someone may be at risk due to domestic abuse, we will:

- Contact the victim/survivor taking safety into consideration so that telling us doesn’t put them at further risk. We will also agree how ongoing contact will be maintained.
- We will always accept the victim/survivor’s account as a true reflection of events.

Assessing Risk

- Work with them to assess the risk to them and their household/ family

- Work proactively with the victim/survivor to identify options and support them to make choices that best meets their needs, and those of their family/household
- Work in partnership with agencies such as the Police, Social Care, Children's Services and other specialist support, advice and accommodation groups to support the customer and reduce risk.
- Support the lead statutory agency in taking action against those committing the abuse. This includes taking tenancy enforcement action against perpetrators where it is appropriate to do so and does not put the victim/survivor at further risk.

Ongoing work with victim/survivors

Our approach will be survivor led as we understand that respecting and understanding the victim/survivors needs and wishes is vital in offering effective support. This involves working with the victim/survivor at their own pace and respecting any decision that they make about engaging with us. Where we do have to contact statutory agencies due to serious risk of harm to the victim/survivor, children or adults' risk we will notify and explain this to the victim/survivor where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

We will work with the survivor to review the risk and update any action plan on an ongoing basis.

We will consider the safety of the victim/survivor's home and offer additional security or alternative housing options based on circumstances.

We consider any access or communication needs that the victim/survivor may have for example we will offer domestic abuse victim/survivors the opportunity to access translation services, meeting them at a safe location outside their property, if needed, or the opportunity to speak to a YHG employee of the same gender, where possible.

We also acknowledge that not all victim/survivors of domestic abuse end the relationship with the perpetrator, and we will work to support and maximise victim/survivor safety whilst being respectful of their decision.

We understand that the victim/survivor may have practical and emotional reasons which they feel stops them making the decisions and taking the action they want. We will work with victim/survivor to provide advice and support on any barriers and challenges they have.

Protecting children and vulnerable adults

We will make a safeguarding referral to the relevant local authority when needed to protect children or vulnerable adults impacted by the abuse.

Working in partnership to provide a community response

YHG will work with local agencies or partnerships to ensure victim/survivors are supported in the most effective way. We will identify specialist domestic abuse support agencies and develop links and working relationships, so we are able to refer victim/survivors to services that reflect their own identities and characteristics and who are better placed to understand and meet their needs. This could be specialist services based on victim/survivors' gender, age, sexuality, culture, religion, race or ethnicity.

Survivor Feedback

YHG will continually improve our response to domestic abuse by asking for and learning from victim/survivor feedback, colleagues or customers with lived experience and feedback from other agencies including Domestic Homicide Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews, and Serious Case Reviews.

We will establish clear lines of responsibility and accountability for the detection, recording and reporting of domestic abuse incidents. We will undertake regular audits to ensure policy and procedures are followed.

YHG colleagues

YHG has a responsibility to provide all colleagues with a safe and effective working environment. YHG have a separate policy in relation to managing domestic abuse towards colleagues, which includes volunteers and contractors.

Action against the perpetrator

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 specifies that we must hold perpetrators of domestic abuse to account. Committing domestic abuse in a YHG property is a crime and a breach of tenancy. YHG are committed to managing domestic abuse cases on an individual basis, with a victim/survivor focused approach whilst holding perpetrators to account.

In holding perpetrators to account we will:

- Ensure that our colleague training reflects the principle that responsibility for domestic abuse lies with the perpetrator

- That our publicity and awareness raising on domestic abuse puts an emphasis on perpetrator responsibility
- Case management focuses on ways to support victim/survivors so disruption to their lives is minimised including sign posting to legal help to enable this
- Work with partner agencies including the Police to share information or evidence that may support perpetrator prosecution
Consider taking action to end a perpetrator's tenancy where appropriate.

We will work alongside victim/survivors to ensure that any action we take is done so in partnership with them and their wishes will be considered.

We will consider appropriate action to take against the perpetrator. However, we will not take action against the perpetrator if it may increase the risk to the survivor. Our top priority is to ensure the survivor's safety and wellbeing.

In circumstances where it is appropriate to do so, we may refer perpetrators to domestic abuse perpetrator programmes. We will manage any breach of tenancy agreement by perpetrators in line with the Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Policy and Procedure.

8. Responsibilities under this Policy

Relevant colleagues are responsible for implementing this policy and being vigilant in identifying any incidents that may fall under it. Incidents should be discussed with the colleague's line Manager. Managers should refer to the domestic abuse procedure and other relevant guidance.

If any colleague has any concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child and/or adult at risk, they must immediately follow the YHG Safeguarding Procedure.

Responsibility for carrying out this policy rests with relevant colleagues

This includes:

- Your Housing Group employees
- Agency Colleagues where relevant
- The Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Champions and leads are available for providing advice and support to managers.

9. Risk Management

Responding appropriately to domestic abuse is a key responsibility for housing, care and support providers. We understand the risks posed to customers due to domestic abuse and YHG will seek to mitigate risk through this policy. When responding to any incident, we take a risk-based view of the actions being taken to ensure that the most appropriate action is taken, and the welfare and safety of customers and colleagues are at the forefront. This is also reflected in any safeguarding risk which is identified and managed through the Group Risk Management Framework.

10. Data Protection, Record Storage and Retention

It is recognised that incidents of domestic abuse are extremely sensitive incidents for victim/survivors to report and YHG shall maintain the confidentiality of a disclosure regarding violence to the extent allowed by law and unless to do so would result in significant risk of harm to any person on any cases that are reported.

YHG will however, share relevant information with local agencies such as the police, MARAC and other groups where necessary, to deal with cases more effectively by either gathering extra evidence to carry out enforcement measures against the perpetrator or sharing information in the interests of the victim/survivor and/or their dependants to provide better or more effective support.

The principles of UK GDPR and YHG's Data Protection Policy will apply to this Policy.

11. Equality and Diversity

The policy complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 to ensure equality of treatment for all customers without discrimination or prejudice. Domestic abuse can be experienced by anyone, including those with protected characteristics and males.

Issues around diversity have been considered regarding access to and delivery of any services covered by the policy.

An EIA has been undertaken on this policy.

On request, YHG will provide translations of all its documents, policies in various languages and other accessible formats.

12. Communication

Colleagues will be made aware of the policy and related procedures and have a responsibility to keep up to date with it. Domestic abuse training will also refer to the policy. YHG's Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Champions will also play a key role in communicating YHG's domestic abuse policies and procedures and providing guidance and support.

We are committed to raising awareness of domestic abuse and a key part of this is ensuring that our residents and communities are clear on our position. This includes giving information in newsletters, resident communication and on our website. We will regularly publicise on internal colleague platforms and external resident platforms and provide training for relevant colleagues.

13. Learning and Development

Training on domestic abuse is available as part of training on Safeguarding. YHG is committed to have arrangements in place to ensure effective training of all colleagues. YHG expects all YHG colleagues to be trained in children and adult safeguarding at level 1.

Front-line colleagues in specific roles will receive face to face training on Domestic Abuse. YHG Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Champions will also be available to support colleagues on responding appropriately to reports or incidents of domestic abuse.

14. Performance Management of this Policy

Cases of domestic abuse will be logged on our case management system and reviewed by the appropriate manager. The Safeguarding team will audit all domestic abuse cases and report findings to YHG Risk and Compliance Group including any trends. The team will also identify any issues with case management and report to the relevant Heads of Service and Service Managers.

We will also ensure that this policy is implemented through regular and effective colleague training, and awareness raising amongst team.

We will raise awareness of the policy amongst our customers by using social media campaigns, YHG website and newsletter articles.

The effectiveness of this policy will also be monitored through case management reviews.

15. Review of this Policy

This policy will be formally reviewed on a two-year basis in consultation with customers and partner agencies of Your Housing Group, to reflect changes in research, national legislation and policy and local support and service provision.

Appendix 1

Role and responsibilities of statutory agencies

Agency	Role
Adult Social Care	To protect and promote an adult's right to live a independent life in safety free from neglect (including self neglect) abuse and exploitation
Children's Services	To safeguard and promote the welfare of children
Community Mental Health team	To provide support and treatment for individuals with mental health needs withing their homes and communities
Mental Health Crisis Team	Responds to individual's experiencing mental health crisis where urgent support is needed to ensure their safety or the safety of others
Community Drug and Alcohol Service	Provides community based support with drug and alcohol issues
Police	Maintain public safety and order, prevent and detect crime. Respond to emergencies. Work with the community to reduce crime and improve quality of life
Fire and Rescue Service	Protects the public and property from fire and other emergencies such as extreme weather events and traffic incidents. Advises on safety issues within the community for example carries out risk assessments on properties where hoarding occurs.

Related Documents

Document Type	Name
Connected Policies and Procedures	<p><i>DAHA: It links to all relevant policies including but not restricted to safeguarding, data protection, anti-social behaviour, eviction, arrears/damage policies.</i></p> <p>Domestic Abuse Procedure Domestic Abuse Colleague Disclosure Policy</p> <p>Safeguarding Policy Safeguarding Procedure</p> <p>Data Protection Policy ASB & Hate Crime Policy Customer Feedback Policy Tenancy Policy Repairs & Maintenance Policy Neighbourhood Management Policy Income Policy</p>
Forms and Letters	
Leaflets/Publicity Material	
Training Materials Available	
Intranet/ Website Page	