

Housing Domestic Abuse Policy

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Version	Author	Date	Changes
0.1	Maria Ramos	17/09/2026	



1. Introduction

Redbridge Council is committed to ensuring that all residents can live safely, free from domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is a serious crime and a significant safeguarding concern that can affect anyone, regardless of age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or socio-economic background.

This policy applies to all Redbridge Council tenants, leaseholders, and residents approaching the Council as homeless due to domestic abuse. It sets out how the Housing service identifies, responds to, and supports those experiencing domestic abuse, and how we work with partners to reduce harm and promote safety.

Domestic abuse can be hidden, complex and long-term. Staff across Housing services have a responsibility to recognise indicators of abuse, respond safely and sensitively, and ensure residents receive timely and appropriate support. Our approach is guided by the principles of safety, dignity, empowerment, and partnership working.

2. Policy Aims and Principles

The aims of this policy are to:

- Provide a clear, trauma-informed framework for responding to domestic abuse.
- Ensure that victims/survivors are listened to, believed, and supported to make informed choices.
- Promote early identification of domestic abuse and timely intervention.
- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities and have access to appropriate training.
- Work collaboratively with specialist services and statutory partners to reduce harm.
- Maintain a consistent, sensitive and confidential service for all residents.
- Ensure compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community Standard.

Our principles in relation to domestic abuse are:

- **Safety first** – the safety of victims/survivors and their children is paramount.
- **Trauma-informed practice** – recognising the impact of trauma and responding with empathy.
- **Choice and empowerment** – supporting victims/survivors to make decisions about their lives.

- **Non-judgemental response** – treating all residents with dignity and respect.
- **Partnership working** – collaborating with Reach Out, the Police, Social Care and other agencies.
- **Confidentiality** – sharing information only where lawful and necessary to protect from harm.

3. Scope and Definitions

3.1 Scope

This policy applies to:

- Council tenants and leaseholders
- Residents approaching as homeless due to domestic abuse
- Residents affected by domestic abuse who are not the named tenant
- Staff responding to disclosures or concerns of domestic abuse

3.2 Definition of Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 as behaviour between individuals aged 16 or over who are personally connected, where the behaviour is abusive. Abuse may include:

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

Domestic abuse may consist of a single incident or a pattern of behaviour.

3.3 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Redbridge adopts the VAWG framework, recognising that domestic abuse disproportionately affects women and girls, while acknowledging that men, boys and people of all genders can also be victims/survivors.

3.4 Identifying Domestic Abuse

Staff should be alert to indicators such as:

- Behavioural changes
- Unexplained injuries
- Rent arrears linked to financial control

- Neighbour reports
- Safeguarding concerns

Disclosures may be direct or indirect. Staff must respond sensitively and without judgement.

4. Reporting Concerns

Residents can disclose domestic abuse through any contact with Housing staff. We will:

- Offer safe, flexible reporting routes
- Provide a non-judgemental, confidential environment
- Record concerns accurately
- Assess immediate risks and take appropriate action

Residents may also self-refer to the Council's Reach Out domestic abuse service by phone or email.

Where the victim/survivor or alleged perpetrator is not the named tenant, we will still offer support, safeguarding referrals and signposting. Housing options may differ, and staff will explain these clearly.

5. Support and Prevention

We will provide support tailored to each victim/survivor's circumstances, recognising that experiences of domestic abuse vary widely. Our approach is trauma-informed and person-centred, prioritising safety, choice and empowerment.

Support may include:

- Safety planning
- Sanctuary scheme measures (e.g., lock changes, fire-proof letterboxes)
- Advice on housing options
- Referrals to Reach Out, Social Care, Police or other agencies
- Independent interpreters where needed
- Support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse

Where survivors have additional vulnerabilities—such as disability, mental health needs, substance misuse or language barriers—we will adapt support accordingly and follow safeguarding pathways.

We recognise that some residents may disclose historical abuse. We will still offer support, signposting and safeguarding where appropriate, and consider tenancy-related actions if ongoing risks are identified.

6. Investigation and Action

Actions will be based on a risk assessment and agreed with the victim/survivor in an action plan. Housing may:

- Provide safe and suitable accommodation
- Maintain the survivor's social housing status where required by law
- Refer high-risk cases to MARAC
- Make safeguarding referrals
- Support Clare's Law disclosure requests

We will provide clear timescales for agreed actions and maintain regular updates.

7. Working With Perpetrators

Redbridge Housing has a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse. Where appropriate, we will:

- Work with enforcement partners to manage perpetrator behaviour
- Consider tenancy enforcement, injunctions or other legal remedies
- Engage with the Open Up programme within Reach Out
- Ensure any action is risk-assessed to avoid escalating harm

All actions will be discussed with the victim/survivor and included in the action plan.

8. Partnership Working

We will work collaboratively with:

- Reach Out (including the Open Up programme)
- Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs)
- Adult Social Care
- Children's Social Care
- Police
- Public Health
- Drug and Alcohol Services
- Mental Health Services

We will participate in multi-agency forums, including MARAC, to share learning and improve practice.

9. Data Management and Confidentiality

All domestic abuse case information will be recorded on the CX case management system, stored securely and accessed only on a need-to-know basis.

We will share information lawfully where necessary to protect victims/survivors or children from harm. Where information must be shared without consent, we will explain the reasons wherever it is safe to do so.

The address of a victim/survivor rehoused for safety will not be disclosed without their consent.

10. Legislation and Standards

The following legislation and policies are relevant to and taken account of in developing this policy:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Crime and Security Act 2010
- Care Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Regulator of Social Housing – Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Redbridge VAWG Strategy
- Redbridge Corporate Plan

11. Equality and Diversity

The Council is committed to treating all tenants with fairness, respect, and professionalism, regardless of their personal characteristics.

To ensure equal access to services, the Council will provide this strategy in multiple languages and formats upon request.

We will seek out the views of communities or persons who experience barriers and ensure we understand and address them.

12. Complaints

Concerns or complaints about engagement activity will be managed through the Council's Complaints Policy and the Housing Ombudsman route where appropriate.

13. Monitoring and Review

Monitoring

We will monitor and review to ensure the Strategy continues to meet its objectives and provide improved outcomes.

Review

The policy will be reviewed every three years in consultation with tenant representatives, staff and other stakeholders unless there are any reasons, such as legislative changes, requiring that it be reviewed earlier.

We will:

- Monitor domestic abuse cases and outcomes
- Audit casework to ensure compliance and identify learning
- Maintain up-to-date records of local support agencies
- Complete an equality impact assessment as part of each review

Directorate	Housing Management
Responsible Person	Maria Ramos
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