



**manningham**  
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

# **DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY**

## 1. BACKGROUND

**1.1** Manningham Housing Association (MHA) is a social housing provider regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing. We provide homes for around 1,400 households, mainly in Bradford and Keighley. Our homes include properties for rent and shared ownership.

**1.2** We understand that domestic abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of background, disability, age, gender, religion, sexuality or ethnicity. It affects people of all genders, including those in LGBT relationships. People with disabilities experience disproportionately higher rates of Domestic Abuse than those without.

**1.3** MHA is committed to supporting all victims of domestic abuse and making sure they are safe. No one should have to live in fear or suffer violence or abuse. We also believe perpetrators must be held accountable for their actions. MHA will take appropriate action against perpetrators of Domestic Abuse in line with its Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) policy and procedure.

**1.4** In many Asian communities, domestic abuse often goes unreported because victims fear bringing shame or dishonour to their families. There is also very little data about male victims of domestic abuse in BAME communities, but local services in Bradford report growing demand for support from men.

**1.5** As a housing association led by people from BAME backgrounds, we know our staff need the right training to spot and respond properly to domestic abuse affecting BAME and other communities.

## 2. REGULATORY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

**2.1** The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 became law in April 2021. It introduced important changes, including:

**2.1.1 Updated definition of domestic abuse** – now includes children as victims and recognises economic abuse as a form of domestic abuse.

**2.1.2 New duty for local councils** – they must provide support for victims and their children in safe accommodation.

**2.1.3 New protection measures** – Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPNs) and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs), introduced by the Act and

being implemented through phased rollout, are intended to combine the strongest elements of existing orders to better protect victims and manage perpetrators.

**2.1.4 New criminal offences** – New and strengthened criminal offences - including the offence of non-fatal strangulation and enhanced protections against threats to share intimate images, ensuring abusers face serious consequences.

**2.1.5 Family court reforms** – perpetrators can no longer cross-examine victims, victims automatically qualify for special measures, and rules on barring orders have been clarified.

**2.1.6 Domestic Abuse Commissioner role** – an independent voice to champion victims and hold public bodies accountable.

**2.2** The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has seen further amendments, most notably through the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Amendment) Regulations 2024, which added the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) as a specified public authority for cooperation with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, but the main Act remains the core legislation, with ongoing implementation and minor updates via regulations.

### **Key Amendments & Updates:**

- 1. 2024 Regulations:** These regulations came into force in April 2024 and specifically mandated the IOPC to work with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, enhancing oversight.
- 2. Statutory Guidance:** The Act also includes provisions for statutory codes of practice and guidance, such as for Clare's Law and data processing.
- 3. Housing Provisions:** Key housing protections, like automatically granting priority need for homeless victims and ensuring secure tenancies, apply specifically in England.

**2.3** In March 2022, the Government launched the 'Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan' to build on these reforms. It focuses on four main areas:

- 1. Preventing abuse** – stopping people from becoming perpetrators or victims.
- 2. Supporting victims** – helping survivors rebuild their lives and meet health, emotional, financial and social needs.
- 3. Pursuing perpetrators** – reducing repeat offences and ensuring offenders face justice.
- 4. Strengthening the system** – improving how agencies respond to domestic abuse.

**2.4** This policy aligns with the **Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood & Community Standard** (as part of the Consumer Standards effective April 2024), which requires housing providers to work with other agencies to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB), including domestic abuse. Providers must:

- Publish a policy on how they will work with partners to prevent and tackle ASB.
- Make sure tenants know their rights and responsibilities.
- Show strong leadership and work closely with local agencies.
- Focus on prevention tailored to tenants' needs.
- Act quickly and decisively to stop ASB before it escalates, using all available tools and legal powers.
- Make reporting easy, keep tenants informed, and signpost them to help when needed.
- Provide support to victims and witnesses.

**2.5** This policy also considers other relevant laws.

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- The Serious Crime Act 2015
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2012 (Amendments)
- Clare's Law - The Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme is a safeguarding policy in the UK that allows people to ask the police whether their partner (or a partner of someone they know) has a history of domestic abuse.
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Family Law Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Housing Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010

### **3. DEFINITION**

#### **3.1 What is Domestic Abuse?**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 says domestic abuse is when one person behaves abusively towards another person they have a personal connection with, and both are aged 16 or over.

### 3.2 Personal connection means:

- They are or were married or civil partners
- They agreed to marry or enter a civil partnership (even if it didn't happen)
- They have been in an intimate relationship
- They share parental responsibility for the same child
- They are relatives

### 3.3 Abusive behaviour includes:

- Physical or sexual abuse (any force or unwanted sexual behaviour)
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour (this behaviour usually involves a pattern of behaviour rather than a single incident)
- Economic abuse (restricting access to money, property, goods or services)
- Psychological or emotional abuse (such as threats, isolation, humiliation, or making someone feel afraid or worthless)

**3.4** It can be one incident or a pattern of behaviour. Abuse can also include harming someone else to upset the victim, for example, their child.

**3.5 Children are victims too** if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse and are related to the victim or the victim has parental responsibility for them.

**3.6** This definition also covers **honour-based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage**. Abuse can happen to anyone – men, women, and in same-sex relationships.

### Examples of abuse:

- **Controlling behaviour:** Making someone dependent by isolating them, taking away independence, and controlling daily life.
- **Coercive behaviour:** Threats, intimidation, humiliation, or harm to frighten or punish someone.
- **Emotional abuse:** Bullying, shouting, ignoring, enforced isolation, undermining self-esteem.
- **Physical abuse:** From a slap or shove to serious injury – even death in extreme cases.

- **Sexual abuse:** Forcing or pressuring someone into sex or sexual acts they don't want.
- **Financial abuse:** Taking money, stopping someone working, putting debts in their name, or controlling spending.
- **Honour-based violence:** Planned attacks, often by family or community, to punish someone for "bringing shame".
- **Forced marriage:** When someone is pressured or abused into marrying against their will.
- **FGM:** Deliberately cutting or injuring female genitals for non-medical reasons.

## 4. OUR APPROACH TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

4.1 We want to prevent abuse and reduce harm for anyone experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse. Here's what we will do:

- **Easy reporting:** Customers can report domestic abuse to us in different ways. We will look into every report we receive.
- **Trained staff:** Our staff will get specialist training to deal with domestic abuse properly.
- **Support for everyone:** We will help anyone experiencing abuse, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, religion or background.
- **Working with partners:** We will work with other organisations to support victims and, where possible, take action against perpetrators without putting victims at risk.
- **Sharing information:** We will share details with agencies like Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Bradford Women's Aid, Staying Put and Bradford Domestic Abuse Services when needed.
- **Confidential response:** All cases will be managed sensitively and in confidence where reasonably practicable. If a case meets MARAC criteria or raises safeguarding concerns, we will share information with the right agencies.
- **Multi-agency meetings:** With the victim's agreement, we will arrange meetings with other agencies to make sure they get full support.
- **Choice and language support:** Victims can ask for a staff member of a specific gender or, where possible, the same ethnic background. We will provide translation services if needed.
- **Safe contact:** Victims can meet staff in confidence at our offices or another safe place. We will agree on the best way to keep in touch.
- **Protecting privacy:** In joint tenancies, perpetrators have a right to see tenancy files. We will take steps like anonymising cases and hiding confidential details to protect victims.
- **Home security:** We will work with partners to improve home security if needed.

- **Financial help:** We will refer victims to our Welfare Benefits & Financial Support Officer for money-related issues.
- **Legal advice:** We will signpost victims to organisations that can give legal advice.
- **External support:** We will tell victims about other agencies that can help and work with partners to keep victims and their children safe.
- **Action plan:** We will agree a plan with the victim, monitor progress and review it regularly.
- **Action against perpetrators:** Where there is evidence and it is safe to do so, we will take firm action against perpetrators and keep partner agencies informed.
- **Police support:** We will report incidents to the police on behalf of victims or help them do so if they feel too scared. We can also offer third-party reporting.
- **Emergency housing:** We will help victims access emergency accommodation through the Housing Options Team and refer them to refuges via the National Domestic Violence Helpline or other agencies like Staying Put.

## 5. ENFORCEMENT MEASURES

**5.1** If appropriate, MHA will take action against perpetrators of domestic abuse. This could include:

- **Possession proceedings** – starting the process to remove the perpetrator from the property.
- **Ending a starter tenancy** – deciding not to extend an Assured Shorthold (Starter) Tenancy.
- **Injunctions or undertakings** – legal orders to stop abusive behaviour.
- **Non-molestation orders** – court orders to prevent harassment or harm.

**5.2** We will only take enforcement action with the victim's consent or when it is reasonable, proportionate and necessary. Action may also be taken if the perpetrator's behaviour causes nuisance or annoyance to neighbours.

**5.3** If the perpetrator has serious criminal convictions linked to their address and the action is justified, MHA will seek possession of the property.

**5.4** We also support victims in getting **Non-Molestation Orders** by signposting them to a family law solicitor. In some cases, we may apply for housing-related injunctions with a power of arrest or exclusion orders, especially if the abuse is affecting neighbours as well as the victim.

## **6. Training and Safety**

**6.1** All relevant staff must complete domestic abuse training:

- Staff who handle domestic abuse cases will get specialist training to help them recognise and respond to issues.
- All staff will be familiar with MHA's Lone Worker Policy, and we will assess risks before visiting victims or perpetrators.

**6.2 Working Together:**

- We know not all staff are experts and we don't have the resources to manage every aspect of domestic abuse alone.
- We will work with legal, statutory and voluntary services to make sure victims get the right support in a co-ordinated way.

## **7. Staff and Domestic Abuse**

**7.1** We understand that MHA staff may also be victims of domestic abuse and will handle these cases sensitively.

**7.2** If a staff member is a convicted perpetrator of domestic abuse, this will be dealt with under our HR policies.

**7.3** All staff experiencing domestic abuse will receive support, regardless of gender or type of abuse. MHA will also actively support any staff member who wants to take action against a perpetrator, including signposting them to specialist services.

**7.4** If we become aware of harassment, intimidation or unwelcome contact at work by an alleged perpetrator, we will report it immediately so it can be addressed.

**7.5** Staff should be aware that any misconduct, whether occurring inside or outside work, is taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action, particularly if it affects their ability to perform their role or brings the organisation into serious disrepute. Domestic abuse is a serious matter and can also lead to criminal charges.

**7.6** If both the victim and perpetrator work for MHA, we will take the most appropriate action once notified.

## **8. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

**8.1** We will treat all personal and sensitive information as confidential, following the Data Protection Act 1998 and UK GDPR 2018, in line with MHA's GDPR Policy.

**8.2** We will only share information with third parties, such as statutory organisations, if required by law; for example:

- To prevent or detect crime or to help prosecute offenders.
- There is an information/data sharing protocol, contract or confidentiality agreement in place.
- The person who gave us the information is happy for us to share the information.
- Our employees will always respect confidentiality and will not share any information given in confidence unless justified by the assessed risk to the vulnerable person or required by law.
- Confidentiality will be discussed with the customer where there are safeguarding concerns or alerts, and an explanation will be given that this information may need to be shared with other people for the situation to be resolved.
- Where Safeguarding concerns are identified while dealing with Domestic Abuse then staff should refer to the Safeguarding – Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and act in accordance with guidance set out in the policy.

## **9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

**9.1** As Bradford's only Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) housing association, MHA is actively committed to promoting and embedding a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion. MHA is an organization which values differences and enables individuals to be their authentic selves.

**9.2** Our aims are for the organization to be a leading voice for BAME communities, to be truly representative of all sections of society and communities we service, and for each member of our staff, residents, and other stakeholders to feel respected and valued.

## **10. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

**10.1** We will monitor and review policy in conjunction with residents to ensure its effectiveness and relevance to MHA's stated aims and objectives.

**10.2** The Director of Operations has overall responsibility for the on-going monitoring of the policy through the work of frontline staff, particularly those engaged in tenancy management. The policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner due to statutory, regulatory or good practice requirements

<b>Policy Name</b>	Domestic Abuse Policy
<b>Date of Customer Panel Consultation</b>	20 January 2026
<b>Equality Impact Assessment Completed</b>	Yes
<b>Date Approved by CEC</b>	February 2026
<b>Next Review date</b>	February 2029
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Director of Operations