

First Affordable Limited: Domestic Abuse Policy

Version	V1.0	Author	Altair
Policy Owner:	Board	Approved by:	Board
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1 | Introduction

- 1.1. At First Affordable Limited (“FAL”), we have a zero tolerance approach to domestic abuse. We recognise that anyone can experience abuse and that it affects both men and women including those in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (“LGBT”) relationships. We are committed to supporting victims/survivors of domestic abuse regardless of gender or sexuality or any other protected characteristic.
- 1.2. This policy explains how FAL and anyone acting on FAL’s behalf will respond to reports of domestic abuse.

2 | Legal and Regulatory Requirements

- 2.1. The Regulator of Social Housing’s Neighbourhood and Community Standard 2024 requires all registered providers to have a policy on how they recognise and respond to cases of domestic abuse.
- 2.2. The following legislation is relevant to this policy:
 - Domestic Abuse Act 2021
 - Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
 - Protection from Harassment Act 1997
 - The Family Law Act 1996
 - Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Data Protection Act 2018
 - Housing Act 1996
 - Housing Act 1988
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014

3 | Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all residents of FAL who have a legal relationship with us (i.e. are a tenant, leaseholder or licensee).

- 3.2. Any managing agents or contractors working with or on our behalf are responsible for delivering services in line with this policy requirement.

4 | Definitions

- 4.1. FAL recognises the definition of domestic abuse as defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 4.2. **Domestic abuse:** is an incident or course of conduct where the behaviour of A towards B, if they are aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other and the behaviour is abusive. Behaviour is considered 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
- 4.3. Children are also considered to be victims of domestic abuse if they see or hear, or experience the effects of domestic abuse and are related to A or B.
- 4.4. **Victim/Survivor:** We have used the term victim/survivor as we understand that some people experiencing domestic abuse may not identify themselves as victims of abuse.

5 | Accessibility and Awareness

- 5.1. Reports of domestic abuse can be made by phone, by email, by letter, in person to an employee of FAL or their managing agent or through a third party/representative. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, FAL will make reasonable adjustments to ensure residents can contact to make a report.
- 5.2. We do not currently operate social media channels or accept contact through social media. This may be reviewed in the future.
- 5.3. The FAL website will (once established) will include information on how to contact and raise a concern or report of domestic abuse. Other sources will be used to raise awareness of how domestic abuse can be reported including, but not limited to, newsletters.

6 | Policy

- 6.1. FAL and its managing agents will take all reports of domestic abuse seriously.
- 6.2. The approach to each case will be person-centred and a risk assessment will be undertaken for the victim/survivor and the alleged perpetrator. When a report is

received, the alleged victim/survivor will be contacted within one working day and the risk assessment undertaken. Actions will then be agreed with the victim/survivor depending on the case and the diverse needs of the victim/survivor. The SafeLives Dash risk checklist will be used for the identification of domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour-based' violence.

- 6.3. FAL and its managing agent(s) will ensure relevant employees have an understanding of domestic abuse, are able to recognise the signs and know how to respond and deal with any reports and cases.
- 6.4. When responding, employees will ensure that they have an appreciation of the diverse needs of the individual and their household to ensure that the response and level of support offered is appropriate.
- 6.5. Victims/survivors of domestic abuse will be signposted to specialist advice and support. Employees will make referrals to specialist domestic abuse agencies.
- 6.6. Cases of domestic abuse will be managed in line with the action plan agreed with the victim/survivor and taking into account the diverse needs of the victim/survivor. They will be monitored until they reach a satisfactory outcome.
- 6.7. If an anonymous report is received regarding alleged domestic abuse, the employee will discuss the report with their line manager to agree the next steps. Records held may be reviewed, including any previous contact and any diverse needs to agree the best approach to contacting the alleged victim/survivor before contact is made.
- 6.8. If any report of domestic abuse, including those received anonymously, indicates an imminent risk to life then the Police may be contacted.

7 | Housing

- 7.1. If a victim/survivor enquires about emergency or rehousing, they will be referred to the relevant local housing options team, with their agreement.
- 7.2. Referrals may be made to local Sanctuary Schemes, where appropriate, to support the victim/survivor to remain safely in their home.

8 | Perpetrators

- 8.1. Where the perpetrator is themselves vulnerable they may be referred or signposted to appropriate support agencies and specialised services, where available and in agreement with the perpetrator.

9 | Partnership Working

- 9.1. We will work co-operatively with other agencies tackling domestic abuse and enable residents to access appropriate support and advice.
- 9.2. We will work closely with other agencies, like the Police, local authorities and specialised domestic abuse agencies to ensure a co-ordinated response to reports of domestic abuse.
- 9.3. We will collaborate with local agencies and groups like MARAC and local action partnership to prevent and tackle domestic abuse.

10 | Confidentiality

- 10.1. We will respect the privacy of all parties involved in domestic abuse cases.
- 10.2. The cases will be dealt with in compliance with all data protection legislation.

11 | Review

- 11.1. The Domestic Abuse Policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if there is a change in statutory or regulatory requirements.
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