



Domestic Abuse and VAWG Policy

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| Author's name | Vic Stirling Phil Parkes |
| Sponsor | Charlotte Murray |
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| Appendices | List of specialist agencies. |

1. Introduction to the Policy

- 1.1 This policy outlines our approach to dealing with Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- 1.2 This policy aims to ensure that SYHA support customers experiencing Domestic Abuse in a consistent, safe and sympathetic way.
- 1.3 SYHA staff and customers should read this policy alongside the following policies where appropriate:
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
 - Safeguarding Children Policy
 - Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Policy
 - Vulnerability Policy
 - Lettings Policy
 - Lone Working Policy
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Wellbeing and Absence Policy (SYHA staff only)
 - Lone Working Policy (SYHA staff only)
 - Adaptations Policy

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all SYHA customers including those who live in our homes, those who receive support in our homes and those who receive floating support from SYHA across the communities we serve.

2.2 Where colleagues are experiencing domestic abuse or VAWG, we will follow our Wellbeing and Absence Policy.

2.3 The policy clearly outlines SYHA responsibilities and the actions we will take.

2.4 There is often an overlap between people experiencing domestic abuse or VAWG and safeguarding. If SYHA identifies that someone experiencing domestic abuse or VAWG may also have additional vulnerabilities we will always make a referral to the safeguarding team at the Local Authority as per our Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children policies.

3. Defining domestic abuse

3.1 Domestic abuse is any single incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people aged 16 years or over who are personally connected to each other as intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. Behaviour is considered abusive if it consists of any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse – for more info: [Physical or sexual abuse](#)
- Stalking, violent or threatening behaviour – for more info: [Harassment and stalking](#)
- Controlling or coercive behaviour – for more info: [Coercive control](#)
- Economic/financial abuse – for more info: [Financial or economic abuse](#)
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse – for more info: [Psychological and/or emotional abuse](#)
- Abuse in an online space – for more info: [Online or digital abuse](#)

3.2 Domestic Abuse & Children the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims of domestic abuse if they witness or experience domestic abuse in the home. Where children are experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse this must be reported to Children's Services in the Local Authority.

3.3 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) describes forms of violence and abuse that is disproportionally perpetrated by men against women and girls. It is deeply linked to women's inequality and includes sexual violence, domestic abuse, stalking and harassment, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, and so called 'honour-based' abuse and online exploitation.

4. What we will do

4.1 SYHA will ensure that customers are able to report domestic abuse or VAWG to us through a variety of methods and we will investigate all reports that we receive. We will respond to reports within one working day.

4.2 We will ensure that staff in our frontline services are trained and supported to take appropriate action when domestic abuse or VAWG is reported.

4.3 Whilst we understand that men are disproportionately the perpetrators in violence against women and girls, we will support all individuals experiencing domestic abuse or VAWG irrespective of age, sex, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, social background or any other protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act.

4.4 We will take a customer centred approach and recognise the confidentiality of all the individuals concerned. However, where an incident or offence is witnessed by a SYHA member of staff they will immediately call the police. Where high risk of serious harm or risk of death is identified we will share relevant and proportionate information with partner agencies to minimise the risk.

4.5 People experiencing abuse will be able to speak to a member of staff of the same sex and where possible of the same ethnic origin if requested. If required, we will arrange for a translation service.

4.6 People experiencing abuse will be able to meet staff in confidence at our offices or at an agreed choice of a safe venue. At the first point of contact, we will also agree with the customer the safe method and time of contact.

4.7 Where possible we will provide improved security to the tenant's home if they live in a SYHA home – this is known as target hardening and may include lock changes, alarms and additional window locks at zero cost. We will not insist on a crime reference number to carry out this and any additional works.

4.8 We will provide financial assistance where possible for utilities and we will work in partnership with other organisations and agencies to provide financial support to any customer experiencing domestic abuse or VAWG.

4.9 We will refer people experiencing domestic abuse or VAWG to external specialist agencies who can offer further advice and support dependent on their needs.

4.10 We will take appropriate enforcement action (where evidence is available) against anyone responsible for domestic abuse or VAWG. We will only do this if it does not compromise the safety of the individual and we will work closely with specialist partner agencies including the Local Authority and Police to keep them informed of any action taken.

4.11 With permission from customers we will report incidents to the police if they feel too intimidated to report incidents themselves.

4.12 Where emergency temporary accommodation is needed, we will support the person experiencing abuse to access support from the appropriate statutory service.

4.13 We will keep a clear record of any disclosure of domestic abuse or VAWG on our internal systems including any referrals we've made to statutory and other agencies.

4.14 In the case of joint tenancies it should be noted that a perpetrator may have the right to access the tenancy file. SYHA will do all we can to ensure any record of domestic abuse or VAWG is anonymous so they are not associated with the tenancy and in line with data protection and legal guidance we will redact confidential information to ensure it is not seen by the perpetrator or anyone representing them. Any safeguarding record of domestic abuse or VAWG will be logged on Cx in the name of the customer who is experiencing the abuse, and this cannot be accessed by the perpetrator.

4.15 In the case of joint tenancies if a victim is unable to return to their home due to risk of harm, we will take appropriate action to bring that tenancy to an end through the courts. We may also support perpetrators into other accommodation where available and appropriate to reduce the risk to the person experiencing abuse.

4.16 Where appropriate, and if this does not present additional risk to the person experiencing domestic abuse or VAWG, we will look to recharge the perpetrator for any damage caused to the SYHA property. See roles and responsibilities below.

4.17 We will arrange or attend multi-agency meetings to ensure support is offered by all agencies.

5. Legislation & Regulation

- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Children & Families Act 2014](#)
- [The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Children Act 1998](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)

- Consumer Standards

6. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

6.1 SYHA strives to be an open, inclusive, and diverse organisation where everyone has a right to be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect.

6.2 We recognise that some people with protected characteristics and additional needs experience barriers to disclosure or seeking support around domestic abuse. We will do our best to identify the needs of these customers, listen and respond in a personalised way and we will seek specialist support to help us to do this where appropriate.

7. Roles and responsibilities

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| Investigating and updating case notes | Neighbourhood Officer/Keyworker |
| Signposting/referrals | Neighbourhood Officer/Keyworker/All SYHA staff |
| Actions against perpetrator | Neighbourhood Officer/Keyworker/PL |
| Actions regarding transfer | Lettings Officer/Project Lead |
| Ordering repair/works as per policy | Customer Connect/PSO |
| Decision on recharging perpetrator | Neighbourhood & Mixed Tenure Manager/Head of Service |
| Vulnerability and Domestic abuse budget | Head of Landlord Services (General Needs) Head of Service (LiveWell) |
| Overall accountability | SYHA Executive Team |

APPENDIX A

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| 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline | 0808 2000 247 www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk |
| Men's Advice Line | 0808 801 0327 Days and times of phone support vary. www.mensadvice.org.uk |
| Respect Phoneline | 0808 802 4040 Days and times of phone support vary. www.respectphoneline.org.uk |
| Broken Rainbow | 0300 999 5428 help@brokenrainbow.org.uk https://galop.org.uk/get-help/helplines/ |

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| Karma Nirvana | 0800 599 9247 www.karmanirvana.org.uk/ |