

Valleys to Coast Group Domestic Abuse Policy for Customers.

Owner:

Valleys to Coast Housing Group Board

Accountable Lead

Director of Customer Excellence

Policy Control

Policy Level	Operational
Policy Reference	tbc
Link to Strategy	Delivering brilliant services that are easy to use, accessible, responsive and reliable.
Version Control	V2
Approved by	Leadership Team
Consultation	16th September 2025
Equality Analysis	tbc
Next review Date	3 year

Contents

Policy Control

1. Policy Introduction and Principles	4
2. Equality and Diversity Implications	5
3. Key matters and Definition	7
4. Safer Homes – our approach to domestic abuse	9
5. Safeguarding	15
18. Appendix –	15

1. Policy Introduction and Principles

- 1.1. At Valleys to Coast Group we are committed to ensuring that we deliver “Safer Homes” where contract holders and members of their households are empowered and supported to live free from the threat of domestic abuse within their homes. Domestic Abuse is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. There are significant consequences for victims/survivors and children who will often turn to their landlords for support. Our ambition to provide homes and services where people feel safe and happy. This is a stand alone policy for our customers there is a separate policy for staff.
- 1.2. As a frequently hidden form of abuse, Valleys to Coast Group recognises the important role that it has to play in identifying and responding to domestic abuse within its homes. We are committed to assisting, signposting and working with all our customers and their household members who are affected by, or may be perpetrators, of domestic abuse.
- 1.3. We recognise that for those who experience domestic abuse, they may identify as either victim or survivor, and for the purposes of this policy we will use both these phrases combined to ensure inclusivity and reflect the complexity of domestic abuse.
- 1.4. We will adopt a victim/survivor centred approach in all cases of domestic abuse and we recognise that the safety of the victim/ survivor and their household members is paramount, and will do all that we can to support and empower them to

feel safe in their homes.

- 1.5. Any disclosure of domestic abuse will be treated with the utmost urgency and confidence- ***you will be heard and we will listen.***
- 1.6. We are committed to ensuring we provide an effective response quickly, ***the first time and every time.***
- 1.7. We work closely with partner agencies and support organisations, both statutory and third sector, to ensure that appropriate safeguards are put in place and that the rights and wishes of victim's/survivors are respected.
- 1.8. Valleys to Coast Group's ambition is to provide homes where people feel safe and happy, with the customer at the heart of our decisions. Our purpose and vision is to make a positive difference to people's lives, and through the effective delivery of this Domestic Abuse policy we will commit to taking a proactive, consistent and robust approach to tackling domestic abuse within our homes.

2. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 2.1. Valleys to Coast Group will take a mosaic approach to EDI recognising individuality but at the same time celebrating the picture that is the sum of all the pieces. Our approach aims to

embed EDI in all we do, making it part of our fabric and not just a tick box exercise.

- 2.2. This approach brings together ideas, thoughts and ways of working to ensure that different backgrounds, experiences and identities are represented and all voices are heard. This fosters a culture of creativity and innovation and supports better decision making which in turn benefits our customers and colleagues).
- 2.3. Customers and vulnerabilities are taken into account in the development of Valleys to Coast's Group policies and procedures. Valleys to Coast Group will provide a tailored approach in respect of service delivery where possible.
- 2.4. Domestic abuse affects both men and women, with access to support for all. It is however important to acknowledge that domestic abuse is a gendered crime and disproportionately affects women who make up the overwhelming majority of cases.
- 2.5. We understand there are cultural and other barriers to reporting domestic abuse and we'll take all of this into account in the support we provide. We recognise this intersectionality and understand that some customers may face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. We will consider the

individual needs of each customer in our approach including specialist services and access to translation services.

3. Key matters and Definitions

- 3.1. This Policy has been prepared in accordance with the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) and Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales, 2015) alongside best practice recommendations from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) of which Valleys to Coast is a member.
- 3.2. Valleys to Coast Group recognises, and accepts fully, its statutory duty under the Domestic Abuse Act to work with both victims/survivors and, also perpetrators, of domestic abuse. This policy and its associated procedures apply to everyone working for or on behalf of Valleys to Coast.
- 3.3. Domestic abuse poses a significant social and criminal challenge, resulting in substantial human and financial repercussions for individuals, families, and communities alike.
- 3.4. Definition "Domestic Abuse Act 2021"

Domestic Abuse as involving persons **aged 16 years of age or older** who are **personally connected** and where there is **abusive behaviour** present.

- 3.5. Within the act, two people have a **personal connection** if any of the following apply:
- They are, or have been, married/ in a civil partnership to/with each other or have entered into an agreement to do so.
 - They are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other.
 - They each have, or there has been a time when they have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child.
 - They are relatives as defined under the Family Law Act (1996).
- 3.6. **Abusive behaviour** – Behaviour is defined as “abusive” if it consists of any of the following, it does not matter if it’s a single incident or a course of conduct:
1. **Physical or Sexual Abuse.**
 2. **Violent or Threatening Behaviour.**
 3. **Controlling or Coercive Behaviour.**
 4. **Psychological, Emotional or other Abuse.**
 5. **Economic Abuse** (specifically any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to

acquire, use, or maintain money or other property, or to obtain goods or services (including housing).

- 3.7. Children as victims of DA – the Act explicitly includes children as victims if they see, hear or experience the effect of domestic abuse and they are related to either person. They are also considered a victim of domestic abuse within the Act. and need to be safeguarded in their own right.

4. Safer Homes – our approach to domestic abuse

4.1. Disclosures

We recognise that a victim/ survivor will often find it extremely difficult to make a disclosure and ask for help and support. We encourage those affected by domestic abuse to feel safe and to approach us, where they can talk and be heard. We will not seek proof of the abuse, nor will we compel a victim to accept support.

- 4.2. If a disclosure is made, we will deal with it in a sensitive and supportive manner, supporting those affected to feel safe and secure in their home.
- 4.3. Every case of domestic abuse is individual, therefore help and support will be provided based on each individuals' circumstances, ensuring the victims wishes and needs are taken into account at all times.

- 4.4. Should we need to share information received within the disclosure to other services to further safeguard the victim/ survivor we will seek their consent. If this is not possible, or there is a high risk of serious harm, we will proceed to share this information in line with our Safeguarding Policy.
- 4.5. Those experiencing domestic abuse will never be made to feel responsible for the abuse nor will they be required to take any action they feel will place them in greater danger. The decisions each individual takes as to how to manage their situation will not affect the way in which their case is dealt with, or the support provided at any time.
- 4.6. We recognise that those currently affected by domestic abuse may not seek, or respond to, offers of help and may wish to remain in their relationship. We will respect the wishes of the victim/ survivor but it is important that we communicate clearly that we retain a legal duty to safeguard them and others, if we feel they or others are at serious risk of harm.

4.7. Support and Multi- Agency Working

We work alongside statutory and voluntary organisations, to support victims/ survivors and their household members. Although trained within the “Ask and Act” framework, employees are not domestic abuse specialists and therefore we will refer customers to specialist agencies for further domestic abuse support.

- 4.8. For every disclosure of abuse, we will carry out a risk assessment using the “Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour based risk identification checklist” (DASH RIC) and offer safety planning to provide support for the customer and members of their household, including children, experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse.
- 4.9. We will share information between agencies where the DASH RIC meets the local authority threshold for Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) referral
- 4.10. High risk domestic abuse cases are heard at MARAC meetings, which are attended by an appropriate member of the housing team, alongside representatives from other services including health, Police, domestic abuse support services and appropriate personnel from local authorities.
- 4.11. Any referrals to MARAC will be made after discussion with, and consent from, the victim/ survivor. However, if consent is not granted and there is an immediate or potential risk to the victim/survivor or their household members, a referral may be made without consent to protect them and others from potentially serious harm.
- 4.12 We will provide advice and guidance around housing options to ensure choice which will empower victim/survivors. Ensure the home is a safe, secure home. Also provide inhouse support to ensure income is maximised and financially excluded.

4.12. Working with perpetrators

- 4.13. Valleys to Coast Group will not tolerate domestic abuse, it is wholly unacceptable and inexcusable behaviour. Abusive behaviour is a choice and perpetrators can choose to behave differently. The responsibility of abuse lies with the perpetrator, and they must take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- 4.14. Dealing with perpetrators is part of a wider community response; any attempt to work with perpetrators could potentially reduce the risk in a current or future relationship.
- 4.15. We recognise that perpetrators of domestic abuse may wish to seek help and support voluntarily to address their behaviour and make changes. If this is the case, where appropriate, we will signpost perpetrators of domestic abuse to access external agencies and support organisations, who can offer them support in order to prevent the abuse reoccurring. Support can be offered but domestic abuse will not be tolerated.
- 4.16. Perpetrators must be held to account, and we will share information and work with other agencies, such as the police and MARAC partners to find effective ways to work with perpetrators who can manage their behaviour.

4.17. Under the terms of each “Secure Occupation Contract” that is issued to all contract holders residing within Valleys to Coast properties, domestic abuse is classified as “Prohibited Conduct” and where appropriate we will use legal powers afforded to us under the Rented Homes Act (Wales) Act 2016 to take action to disrupt or to prevent further domestic abuse within our homes.

4.18. Our commitments to delivery

As a Social housing provider in Wales, the Valleys to Coast Group is committed to delivering relevant high quality domestic abuse training to all colleagues in line with the VAWDASV “Ask and Act” guidance. This will include how to spot the signs of domestic abuse and also how to respond to a disclosure.

4.19. This is an ongoing commitment to training and ensures there is widespread knowledge and awareness of domestic abuse across all of our teams and services which embeds a culture of safety through our services. All colleagues will have easy and ready access to key information, resources and referral pathways to support delivery of an effective response to domestic abuse including on our intranet.

4.20. Within the organisation, we will maintain a domestic abuse project action group, which consists of “champions” who are able to offer immediate guidance and support to colleagues to ensure that all teams maintain an awareness of the risks of

domestic abuse. This ensures that we provide an effective response quickly, the first time and every time. The group will be overseen by the Head of Housing and they will be responsible for driving standards and improvements across the organisation.

- 4.21. We are committed to our partnership with DAHA and we will strive for constant improvement to our services to achieve, and maintain, the highest level of accreditation within their framework. This commits us to regular review of our response and delivery to domestic abuse across the group.
- 4.22. We commit to communicating with our customers both the issue of domestic abuse, the services that are available.

5. Safeguarding

- 5.1. Full consideration will be given to our safeguarding responsibilities, details of which can be found within our Safeguarding Policy.

Appendix

5.2. “Ask and Act” The role of the frontline practitioner’

chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/ask-and-act-role-frontline-practitioner.pdf>

5.3. [The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance \(DAHA\)](#)

5.4. ASSIA

5.5. Live free from fear

6. Appendix

6.1. This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures.

Group Safeguarding Policy
Former Contract Holder Arrears Management Policy
Allocations Policy
Supporting Colleagues experiencing Domestic Abuse Policy
Anti Social Behaviour Policy
Recharge and Income Collection Policy
DBS Policy and Procedure.pdf
Group - Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.pdf
Code of Conduct Policy.pdf
Data Protection Policy
Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Management



Cymoedd i'r Arfordir
Valleys to Coast

 Llanw