

Domestic Abuse Policy

2019-2021



Policy Reference:

HO052(D)

Approved by:

Senior Management Team

Date approved:

06/03/2019

1. Scope and objectives

- 1.1. This policy sets out bpha's approach in supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse. bpha's role is one of support and bpha will never act as the lead agency in dealing with cases of domestic violence and abuse.
- 1.2. bpha recognises that housing plays an important role in the protection of victims and survivors and in the prevention of domestic abuse. bpha's role is one of a facilitator by:
 - referring or signposting survivors and victims to other agencies
 - undertaking reasonable adaptations to our properties to enhance security
 - taking tenancy action against perpetrators where appropriate
 - assisting people in being rehoused.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1. bpha are committed to working in partnership with other agencies to support those experiencing domestic abuse. bpha will ensure that all frontline staff receive safeguarding training and will provide specialist domestic abuse training where appropriate.
- 2.2. Domestic abuse is an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer. It is very common. Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - coercive control (a pattern of intimidation, degradation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence.
 - psychological and/or emotional abuse.
 - physical or sexual abuse.

- financial abuse.
- harassment and stalking.
- online or digital abuse.

3. Safeguarding

3.1. bpha has a duty of care to all of our residents and their families. If bpha is aware of a situation where an adult or a child is being affected by domestic abuse, we will report this to the relevant safeguarding agency following our Adult Safeguarding Policy and/or Child Safeguarding Policy.

4. Multi agency and Partnership working

4.1. bpha will report domestic abuse concerns to appropriate agencies, with consent where appropriate, following bpha's Data Protection Policy.

4.2. bpha will adopt a multi-agency approach to tackle domestic abuse. A multi-agency approach provides us with a way to manage, resolve and look at prevention of domestic abuse and further domestic abuse amongst our residents. bpha's role is to manage the tenancy, signpost or refer residents for appropriate support and cooperate with other agencies in relation to safeguarding issues.

4.3. bpha are committed to:

- positively supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse and being an active participant in Domestic Abuse Partnerships in areas where we have significant stock numbers. For example, Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership including the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). In areas where we have lower numbers of stock bpha will actively refer residents for support and cooperate with safeguarding boards which may include attendance at case conferences for specific cases.
- actively participating in our role as a landlord in managing tenancies in multi-agency meetings which seek to reduce and manage domestic abuse.
- contributing to domestic homicide reviews where required.

5. Enhanced Security

5.1. Where bpha residents are at risk of domestic abuse they may wish to remain in their existing home and remain close to existing support networks. This decision remains with the victim/survivor and bpha will work in partnership with other agencies where appropriate in the ongoing management of the tenancy and signpost residents for appropriate support.

- 5.2. bpha is committed to implementing reasonable requests from other agencies for additional safety measures, which may include adjustments to the property. The decision will be at the discretion of the Regional Manager or the Retirement Living Manager taking into account the cost and scope of the requested works and the wider situation of the household.

6. Tenancy Action

- 6.1. Where appropriate, and with consent from the victim/survivor of domestic abuse, bpha may take tenancy action against perpetrators. bpha may seek to end the tenancy of those residents who perpetrate domestic abuse, at the discretion of the Regional Manager or Retirement Living Manager taking into account the specific circumstances.
- 6.2. If a resident is evicted on these grounds and a further application is made to the Local Authority, the application will be considered under local nominations agreements or bpha's Allocations Policy, which highlights circumstances where applicants will not be rehoused, including criminal offences or serious antisocial behaviour that would be deemed a breach of tenancy.
- 6.3. It is possible for victims/survivors to seek other legal remedies, such as a non-molestation order, but bpha will not be the lead in instigating any type of legal remedy other than tenancy action.

7. Allocations

- 7.1. When the victim/survivor wishes to be rehoused to escape the threat of continued abuse bpha will assist in rehousing by:
- providing a supporting statement for a resident when they apply to be rehoused with their local authority when the police or other relevant agency confirm that the person is no longer safe to remain in their home.
 - considering a direct let of bpha property where we are able to do so and this is in accordance with the bpha Allocations policy and Local Authority Nominations Agreement.
 - signposting and/or referring the victim/survivor to appropriate support agencies.

8. Regulatory and legal considerations

- 8.1. Care Act 2014

9. Monitoring, reviews and evaluation

- 9.1. This policy will be kept up to date and amended accordingly to reflect any changes in response to revised legislation, regulatory guidelines and standards. bpha will ensure all domestic abuse

cases are recorded on the Orchard Housing Management system as part of wider safeguarding monitoring and reporting. Issues surrounding safeguarding and domestic abuse will be discussed at the quarterly Safeguarding Meeting and reported in accordance with the Adult and Child Safeguarding policies.

10. Associated documents and procedures

- 10.1. Safeguarding Adults and Children Procedure
- 10.2. Adult Safeguarding Policy
- 10.3. Child Safeguarding Policy
- 10.4. Health and Safety Policy
- 10.5. Lone Working Procedure
- 10.6. Antisocial Behaviour Policy

Status	Version 4
Responsible	George Parkinson, Head of Housing Operations
Equality impact issues	None
Next review date	08/03/2021