



DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

Effective Date: 09/ 2023

Last Revised: 09/2023

Next Revision Due: 09/2026

Policy Owner: Neighbourhood Services

Policy Contact: Geraint Jones, Neighbourhood Services Manager



CONTENTS

1. SCOPE/PURPOSE
2. POLICY DETAIL
3. PROCEDURES
4. COMPLAINT
5. REVIEW OF DECISION
6. RESPONSIBILITY AND ARRANGEMENTS
7. DEFINITIONS
8. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS
9. RECORD OF REVISIONS TO THIS PROCESS
10. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY
11. GDPR
12. APPENDIX

1.0 SCOPE / PURPOSE

- 1.1 Domestic abuse is one of the biggest issues in society today and a leading cause of homelessness. The true scale of the problem is difficult to determine because a large proportion of domestic abuse goes unreported. Having and embedding a policy to support residents who are affected by domestic abuse is one of the pledges of the 'Make a Stand' pledge which was created to encourage housing associations to make a commitment to support people experiencing domestic abuse.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is:
- to give a clear definition of domestic abuse.
 - to set out how Adra (Tai) Cyfyngedig supports residents and staff who are, or may be, affected by domestic abuse to keep them safe and sustain their contract.
 - ensure that opportunities to identify domestic abuse to prevent further abuse and risk to children are not missed.
 - ensure consistency in service delivery when responding to issues of domestic abuse.
 - reduce the financial impact on Adra from criminal damage to housing stock, rent arrears, anti-social behaviour interventions, eviction, and re-let and new contract costs.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all current and prospective contract holders and residents of properties owned by Adra.

2.0 POLICY DETAIL

- 2.1 Domestic abuse occurs across society regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, or background and can encompass, but is not limited to the following types of behaviour:

- Physical or sexual violence, stalking and harassment.
- Financial abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Coercive controlling behaviour

Further detail on the types of domestic abuse can be found on the Welsh Government's website [Live Fear Free - Types of Abuse](#)

- 2.2 Domestic abuse is not acceptable. Anyone experiencing domestic violence and abuse is not to blame and are not alone.
- 2.3 We will prioritise support for contract holders experiencing domestic abuse.
- 2.4 Adra has signed the 'Make a Stand' pledge and has made commitments to:

- Put in place and embed a policy to support residents who are affected by domestic abuse.
- Make information about national and local domestic abuse support services available on our website and in other appropriate places so that they are easily accessible for residents and staff.
- Put in place a HR policy, or amend an existing policy, to support members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse.
- Appoint a champion at a senior level in the organisation to own the activity we are doing to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

3.0 PROCEDURES

3.1 Increasing awareness of domestic abuse

- 3.2 Adra will raise awareness of domestic abuse by promoting local and national campaigns. [Live Fear Free Campaigns](#)
- 3.3 Adra will keep its web page up to date with information about national and domestic abuse support services.

Adra will ensure that identified members of staff will be trained to spot the signs and symptoms of domestic abuse, feel confident to ask people if they have been affected by Domestic Abuse and refer people to the right specialist support services. This includes encouraging people to report what has happened to them to the police. Training will include understanding the barriers to disclosing Domestic Abuse.

3.4 Identifying households with Domestic Abuse as early as possible

- 3.5 Adra takes a multi-agency approach and works in partnership with relevant specialist support services to ensure staff have clear referral pathways for individuals suffering from domestic abuse and perpetrators once domestic abuse has been identified or disclosed.
- 3.6 Adra is represented on the monthly Domestic Violence MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) for Gwynedd and Môn which is coordinated by North Wales Police. We will review weekly lists shared by North Wales Police's Protecting Vulnerable People Unit (PVPU).
- 3.7 Adra has agreed and signed MARAC Information Sharing Protocols (ISP) in each of the following counties in which Adra has properties : Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Wrexham.
- 3.8 Adra will ask new contract holders about domestic abuse routinely and sensitively to consider any safety measures required.

3.9 We will routinely review applicants housing history. When successful applicants are identified to be victims of domestic abuse, we will make contact following allocation of the property to offer advice and support.

3.10 Handling Domestic Abuse incidents

3.11 Adra will review all reports of domestic abuse we receive, be it a direct or indirect referral and will provide a sensitive and appropriate response in line with safeguarding procedures.

3.12 Adra will give people experiencing domestic abuse the opportunity to have a staff member of the same gender to deal with their case. We will ensure individuals know they can meet staff in confidence at our offices or at an agreed choice of safe venue. We will also agree the method of contact that the individual wishes us to use to stay in contact with them.

3.13 Adra will take a non-judgmental believing approach and accept the individual's account. We will recognise that evidence of domestic abuse from sources other than the individual experiencing domestic abuse e.g. a neighbour, may not always be available. However, evidence may be required if legal action is to be taken.

3.14 Initial Help and Support

3.15 All safeguarding concerns (where it is suspected that a child or adult is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect or other kinds of harm) will be dealt with in accordance with Adra's Safeguarding Policy and will follow the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

3.16 Adra's Domestic Abuse Disclosure form will be used to ensure our initial response is complete and accurate and that an initial safety plan is in place.

3.17 Trained Adra members of staff will carry out a risk assessment using the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour based violence risk identification checklist (DASH-RIC), with the agreement of the victim whenever possible when a disclosure of domestic abuse is made directly to us. If the result meets the threshold, or if it is in the professional judgement of the officer, a MARAC referral will be made.

3.18 Where the DASH-RIC does not meet the threshold, with the agreement of the individual experiencing domestic abuse, we will provide support and appropriate signposting.

3.19 Case management

3.20 Records of the incidents reported, and actions carried out will be kept securely in Adra's Core Business System.

3.21 All evidence relating to the case will be recorded with the case notes including details of individual incidents, DASH-RIC, referrals to and from MARAC, referrals from other

agencies, referral pathways followed, all assistance offered, and preferred safe contact method.

3.22 Domestic abuse cases will be audited by the relevant manager to ensure completeness of information recorded and that cases are not closed inappropriately.

3.23 Tackling the behaviour of perpetrators

3.24 Adra will not tolerate domestic abuse by or against its contract holders or other residents of our properties. We recognise domestic abuse as a crime and a breach of contract conditions.

3.25 Perpetrators will be held accountable in any anti-social behaviour action where it is possible to do so without compromising the safety of the individual experiencing domestic abuse. Such cases will be dealt with in accordance with Adra's Anti-Social Behaviour policy and may result in eviction, or where the perpetrator is a joint contract holder seeking an order of the Court to end the perpetrator's rights and obligations under the contract, or injunctions and/or exclusion orders.

3.26 Where appropriate, Adra's aim is to prevent the domestic abuse from reoccurring and will refer the perpetrator, with their agreement, to the relevant supporting agencies as well as providing support from our own designated and trained officers.

3.27 Adra will support campaigns aimed at educating people to take responsibility for their own behaviour and learn new skills that will enable them to have healthy relationships.

3.28 Further support

3.29 Adra will consider a range of options available dependent upon the individual circumstances. Most importantly we will respect the individual's wishes and will stress our support and empathy for their situation. The options available to us may include:

- Agreeing next steps with the individual, monitoring the situation and reviewing at a frequency and method of contact agreed with them.
- Assisting wherever possible in making the accommodation more secure, assessing additional safety measures in partnership with the Police and other specialist agencies to allow the individual experiencing domestic abuse to remain safely in the home. Examples of target hardening which Adra will consider implementing include: installing a stronger internal door with a lock to create a safe room; installing a door chain; installing external lighting; changing door locks.
- Providing housing management advice aimed at sustaining the contract and avoiding homelessness.
- Making a referral to our Rent and Income team, or external agencies including CAB or Shelter, for any required support relating to financial issues.
- Supporting the individual to report incidents to the police where they feel too intimidated to report incidents themselves and supporting witnesses throughout the investigation and any further action which may arise.

- Advising of external agencies who can offer further specialist advice and support dependent on their needs, and work with our partners to ensure a co-ordinated service to prioritise the safety of the individual who is experiencing domestic abuse and the safety of their children, where present.
- Signposting to relevant organisations to provide legal advice as appropriate especially if the individual wishes to take his/her own legal action and seek remedy under the Family Law Act 1996 and Protection from Harassment Act 1997. Remedies available include non-molestation orders, occupation orders, and restraining orders.
- Work with the Police and other agencies to utilise legal powers, including where appropriate, the provisions within the relevant legislation to obtain an injunction (Anti -Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014) against and or to exclude or evict (Renting Homes Wales Act 2016) domestic abuse offenders, or where the perpetrator is a joint contract holder seeking an order of the Court to end the perpetrator's rights and obligations under the contract.
- If the individual expresses a wish to move, explain about transfers, reciprocal arrangements, and transfer to other secure contract holders (exchange). Refer to the relevant Housing Options team and support the individual to make an application for housing, to be placed in the top band as they are experiencing domestic abuse.
- Referring the case to the Homelessness Team where emergency temporary accommodation is required, or where the individual's contract may be at risk.
- In exceptional circumstances Adra may exercise its discretion, in accordance with Section 159(5) of the Housing Act 1996, to transfer outside the Common Housing Allocation Policy. An example may be in cases where a Adra tenant is a survivor of domestic abuse and needs to be moved for their own safety.

3.29 Support to Complainants

Adra will provide appropriate advice to anyone who reports domestic abuse within any of our properties.

4.0 Complaints

- 4.1 Adra recognises your right to bring forward a complaint in relation to the exercise of this policy. Any such complaint will be dealt with under the CCpol01 – Complaints and Concerns Policy.

5.0 REVIEW OF DECISIONS

- 5.1 Adra recognises the right to request a review of any decision relating to this policy. Any such review will be dealt with by following our CCp04- Review of Decision process.
- 5.2 Adra will ensure that any decisions relevant to this policy are reasonable and comply with relevant policy and legislation.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITY AND ARRANGEMENTS

Role	Responsibility
Director of Customers and Communities	Ensure that this policy is applied effectively, and that staff are trained appropriately in the principles and procedures associated with this policy.
All staff	Identify the signs and symptoms of domestic abuse and refer individuals to the appropriate support agency
Neighbourhood Service Staff	Use the Domestic Abuse checklist to ensure individuals are safe and able to sustain their contract

7.0 DEFINITIONS

- 7.1 The UK government definition of domestic abuse and violence is:

‘any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional.’

Adra’s policy refers to domestic ‘abuse’ in recognition that its impact can go beyond actual physical violence. Other local and national documents will refer to either domestic violence and/or domestic abuse.

- 7.2 [Types and examples of domestic abuse: Live Fear Free - Types of Abuse](#)
- 7.3 DAHA – Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance [DAHA website](#)
- 7.4 DASH-RIC - Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour based violence risk identification checklist [Dash risk checklist with quick start guidance](#)
- 7.5 MARAC – Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

8.0 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- 8.1 Family Law Act 1996
- 8.2 Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016
- 8.3 Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- 8.4 Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- 8.5 Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015
- 8.6 [Welsh Government Live Fear Free Website](#)
- 8.7 Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
- 8.8 Home Office- Information guide: adolescent to parent violence and abuse (APVA)
- 8.9 [DAHA Accreditation](#)
- 8.10 [Safe Lives Ending domestic abuse website](#)
- 8.11 Adra Anti- social behaviour policy (NSpol01)
- 8.12 Adra Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy (H&Spol34)
- 8.13 Adra Domestic Abuse Disclosure Checklist
- 8.14 [NSp22 Domestic Abuse Case Handling Process](#)

9.0 RECORD OF REVISIONS TO THIS PROCESS

Issue	Date	Comments (What has been revised?)	Written By	Approved for content
Issue 0	09/13	Review of policy dated 18 th March 2010 – 3-year review	Mari Pritchard	
Issue 1	06/16	Review of policy dated 09/13 and in response to new legislation Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015	Mari Pritchard	
Issue 2	06/19	3 Year Review to include best practice for housing associations from DAHA and Safe Lives and include the commitment to CIH's 'Make a stand' pledge	Geraint Jones	
Issue 3	10/19	Updated to reflect Adra branding	Geraint Jones	
Issue 4	09/23	3 year full review and change in terminology in	Geraint	



		line with Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016	Jones & Arwyn Roberts	
--	--	--	-----------------------	--

10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 10.1 Adra will support those individuals experiencing domestic abuse irrespective of age, gender, language, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, religion, social background, or any other characteristics identified in the Equality Act.
- 10.2 Adra will be aware of how religions and beliefs can impact on an individual’s willingness to report domestic abuse and make use of translation resources as appropriate as required where the contract holder does not speak fluent Welsh or English.

11.0 GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)

- 11.1 Adra will maintain confidentiality when dealing with cases of domestic abuse but may share information with partner agencies e.g., MARAC in accordance with relevant legislation and agreed protocols and in accordance with H&Spol34 – Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Policy.