



WILLOW TREE

HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

# Domestic Abuse Policy

|                                               |                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Version:</b>                               | <b>v2</b>                                      |
| <b>Responsibility for the Policy</b>          | <b>Head of Housing and Customer Experience</b> |
| <b>Date approved by Executive</b>             | <b>May 2024</b>                                |
| <b>Date approved by Board (if applicable)</b> | <b>N/A</b>                                     |
| <b>Date due for review:</b>                   | <b>May 2027</b>                                |

## 1. Statement of Intent

Willow Tree Housing Partnership (WTHP) believes that none of its tenants should live in fear of domestic abuse and will take steps to assist and support any person suffering from or threatened with domestic abuse. WTHP has adopted the Government's definition of domestic abuse.

## 2. Policy Objectives

2.1. Domestic abuse is defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 as follows:

"Behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if:

- A and B are each aged 16 or over and are "personally connected" to each other, and
- The behaviour is abusive.

Behaviour is "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

And it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct."

2.2. WTHP recognises that domestic abuse often has complex housing consequences and as a responsible landlord, we aim to give priority to and, to protect the housing status of those at risk.

2.3. WTHP will take a supportive approach in responding to cases of domestic abuse. Recognising that evidence of domestic abuse may not always be readily available; WTHP will accept the account of the person suffering domestic abuse (the victim) and will not insist on them providing proof of the abuse. WTHP will also be guided by the victim in determining the most appropriate course of action in responding to an incident of domestic abuse.

2.4. WTHP will work with our partners to identify and support victims and, where appropriate, to take action against perpetrators, where it can be done without compromising the safety of the victim.

2.5. WTHP will provide a sensitive and confidential response to anyone approaching us for assistance in cases of domestic abuse. For cases which meet the threshold of a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), or if we have safeguarding concerns, we have a legal duty to share information with relevant agencies, such as Social Services.

- 2.6. Anyone experiencing domestic abuse will have the right to be dealt with by someone of the same gender if they request this.
- 2.7. WTHP will carry out safety planning to provide support for the victim and their children where present. Unless we are informed that another organisation has carried this out, we will carry out a risk assessment using the Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Violence (DASH) risk assessment.
- 2.8. WTHP will consider arranging, with the agreement of the victim, multi-agency meetings to ensure support is received from all relevant agencies where the DASH risk assessment does not meet the local authority threshold for a MARAC referral.
- 2.9. WTHP will share information between agencies where the assessment against the DASH risk assessment meets the local authority threshold for MARAC referrals. This information will only be shared with those agencies attending the meeting.
- 2.10. WTHP will signpost victims to external agencies who can offer further advice and support dependent upon their needs and will work with our partners to ensure co-ordinated services to prioritise the safety of the victim and any children.
- 2.11. WTHP will carry out repairs, which are required as a result of domestic abuse. In addition, WTHP may, with the permission from the victim, undertake works to further secure a property i.e. additional locks. We may undertake such works in conjunction with other agencies.

### **3. Make a Stand Pledge**

- 3.1 To show WTHP's ongoing commitment to supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse, we signed the 'Make a Stand' pledge that was launched in June 2018 by the Chartered Institute of Housing, in partnership with Women's Aid and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA). , By signing the pledge, we have undertaken to continue to meet four commitments.
  - To put in place and embed a policy to support residents who are affected by domestic abuse.
  - To 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.
  - To put in place a HR policy, or amend an existing policy, to support members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse.
  - To appoint a champion at a senior level to own the activity we are undertaking to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

## 2. Performance Standards

Biennial staff training

Annual reporting to Audit and Risk Committee on numbers of cases dealt with and monthly KPI reporting to the Executive Team on numbers of cases reported.

## 3. Reference Documents

### External

[Regulator of Social Housing Neighbourhood and Community Standard](#)

[Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

[Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Statutory Guidance](#)

### Internal

WTHP Domestic Abuse Procedure

When setting policy, the Willow Tree Housing Partnership will ensure a golden thread of best practice runs through all aspects of its operations in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion. It will seek to minimise adverse environmental impacts arising as a consequence of its work. This approach and all policies will be reviewed on their anniversary date or as new guidance or legislation is introduced, whichever occurs sooner.