

Shropshire Rural Housing Association



Domestic Abuse Policy

Date Considered by Committee	16.07.26
Date Approved by Board	30.07.26
Scheduled date for Review	2029
Lead Officer	CE

1. Purpose

Shropshire Rural Housing Association (SRHA) is committed to preventing, identifying and responding to domestic abuse. This policy sets out how SRHA will support individuals affected by domestic abuse, work with partner agencies to reduce harm, and ensure that the safety and wellbeing of victims and survivors remain central to all decisions and actions. SRHA recognises that domestic abuse can have a devastating impact on individuals, families and communities, including children who witness or experience abuse.

SRHA is committed to providing a sensitive, effective and consistent response to domestic abuse and to ensuring that those affected are treated with dignity, respect and compassion.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all SRHA tenants, other individuals living within SRHA homes, and all employees. The policy applies to reports of domestic abuse regardless of whether the abuse is current or historic and whether it occurs within or outside the home.

3. Definition of Domestic Abuse

SRHA adopts the definition of domestic abuse contained within the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. Abuse can include psychological, physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuse, as well as coercive and controlling behaviour.

SRHA also recognises the significant impact domestic abuse can have on children and young people who witness, experience or are exposed to abusive behaviour.

4. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This policy has been developed with reference to the following legislation and regulatory requirements:

- Housing Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Victims and Prisoners Act 2024
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Care Act 2014
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards

5. Policy Statement

SRHA is committed to a survivor-centred and trauma-informed approach to domestic abuse. We will listen to, believe and support individuals who disclose abuse and will seek to ensure that their safety and wellbeing are prioritised at all times. We will respect individual choices wherever possible while balancing our legal and safeguarding responsibilities.

We will provide services fairly and equitably and will support people experiencing domestic abuse regardless of age, disability, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, social background or any other protected characteristic. We recognise that abuse can affect anyone and that individuals may face additional barriers to seeking help.

SRHA will encourage the reporting of domestic abuse and will investigate all reports received, including those made confidentially and those received from third parties such as neighbours, contractors or members of the community.

6. Responding to Domestic Abuse

When domestic abuse is reported or identified, SRHA will provide a sensitive and confidential response. Individuals will be offered the opportunity to speak with a staff member in a private setting, either at SRHA's offices or another agreed safe location. A safe method of communication will be agreed to ensure that contact does not place the individual at greater risk.

SRHA will work with the individual to understand their circumstances and identify appropriate support. We will also seek advice from [Shropshire Domestic Abuse Service](#) (SDAS) where domestic abuse is identified.

Where required, SRHA will improve the security of a person's home through measures such as lock changes, alarms or Sanctuary Scheme measures. [Sanctuary schemes for households at risk of domestic violence: guide for agencies - GOV.UK](#). We will also support individuals to access legal advice, financial guidance and specialist domestic abuse services such as SDAS, where these are required.

Where individuals wish to report incidents to the Police, SRHA will support them in doing so. In circumstances where emergency accommodation is required, we will assist with referrals to local authority homelessness services, refuges and other appropriate accommodation providers.

SRHA will also seek to support children and other household members who may be affected by domestic abuse and will work with relevant agencies to promote their safety and wellbeing.

7. Housing Management and Tenancy Actions

SRHA will use its housing management and tenancy powers fairly, sensitively and proportionately in cases involving domestic abuse. We recognise that abuse can affect an individual's ability to manage their tenancy and will seek to ensure that survivors are not unfairly disadvantaged because of circumstances arising directly from abuse.

Where appropriate, we will consider options that allow individuals to remain safely in their homes, provided this is their preferred outcome and suitable safety measures can be implemented. We may also consider tenancy changes, management transfers or sole tenancy arrangements in accordance with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and other relevant housing legislation.

SRHA will seek to avoid taking action against survivors for rent arrears, property condition concerns or tenancy breaches that have arisen as a direct consequence of domestic abuse. Wherever possible, enforcement action will be focused on perpetrators rather than survivors.

8. Partnership Working and Safeguarding

SRHA recognises that effective responses to domestic abuse require partnership working. We will work collaboratively with local authorities, the Police, safeguarding services, specialist domestic abuse organisations and other relevant agencies to ensure that individuals receive coordinated support and protection.

Where risk levels meet local thresholds, SRHA will make referrals to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and participate fully in information sharing and coordinated safety planning. We will also fulfil our safeguarding responsibilities in relation to children, young people and adults at risk.

9. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

SRHA is committed to maintaining confidentiality and handling disclosures of domestic abuse with sensitivity and professionalism. Personal information will be recorded accurately, stored securely and accessible only to authorised colleagues who require the information in order to carry out their duties.

Information will normally be shared with other agencies only with the individual's informed consent. However, information may be shared without consent where there is a legal obligation to do so, where safeguarding concerns apply, or where there is an immediate risk of serious harm to an individual or others. Any information sharing will be lawful, necessary and proportionate.

All information processing and sharing will comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and relevant provisions of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

10. Publicity and Awareness

SRHA will promote awareness of domestic abuse and the support available to those affected. Information about national and local support services will be made available through our website and other appropriate communication channels.

11. Employees

SRHA recognises that domestic abuse may affect employees as well as tenants and residents. We are committed to providing a supportive working environment in which colleagues feel able to seek help confidentially and without fear of discrimination or stigma.

Employees who experience domestic abuse will be encouraged to discuss their circumstances through appropriate confidential channels and will be offered support. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments, including flexible working arrangements, may be considered to support their safety, wellbeing and continued employment.

All employees are expected to support and promote SRHA's commitment to addressing domestic abuse and to respond appropriately when concerns or disclosures arise.

12. Training

SRHA will provide domestic abuse training appropriate to employees' roles and responsibilities. Training will support colleagues to recognise signs of abuse, respond confidently and sensitively to disclosures, understand safeguarding responsibilities and make appropriate referrals to specialist services.

Enhanced training will be provided for colleagues with specific responsibilities for tenancy management and safeguarding. Training will also support understanding of coercive control, economic abuse and trauma-informed practice to ensure that individuals receive an appropriate and consistent response.

13. Monitoring and Review

Cases of domestic abuse will be handled and recorded confidentially and on a need-to-know basis in accordance with data protection requirements.

SRHA will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and review it every three years, or earlier if legislative, regulatory or operational changes require amendment.

14. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following documents:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Allocations and Lettings Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy