



# Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**Providing homes, supporting communities**

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## 1.0 Hjaltland Values

### Our Vision

Providing homes, supporting communities

### Our Values

#### Teamwork

Working together as one team, to the benefit of our customers. To demonstrate and extend trust in each other.

#### Open, Honest & Inclusive

We offer a people focused service that is centred in fairness and integrity. We believe in being open, honest and respectful in everything we do.

#### Ownership

We expect our staff to take responsibility for their actions and give them the freedom to do their job in a positive working environment.

#### Quality

We value quality in everything we do from the standard of our product to the level of service we provide. We take pride in making a difference in communities and providing continuous improvement.

#### Innovation

We seek to ensure we have sustainable housing, fit for future generations, maintained and developed to the highest possible standard.

## 2.0 Introduction

This policy forms part of our commitment to the Make a Stand pledge which has been developed by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) in partnership with Women's Aid and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance and has been created to encourage housing organisations to make a commitment to supporting people who are experiencing, or are at risk of, domestic abuse. By signing up to the Make a Stand pledge, housing organisations across the UK will send out the powerful message to survivors of domestic abuse who live or work in housing that they are not alone and that there is help and support available to them.

Being a good employer includes supporting staff through new or difficult periods in their lives. This policy sets out how Hjaltland Housing Association will take steps to assist and support any employee, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, and regardless of gender who are experiencing or being threatened with domestic abuse.

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### 3.0 Policy Statement

Hjaltland Housing Association recognises that domestic abuse is a serious issue within society and one that affects the lives of many adults and children. Domestic abuse is unacceptable and inexcusable. For many victims of domestic abuse there is no escape, even when they go to work. Hjaltland Housing Association is committed to assisting and supporting employees, both male and female, who may be experiencing, or are at risk of, domestic abuse.

This Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy complements other employee welfare policies and focuses on the issues relating to domestic abuse from an employment perspective. It has been prepared taking account of the Shetland Violence Against Women, Children and Young People Strategy which seeks to:

- Raise public awareness of domestic abuse, gender-based violence and its consequences
- Challenge attitudes towards domestic abuse and gender-based violence
- Protect and provide support to those who experience or are affected by domestic abuse and gender-based violence
- Provide a co-ordinated and consistent approach by all agencies who provide services which support those affected by domestic abuse and gender-based violence
- Support and develop a range of services for those who have experienced domestic abuse and gender-based violence

Hjaltland Housing Association is aware of its duty of care as a good employer for ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees at work, and for creating an environment in which employees are safe to disclose their experience of abuse in order to access support and increase safety for themselves and others.

However, the right of employees not to disclose must be respected and no employee should feel pressured into sharing this information if they do not wish to do so.

Signed

Ian Bray  
Director of Housing

Date: June 2025

Planned Review Date: June 2028

### 4.0 Policy Aims

Our policy aims to achieve the following:

- Assist and support any employees requesting help in addressing problems arising from domestic abuse and ensure the confidential and sympathetic handling of situation for employees arising from domestic abuse

- Provide a framework for addressing the behaviour of employees who may be perpetrators of abuse and who may pose a risk to other employees within the context of their work
- Set out for employees generally, Hjaltland's position in relation to addressing domestic abuse and ensure this policy is embedded into the Association through communication and making information easily accessible.

## **5.0 Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Committee**

It is recognised that the Management Committee, while not actively involved in the day to day running of the organisation, is collectively responsible for providing leadership and direction.

Committee Members are responsible for ensuring that Hjaltland Housing Association fulfils its statutory obligations and allocates adequate resources to do so.

### **5.2 Executive Team**

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the Committee's policy objectives are achieved and that policy and performance are kept under active review to address any changes required. The following individual post has been allocated overall responsibility within the terms of our policy:

- Bryan Leask, Chief Executive Officer

### **5.3 Senior Leadership Team**

Due to the 'managerial' function performed by Heads of Departments it is accepted that they will be best placed to identify and control any concerns within their departments. Day to day responsibility for ensuring the policy is put into practice and consultation with employees is delegated to:

- Heads of Departments

They will ensure:

- The objectives and guidance outlined within our management system is fully understood and observed by persons under their control;
- Responsibilities are clearly defined and allocated / delegated to the appropriate levels within their areas of responsibility;
- The policy statement will be brought to the attention of all employees under their control;
- Any changes to the policy or our arrangements are brought to the attention of all persons under their control;

### **5.4 Responsible Persons**

It is important that policy standards are maintained and improved therefore where necessary specific roles within Hjaltland Housing Association, have been allocated additional responsibilities. Where this responsibility is specific to a subject area, the details of the responsible person are communicated to employees in writing or verbally as required.

These Responsible Persons will also be required to monitor their areas of control as well as the performance and activities of all persons under their control to ensure that acceptable standards are maintained.

Relevant responsible persons are: Heads of Departments

### 5.5 All Staff

- Employees will comply with the policies, procedures and arrangements set out in the Management System together with any information, instruction and training provided. In addition, any risk control measures and equipment provided to ensure safe-working practices will be properly used.
- Employees will report to their Head of Department or other member of management any identified breaches of procedures, any accidents or incidents in any aspect, which appears to them to give rise to a significant risk to employees or other persons. Such reports will be made without undue delay.
- Employees will inform their Head of Department or other member of management, without undue delay, where they believe that further training or other risk control measures would be beneficial.
- Employees will co-operate in all programmes, training, assessments and other initiatives that are intended to reduce risk and will actively implement any control measures identified as being required.
- Employees will not participate in horseplay, practical jokes or other acts, which may result in harm being caused to themselves or to other individuals.
- Demonstrate their commitment by their behaviour and co-operate in the investigation of accidents and incidents;

### 5.6 Third Parties

- Contractors representing the Association are requested to notify a senior member of staff, should the conduct of any tenant raise concerns in line with the aims of this policy. This includes any conduct which may be constituted as being violent or abuse towards their employees whilst performing duties as directed by the Association.

## 6.0 Defining Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is a pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and/or violent behaviour, including sexual violence, by a partner or ex-partner. Domestic abuse is overwhelmingly experienced by women and perpetrated by men. It doesn't matter how old someone is, what race or ethnicity they are, what class they are, whether or not they are disabled, or whether they have children – anyone can be a victim of abuse.



Often when people think of domestic abuse they think of physical violence, but domestic abuse is very often so much more than that. For many women who live with domestic abuse there will be no scars, bruises or broken bones, but for some it can take their life. No one kind of abuse is more serious than any other.

The Scottish Government passed what was described as 'gold standard' legislation when it passed The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018. The Act created a new criminal offence of domestic abuse, designed to offer greater protection to victims of controlling and coercive behaviour.

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is:

'Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse) can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate victims and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour, such as isolation from family and friends).'

## 7.0 Coercive and controlling behaviour

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

### What is coercive control?

Coercive control describes a range or pattern of behaviours that enable a perpetrator to maintain or regain control of a partner, ex-partner or family member.

Examples of coercive control might include:

- Controlling or observing victim's daily activities, including: being made to account for their time;
- restricting access to money; restricting their movements (including being locked in the property).
- Isolating the victim from family/friends; intercepting messages or phone calls.  
Constant criticism of victim's role as a partner/spouse/parent.
- Threats of suicide/homicide/familicide.
- Preventing the victim from taking medication/accessing care (especially relevant for victims with disabilities).
- Using children to control their partner, e.g. threats to take the children.  
Extreme dominance; a sense of 'entitlement' to partner/partner's services, obedience etc. – no matter what.

- Extreme jealousy (“If I can’t have you, no one can”), giving the victim cause to believe they will act on this.
- Damage to property, including to pets.
- Threats to expose sensitive information (eg sexual activity) or make false allegations to family members, religious or local community including via photos or the internet.
- Involvement of wider family members/community; crimes in the name of ‘honour’
- Manipulation of information given to professionals.

## 8.0 Domestic Abuse facts and figures

### National context for 2023/24

- 63,867 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by Police Scotland in 2023/24 (a 3% increase compared to the previous year)
- 81% of victims of domestic abuse involved a female victim and a male accused
- 15% of victims of domestic abuse involved a male victim and a female accused
- 90% of domestic abuse incidents occurred in a home or dwelling

### Shetland context for 2023/24

- 106 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by Police Scotland during 2023/24
- 128 new referrals to Shetland Women’s Aid Adult Service
- 41 new referrals to Shetland Women’s Aid Children and Young People’s Service
- 263 women accessed support services offered by Shetland Women’s Aid
- 87 Children accessed support services due to Domestic Abuse/Rape & Sexual Abuse

Every year in the UK at least 3 million women experience violence and any more are living with the legacies of past abuse. By having a domestic abuse workplace policy, employers are able to support employees who may be experiencing domestic abuse and other forms of violence.

- Domestic abuse currently costs UK businesses over £1.9 billion a year.
- 75% of women that experience domestic abuse are targeted at work – from harassing phone calls and abusive partners arriving at the office unannounced, to physical assaults.
- At least 1 in 5 women in Scotland will experience domestic violence in their lifetime whilst 2 women are killed every week in the UK
- 25% of LGBT relationships are abusive
- Nationally, 40% of all homeless women state that domestic abuse is a contributing factor in their homelessness.
- The number one barrier to leaving an abusive relationship is housing.

## 9.0 Support and Guidance

Hjaltland supports various campaigns against domestic abuse and sits as a partner on the Shetland Violence Against Women, Children and Young People partnership.



Although domestic abuse will occur predominately outside of the workplace, the employment implications for employees who experience abuse are significant. It can have a detrimental impact on both the health and well-being of an employee, which in turn may affect attendance, performance and effectiveness.

In light of a shift to home working, facilitated through The Association's Flexible and Remote Working Policy, The Association must be aware employees working from home may be at additional risk if they have made a request to work from home. Lone working protocols ensure contact is made with all staff, at the end of every working day.

Managers have a role to address the needs of employees who have experience of domestic abuse. In cases where an employee discloses their experience, managers should provide flexible support to meet the circumstances of the individual, taking into account any additional needs they may have.

The role of the manager is not to deal with the abuse, but to make it clear through the Domestic Abuse Policy, that employees will be supported and to outline help and support is available locally and/or nationally. Managers should encourage the employee to seek support from appropriate agencies (see Appendix 1 to this Domestic Abuse Policy). No referral should be made on behalf of the employee without their express consent.

All disclosures of abuse experienced by employees should be treated confidentially, the key exception being situations where there is reason to believe that there may be risk to others, including harm to children. In these circumstances, local child/adult protection procedures should be followed.

Employers are encouraged to respond appropriately if they suspect that a colleague is experiencing or perpetrating abuse. Employees may not want to discuss the abuse, but concerns should be raised in confidence with a manager. See Appendix 2 for further guidance.

Providing support can include directing the employee to sources of support as noted in Appendix 1 to this policy, and considering work related adjustments such as:

- Diverting phone calls or changing mobile/extension numbers if the employee is receiving harassing calls, with the consent of the employee
- Agreeing with the employee what, if anything, to tell colleagues and how they should respond if their partner or ex-partner telephones or visits the workplace
- Ensuring the employee does not work alone or in an isolated area and checking that the employee has arrangements for getting safely to and from home
- Keeping a records of any incidents of abuse in the workplace, including persistent telephone calls, emails or visits to the workplace
- Supporting the employee in a sympathetic, non-judgemental and confident manner
- Reviewing the security of information held such as temporary or new addresses, bank or healthcare details

- With the employee's consent, advising colleagues on a need to know basis and agreeing the response should the perpetrator/alleged perpetrator contact the workplace or present themselves at the office
- Changing working patterns or adjusting workload for a temporary period to make it more manageable and giving consideration to any request for a change in work arrangements.

All advice, information and support should remain confidential. No information should be disclosed without the express written consent of the employee. However, managers need to explain to the employee that where issues regarding the protection of children or protection of vulnerable adults arise, the relevant child/adult protection services will need to become involved without consent.

A brief note should be placed in the employee's personal file detailing the date the meeting took place and outlining that personal information was shared. Line managers should give a copy to the employee in person and should not post a copy of any correspondence to the employee as the perpetrator may have access to their mail at home.

If any plans are made regarding changes to working arrangements, the agreement and review date should be put in writing and placed in the employee's personal file. The reason should be noted as 'personal circumstances and not full details of the situation.

It is the employee's choice on whether or not to accept support and managers should respect their decision, reassure them of the Association's primary concern for their safety and remind them that support is available if they need it in the future. Even if the manager disagrees with the decisions being made by the employee regarding an employee's relationship, it is important to understand that a victim of domestic abuse may make a number of attempts to leave their partner before they are finally able to do so.

## **10.0 Perpetrators of abuse**

Where The Association is made aware of concerns regarding the conduct of an employee, either through formal notification of self-disclosure, they will offer appropriate advice and sign-posting. It may be appropriate, in agreement with the employee, to consider a referral to Justice Social Work, who can facilitate a restorative programme of support.

Any employees who are alleged perpetrators of abuse within the workplace may be dealt with in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct and EVH Terms and Conditions if the allegations are considered to fundamentally affect the employee's suitability for the post they hold with the Association or any associated registrations, for example Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) or PVG membership.

Examples of alleged abuse may include domestic abuse; gender-based violence; physical or sexual abuse of children or downloading images of child abuse; sexual violence; involvement in honour violence or stalking.

The conduct of any employee which brings the Association into serious disrepute may result in dismissal.

Employees should inform the Association immediately of any cautions or convictions for domestic abuse. Failure to do so may itself be viewed as a disciplinary matter.

Where an employee has made an allegation without foundation that another employee is perpetrating abuse, this will be viewed as a serious employee conduct issue and will be investigated and addressed in the appropriate manner using the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

### **11.0 Equality, Diversity and Human Right Impact Assessment**

The Association is committed to promoting positive measures that eliminate all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Our aim as landlord, service provider and employer is to recognise the needs of all individuals, and ensure these commitments are evident throughout every aspect of our business and our activities.

The Association assesses and reviews all new and revised policies and procedures, and an Impact Assessment is available.

### **12.0 GDPR**

The Association will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own Data Protection Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in Hjaltland Housing Associations Privacy notices.

### **13.0 Monitoring and Review**

Employees [and any sub-contractors] have a duty to co-operate in the operation of this policy by fulfilling the responsibilities placed upon them.

As stated, the operations of the company and this policy will be reviewed at regular intervals or in light of changing company circumstances, procedures and statutes. These changes will be brought to the attention of employees and others whose health and safety may be affected by such changes.

Planned Review Date: June 2028

## Appendix 1: Support Agencies – Local and National

### Emergency Services

#### POLICE

**In an Emergency Dial 999**

**Tel: 101 – Non emergency calls**

### Employee Free Counselling Service – independent and confidential

#### **Rowan Consultancy**

**[www.rowan-consultancy.co.uk](http://www.rowan-consultancy.co.uk)**

**01738 562005 9am-4pm**

**The Association can also refer an employee for face to face support**

### Local Services

#### **Shetland Women's Aid**

Tel: 01595 692 070

Women's Aid provides help to women's and children experiencing domestic abuse. They may be able to offer safe and secure accommodation for you and your children.

#### **Shetland Rape Crisis**

Tel: 01595 745 078/  
07570 062 362

Shetland Rape Crisis provides free and confidential information, advocacy and support to anyone in Shetland aged 13 and over affected by any form of sexual violence.

#### **Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse, Information and Resources**

Tel: 07747 097 160

If your life is affected by sexual abuse there are support groups for survivors over 18, partners of survivors and parents of children who have been sexually abused by others.

#### **Shetland Citizens Advice Bureau**

Tel: 01595 694 696

Shetland Citizens Advice Bureau provides free and confidential advice and information whatever your problem.

#### **Advocacy Shetland**

Tel: 01595 743 929

Advocacy Shetland helps people to gain access to information, explore and understand their options, and make their views and wishes known to all the services they are dealing with.

#### **Shetland Islands Council: Duty Social Work**

Tel: 01595 744 400 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Social Work services are there to provide help for adults and children who are at risk of harm.

Tel: 01595 695 611 Out of Hours

## National Support Services

**24hr Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline** Free confidential 24 hour support for people who have experienced domestic abuse  
Tel: 0800 027 1234

**Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline** Crisis support for anyone in Scotland affected by sexual violence at any time in their lives  
6pm – Midnight  
Tel: 08088 01 03 02  
Mini-com 0141 353 3091 deaf/hard of hearing

**Rape and Sexual Abuse Service Highland (RASHASH)** RASHASH provides free and confidential information, advocacy and support to anyone aged 13 or over that is affected by sexual violence  
Mon/Wed/Fri 9.30am -1.00pm  
Tues/Thurs 1pm – 4.30pm  
Tel: 03330 066 909

**Respect Phone line** Offers a chance to get support to stop and change to anyone who is worried that their behaviour towards a partner is abusive. Can also support concerned families and friends.  
Mon – Friday 9am – 5pm  
Tel: 0808 802 4040

**Scottish Legal Aid Board Legal Help Information Line** Helps individuals on low and modest incomes gain access to the legal system. Provides help towards the cost of legal advice and representation, for those who qualify, paid for out of public funds.  
Tel: 0845 122 8686

**Civil Legal Aid Assistance (Highland & Islands)** Employs solicitors to provide civil legal assistance direct to clients and address unmet legal need under Part V of the Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1986.  
Tel: 0845 123 2353 / 01463 641 770

**Scottish Women's Rights Centre** Provides free legal information and advice to women who have been affected by any form of Gender Based Violence.  
Tues 6-9pm; Wed 1.30-4.30pm;  
Fri 10am – 1pm  
Tel: 08088 010 789

## Support Services for Men

**Men's Advice Line** Confidential helpline for men experiencing domestic abuse  
Mon-Friday 9am – 5pm  
Tel: 0808 801 0327

**Abused Men in Scotland** Provides direct support to men experiencing domestic abuse

**Providing homes, supporting communities**



Mon – Friday 9am – 4pm  
Tel: 0808 800 0024

in Scotland, as well as helping to improve mainstream service responses.

**Survivors UK**

SMS Chat Mon-Fri 10.30am – 9pm  
Sat 10am – 6pm  
Text: 020 3322 1860  
WhatsApp: 0791 816 064

Survivors UK offer web and SMS chat services for men provided by trained professionals who are specialists in the field of male sexual violence, including childhood sexual abuse and adult rape.

**Respect**

Tel: 01595 724524

Offers a chance to get support to stop and change to anyone who is worried that their behaviour towards a partner is abusive. Can also support concerned families and friends.

## Support Services for Children and Young People

**ChildLine**

Tel: 0800 11 11

ChildLine is a free, private and confidential service where you can be you. Whatever your worry, whenever you need help, however you want to get in touch. They are there for children online or on the phone, anytime.

**LGBT Youth Scotland**

Text to chat: 07786 202 370

LGBT Youth Scotland's website provides information on identifying domestic abuse and what to do in a crisis. LGBT Youth Scotland is the largest young and community-based organisation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Scotland.

**18U**

Text/WhatsApp: 07707 531 976

18U provides information and support to young people who have been abused in any way.

## LGBT Support Services

**Galop**

Mon/Thurs 10am – 8pm; Tues\*/  
Wed 10am – 5pm  
Fri 1pm – 5pm  
\*Tues 1pm – 5pm is trans-specific  
Service  
Tel: 0800 999 5428

Provides emotional and practical support for LGBT people experiencing domestic abuse.

**LGBT Youth Scotland**

Text to chat: 07786 202 370

LGBT Youth Scotland's website provides information on identifying domestic abuse and what to do in a crisis. LGBT Youth Scotland is the largest young and community-based organisation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Scotland.



## Appendix 2: Management Guidance Flowchart – employees experiencing Domestic Abuse

