

# thirteen

Domestic Abuse Policy

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<b>Review Date</b>	1/4/2024
<b>Officer Responsible for Review</b>	Elle Butchart Fiona Heighton

## Policy Review History

[illegible]

## 1 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. This policy sets out how Thirteen will take steps to assist and support any person experiencing or threatened with domestic abuse, it applies to all customers including those living with our tenants, leaseholders, and shared owners.
- 1.2. Domestic abuse is still a largely hidden crime and measuring the true scale of the issue is difficult. Domestic abuse happens in all communities, regardless of gender, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership and pregnancy or maternity. Domestic abuse disproportionately affects women and is disproportionately perpetrated by men.
- 1.3. Thirteen are well placed to recognise the signs of domestic abuse. We will take all reports of domestic abuse seriously and work positively and pro-actively with the victim to offer support.
- 1.4. Thirteen recognise that our own colleagues may also be experiencing domestic abuse and are committed to supporting colleagues through our wide range of support packages.

## 2 REFERENCE MATERIAL

- 2.1. The following is a list of documents and associated policies/publications which we will consider when developing our approach to supporting victims of domestic abuse:
  - Housing Act 1996
  - Family Law Act 1996
  - Protection from Harassment Act 1997
  - Human Rights Act 1998
  - Data Protection Act 1998
  - Domestic Violence, Crime & Victims Act 2004
  - Police & Justice Act 2006
  - Equality Act 2010
  - Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
  - Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014
  - Serious Crime Act 2015
  - Care Act 2014
  - Clare's Law/Domestic Abuse Offender Disclosure Scheme.

## 3. Definition of Domestic Abuse

- 3.1. Domestic abuse is defined as:

The behaviour by a person ("A") towards another person ("B" or their child) is considered domestic abuse if

- (a) A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected, and
- (b) the behaviour is abusive.

- 3.2. What is abusive behaviour?

Abusive behaviour may consist of any of the following:

- (a) physical or sexual abuse;

- (b) violent or threatening behaviour;
- (c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
- (d) economic abuse; (Economic abuse means, any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B's ability to acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or obtain goods or services)
- (e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.

3.3. What does personally connected mean?

Two people are considered personally connected if any of the following apply:

- (a) they are, or have been, married to each other;
- (b) they are, or have been, civil partners of each other;
- (c) they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- (d) they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- (e) they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
- (f) there is a child in relation to whom they each have a parental relationship;
- (g) they are relatives.

3.4. The term Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) refers to the following range of serious crime types which are predominately, but not exclusively, experienced by women and girls; domestic abuse, sexual offences, stalking, female genital mutilation (FGM), crimes said to be committed in the name of 'honour', forced marriage, sex working and trafficking for sexual exploitation.

3.5. Economic abuse involves behaviours that interfere with an individual's ability to acquire, use and maintain economic resources such as money, transportation and utilities. It can be controlling or coercive. It can make the individual economically dependent on the abuser, thereby limiting their ability to escape and access safety.

Examples of economic abuse include:

- having sole control of the family income;
- preventing a victim from claiming welfare benefits;
- interfering with a victim's education, training, or employment;
- not allowing or controlling a victim's access to mobile phone/transport/utilities/food;
- damage to a victim's property

3.6. Controlling behaviour: 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.

3.7. Coercive behaviour: An act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

- 3.8. We recognise the devastating impact that domestic abuse can have on children exposed to it in their own home. A child who sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, domestic abuse and is related to the person being abused or the perpetrator is also to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse.

#### **4. POLICY CONTENTS**

##### **4.1. Aims and objectives: -**

We are committed to providing safe homes for all our customers, people experiencing domestic abuse will be treated in a sympathetic, supportive and non-judgmental way. A victim's disclosure alone is sufficient for them to be given advice and assistance as a matter of priority by staff.

- 4.2. Our domestic abuse panel will meet weekly to discuss property move applications. . This is to ensure that there is a pro-active and consistent approach to tackling housing issues relating to domestic abuse.
- 4.3. We will have a Right first time Response - ensuring all colleagues have the knowledge to respond correctly to victims of domestic abuse and safeguard our customers.
- 4.4. Our approach will be victim centred in responding to and encouraging those experiencing domestic abuse, to report it and be confident that complaints will be treated seriously, sympathetically and in confidence.
- 4.5. We will ensure that Specialist Services referrals are completed to ensure:
- LGBT+ individuals can speak to a support officer of the same sexual orientation.
  - Victims of all ages, especially adolescents and older survivors can access support.
  - People with disabilities receive specialist support.
  - We will ensure that we will support victims to receive the appropriate support that meets their needs and best interests.
- 4.6. While women and girls are disproportionately affected by all forms of VAWG, and some are gender specific such as FGM, we will support those individuals experiencing VAWG or domestic abuse irrespective of age, gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, religion, social background, or any other protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act.
- 4.7. We will be proactive in our multi agency approach with all essential agencies, working together to ensure that the safety of victims impacted by domestic abuse. These will include multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) meetings.
- 4.8. We will be flexible in our approach in responding to incidents of domestic abuse, considering the varying circumstances of victims and the differing courses of action available and appropriate action that they may wish to take to end the abuse.
- 4.9. Perpetrator action, we will:
- Work with perpetrators of domestic abuse who recognise and seek to change their behaviour.
  - Hold perpetrators accountable for their abusive behaviour.
  - If necessary, take action to stop perpetrators continuing the abuse and that they are held accountable through the courts, including asking police to prosecute for criminal damage and taking action to evict the perpetrator of domestic abuse using the powers available under the Housing Act, whilst taking into consideration the wishes of the victim and their future housing needs.

- 4.10. We will keep consistent, accurate and relevant records, to ensure that the victim does not have to constantly repeat the same information. Where possible we will inform you when we will need to share information with other agencies.
- 4.11. We will assist and guide victims to obtain support, providing advice to victims, including supporting victims to take appropriate legal measures to protect themselves and their families.
- 4.12. We recognise the importance of Safeguarding. Our approach is to prevent and reduce the risk of harm to adults, young people and children who are experiencing or are at risk from abuse or neglect by completing safeguarding referrals that have recognised links to domestic abuse acting in line with our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- 4.13. Where the victim wishes to remain in their home we will endeavor where possible to: -
  - Use legal tools to remove the perpetrator from the property
  - Explore and install additional security to the property
  - Signpost to the police for panic alarms
  - Liaise with the Local Authority around additional home security measures
- 4.14. We will assist victims to find alternative accommodation, if it is not possible for the victim to stay safe at home, we will discuss all housing options available. Where possible we will liaise with other housing providers to ensure the victim moves as quickly as possible to a safe property.
- 4.15. When safe we will support victims to fulfil their aspirations by supporting them to access services. This could include, counselling, therapeutic and group programmes, access to training and employment advice.
- 4.16. We will publicise and promote a clear message through our website and social media, that we will not tolerate domestic abuse and try to reach out to victims who experience barriers to reporting or accessing services. We will promote campaigns and educational interventions ensuring they are RESPECT accredited.
- 4.17. We will ensure that all Thirteen colleagues undertake mandatory training to understand domestic abuse and enable them to respond appropriately. If they see or feel that 'something is not quite right' they report to the appropriate person.
- 4.18. We will treat any disclosure of domestic abuse in the strictest of confidence unless there is a duty to disclose information to protect the victim, prevent harm to someone else or prevent or detect a crime.
- 4.19. All information that we gather when managing cases of domestic abuse will be stored on our systems securely. We may have to share information with agencies including the police or social services when a child or the adult is at potential risk of harm. For children this includes emotional harm and neglect.
- 4.20. We will carry out a risk assessment using the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) Risk Identification Checklist and safety plan to provide support for the person experiencing domestic abuse or VAWG and their children We will agree the best method of communication with victims, to keep victims safe as possible.
- 4.21. Where our property has been damaged, and the safety of our customer(s) is at risk we will carry out emergency repairs within 24 hours.
- 4.22. We will respond to referrals the next working day. A support coordinator will contact victims and provide advice and guidance on specialist services and explore emergency

accommodation. An appointment will also be offered with a Domestic Abuse Coordinator (DAC) which will take place within 7 working days. The DAC can offer support with housing needs and complete referrals into specialist services.

4.23. All domestic abuse cases will be recorded on our systems and victims will be flagged as vulnerable, and perpetrators for any potential risk.

4.24. All appeals and complaints will be dealt with through our complaint's procedure.

## 5 GOVERNANCE INFORMATION

<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	There are no equality and diversity concerns as this policy takes a proactive approach.
<b>Customer Involvement and Consultation</b>	The customers feedback was well received. All customers found the policy clear and easy to read. A couple of comments were made by the customers to which have been sent to the Care and Support Manager and a response has been received.
<b>Environmental Sustainability</b>	None identified
<b>Monitoring and Review</b>	The Care and Support Manager and team leader who leads on domestic abuse within Thirteen will review the policy every three years or sooner if there are any legislative or regulatory changes. on an annual basis.
<b>Responsibility</b>	<p>A statement should be made as to who the responsible officer will be and what they will be responsible for. For example:</p> <p>Suzanne Halliwell – Overall implementation of the policy.</p> <p>Fiona Heighton &amp; Elle Butchart - Operational delivery of the policy and associated procedures.</p>

## Appendix A - Specialist Domestic Abuse Services Contact

## Where to find help

Locality	Agency name and contact details	What they offer
Middlesbrough	<p>My Sisters Place 123 Borough Road, Middlesbrough, TS1 3AN</p> <p>01642 241 864</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:hello@mysistersplace.co.uk">hello@mysistersplace.co.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.mysistersplace.org.uk/">http://www.mysistersplace.org.uk/</a></p> <p><b>Please note, Harbour offer support to male victims in the Middlesbrough area, please use the main contact details as stated for all other areas</b></p>	<p>Specialist support for women aged 16 and above, including counselling services, programmes, sanctuary and support with criminal and civil court processes</p>
Stockton	<p>Harbour (Head Office) 8 Sydenham, Hartlepool, TS25 1QB</p> <p>03000 202 525 (24-hour number)</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@myharbour.org.uk">info@myharbour.org.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="https://www.myharbour.org.uk/">https://www.myharbour.org.uk/</a></p>	<p>Specialist support for men and women, including refuge, outreach support, support for children and young people and work with abusive partners, programmes, sanctuary and support with criminal and civil court processes</p> <p>Harbour also deliver a 30 week Respect Accredited programme for perpetrators.</p>
Hartlepool	<p>Harbour (Head Office) 8 Sydenham, Hartlepool, TS25 1QB</p> <p>03000 202 525 (24-hour number)</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@myharbour.org.uk">info@myharbour.org.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="https://www.myharbour.org.uk/">https://www.myharbour.org.uk/</a></p>	<p>Specialist support for men and women, including refuge, outreach support, support for children and young people and work with abusive partners, programmes, sanctuary and support with criminal and civil court processes</p> <p>Harbour also deliver a 30 week Respect Accredited programme for perpetrators</p>
Redcar	<p>Foundation PO Box 226, Redcar, TS10 9BB 0300 456 2214</p>	<p>Supporting both male and female victims, they offer outreach services, support with criminal and civil court processes, sanctuary and</p>



	<p>Email: <a href="mailto:RedcarDV@foundationuk.org">RedcarDV@foundationuk.org</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="https://www.foundationuk.org/team/foundation-redcar/">https://www.foundationuk.org/team/foundation-redcar/</a></p>	specialist programmes for those causing harm to others
Durham	<p>Stone Meadow House</p> <p>Address details are not disclosed to keep residents safe.</p> <p>01207 282 193</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:Stone.MeadowHouse@thirteengroup.co.uk">Stone.MeadowHouse@thirteengroup.co.uk</a></p> <p><b>Please note, further support can also be obtained from Harbour who operate a service in this area. Please use the contact details as stated for all other areas</b></p>	The project is made up of nine self-contained furnished two/three bedroom flats for women and children. Specialist workers conduct 1-2-1 work in relation to finances, health, tenancy management, employment and training as well as helping to access legal advice.
Darlington	<p>Harbour (Head Office) 8 Sydenham, Hartlepool, TS25 1QB</p> <p>03000 202 525 (24-hour number)</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@myharbour.org.uk">info@myharbour.org.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="https://www.myharbour.org.uk/">https://www.myharbour.org.uk/</a></p>	<p>Specialist support for men and women, including refuge, outreach support, support for children and young people and work with abusive partners, programmes, sanctuary and support with criminal and civil court processes</p> <p>Harbour also deliver a 30 week Respect Accredited programme for perpetrators</p>
Newcastle	<p>NIDAS (Newcastle Integrated Domestic Abuse Service)</p> <p>0191 214 6501</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:Nidas.Team@thirteengroup.co.uk">Nidas.Team@thirteengroup.co.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.newcastleidas.co.uk">www.newcastleidas.co.uk</a></p>	Specialist support, including outreach, refuge, practical issues, specialist accommodation for men and support with criminal and civil court processes
Teesside	<p>Route 2 St. Marys Centre, 82-90 Corporation Road, Middlesbrough, TS1 2RW</p> <p>01642 241 873</p>	Specialist service for those who are concerned that they are behaving abusively to their partner, ex-partner or family members and are wanting to make positive change.

	Email: <a href="mailto:info@route2.org.uk">info@route2.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.route2.org.uk/">http://www.route2.org.uk/</a>	
Teesside	ARCH North East 22 Hoylake Road, Middlesbrough, TS4 3JL  01642 822 331  Email: <a href="mailto:admin@archnortheast.org">admin@archnortheast.org</a> Website: <a href="https://www.archnortheast.org/">https://www.archnortheast.org/</a>	Provides counselling and support for those who have been affected by rape, sexual abuse and childhood sexual abuse
Teesside/National	Halo Project Vanguard Suite, 307a Broadcasting House, Middlesbrough, TS1 5JA  01642 683 054  Email: <a href="mailto:info@haloproject.org.uk">info@haloproject.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="https://www.haloproject.org.uk/">https://www.haloproject.org.uk/</a>	Support for victims of Honour Based Violence (HBV), Forced Marriage (FM) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), specialist refuge, advocacy and empowerment programmes
National (female victims)	National Domestic Abuse Helpline:  0808 2000 247  Website: <a href="http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk/">http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk/</a>	This is a freephone 24-hour helpline. They can offer support to women experiencing violence or abuse, their family and friends
National (male victims, heterosexual, gay and bisexual)	Men's Advice Line:  0808 801 0327  Email: <a href="mailto:info@mensadviceline.org.uk">info@mensadviceline.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk/">http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk/</a>	This is a freephone support line (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) for men experiencing domestic abuse from a current partner, ex-partner or family member.

National LGBT+	<p>Galop</p> <p>0800 999 5428</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@galop.org.uk">info@galop.org.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="https://www.galop.org.uk/galop-to-run-national-lgbt-domestic-violence-helpline/">https://www.galop.org.uk/galop-to-run-national-lgbt-domestic-violence-helpline/</a></p>	<p>Specialist service for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people who are experiencing abuse or violence. The freephone line is available Monday to Friday (please see website for times as these vary). The helpline operates a specific trans service on Tuesdays.</p>
National Perpetrators	<p>Respect</p> <p>0808 8024040</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@respectphoneline.org.uk">info@respectphoneline.org.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="https://respectphoneline.org.uk/">https://respectphoneline.org.uk/</a></p>	<p>Respect is a pioneering UK domestic abuse organisation leading the development of safe, effective work with perpetrators, male victims and young people using violence in their close relationships.</p> <p>The Respect Phoneline is an anonymous and confidential helpline for men and women who are harming their partners and families. We provide specialist advice and guidance to help people change their behaviours and support for those working with domestic abuse perpetrators</p>