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 DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY
 

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## 1. Policy Purpose and Scope

Elim is committed to ensuring that our customers are able to live in their homes safe from violence or any other kind of abuse perpetrated by a member of their household. This policy applies to all Elim households and residents but may also apply in circumstances where one or more of the people involved are not Elim residents.

Elim recognises colleagues may be amongst those impacted by domestic abuse, either as a victim or a perpetrator, and a clear workplace policy and guidelines are required.

This policy will outline how Elim will respond to any concern raised about domestic abuse. Effective delivery of this policy is intended to make sure Elim's residents are safer and feel safer in their homes and communities and our colleagues are supported in the workplace. This policy sets out the actions Elim colleagues must undertake when working with customers and colleagues who have or may have experienced domestic abuse.

## 2. Definition

Definitions and understanding of domestic abuse:

Elim's definition and understanding of domestic abuse are taken from Part 1 of [the Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#). The summary definition below is based on this Act.

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people aged 16 years or over who are or who have been connected to each other through marriage, civil partnership, family relationship or intimate relationship regardless of gender or sexuality.

This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- physical
- emotional
- psychological
- sexual
- verbal
- coercive and controlling behaviour
- financial or economic.

This definition includes honour-based abuse, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. Victims are not confined to one gender, religion, ethnic group or social class.

What constitutes domestic abuse is commonly misunderstood, and it is important to remember that no single act defines it; there are a wide range of activities and behaviours that amount to domestic abuse which are often dangerous and can be life-threatening

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 specifically recognises children as victims of domestic abuse if they witness domestic abuse in their own home.

## 3. Values and principles

Our vision is to meet housing need and deliver homes that change people's lives. Elim Housing colleagues, customers, Board and stakeholders have developed Elim CARES values that determine how we work together to deliver our services and achieve our business plan objectives and vision.



#### **CUSTOMERS FIRST**

Customers are at the heart of our services and decision making.



#### **ASPIRATIONAL & ACCOUNTABLE**

We are ambitious for our customers, colleagues and stakeholders. We work with integrity, learn from mistakes and do what we say we will.



#### **RESULTS**

We work hard and deliver great results for our customers and for Elim.



#### **EVERYONE'S VIEW MATTERS**

We listen to understand, improve and build our services.



#### **SUPPORTIVE**

We tackle challenges head on and inspire each other to achieve our potential.

The following principles will be observed in all our work relating to domestic abuse:

#### **Support for our tenants:**

- We recognise that domestic abuse is both illegal and a breach of our tenancy agreements and this will inform our response to domestic abuse concerns.
- We will be vigilant about signs of domestic abuse.
- We recognise that our role as a housing provider means that Elim colleagues and our contractors may often be the most likely people to witness signs of domestic abuse.
- We will ensure all colleagues are trained to recognise the signs of domestic abuse and raise a concern
- We will ensure residents are heard, supported and signposted to specialist support

#### **Support for our employees:**

- Elim recognises colleagues experiencing domestic abuse have the right to complete confidentiality. However, in some exceptional circumstances this confidence may need to be broken, for example, in order to protect children or vulnerable adults.
- Elim is committed to taking all reasonable steps to minimise the risks to the safety of colleagues while at work if they are known to be or have experienced domestic abuse.
- If approached by a colleague experiencing domestic abuse, managers will listen and be sensitive and non-judgemental in order that the most appropriate help can be offered.

- Elim will ensure that managers have access to appropriate information and feel able to encourage colleagues to seek advice and support
- Where possible, a perpetrator who is a colleague will be supported to seek help to change their behaviour. However, depending on circumstances, the perpetrator may be subject to Elim's disciplinary procedures. This may apply if their behaviour endangers other colleagues or is under investigation as a criminal offence, or if their activities outside of work have an impact on their ability to perform their role, or are likely to bring Elim into disrepute

#### **4. Legislation and regulation**

Legislation and regulations linked to this policy include:

- ASB Act 2003
- Capacity Act 2005
- Care Act 2014
- Children Act 1989
- Criminal Justice Act 2015
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Family Law Act 1996
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- Housing Act 1996
- National Housing Federation Consumer Regulations 2024
- Offences against the Person Act 1861
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Serious Crime Act 201
- Sexual Offences Act 1956
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2023

Procedures and guidance linked to this Policy include:

- Allocation Policy 2024
- ASB Policy 2024
- Customer flagging 2015
- Domestic Abuse Guidelines 2025
- Data Protection Policy 2021
- Working flexibly at Elim 2025
- Incident reporting 2022
- Repairs & maintenance Policy 2022
- Risk management procedure ?
- Safeguarding Adults Policy 2025
- Safeguarding Children and Young Peoples Policy 2025
- Support delivery procedure 2025
- Well-being at work policy 2025

#### **5. Policy statement**

- Domestic abuse occurs across society, regardless of age, gender, race, religious belief, sexuality, disability, wealth and geography. It has extreme consequences for victims

across a whole range of outcomes, including physical and mental health, alcohol abuse, homelessness and in extreme cases, murder.

- Domestic abuse can affect the morale, health, wellbeing and self-confidence of a resident or colleague, which in turn can impact on all aspects of their life and for colleagues their performance at work.
- Elim recognises the devastating effect domestic abuse has on those experiencing it, their families and the wider community. This policy demonstrates Elim's commitment to support residents and colleagues in making positive changes and to provide a safe and positive place to live or work.
- Elim is committed to ensuring every resident or colleague who experiences domestic abuse can raise the issue without fear of stigma or victimisation and will receive appropriate support and assistance.

## **6. Commitment to our customers and colleagues**

- We will ensure that appropriate colleagues are trained in responding to domestic abuse concerns
- We will not ignore concerns. All concerns will be responded to within one working day.
- We will take a victim-centred approach when responding to concerns. This means listening, prioritising their safety, respecting their capacity to make decisions even if we disagree with them and communicating clearly.
- We will work in partnership with local agencies to respond to domestic abuse concerns wherever possible/appropriate.
- We will process personal data appropriately and in keeping with our Data Protection Policy, treating concerns confidentially but reporting them to the appropriate authorities if we believe anyone is at risk of serious harm.
- We will recognise where domestic abuse may also represent a safeguarding concern - whether relating to children or vulnerable adults – and follow our safeguarding procedures wherever appropriate.
- We will take personal characteristics such as disability or religion into account in our work around domestic abuse, but they will never be recognised as a justification for abuse.

### **When responding to a concern around domestic abuse, we will take the following action:**

- We will gather information. Ideally and most importantly, we will listen to and gather information from the victim.
- We will assess the risk, completing a [DASH Risk Checklist](#) (if possible). The results of this assessment will be used to inform further action.
- Where appropriate we will also assess the appropriateness of making a referral to [MARAC](#) through reviewing the referral criteria and completing a referral form.
- We will take steps to ensure that the victim is safe. Where we believe that the victim is at serious or immediate risk of harm we will liaise with the local authority and Police to help them access a place of safety.
- Where appropriate we will seek to 'target harden' – make the victim's home safer, e.g. by changing locks.
- We will try to ensure that the victim has adequate support in place to meet their physical and emotional needs.
- We will work with the victim to identify appropriate organisations or agencies to work in partnership with, to ensure the ongoing safety and recovery of the victim.

- We will recognise that adults may have the capacity to knowingly make choices that put them at risk of harm. In these circumstances, we may advise about the potential consequences of their choice, but we will respect their right to make it.
- Committing acts of domestic abuse is both illegal and a breach of Elim's Tenancy and Licence agreements. We will seek to take enforcement action against tenants who are perpetrators of domestic abuse, recognising that certain tenancy arrangements may complicate this.

## **Housing Management**

As a housing association, we recognise that responding to and managing domestic abuse may overlap with a significant amount of our other service provision. The considerations detailed in this Policy will be factored into our work in the following areas, though the list is not exhaustive:

- ASB management
- Allocations
- Arrears management
- Estate inspections
- Repairs and maintenance
- Safeguarding
- Tenancy visits

### **Joint tenancies:**

- Where the tenancy allows it, we will accept a notice to end the tenancy by only one tenant.
- We will consider offering a sole tenancy to the victim where possible. If it is not possible to accept one tenant's notice to end the tenancy, we will take steps, usually working in partnership with other agencies, to make the victim as safe as possible

### **Sole tenure where the perpetrator is the tenant:**

- We will try to make sure that the victim is safe and aware of their legal rights, e.g. whether they can apply for an Exclusion Order.
- Where appropriate we will explore options for safe accommodation, as well as more appropriate long-term accommodation if it is the victim's wish. We may consider the use of Elim's homes for this purpose.
- Where we have sufficient evidence, we will consider taking possession of the tenancy.

### **Sole tenancy/license where the victim is the tenant:**

- If the victim wants the abuser to leave the home, we will support them in this with support from partner agencies, in particular the Police.
- We will look to make the property more secure, where this is appropriate.
- We will support the victim in finding alternative accommodation where this is their wish. We may consider the use of Elim's homes for this purpose

## **Our colleagues**

We realise that it is not just our residents who may be victims of domestic abuse. We will support our colleagues in relation to domestic abuse in the following ways:

- We will observe the overarching principles

- We will proactively communicate to all colleagues so that they know we will provide support to them if they are experiencing or affected by domestic abuse.
- We will be clear about what we can and cannot keep in confidence. Where colleagues are involved in supporting another colleague in relation to domestic abuse, we will be clear and transparent about how the sharing of information and confidentiality will work within Elim.
- Wherever possible we will provide the same support to colleagues that we do to our residents in terms of assessing risk, supporting them to be safe and accessing appropriate support and advice.
- We will make adaptations to a colleague's working conditions and arrangements where possible and appropriate, e.g. changing their office base for a temporary period, paying their salary into a different bank account etc.

## **7. Policy breach**

Elim does not tolerate Domestic Abuse, and disciplinary action would always be considered in the event of any occurrence or other breach of this Policy. All our colleagues, our Board and Committee members have a responsibility to champion our Elim CARES values and our culture of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Elim's external contractors, sub-contractors, agents or third parties providing services to us are responsible for complying with this policy and we shall take action against them in cases of non-compliance as appropriate

## **8. Policy owner**

The Deputy Chief Executive Officer is the Policy owner. All colleagues at Elim, the Board, Committees and managers have responsibility for ensuring this Policy is compiled with and for role modelling appropriate behaviours and language. The Senior Leadership Team and Operational Leadership Team have responsibilities for their individual areas of operations.

## **9. Policy date and review**

This Policy was created October 2024. The Policy was revised in December 2025. It will be reviewed every 3 years.