

Domestic Abuse Policy

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 An estimated 1.2 million women and 713,000 men have suffered domestic abuse in 2017, according to figures from the [Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS).
- 1.2 Coastline believes that none of its customers or their households should live in fear of violence from a current or former spouse or partner or any other member of their household. Coastline will assist and support any person suffering from or threatened with violence.
- 1.3 Committing an act of domestic abuse is a specific breach of tenancy and Coastline will take action against those that perpetrate domestic abuse.
- 1.4 Coastline has developed this policy indicating how we will work to tackle Domestic Abuse.

2.0 What is Domestic Abuse?

- 2.1 The [Home Office](#) (2013) definition of domestic abuse is:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological;
- Physical;
- Sexual;
- Financial;
- Emotional.

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.

Coercive behaviour is: 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.”

- 2.2 Domestic abuse:

- Can be actual or threatened and can happen once, occasionally or on a regular basis;
- It can happen to anyone, in different types of relationships; people suffer domestic abuse regardless of their social group, class, age, race, disability, sexuality or lifestyle;

- The abuse can begin at any time – in new relationships or after many years together;
- Children are affected by domestic abuse, regardless of whether they directly witness the abuse.

3.0 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)

3.1 Galop report that LGBT people are not less likely to experience domestic abuse than those in heterosexual relationships and whilst LGBT people may experience the similar patterns of domestic abuse to heterosexual people, there are some specific domestic abuse issues which are uniquely experienced by LGBT people. This may include:

- Threat of disclosure of sexual orientation to friends, family, work place etc;
- Controlling access to places which support their coming to terms with coming out and sexual orientation.

There are no mainstream services in the UK for LGBT people experiencing domestic abuse and homophobia and transphobia may be experienced by individuals in refuges.

3.2 Galop (UK) is working to change the situation for LGBT people experiencing domestic abuse. They run a confidential UK-wide listening, information and signposting helpline Service (0800 999 5428), staffed by LGBT people. They also offer limited advocacy work.

3.3 Coastline also works with local advocacy and support organisations for LGBT people such as Intercom Trust (LGBT support and advocacy) and Esteem (DAISI Project Domestic Abuse Interventions and Support Initiatives) for men and LGBT people who experience domestic abuse.

4.0 Dealing with domestic abuse

4.1 Coastline works in partnership with a number of external agencies to assist and protect anyone who is suffering from domestic abuse. Coastline can offer an appointment with a trained member of staff (male or female) who will be the named contact and will work with the customer to make suggestions about how to keep safe and will keep the customer updated with any action taken on their behalf.

5.0 What we will do

5.1 Coastline will:

- Offer confidential advice over the phone, at our offices, at a home visit, or at a visit to a local venue of the customers choosing;
- Adopt a victim centred approach and agree an Action Plan;
- Provide extra security to the home, such as extra locks, chains, window

locks, and external lighting;

- Provide training to staff on the signs and symptoms of domestic abuse, including that related to repairs typically caused by domestic abuse;
- Liaise with the police and Cornwall Council's Community Safety Team, if you permission is given, to let them know who is at risk;
- Provide advice and assistance if there is a need to move house;
- Arrange referrals to specialist domestic abuse support services;
- Liaise with Cornwall Council's Housing Options if refuge accommodation is needed;
- Carry out repairs if damage has been caused to the home through an incident of domestic abuse within one working day;
- Consider legal action against those who commit domestic abuse. This can include injunctions, anti-social behaviour orders, and possession proceedings;
- Record all incidents of domestic abuse on our Customer Relationship Management system;
- Treat cases of domestic abuse as a priority, within one working day of receiving a complaint;
- Contribute to regular Multi agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) meetings that are held weekly to help those at high risk of harm;
- Use the Sanctuary Scheme for Target Hardening (a scheme funded by Cornwall Council to keep victims safe in their homes and avoid homelessness);
- Encourage customers to report abuse to us quickly;
- Monitor customer satisfaction within our service;
- Benchmark our performance against national organisations.

6.0 Make a Stand

6.1 Coastline has signed up to and is committed to the Chartered Institute for Housing, Women's Aid and Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance pledge, Make a Stand. The pledge enables Housing Associations to sign up to four key commitments.

6.2 As a result of the Make a Stand pledge, Coastline are committed to:

1. Put in place and embed a policy to support residents who are affected by domestic abuse;
2. Make information about national and local domestic abuse support services available on your website and in other appropriate places so that they are easily accessible for residents and staff;
3. Put in place a HR policy, or amend an existing policy, to support members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse;

4. Appoint a champion at a senior level in your organisation to own the activity you are doing to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

6.3 Coastline's Domestic Abuse Champion is the Chief Executive Officer.

6.4 Coastline will actively promote its pledge to the Make a Stand campaign.

7.0 Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

7.1 Coastline Housing is a member of the weekly MARAC group. This group of statutory and non-statutory agencies has signed a data sharing agreement to share information on high risk domestic abuse cases.

7.2 The MARAC group works together to share all pieces of a victim and perpetrators network in order to reduce the risk of further abuse.

7.3 Coastline will submit a report for any cases of which they have involvement or in cases of high levels of involvement will attend the meeting to discuss.

8.0 Tenancy agreements and Leases

8.1 By signing the tenancy agreement or lease our customers agree not to commit acts of domestic abuse and to be responsible for the behaviour of their household and visitors.

8.2 Not all tenancy agreements are exactly the same, but the principle that individuals' lives should not be adversely affected by another's behaviour is a constant throughout.

9.0 Training

9.1 To ensure that staff are equipped with the key skills to deliver this Policy and our Procedures effectively we will:

- Facilitate regular One-to-Ones, Team Meetings and Appraisals for staff;
- Provide frequent training courses for all staff involved in dealing with incidents of domestic abuse.

10.0 What will Coastline do when they receive complaints of Domestic Abuse

10.1 Coastline will:

- Record all reports of Domestic Abuse within 24 hours and appoint a named officer to each case;
- Respond to the victim within one working day of receiving a complaint;
- Develop an action plan with the victim;

- Keep the victim informed of the progress of the action plan and notify and explain our decisions;
- Work with the Police, Adult Social Care and the Community Safety Team with the permission of the victim;
- Review and close cases as soon as they have been resolved with the victim's agreement.

11.0 Providing support to those involved

11.1 Coastline will:

- Agree an action plan with the victim and tailor the plan to their individual circumstances and case;
- Work with our partners to provide assistance and support to suit the needs of the victim;
- Will have regard to what assistance and support may be available to perpetrators to encourage them to change their behaviour to prevent re-offending;
- Maintain contact throughout the course of the investigation and keep those involved informed of progress (subject to duties of confidentiality) from the date the first complaint is received, throughout the investigation process and/or any legal action;
- Ensure that a Disability Assessment Form (Justification Prior to Legal Action Equality Act 2010) is completed before Notices are served;
- Provide feedback and reports to customers relating to our performance.

12.0 Complaints

12.1 Where customers feel that Coastline have not carried out their responsibilities under this Policy they have the right to make a complaint through the Complaints Policy and procedure.

13.0 Equality and Diversity

13.1 Throughout the operation of our Policy on domestic abuse and through our dealings with those involved in cases we will have regard for diversity at all times.

13.2 All customers (and their advocates) will have access to this document upon request or from our website.

13.3 This document and accompanying leaflets can be translated or provided in alternative formats (e.g. Braille, large print, and audio) upon request.

14.0 Associated Documents

14.1 The following legislation, guidance, policies and documents are associated with this Policy:

- Chartered Institute For Housing Women's Aid and Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Pledge, Make A Stand
- Respect – ASB Charter for Housing;
- Lettings Policy;
- Probationary Policy;
- ASB Policy;
- Hate Crime Policy;
- Equality & Diversity Policy;
- Mutual Exchange Policy;
- Safeguarding Adults and Children policies;
- Complaints Policy;
- Tenancy Agreements;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Housing Act 1996;
- Housing Act 1988;
- Criminal Justice Act 2003;
- Anti-social behaviour Police and Crime Act 2014.