

Domestic Abuse Policy

Introduction

An estimated 1.4 million women and 700,000 men have suffered domestic abuse in the last year, according to figures from the [Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS).

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.

Committing an act of domestic abuse is a specific breach of tenancy and Coastline will take action against those that perpetrate domestic abuse.

Through consultation with the Neighbourhood and Communities Sounding Board and in conjunction with a customer Action Team, Coastline has developed this policy and procedure to tackle Domestic Abuse.

1.0 What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse is all incidents of threatening, controlling or coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, sexual, emotional or financial) between adults, including family members, no matter what their sex or sexuality. If you are a victim of domestic abuse we can help.

- 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

2.0 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)

Broken Rainbow has produced statistics that advise 30 – 40% of LGBT people experience domestic abuse in their relationships and from members of their families. 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.

Broken Rainbow (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 (0300 999 5428), staffed by LGBT people. They also offer limited advocacy work.

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.

3.0 Dealing with domestic abuse

Coastline works in partnership with a number of external agencies to assist and protect anyone who is suffering from domestic abuse. We can offer you an appointment with a trained member of staff (male or female) who will be your named contact and will work with you to help keep you safe and will keep you updated with any action taken on your behalf.

What we will do

We will

- Offer you confidential advice over the phone, at our offices, at a home visit, or at a visit to you at a local venue
- Adopt a victim centred approach and agree an Action Plan
- Provide extra security to your home, such as extra locks, chains, window locks, and external lighting
- Liaise with the police and Cornwall Crime and Disorder Reduction Team , if you want us to, to let them know that you are at risk
- Provide advice and assistance if you need to move house
- Arrange support for you from specialist domestic abuse support services
- liaise with Cornwall Council's Housing Options if you need refuge accommodation
- Carry out repairs if damage has been caused to your 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 ASB recording system
- Treat cases of domestic abuse as a priority, within 1 working day of receiving a complaint
- Attend regular Multi agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) meetings that are held monthly 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 you to report abuse to us quickly
- Monitor customer satisfaction within our service
- Benchmark our performance against national organisations

4.0 Respect – ASB Charter for Housing

Coastline has signed up to and is committed to the new Respect – ASB Charter for Housing which aims to be outcome-focused so that we can provide a high quality ASB service. The Charter consists of seven core commitments.

We are committed to:

- demonstrating leadership and strategic commitment
- providing an accessible and accountable service
- taking swift action to protect communities
- adopting a supportive approach to working with victims and witnesses
- encouraging individual and community responsibility
- having a clear focus on prevention and early intervention

- ensuring that a value for money approach is embedded in our service

5.0 Tenancy agreements and Leases

Our tenancy agreements and leases contain clauses relating to domestic abuse. 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.

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.

6.0 Training

To ensure that officers 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

7.0 What we will do when we receive complaints of Domestic Abuse

We 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 Care and Support and the Cornwall Crime and Disorder Reduction Team with the permission of the victim
- Review and close cases as soon as they have been resolved with the victim's agreement

8.0 Providing support to those involved

We 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
- We 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.
- We will provide feedback and reports to residents relating to our performance.

9.0 Monitoring and reporting

We will:

- record the number of incidents of Domestic Abuse reported to us
- record the number of Notice Seeking Possessions served
- monitor the number of tenancies brought to an end through legal proceedings for Domestic Abuse
- monitor and report customer satisfaction

10.0 Complaints

Where customers feel that we have not carried out our duties under this Policy they have the right to make a complaint to us under our Complaints Policy.

11.0 Equality and Diversity

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

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

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

12.0 Associated Documents

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

- 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