

Amplius believes that no one should live in fear of domestic abuse and will take steps to advise, assist and support any person experiencing domestic abuse.

Domestic Abuse Policy

Document management

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Policy owner	Director of Independent Living
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Part 2

Overview

Policy statement

This policy supports Amplus' values and is a commitment to improving lives and supporting colleagues by:

Our primary objective is to provide safe homes and communities for all our customers. People experiencing domestic abuse will be treated in an empathetic, supportive and non-judgemental way. We operate a survivor-centred approach and a survivor's disclosure alone is sufficient for them to be given advice and assistance as a matter of priority.

This policy is a Day 1 provision for Amplus as a newly established company, it is subject to review as we develop and review our policies over the next 18 months.

Scope

The term Amplus incorporates all member companies and subsidiaries.

The policy applies to:

All Amplus customers, including leaseholders, who are survivors of domestic abuse perpetrated by a spouse or partner, former spouse or partner, or other member of their household/family. The perpetrator may be someone living in the same property as the survivor; or be a visitor to their home, estate or neighbourhood.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Amplus Safeguarding Adults and Children and Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbourhood Management Policies.

The Domestic Abuse team and our Housing Officers will lead and oversee our response to domestic abuse.

Amplus Domestic Abuse Responders will have the knowledge to provide colleagues with support and advice on managing domestic abuse cases.

The policy does not form part of any colleague's contract of employment and the policy may be amended at any time.

Part 3

Policy details

Amplius aims in dealing with Domestic Abuse

Get our response right first time by ensuring all colleagues have the knowledge to respond appropriately to survivors of domestic abuse and save lives.

Take a survivor-centred approach 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.

Complete specialist referrals. Domestic Abuse is regarded as a gendered crime which disproportionately affects women and perpetrated by men. We recognise that domestic abuse can happen to anyone regardless of:

- Age
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Disability
- Economic status

Some survivors may experience overlapping forms of discrimination through different aspects of their identity, for example, through their sexual orientation or beliefs. By taking a whole person approach, we aim to provide equal support through specialist referrals and remain responsive in removing barriers to accessing support or reporting abuse.

Adopt a proactive multi-agency approach with all essential agencies, working together to ensure the safety of those suffering from domestic abuse.

Be flexible in our approach in responding to incidents of domestic abuse, taking into account the varying circumstances of survivors, and the differing courses of action that are available and appropriate that they may wish to take to end the abuse.

Keep consistent, accurate and relevant records, to ensure that the survivor does not have to constantly repeat the same information which may need agreement to be shared with other agencies.

Assist and guide survivors to obtain support, providing advice to survivors, and working with stakeholders. In holding perpetrators to account, we will always ensure we take into consideration the wishes of the survivor and their family of any action taken. We will signpost survivors to access legal support such as Clare's Law disclosure scheme and support to apply for Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme or obtain Non-Molestation Orders.

Safeguarding – our approach is to prevent and reduce the risk of harm to adults 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.

Stay safe at home – we act on the principle that a survivor of abuse should not have to leave their home unless they choose to. Where the survivor wishes to remain in their home and maintain the support of local family or friends, we will consider additional security. This could include using legal tools to remove the person causing harm from the property, installing panic alarms and seeking police advice/support on further adjustments required to increase the security to the property.

Assist survivors to find alternative accommodation – if it is not possible for the survivor to stay safe at home, we will support their decision to move including discussing options of temporary accommodation and refuge accommodation. Where possible we will liaise with other housing providers to ensure the survivor moves as quickly as possible to a safe property with the same tenancy tenure.

When safe, support survivors to fulfil their aspirations by ensuring relevant support is provided to continue to live well. This could include, counselling, therapeutic and group programmes, access to training and employment advice.

Perpetrator management – we will seek to hold persons causing harm/perpetrators accountable and to engage with those who recognise and seek to change their behaviour. Where necessary, we will take a coordinated community response to stop persons causing harm and ensure that they are held accountable:

- Through the courts, including asking the police to prosecute for criminal damage.
- By sharing information with MARAC and other agencies to enhance safety for survivors.
- If necessary, utilising powers under the Housing Act or seek a court order to gain possession where a survivor has left the property as a result of domestic abuse and where the person causing harm/perpetrator remains.
- By considering and supporting other housing aspects of those causing harm/perpetrators including homelessness, housing applications and other support for rehoming.
- By reviewing the tenure as domestic abuse is a breach of tenancy.

Support will be given to the person causing harm/perpetrators who recognise their behaviour is harmful and wish to change this through signposting and partnership working; this includes referrals to local Change programmes.

Publicise and promote a clear message through our website, social media, neighbourhood news, and information displayed in communal areas, that we will not tolerate domestic abuse and will try to reach out to survivors who experience barriers to reporting or accessing services. We will promote campaigns and educational interventions ensuring they are Respect accredited.

Ensure that all colleagues and partnering contractors undertake training to understand domestic abuse and enable them to respond appropriately. If they see or feel that 'something is not quite right' they must report it to the appropriate person.

Colleague safety – a separate domestic abuse policy for Amplius colleagues can be referred to in the event of instances of abuse relating to Amplius colleagues.

Making the link to safeguarding

A significant number of adults who need safeguarding are often experiencing domestic abuse in some form. Despite the overlap between supporting abuse survivors and safeguarding adults, the two have developed separate professional practices.

If there is more than one safeguarding issue present, such as domestic abuse in addition to physical or mental health disabilities, then a referral should be made to Safeguarding Adults so that services can be coordinated to deal with the potentially complex issues.

Case Management

All records regarding domestic abuse will be recorded on (Specific to organisation casework management) and related documentation saved on (Specific to organisation casework management) and remain confidential. Information sharing is necessary where other agencies and teams are involved to ensure a whole person approach to support.

Confidentiality

Survivors will be encouraged to allow us to share information with other agencies, including the Police and local authority, to ensure that the full range of civil and criminal action can be pursued, and appropriate support provided. However, all information provided by the survivors will be treated with the utmost confidence and only passed to external agencies where we are required by law to do so, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Where we do not have the survivors' consent and we consider there is a high risk of serious harm to anyone involved, we may make a report to the Police without the survivors' consent. The Safeguarding Lead has the authority to approve any such disclosure.

Training

All colleagues will receive training for Domestic Abuse appropriate to their role and will be equipped with the knowledge to report or respond to Domestic Abuse concerns. In addition to this, contractors for Amplius who are visiting customers will receive Domestic Abuse awareness training.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Domestic abuse approaches have traditionally focused upon heterosexual partner abuse and more recently have been seen to address abuse in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender relationships as well as the increase of abuse within familial relationships including honour-based abuse and forced marriages. We recognise that all abuse must be addressed, and the appropriate support offered to survivors of abuse.

We are committed to the principles of diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation. In the context of dealing with domestic abuse cases, we aim to:

- Meet the needs and choices of people from all backgrounds and take into consideration gender, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership and pregnancy or maternity.
- Ensure our service is responsive and meets the needs of our existing and prospective customers.
- Understand the cultural implications and barriers to reporting domestic abuse.

- Ensure that all sections of the community in which we work have equal access to our service by strengthening partnerships with other local and national by-and-for services and signpost accordingly.

Additional needs (addressing vulnerabilities)

Amplus recognises that, for various reasons, some of our customers and service users may be vulnerable. Policies therefore will take account of the recommendations made by the Housing Ombudsman and Regulatory recommendations on vulnerabilities. Amplus will take a proactive approach when making a decision relating to a customer or service user and where practicable, tailor and adapt our services to suit the needs of customers and support vulnerable people.

Summary of local variations

No variations to the policy required.

Part 4

Compliance and administration

Legal and regulatory compliance

This policy fully complies with Amplus' legal and regulatory obligations.

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Police and Justice Act 2006
- The Equality Act 2010
- Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Clare's Law, also known as Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS)
- Housing Act 2004
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007

This list is not exhaustive, and policy authors will undertake thorough research and/or seek professional advice to ensure that Amplus meets its obligations and complies with the current and relevant legislation and regulations.

Evaluation, review and performance monitoring

This policy will be reviewed on a Triennial basis to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. A policy review may also be required earlier, in response to internal or external changes for example changes in legislation. Prompt and effective action will be taken where improvements are identified..

Related policies

- Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbourhood Management Policy
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy

Part 5

Appendices

A. Associated documents – Internal procedural documents, colleague use only

- No current associated documents.
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B. Definition of Domestic Abuse

Appendix A – Statutory definition of Domestic Abuse 2021
The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 became law in April 2021 and marks a significant step towards providing further protections to the millions of people suffering from Domestic Abuse.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as:

Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if:

- A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and the behaviour is abusive.

Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse.
- violent or threatening behaviour.
- controlling or coercive behaviour.
- economic abuse (see below)
- psychological, emotional or other abuse; and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

The Act has four main objectives relating to Domestic Abuse:

- To promote awareness.
- To protect and support survivors.
- To transform the justice process.
- To improve performance of the justice system.

Children

Children are also recognised as survivors of domestic abuse and this definition includes forced marriages and Honour Based Abuse.

Part 6

Changelog

Amended date	Summary of changes	Version №