

Domestic Abuse

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1. Document Overview

Purpose	This policy sets out a what domestic abuse is and Thrive's approach to supporting customers and responding to reports of domestic abuse and perpetrators.
Audience	Thrive customers, colleagues and contractors.
Data Classification	For internal and external use
Review Cycle	24 months
Next Review	25/04/2026
Relevant Legislation	ASB, Crime & Policing Act 2014, Clare's Law 2017, Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Equality Act 2010, GRPR 2018, Housing Act 1996/1988/1985, Homelessness Act 2002, Human Rights Act 1998, Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007, Domestic Proceedings & Magistrates Court Act 1978, Protection & Harassment Act 1997, Family Law Act 1996, Crime and Security Act 2010, Serious Crime Act 2015, Stalking Protection Act 2019.

2. Document Version History

Version	Date	Author	Reviewer	Changes & Additions
V1.0	02/04/2024	NC	Safe & Well Customer WG	

3. Introduction

Thrive Homes are committed to providing homes where customers can be and feel safe and we recognise our role in responding to domestic abuse. We understand that domestic abuse can have a significant impact on customers and household members. We will assist, signpost and work with customers who are experiencing or threatened with domestic abuse and work in partnership with other agencies to contribute to the wellbeing of our customers and the communities we work in.

4. Scope

This policy applies equally to customers residing in a home which is owned or managed by Thrive across all tenure types. Domestic abuse can affect anyone in different communities regardless of gender, age, culture or religion, sexual orientation or who they live with.

This policy sets out what domestic abuse is and Thrive's approach to supporting customers and responding to reports of domestic abuse and perpetrators.

5. Definitions & Language we use

Thrive has adopted the definition set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which states:

Domestic Abuse (DA)	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.
Types of abusive behaviour	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; • psychological, emotional or other abuse. It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

In addition, the Domestic Abuse Act recognises children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right and defines a "parental relationship" and someone who is "personally connected".

Domestic abuse can be a one-off incident or pattern of incidents and is not limited to physical violence. In addition to the definition set out above, domestic abuse could also come in the form of 'honour' based violence, including forced marriage, modern day slavery, female genital mutilation (FGM), elder abuse, family and inter-generational abuse and online abuse.

We recognise that the legal term 'victim' is often used to describe a person with a lived experience of domestic abuse, but for many 'survivor' brings a sense of empowerment to convey a person is healing. We understand that both terms can be relevant and serve different purposes therefore we will use the term 'victim/survivor'.

Perpetrator refers to the person responsible for displaying the abusive behaviour.

6. Responding to reports of domestic abuse

Thrive understands that it can be difficult to speak about domestic abuse and ask for help. When responding to reports of domestic abuse, customers can expect us to:

- listen to the person reporting the abuse,
- be supportive and be clear about what we can do,
- respond safely in a way and time that suits,

- consider each case individually,
- not seek proof of the abuse or compel a victim/survivor to accept support.

7. Support and multi-agency working

Thrive will take a victim/survivor centred approach, provide timely and effective guidance, and make first contact within 1 working day when responding to cases of domestic abuse. We will work closely with partner agencies as part of a coordinated response.

We will listen to the victim/survivor and ask questions to ensure we fully understand their needs and how we can support them. We will appreciate the different specific needs of customers who experience abuse including those arising from protected characteristics such as disability and race.

We will discuss the role of specialist organisations that could assist and provide referrals or assist with making contact where accepted. Our colleagues responsible for handling domestic abuse cases are competent in identifying, reporting, and following up on domestic abuse concerns and are familiar with local support services and relevant processes.

We will work with the victim/survivor to stay in their home if safe to do so, and work with domestic abuse services to determine if appropriate adjustments are needed, such as additional locks. Where appropriate we will assist the victim/survivor to find a new home.

Thrive contributes to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) where high-risk cases are heard in a confidential setting. MARAC meetings are local groups attended by a representative, where appropriate, by agencies such as housing, health, police, local authorities, and domestic abuse services.

8. Responding to the perpetrator

Domestic abuse will not be tolerated, and tenancy enforcement action will be considered where we have evidence that a breach of tenancy has occurred.

Where a perpetrator recognises their behaviour and wants to engage to make a positive change, we will discuss support options available to them and make referrals to specialist organisations.

We will provide evidence to the police and local authority when prosecuting perpetrators.

We will consider temporarily excluding or permanently removing perpetrators from our homes where appropriate or support the victim/survivor with this.

We will charge for any damage caused to the home or communal area and where appropriate report this to the police as criminal damage.

Where a perpetrator could pose a risk to a Thrive colleague, additional measures may be put in place in line with Thrive's Staff Protection policy and procedure.

We will share information about a perpetrator as appropriate in line with data protection legislation.

9. Housing Options

Thrive will support and signpost customers who require emergency (temporary) accommodation to approach a local authority or specialist domestic abuse service as we do not have our own stock of temporary accommodation.

Where a customer would like to be considered for a transfer (direct let) on the grounds of domestic abuse we will follow our management move process and refer to our Empty Homes & Lettings Policy. As part of the management move process, we may ask external agencies (where involved) for their recommendation, for example, this may include asking the police about known risks. Cases approved for a management move on the grounds of domestic abuse will usually be offered accommodation outside of the immediate area however we will consider the needs of individual households. We may also discuss the case or provide supporting evidence to the local authority to provide alternative accommodation directly as this may be a quicker route.

We recommend that customers who hold a joint tenancy seek independent legal advice.

Where a customer has fled their home due to domestic abuse without providing Thrive with an end-of-tenancy form or returning keys we will follow our tenancy management process.

10. Privacy and Safeguarding

Thrive will always treat any sensitive or personal information provided as confidential in accordance with the requirements of data protection legislation and will only pass this information to third parties such as statutory organisations in accordance with our Information Governance Policy.

Thrive may not require consent to share information where this may place a child or adult at increased risk of harm. We will consider our safeguarding responsibilities set out in our Safeguarding Policy.

11. Other Related Policies and Guidance

This policy links to other policies Thrive has in place, including but not limited to:

- ASB Policy
- EDI Statement of Intent
- Empty Homes & Lettings Policy
- Income Protection Policy
- Information Governance Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Protection Policy
- Tenure Policy

As a business we try hard to keep all these related policies aligned with each other. If you do spot any inconsistency, please do contact the Author at your earliest opportunity and make your concerns known. Your support to keep information clear and consistent will always be welcomed.

12. Policy Approval

As this policy forms part of our operational framework, the document will be evaluated by the Leadership Team and Safe & Well (customer) working group as part of any review process.

13. Support and Further Guidance

This policy has been drafted with input from staff across Thrive. If you have any concerns on how to interpret or follow its requirements, it's your responsibility to make your concerns known to your manager or a member of the Customer Team.

Each Thrive team member has a responsibility to work in a way that's consistent with the expectations set out in the documents and its implied intent. Should you witness or become aware of anyone consciously or unconsciously not following this policy you must alert your line manager or member of the leadership team as soon as is reasonably practical.