Domestic Abuse Policy – Customers

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Pivotal is a Registered Provider of Social Housing offering a range of accommodation types, support and care to people with a variety of needs. Pivotal have a duty of care for the health, safety and welfare of our customers, colleagues and all others we work with and for complying with existing legislation to protect them.

1.2 In addition to our legislative obligations, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) requires that registered providers address anti-social behaviour. This includes domestic abuse and we recognise the role we can play in supporting people experiencing domestic abuse and in holding perpetrators to account.

1.3 Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background. Every year, two million people in the UK experience domestic abuse.

2.0 Aims

2.1 It is the aim of this policy to set out the role we will play in relation to customers experiencing domestic abuse, and how we aim to support them. This policy should be read in conjunction with Pivotal's Health and Safety, Anti-social Behaviour and Safeguarding Policies.

3.0 Scope

3.1 This policy applies to Pivotal customers and the colleagues supporting them.

3.2 This policy is recommended to our independent contractors as providing the tenets of good practice in reporting actual or suspected domestic abuse.

4.0 Definition of terms

Domestic abuse is defined in this policy as 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.

Policy	Domestic Abuse Policy - Customers
Policy owner	Director of People
Agreed by	Senior Leadership Team
Version	3.0
Issue date	January 2025
Review date	March 2027

Controlling behaviour is acknowledged as 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 acknowledged as an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation, or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten a victim.

5.0 Types of abuse

5.1 Domestic abuse may include, but not be limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological;
- controlling and coercive behaviour;
- physical, sexual, financial, verbal and emotional harassment;
- stalking;
- honour based violence e.g. forced marriage, genital mutilation.

5.2 The government defines a personal relationship between the abused and perpetrator as key to defining domestic abuse, meaning intimate partners, ex-partners, family members or individuals. They may not live in the same household.

6.0 Policy Statement

Pivotal acknowledges that anyone can be subjected to domestic abuse – regardless of their gender, age, race, social group, disability, religion/belief or sexuality, and that the abuse can start at any time in a relationship and happen once, every so often, or on a regular basis.

6.1 Pivotal will:

- treat all allegations of domestic abuse seriously;
- work within the legal and regulatory frameworks and in line with current good practice to deal with incidents of domestic abuse speedily and in a sensitive manner;
- ensure that any known history of perpetrating domestic abuse is assessed at the lettings stage, balancing the customer's right to a tenancy/licence with the safety and security of others within the property;
- support those experiencing domestic abuse;
- recognise that domestic abuse is often a complex and hard to detect problem and there may be significant barriers for people suffering abuse who want to report it;
- train their colleagues to recognise the signs of domestic abuse as early as possible;

- foster a climate where those experiencing domestic abuse feel they can speak up;
- ensure information, advice and support is accessible and available in a range of ways to meet the needs of different groups of people;
- always put the welfare and safety of those experiencing domestic abuse and their family first;
- listen to customers reporting domestic abuse to us and make sure their safety is our priority;
- work with partner agencies as appropriate, acknowledging that different customers may seek different solutions;
- acknowledge that they are not experts in domestic abuse and support and signpost people experiencing domestic abuse to appropriate services that are experts;
- ensure customers have a raised awareness of domestic abuse and safe channels to report domestic abuse and ask for support.

7.0 Managing reports of domestic abuse

7.1 In acknowledgement of the fact that Pivotal is not a specialist support provider in respect of domestic abuse, we will listen to all allegations of domestic abuse, offer initial reassurance and support, signpost to appropriate, expert agencies and alert statutory authorities as required by law.

7.2 Confidentiality about domestic abuse will be maintained. However, where Pivotal colleagues believe someone is at risk of harm or there are concerns relating to the welfare of a child, we have a legal duty to act.

7.3 Front line colleagues will be trained in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (see Pivotal's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy) and awareness of, domestic abuse.

7.4 As a housing provider, Pivotal will support people experiencing domestic abuse to remain in their home wherever it is possible and safe to do so. Where it is not possible, Pivotal will assist them to obtain alternative accommodation in conjunction with the local authority or other accommodation providers.

7.5 Pivotal will take action to evict the perpetrators of domestic abuse, where this is proven, in accordance with their accommodation agreement with us.

7.6 Pivotal will offer the use of appropriate home security measures including personal alarms, lock changes and surveillance or monitoring equipment to re-assure the victim and to collect evidence for potential legal action against the perpetrator.

7.7 Pivotal will provide and publish easily accessible information on domestic abuse including details of local and national organisations that can help support people experiencing domestic abuse.

7.8 Where appropriate, Pivotal will signpost perpetrators of domestic abuse to specialist support agencies.

7.9 When Pivotal are made aware of a case of domestic abuse, Pivotal will work with other partner agencies e.g. the police or specialist agencies (with the permission of the victim).

8.0 Data protection, information exchange and confidentiality

8.1 All information regarding incidents of domestic abuse will be dealt with in accordance with UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR). Pivotal stores all information securely and none will be disclosed unless the complainant has given their consent or there is a clear duty to do so (for example, under an information sharing agreement or in respect of our legislative duty).

9.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

9.1 Equality, diversity and inclusion is part of Pivotal's culture. It affects all aspects of Pivotal's operations and is integral to our day-to-day work. As a housing provider, Pivotal aim to recognise and respond positively to diverse needs and provide equality of opportunity and support to all.

10.0 Monitoring and Review

10.1 All domestic abuse cases will be treated as anti-social behaviour. They will be logged and updated on our Anti-Social Behaviour case log and Open Housing records. Cases will be monitored on a regular basis by the relevant Manager and reported to Board as appropriate.

10.2 This policy will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team in line with Pivotal's policy review timetable or in the interim period if relevant legislative or regulatory changes arise.

Appendix 1
National Domestic Abuse support services

National Domestic Abuse helpline	https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/ 0808 2000 247 (24-hour Freephone)
Brightsky app (an app for anyone experiencing domestic abuse)	https://www.hestia.org/brightsky
Women's Aid	https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/ https://www.womensaid.org.uk/the-survivors-handbook/am-i-in-an-abusive-relationship/
Men's Advice Line for Domestic Abuse	https://mensadviceline.org.uk/ 0808 801 0327 (run by Respect)
Respect (help for perpetrators to stop Domestic Abuse)	https://respectphoneline.org.uk/ 0808 802 4040
The Mankind Initiative **(f**or men experiencing domestic abuse)	https://www.mankind.org.uk/help-for-victims/ 01823 334244
The Mix (Free info and support for men under 25 experiencing domestic abuse)	https://www.themix.org.uk/crime-and-safety/victims-of-crime/male-domestic-violence-9165.html
National LGBT + Domestic Abuse Helpline	0800 999 5428 (*run by Galop)
Refuge (live online chat) **Refuge (24/7 phone line)**	https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/ 0808 2000 247
Samaritans (24/7 service)	https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/ Freephone 116 123 Email jo@samaritans.org
Victim Support	https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/ 0808 168 9111

*Galop is a not-for-profit organisation working to support all LGBT+ people who've experienced hate crime, domestic abuse or sexual violence.

Related Pivotal policies and procedures

Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
Anti-social behaviour Policy and Procedures
Grievance Policy and Procedure
Information Sharing Protocol
Disciplinary and Appeals Policy and Procedure
Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure
Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Legislation and Regulation

Legislation and regulation in respect of domestic abuse is widespread as part of the broader UK legal framework and only some of this is outlined below:

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992
Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995
Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996
Equality Act 2010
Domestic Abuse Bill 2020
Protection from Harassment Act 1997
Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 (amended 2012)
Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 – Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an Intimate or Family Relationship