



Housing Domestic Abuse Policy Easy Read Version

What is the Housing Domestic Abuse Policy about?

This policy explains how Moray Council's Housing Service helps people affected by domestic abuse. We want everyone to feel safe in their home. We will take action to support victims, stop abuse and remove abusers, where possible.

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse is when someone hurts or controls their partner or ex-partner. It can be:

- Physical (hitting, pushing)
- Sexual (forcing someone to do sexual things)
- Emotional (shouting, threats, controlling behaviour)
- Financial (taking money, stopping someone from working, accessing accounts)

It can happen to anyone, but it mostly affects women and girls and is usually carried out by men and / or boys.

Who does this policy help?

It helps people living in Moray Council homes as well as those needing help live in other properties.

What are the aims of this policy?

The Housing Domestic Abuse Policy wants to:

- Help people and staff recognise and understand what domestic abuse is.
- Identify domestic abuse early and respond quickly / fairly.
- Understand that certain women and girls can face extra risks.
- Give specialist support to those affected by abuse.
- Help victim/survivors make choices about their housing to find safe housing solutions that work.
- Offer reliable, respectful, safe and flexible support for as long as is needed.
- Help victims recover and feel safe again.

What are the key principles of the policy?

They are:

- Listening – Victims / survivors can safely share their views and be heard.
- Responsibility – Staff are trained and actions are tracked to make sure proper help is given.
- Fairness – Everyone is treated equally and with respect.
- Empowerment – Victims are supported to make their own choices.
- Following the law – We follow legal rules and best practice.

What will the Housing Service do?

We will:

- Take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse.
- Believe and support victims.
- Help victims / survivors stay in their home if it is safe and they want to.
- Offer safe housing if they need to leave for a period of respite / sanctuary.
- Take action against abusers.
- Work with the Police and support services.
- Keep information private.
- Train staff to help.

What help is available?

If the victim / survivor wants to stay in their home, we can:

- Give advice about housing rights and benefits.
- Offer safety checks and changes (for example, fit new door locks).
- Help to remove the abuser from the home.
- Arrange support from specialist services.

Where the victim / survivor wants to move, we can:

- Help them to find a safe new home.
- Give domestic abuse points to housing applications.
- Offer support with money and benefits.
- Help with moving and storing belongings.
- Arrange support from specialist services.

Financial help and support

Money worries can make abuse worse and stop people asking for help. We want to make sure money problems don't stop anyone from getting safe housing or support.

How can the Housing Service help?

We can:

- Help with storage to keep belongings safe.
- Give money advice about benefits or other financial support that is available.
- Help arrange housing benefit if rent needs paid on two homes for a short time after leaving abuse.
- Help from the Scottish Welfare Fund if eligible and needed.
- Make sure victims are not blamed for debts caused by the abuser.
- Avoid asking for rent payments in advance to make it easier for people to leave an abusive situation.

People with immigration issues

Some people may find it harder to get help because of:

- Fear of being deported (sent out of the country).
- No access to public money or benefits (called No Recourse to Public Funds or NRPF).

We will work with other organisations to help, no matter their situation.

What happens to the abuser?

We will take fair and firm action against people who cause domestic abuse, to keep victims / survivors safe, protect their homes, and make sure they are not blamed or punished for what the abuser did. This may include:

- taking legal action against the abuser, including eviction.
- ending a tenancy or changing a full tenancy (SST) to a short tenancy (SSST) if the abuse has a recent conviction for antisocial or criminal behaviour.
- transferring the tenancy to the victim / survivor.
- using a short tenancy (SSST) to re-home and monitor the abuser.

The victim/survivor will not lose their home or be treated unfairly because of any action we take. We will:

- help victims/survivors use legal protections available to them.
- make sure victims are not punished for the abuser's actions.

Managing risk

We will:

- Assess danger or risk. We will act quickly and in a way that matches how serious the situation is and always follow the law and best practice.

- Work with other agencies like Police Scotland, NHS Grampian, Moray Women's Aid, and the Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership.
- Take part in meetings held with other agencies to discuss how we can help victims/ survivors. These are called MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) and MATAC (Multi-Agency Tasking and Co-ordination) for serious cases.
- Follow the correct adult and child protection procedures.

Victim / survivor rights

- to be safe
- to be treated fairly
- to get help

Complaints

If someone is unhappy with how their case is handled, they can speak to a manager or make a formal complaint using the Council's Complaints Policy.

Monitoring and review

We regularly monitor and check how we manage domestic abuse cases and use this information to improve our services. We send performance reports to the Scottish Government and Scottish Housing Regulator.

The Domestic Abuse Policy will be reviewed again in **2029** or sooner if laws change.