

Domestic Abuse policy



1 Introduction

- 1.1 Heylo Housing Group Limited (HHGL) is the parent company of the Group which includes Heylo Housing Registered Provider Limited (HHRP) and a number of property-owning investment vehicles (Pods) (collectively referred to in this policy as 'Heylo'). The Heylo Group's purpose is to provide home ownership solutions across England. HHGL currently provides two different Shared Ownership products – HomeReach and YourHome.
- 1.2 All customer-facing services to Heylo customers are provided by employees of ResiManagement, a separate, but commonly controlled company.
- 1.3 Heylo is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all residents. This policy outlines our approach to addressing domestic abuse when reported to us within our properties. We aim to support victims, hold perpetrators accountable, and work collaboratively with relevant agencies to tackle domestic abuse.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as the following:

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

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

- 2.2 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

This definition includes modern day slavery, coercive control, honour-based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

This definition goes well beyond intimate partner violence (IPV) in the home and also recognises that a child who sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, domestic abuse and is related to the person being abused or the perpetrator, is also to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse in their own right.

Abusive behaviour can be a one off or multiple incidents.

Whilst both men and women may experience domestic abuse, women and girls are disproportionately affected and are more likely to experience repeated and severe forms of abuse.

3 Definition of Harm or Abuse

- 3.1 Physical abuse can include assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, being locked in a room, inappropriate sanctions or force-feeding, inappropriate methods of restraint, and unlawfully depriving a person of their liberty.

- 3.2 Sexual abuse can include rape and coerced sex, forcing a victim/survivor to take part in unwanted sexual acts, refusal to practice safe sex or use contraception, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, sexual exploitation.
- 3.3 Coercive behaviour is an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. Victims of coercive control can have every aspect of life controlled by their partner, often being subjected to daily intimidation and humiliation. This can also include forced marriage and so called 'honour-based abuse'.
- 3.4 Controlling behaviour includes a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capabilities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.
- 3.5 Psychological and emotional abuse can include isolation from support networks or services, gaslighting, use of threats, humiliation, blaming, telling them they are stupid, hopeless, unlovable, that no one would believe them, or that they are a bad parent.
- 3.6 Economic abuse can include controlling money and bank accounts, making a victim account for all their expenditure, running up debts in the victim's name, allowing no say on how monies are spent, refusing to allow them to study or work, refusing access to joint bank accounts or making fraudulent benefit claims in the victim's name.

4 Policy aims

- 4.1 This policy is intended to set out a clear framework for supporting residents experiencing domestic abuse. Our aims are to:
- To ensure a swift and effective response to incidents of domestic abuse.
 - To collaborate with external agencies to provide comprehensive support and intervention.
 - To raise awareness of domestic abuse among staff and residents.
 - To create a culture of zero tolerance towards domestic abuse.

5 How we will support customers and household members reporting domestic abuse

5.1 Confidentiality and Safety

- Provide a range of channels for victims to communicate and report abuse in confidence
- Ensure the confidentiality and safety of residents reporting domestic abuse
- Provide a named point of contact who will work with the relevant officers / authorities to
- determine immediate safety needs and appropriate interventions, such contact to be available through safeguarding@heylohousing.com

5.2 Support Services

- Offer support through trained staff members and the named safeguarding contact who will ensure compliance with this policy

- Signpost to agencies or other third parties that can assist with support, advice, counselling and safety planning, including the installation of additional security measures in the home if necessary or other options such as emergency housing

5.3 Housing Options

- Signpost to and work with other agencies and housing providers to explore all available options to provide safe accommodation for victims, which may include emergency housing or relocation

5.4 Action Against Perpetrators

- Take appropriate action against tenants or residents who perpetrate domestic abuse, in line with current legislation and best practice as may be set out in our other supporting processes and policies
- Work with law enforcement and other agencies to address the behaviour of perpetrators and support criminal proceedings when necessary

5.5 Staff Training and Awareness

- Provide training for all customer facing staff members on recognising signs of domestic abuse and responding effectively
- Ensure staff are aware of the support services available and how to refer victims to these services
- Promote awareness campaigns and educational materials to inform residents about domestic abuse and available support

5.6 Partnership Working

- Collaborate with local authorities, police, health services, and domestic abuse support organizations to provide coordinated and effective responses where required
- Upon invitation and as relevant / required, participate in local multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARACs) and other relevant forums to ensure a holistic approach to addressing domestic abuse

5.7 Reporting and Complaints

- Provide clear procedures for residents to contact us and/or make complaints about our handling of such cases
- Ensure that the relevant governance bodies within Heylo are kept informed of compliance with this policy and any issues arising under its delivery
- Ensure complaints are handled sensitively, promptly, and in accordance with our complaints policy

6 Review

- 6.1 We will review this Policy every 2 years regularly to address legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational issues.