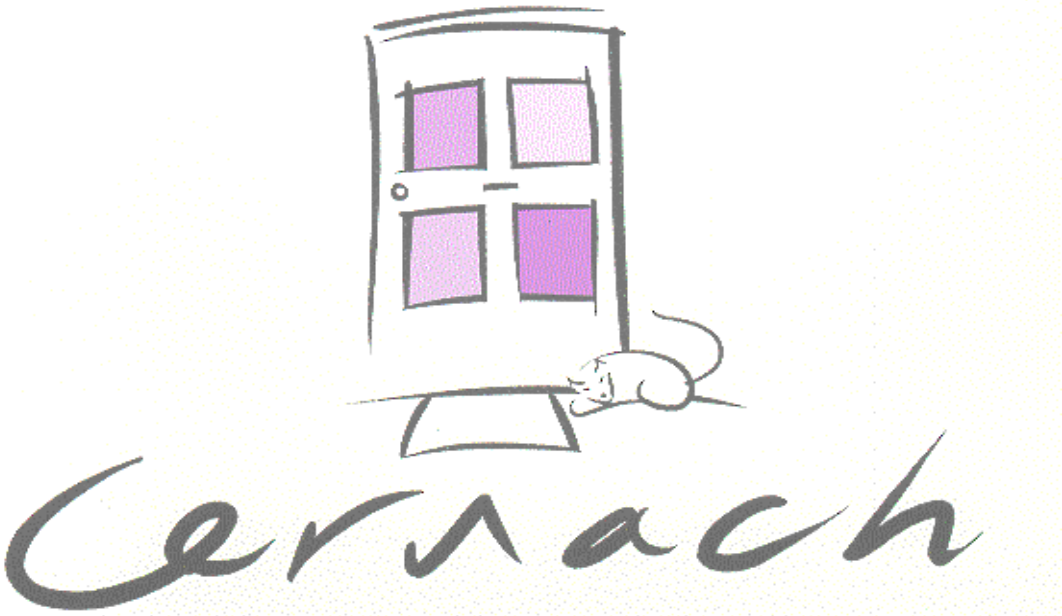


DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

Date Approved by Management Committee:	12 November 2026
Date Issued to Staff	12 November 2026
Due for Review:	November 2029

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy will set out Cernach Housing Association's approach to domestic abuse. The Association fully recognises the detrimental effect that domestic abuse can have on residents their families and their communities.

1.2 Cernach Housing Association believes that our tenants, householders, applicants, staff and Committee should not live in fear of violence or abuse. We take domestic abuse seriously and are committed to providing a sensitive and confidential response to anyone approaching us for assistance in cases of domestic abuse.

1.3 We believe that domestic abuse presents one of the highest risks to personal safety and is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

1.4 We recognise that our staff may be well placed to identify abusive relationships, in terms of how we interact with our customers for reporting of repairs in terms of type and frequency and also reports of neighbour problems. We also recognise that staff and management committee members may experience domestic abuse. In all instances our training and procedures will contribute to supporting staff and management committee members experiencing these difficulties. Any member of staff or management committee member affected can speak to the Director, Operations Manager or line manager.

1.5 The term abuse is defined by the Scottish Government as below: -

'*Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse), can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate women and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family or friends) It can be characterised by a pattern of coercive control often escalating in frequency and severity over time'.*

Source: National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland, Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse, Edinburgh, November 2000

1.6 In accepting this definition it must be recognised that children are witness to, and may be subject to, the abuse. Also, that there is some correlation between domestic abuse and the mental, physical and sexual abuse of children. It must also be recognised that, particularly among minority ethnic communities, other family members may be involved in, or may participate in, the abuse.

1.7 Abuse covers *a*ny incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

1.8 This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Psychological
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Verbal

2. Policy Objectives

2.1 The key objectives of this policy are to:

- Improve overall safety and wellbeing by recognising that domestic abuse is a serious crime which has an adverse impact on the health of individuals, families, and communities.

- Acknowledge and recognise that domestic abuse is not perpetrated exclusively by men within heterosexual relationships, but that woman can also be perpetrators and it can occur in same sex relationships.

- Help with early identification of domestic abuse and enable effective signposting to specialist support and advice services for all victims of domestic abuse and their children.

- Raise awareness and understanding of domestic abuse among tenants, residents, staff and Committee members.

- Encourage victims to report domestic abuse to police and other relevant agencies.

- Empower victims by providing information on the options available to them, including information on external support agencies and their legal rights and responsibilities so that they can make informed choices of what to do next.

- Tenants and applicants suffering from domestic abuse will have this taken into consideration through our allocation policy.

- Adopt a victim centred approach to ensure that when we are dealing with reports of domestic violence incidents that the needs, views and support of the victims are at the forefront of our management of the case.

- Ensure that our services in respect of dealing with domestic abuse are equally available to all sections of the community, recognising differences in language, culture, religion, race, age and sex.

- Create a consistent approach for recording and monitoring incidents of domestic abuse.

- Train and support staff to recognise, report and deal with domestic abuse effectively including MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) training for staff to enable them to confidently submit a referral.

3. Equality and Human Rights

3.1 The Association's Equality and Human Rights policy, which was approved by the Committee in April 2025, outlines our commitment to promote a zero tolerance to unfair treatment or discrimination to any person or group of persons, particularly on the basis of any of the protected characteristics[1]. This includes ensuring that everyone has equal access to information and services, and, to this end, the Association will make available a copy of this document in a range of alternative formats including large print, translated into another language or by data transferred to voice.

3.2 We are also aware of the potential for policies to inadvertently discriminate against an individual or group of individuals. To help tackle this and ensure that it does not occur, best practice suggests that organisations carry out Equality Impact Assessments to help identify any part of a policy that may be discriminatory so that this can be addressed (please see section 6 of the Equality and Human Rights policy for more information).

3.3 In line with section 6 of the Equality and Human Rights Policy, the Association carried out an Equality Impact Assessment on this policy and no remedial action was identified as necessary. The full assessment is appended at the end of this policy.

4. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

4.1 The following legislation relevant to domestic abuse has been taken into consideration in the development of this policy:

- Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981
- Family Law (Scotland) Act 1985
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006
- Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001
- Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010

[1] The Equality Act 2010 identifies the "protected characteristics" as age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment and sexual orientation.

- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018
- Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021
- Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016
- Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004
- The Data Protection Act 1998
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 and
- Equalities Act 2010
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2025 ground 15a

4.2 We also operate this policy taking account of the Scottish Social Housing Charter in particular the following outcomes: -

- Outcome 1 – Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing.

- Outcome 6 - Social landlords, working in partnership with other agencies, help to ensure as far as reasonably possible that tenants and other customers live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

- Outcomes 7 & 9 - Social landlords work together to ensure that people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them and that people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.

- Outcome 11 – Social landlords ensure that tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support and remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly with their landlord and by other organisations.

5. Responsibility & Delegated Authority

The Management Committee will ensure that Cernach Housing Association has approved and implemented a domestic abuse policy that complies with current legislation and guidance.

The Director has responsibility to ensure all staff and Committee members are aware of the policy and their responsibilities under it. The Operations Manager to ensure the policy is implemented and take appropriate decisions based on the policy and legalisation. Also, will ensure appropriate training is provided to staff to enable them to recognise and respond to incidents of domestic abuse or violence.

The Staff team will be aware of their responsibilities under this policy and implement the policy as appropriate.

6. Managing cases of domestic abuse

6.1 We will encourage all tenants and household members to report domestic abuse, whether they are victims of, or witnesses to, such incidents. We will deal with all reports of domestic abuse with sensitivity.

6.2 Prevention

6.2.1 We will endeavour to:

- make sure all new tenants of Cernach Housing Association are aware of the policy on rehousing, relationship breakdown and possible implications of joint tenancies.
- Publicise the domestic abuse policy in both print and digitally to raise awareness among staff and residents, with the aim of increasing reports of domestic abuse and highlighting the consequences for perpetrators
- Provide advice and assistance to include signposting to specialist agencies who assist in giving advice and supporting domestic abuse victims.

6.3 Victim centred approach

6.3.1 We will adopt a victim centred approach when dealing with domestic abuse. Every effort will be made to support the victim and ensure they are aware of any action they can take, and also are comfortable with this action.

6.3.2 We will deal with all reports in a confidential and non-judgmental manner. We will not require victims to take legal action or to contact Police Scotland before we provide assistance.

6.3.3 We will make every effort to ensure we offer the most suitable interview provisions in terms of accessible venue, same sex interviews and translation service, if required.

6.4 Confidentiality

6.4.1 Information given by victims in relation to this policy will be treated as strictly confidential. We will ensure we only involve other agencies and share information with the consent of the person concerned, unless:

- The information is necessary for the protection of children
- If we are obliged by law to disclose information, for example Cernach Housing Association cannot withhold information if being questioned by Police Scotland during a criminal investigation

A member of the senior management team must approve any disclosure that does not have consent of the victim.

6.4.2 We will comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection (2018) Regulations.

6.5.3 Explore our options under Ground 15a Housing Scotland Act 2025 taking into account what the victims preference is in relation to the home.

6.5 Options for Action

6.5.1 We recognise that every reported case of domestic abuse will be different so our response will be tailored to the individual needs of the victim.

6.5.2 Our Allocations policy is a Common Drumcog Allocations policy with Kingsridge Cleddans Housing Association and Pineview Housing Association. This domestic abuse policy should be read in conjunction with this Allocations policy as it outlines how we will assist with cases where domestic abuse results in the current property being unsuitable.

6.5.3 When a tenant or household member reports domestic abuse all available options will be discussed and considered with them, including: -

- reviewing and where possible improving the safety and security of their existing accommodation, to enable them to remain safely there
- reporting incidents of domestic abuse to Police Scotland, which may result in criminal activity against the perpetrator
- Where appropriate, legal action against the perpetrator being taken by Cernach Housing Association

The safety of the victim and their dependents will be our priority. We will provide referrals to support agencies and further information to enable the victim to make an informed choice of what to do next.

6.6 Assistance for victims

6.6.1 We will take a proactive and sympathetic approach. Each case will have its own challenges and so the type and level of assistance offered will be finalised by the Housing Officer with the support of the Senior Housing Officer.

6.7 Remaining in the property

6.7.1 We will advise victims who wish to remain in their own homes of advice they can get from Police Scotland, victim support and any other external agency that provides advisory services in the area.

6.7.2 We will help those experiencing domestic abuse by not recharging them for lock changes and damages due to the domestic abuse. Where appropriate, we will charge such costs to the perpetrator.

6.7.3 Where Police Scotland wish to install additional security, permission will be given immediately subject to agreement on who will maintain such items.

6.8 Emergency rehousing

6.8.1 Where a resident reporting domestic abuse needs emergency accommodation Cernach Housing Association will provide advice and assistance on accessing such accommodation provided by Glasgow City Council or by a women's refuge. We will provide a supporting letter where appropriate and advocate on our tenant's behalf.

6.9 Permanent rehousing

6.9.1 Where a tenant reports domestic abuse and is seeking to be moved accommodation, we will assess their application as appropriate using our Common Allocation policy. The applicant will be awarded domestic abuse and harassment points based on their needs.

6.9.2 Where an applicant is made an offer of rehousing because of domestic abuse, we will take a sensitive approach to ensure affordability in relation to the cost of a house move is not a barrier to securing alternative accommodation. If an applicant cannot make the required payment of rent in advance on sign up, we will consider an agreeable payment arrangement which will be authorised by a member of the management team.

6.10 Multi-agency approach

6.10.1 We will adopt a multi-agency approach in dealing with victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse, to ensure the safety of the victims, meet their needs, co-ordinate available resources, access specialist services, take action against perpetrators and share best practice. Where appropriate a MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference), referral can be completed if there is reason to believe there is an ongoing risk to the victim and there have been repeated incidents.

6.11 Action against perpetrators

6.11.1 We will work with Police Scotland and other external agencies in dealing with perpetrators of domestic abuse. Action against perpetrators will depend upon individual circumstances. This may include legal action for recovery of possession against a perpetrator, where other members of the household have left the home due to domestic abuse.

6.11.2 Subject to data protection requirements we will share information with other relevant agencies so that serial perpetrators are identified and dealt with appropriately.

7. Victim Responsibilities

7.1 Cernach Housing Association will provide support and assistance to victims as described in this policy. The organisation acknowledges that tenants who have experienced domestic abuse are often coerced, frightened, and bullied into going back to the perpetrator. The impact of experiencing domestic abuse can result in the victim being unable to leave the relationship. While recognising that the coercive and controlling nature of domestic abuse can result in difficulties for the victim, the support that Cernach Housing Association can offer will depend on the engagement of tenants. Where tenants fail to engage and show no signs of a willingness to engage, and where the behaviour is having an impact on neighbours, the Association may consider addressing the behaviour under our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

8. Co-operation with other Agencies

Managing reports of domestic abuse requires a multi-agency approach. We will ensure victims are placed in contact with appropriate agencies for specialist advice and support with their consent. We do not provide legal advice or counselling services but can refer to the specific agencies when required.

9. Complaints Procedure

9.1 The Association has a published complaints policy & procedure, which can be used where there is dissatisfaction with this policy or the operation of this policy. Any tenant who feels aggrieved by their treatment under this policy can ask for a copy of the Association's complaints policy, which is available at the Association's office and on the website www.cernachha.co.uk.

9.2 As with all our service policies, the complaints policy can be made available in large print, translated or on tape. Tenants also have the right to complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

10. Staff Training

10.1 We recognise that it is extremely important that the resourcing and training of staff is adequate to meet all the needs of its tenants. The Association is committed to undertaking training relating to identifying domestic abuse and will take actions in line with guidance. Training should be updated as appropriate. Staff will be encouraged to network with other RSLs in order to share best practice in dealing with domestic abuse.

11. Policy Reviews and Tenant Consultation

11.1 The Association has developed this policy in consultation with tenants, the tenant participation group, the tenants on the consultation register and account taken of representations made.

11.2 The Association will make this policy available on the Association's website and publish it in our newsletters

11.3 The Operations Sub Committee and the Management Committee will review the domestic policy every three years. This review will be brought forward if there is a need to respond to new legislation and/or policy guidance.

11.4 The success of this policy will be measured against the following outputs and outcomes:

12. Further Information and Support

- Victim Support – https://victimsupport.scot

- Female victims – Women's Aid - https://www.clydebankwomensaid.co.uk or https://glasgowwomensaid.org.uk

- Scottish Women's Aid - www.womensaid.scot

- Scottish Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline: 08088 027 1234 or www.sdafmh.org.uk Confidential translation service available

- Scottish Women's Rights Centre (free legal advice) 08088 010 789

- Assist – Court Advocacy Service: 0141 276 7710 https://www.assistscotland.org.uk

- Hamat Gryffee Women's Aid – Support for Women from BME Communities: 0141 353 0859 https://www.hematgryffe.org.uk

- AMIS – Support for men and LGBT people 03300 949 395 https://abusedmeninscotland.org

– RESPECT Men's Advice Line – 0808 801 0327 https://mensadviceline.org.uk

- For information and advice for children and young people, please visit the Childline http://www.childline.org.uk or telephone Childline free on 0800 11 11

- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) victims – Galop https://galop.org.uk and telephone number is 0800 999 5428

- LGBT Youth Scotland – 0131 555 3940 - https://lgbtdomesticabuse.org.uk

- FearFree – support for victims of domestic abuse who identify as male or from the LGBT+ Community – 0131 624 7270 https://fearfree.scot

- Police Scotland Emergency – 999 or 101

Cernach Housing Association **Equality Impact Assessment Tool**	

Name of the **policy / proposal** to be assessed	Domestic Abuse Policy	Is this a **new policy / proposal or a revision**?	New
Person(s) responsible for the assessment	Gillian Robertson, Senior Housing Officer		
1. Briefly describe the **aims, objectives and purpose** of the policy / proposal	To help employees of Cernach Housing Association make appropriate decisions when managing cases of domestic abuse by ensuring a consistent and victim centred approach is taken. To raise awareness and understanding of domestic abuse among tenants, residents, staff and Committee members. To help with early identification of domestic abuse and enable effective signposting to specialist support and advice services for all victims of domestic abuse and their children.		
2. Who is intended to benefit from the policy / proposal? *(e.g. applicants, tenants, staff, contractors)*	Staff, Management Committee Members, Tenants, Applicants, Factored Owners and any other stakeholders.		

3. What **outcomes** are **wanted** from this policy / proposal ? *(e.g. the benefits to customers)*	To raise awareness of domestic abuse, encourage victims to report domestic abuse and provide appropriate information and advice to allow victims to make an informed decision on their options.

4. Which **protected characteristics** could be **affected** by the proposal? (*tick all that apply*)

☐ Age X Disability ☐ Marriage & Civil Partnership ☐ Pregnancy/Maternity X Race

☐ Religion or Belief X Gender ☐ Gender Reassignment X Sexual Orientation

5. If the policy / proposal is not relevant to any of the **protected characteristics** listed in part 4, state why and end the process here. There are protected characteristics relevant to this policy / proposal.		
	Positive impact(s)	**Negative impact(s)**
6. Describe the **likely positive or negative impact(s)** the policy / proposal could have on the groups identified in part 4		- Accessibility for those with a disability which requires an alternative communication format. - It is recognised that a disproportionate number of women are victims of domestic abuse with an importance of providing advice and support for these victims and families. However, it is recognised that domestic abuse can also occur between all genders and sexual orientation which means support advice must be available for all victims. - Language barrier for those whom English not their first language in accessing support.

7. What **actions** are **required** to address the impacts arising from this assessment? *(This might include; collecting additional data, putting monitoring in place, specific actions to mitigate negative impacts).*	- This policy can be made available in alternative formats upon request such as braille and large font. - The Association recognises that domestic abuse is not perpetrated exclusively by men in heterosexual relationships. Therefore, a variety of support agency contact numbers are made available for all genders, sexual orientation and BME communities. - Same sex interviews are available on request. - An interpreter service is available on request.

Signed: Gillian Robertson (Job title): Senior Housing Officer

Date the Equality Impact Assessment was completed: 12.11.26

Please attach the completed document as an appendix to your policy / proposal report