

Policy

Title: Calico Homes Domestic Abuse Policy

Author: Community Safety Coordinator
Approved by: Calico SLT

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This document relates to:

the **calico**
group



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1. Introduction

This policy outlines Calico Homes commitment to assisting and supporting our customers, as well as those living with them, in situations of domestic abuse. Recognising that domestic abuse can affect anyone. Our organisational values highlight the importance of seeking assistance at the earliest opportunity. Our goal is to deliver a compassionate response that reduces risk and promotes safety.

2. Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to support an organisational culture where it is understood that anyone can experience domestic abuse and that seeking support at the earliest opportunity is a positive action. We aim to provide a supportive response that helps reduce risk and enhance safety.

The policy aims to ensure that Calico Homes provides an appropriate and effective response to domestic abuse. This includes:

- Ensuring colleagues are trained to confidently support victims/survivors of domestic abuse and their families to increase safety and reduce risk, in partnership with specialist agencies.
- Taking action against and supporting perpetrators of domestic abuse using legal remedies and behaviour change programs where appropriate.
- Working with partner agencies and contributing to local and national initiatives to raise awareness of domestic abuse.

3. Background

Domestic abuse is a criminal offence and is also a breach of Calico Homes tenancy agreements. It impacts on the safety of individuals, their households, and local communities. Domestic abuse often takes place in the home and so we have a role in identifying these issues, supporting the people affected and taking action against perpetrators.

Any person can experience domestic abuse, regardless of age, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, or other characteristics. Domestic abuse does not only occur in intimate partner relationships but includes violence between family and household members.

4. Definitions & Types of Abuse

We adopt the following definitions of domestic abuse, set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

“Behaviour by a person towards another person where both people are ages 16 or over and are personally connected and the behaviour is abusive. Behaviour is abusive if it consists of physical or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviours, economic abuse, psychological, emotional, or other abuse. The behaviour may consist of a single incident or a course of conduct.”

Further details of types of abuse are set out in appendix 1.

5. Policy Description

5.1 How we will respond

Calico Homes takes a zero-tolerance approach to domestic abuse. We will treat all reports sensitively and confidentially with a survivor centred approach.

- We will always accept the person's account at face value.
- We will help people to tell us about the abuse quickly, safely, and confidentially so that telling us does not put them at further risk.
- We will agree with people how future contact can be made safely.
- We will work with the person to determine whether security measures (such as lock changes) are required to reduce or remove the risk of harm whilst they remain at home.
- We will offer people the opportunity to access translation services or to speak to an employee of the same gender.

5.2 The support we offer

- Enable service users to report domestic abuse to us in different ways, including:
 - In person
 - In writing
 - By telephone
 - Online via the online portal or by email cst@calico.org.uk
 - Via a third party such as a police officer or IDVA (independent Domestic Violence Advocate)
- Ensure that victim/survivors know they can meet Calico employees in confidence at our offices or at an agreed choice of safe venue.
- Help people experiencing domestic abuse access appropriate services as early as possible and provide advice to allow them to make choices about what to do next.
- Ensure that where children and young people are affected by domestic abuse, they have access to services as early as possible.
- Make use of civil laws to offer maximum protection to all victims/survivors to stop the abuse reoccurring.
- Follow our Safeguarding Policy for protecting children where we believe a child is at risk due to an abusive relationship.
- Make domestic abuse awareness training mandatory for all frontline colleagues.
- Provide support and guidance to colleagues experiencing domestic abuse through the Calico Group Domestic Abuse Policy for employees.
- Publicise our approach to raise awareness amongst colleagues and residents, with the aim of increasing reports of domestic abuse.
- We will actively participate in local partnerships where appropriate and we will work with specialist support agencies such as Victim Support.
- We may offer additional support such as budgeting advice to people and members of their household where an additional support need is identified.
- In circumstances where it is appropriate to do so, we may signpost perpetrators to domestic abuse perpetrator programs.

5.3 Other support

Calico Homes can take other action to assist victims/survivors, such as:

- Repairing damage to the property (if a Calico Homes resident) with no cost to the victim/survivor.
- Offering extra security at the property.
- Making a referral to emergency safe refuge accommodation including SafeNet refuge provision, one of the Calico Group companies.

5.4 Accommodation & Rehousing

Calico Homes acknowledges that housing plays a crucial role in domestic abuse situations. We recognise that many victims/survivors may prefer to stay in their current home to maintain local ties, family connections, and stability for their children's education. Our goal is to work alongside the victim/survivor to evaluate the risks linked with staying at their home. Whenever possible, we will offer assistance to safeguard the rights of the victim/survivor and to ensure they are not deprived of accommodation.

Where appropriate, Calico Homes will assist the victim/survivor to move to another property where we believe that this would help in decreasing the risk presented to them, we will use a personalised approach to re-housing the victim/survivor.

We will seek the advice of outside agencies in making assessments of risk for rehousing purposes, such as Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA), support agencies and the Police.

In instances where the victim/survivor is a household member but not the tenant, we will assist them in accessing support and guidance from specialised agencies. They will also be encouraged to seek rehousing assistance from local authorities. Under exceptional circumstances, we may consider offering a tenancy to the victim/survivor, even if they are not currently a tenant.

Where we assist a victim/survivor to move home, we will consider their housing needs to ensure that the accommodation offered is appropriate. This may mean we offer a different type of size property to victims/survivors, providing this meets the customers' housing needs.

Where victims/survivors are facing high risk of further harm, serious harm or homicide, we are able to support them into emergency temporary 24 hr refuge accommodation to access support from experienced, qualified Domestic Abuse Practitioners, and support their resettlement process when it is safe to do so.

Calico Homes can also refer customers into SafeNet's 'Safe-at-Home', community based support service which supports survivors to stay safe in their own homes via a dedicated Domestic Abuse Support Worker who delivers a support plan co-designed by the practitioner and survivor.

5.4.1 Joint Tenants

Where it is safe to do so we can discuss with the victim/survivor and perpetrator assignment options for the tenancy. If we are unable to contact the perpetrator we will take steps to remove them from the tenancy and create a tenancy in the sole name of the victim/survivor.

5.5 Action Against Perpetrators

Calico Homes may support victims/survivors in pursuing legal action against domestic abuse perpetrators and guide them on their available options. We will consider the legal action or remedies (both civil and criminal) available to us to deal with domestic abuse.

If the perpetrator resides with or is a Calico Homes tenant, we may take legal action against them following our Community Safety Policy. However, we won't pursue legal action if it's likely to raise the risk to the victim/survivor.

5.6 Multi-Agency Work

Calico Homes will promote a collaborative approach to tackling domestic abuse. We will work closely with the Police, local authorities, voluntary agencies, and community groups.

We will actively engage in Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) to aid and safeguard victims/survivors and will adhere to any recommendations provided.

5.7 Confidentiality & Consent

Calico Homes will maintain confidentiality regarding reports of domestic abuse. However, there are legal obligations to disclose information in certain situations, such as safeguarding children or vulnerable adults, or for crime prevention and detection purposes.

We will communicate this obligation with the person disclosing the information where possible. When obligated to disclose safeguarding concerns, we will refer the matter to the appropriate agency as outlined in our Safeguarding Policy.

6. Responsibility

The Community Safety Co-ordinator is responsible for the implementation of this policy and all Calico Homes colleagues are responsible for adhering to the policy and supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

7. Equality & Diversity

Calico will enforce this policy fairly and equally, without discrimination towards any individual or group. We will handle diverse needs sensitively and take affirmative steps when needed.

We will also make suitable arrangements to prevent customers from being unfairly or disproportionately impacted, such as offering people the opportunity to access translation services if English is not their first language.

8. Regulatory and Legal Compliance

- Family Law Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Equality Act 2010
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

- Care Act 2014
- Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) 2014 (also known as Claire's Law)
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

9. Related Policies and Procedures

- The Humanitarian Offer – Calico Group Customer Strategy
- Employee Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure
- Community Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Lettings & Allocations Policy
- Tenancy Fraud Policy
- Tenancy Sustainment Policy
- Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Health and Safety Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Tenancy/License/Lease agreements
- Employee Code of Conduct

10. Benchmarking

We have benchmarked against 3 housing associations domestic abuse policies, including:

- Guinness Homes
- Southampton City Council
- Derby Homes

11. Monitoring

Monitoring of the delivery of this policy will include the production of monthly reports and monthly case audits to enable operational managers to effectively monitor the performance and progress of the service.

11.1 Board

Board members are responsible for overseeing delivery of this policy. To do this they will receive regular updates about the performance of the service and delivery of the policy on a quarterly basis with extra reporting by exception if required.

11.2 Customer Satisfaction

We will monitor customer satisfaction levels via a closed community safety case survey response and seek feedback by completing follow up calls on closed cases to the survivor. Where dissatisfaction is indicated, we will attempt to contact the customer to understand what has gone wrong and look to make things right.

11.3 Customer Feedback

Customer feedback received via transactional surveys and the Tenant Satisfaction Measures will be used to actively improve the service being offered.

12 Appendices 1 –Types of Abuse

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

Type of Abuse	Example
Psychological or emotional	Intimidation, isolation, verbal abuse, humiliation, degradation, not allowing visitors
Physical	Slapping, pushing, kicking, punching, stabbing, attempted murder or murder
Sexual	Rape and non-consensual sex acts
Destruction of belongings	Threat of legal sanctions, e.g. separation, custody of children
Economic	Denial of risks or restriction of personal freedom. E.g., withholding money, preventing people from working, raising debt in victim's name, preventing medical help, or hiding/refusing travel/immigration documents
Using coercion and intimidation to control someone	Forcing someone to marry, taking someone abroad against their will, threats, isolation, exhaustion, degradation

Support available in Lancashire districts;

SafeNet Domestic Abuse & Support Service. Part of the Calico Group for domestic abuse support, refuge and community support provision and assistance accessing refuges nationally. Tel: 0300 3033581 www.safenet.org.uk

Be Free (Pendle) Tel: 01282 726000 www.pdvi@p-a-c.org.uk

HARV (Hyndburn and Ribble Valley) Tel: 01254 879855 www.HARVoutreach.org.uk

Paladin (National Stalking Agency) Tel: 020 38664107 www.paladin.org.uk

The Wish Centre Blackburn. Access to outreach community service, support for victims of forced marriage, honour-based abuse & female genital mutilation, access to counselling, specialist courses for men and women. Tel:0300 561 0440 <https://www.thewishcentre.org/>

Lancashire Victims Services. Community based domestic abuse support services available across Lancashire; <https://lancashirevictimservices.org/>

Support available in other areas of the UK;

Victim Support - <http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>

Women's Aid for women - <http://www.womensaid.org.uk/>

MALE for male domestic violence victims <http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk/> or telephone 0808 801 0327

For information and advice for children and young people, please visit the Childline website or telephone Childline free on 0800 11 11.

Galop – anti-LGBTQ+ hate crime charity <http://www.galop.org.uk>

If you are worried you might be forced into marriage or are worried about a friend or relative contact the Forced Marriage Unit on 0207 008 0151.

If you are a man either experiencing abuse, or are concerned about your abusive behaviour, or for professionals and victim/survivors looking for help for an abuser, or male victim, contact the Respect Phone line on 0845 122 8609 or visit www.respectphoneline.org.uk.

National Domestic Violence Helpline – 0800 2000 247. This helpline is run in partnership by Refuge and Women’s Aid and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

SafeLives (SafeLives) - Web link for victims of domestic abuse - www.safelives.org.uk

Female victims and legal advice - www.rightsofwomen.org.uk