



Officer Key Decision

Report from the Corporate Director of Residents and Housing

Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness & Renters

Domestic Abuse Policy

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
List of Appendices:	Appendix A – Brent Housing Domestic Abuse Policy Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the adoption of Brent Council's Housing Domestic Abuse Policy following consultation with residents and stakeholder organisations. The policy establishes clear principles for supporting victims/survivors, holding perpetrators to account where appropriate and working collaboratively with partner agencies.
- 1.2 The policy provides a consistent framework for Housing Management, Housing Needs and other relevant housing services to identify, respond to and prevent domestic abuse through a survivor-centred and trauma-informed approach. It also provides the strategic framework for the development of procedures for housing services.

- 1.3 The policy ensures the Council complies with relevant legislation and regulatory expectations and reflects recognised good practice, including the principles of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Whole Housing Approach.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That the Corporate Director Residents and Housing Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters and Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Health:

- 2.1 Approves the adoption of the Domestic Abuse Policy attached at Appendix A.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1.1 The Domestic Abuse Policy supports the Borough Plan by ensuring that residents experiencing domestic abuse can access safe and secure housing with appropriate support. It provides a consistent approach across Housing Services to identifying, responding to and preventing domestic abuse.
- 3.1.2 The policy contributes to the “*Prosperity and Stability in Brent*” priority by supporting safe and secure housing and preventing homelessness through enabling victims/survivors access suitable accommodation and support.
- 3.1.3 The policy also supports the “*Thriving Communities*” and “*A Healthier Brent*” priorities by promoting partnership working and safeguarding vulnerable residents. It outlines Brent Council’s commitment to adopt a trauma-informed, person-centred approach that improves outcomes for victims/survivors and their families.
- 3.1.4 The policy aligns with the Council's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy.
- 3.1.5 It also supports compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's “*Tenancy Standard*”, which requires registered providers to work collaboratively with other agencies tackling domestic abuse and enable tenants to access appropriate support and advice.

3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 Domestic abuse has significant impacts on individuals, families and communities and is one of the leading causes of homelessness among women. As both a housing authority and registered provider, Brent Council has statutory responsibilities to prevent homelessness, safeguard vulnerable residents and respond appropriately where domestic abuse occurs.
- 3.2.2 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced a statutory definition of domestic abuse and strengthened duties on local authorities to support victims/survivors.

The Council has reviewed its approach to ensure it reflects current legislation and recognised best practice.

- 3.2.3 The policy establishes a consistent framework for housing staff to identify and respond to domestic abuse, work alongside specialist services and ensure that residents receive timely support and housing assistance.
- 3.2.4 The policy has been developed following a review of recognised good practice and statutory guidance. This has included:
- Meeting with London Borough of Islington which achieved Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Platinum Accreditation
 - Alignment with the DAHA Whole Housing Approach to ensure that the policy reflects recognised good practice for housing providers responding to domestic abuse
 - Extensive collaboration with colleagues across Housing Management, Housing Needs, Community Safety, Safeguarding Team and other relevant council services to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach
 - Ongoing involvement of the Council's Domestic Abuse Act Support Officer to provide specialist expertise and advice
 - Engagement with residents and specialist Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) partner organisations

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 A six-week public consultation was undertaken through the Council's 'Have Your Say' platform between **21 April 2026 and 13 July 2026**. Residents were invited to comment on the proposed policy and its approach to responding to domestic abuse.
- 4.2 A limited number of responses were received during the initial consultation period. To maximise opportunities for participation, the consultation was extended for a further six weeks. Resident responses remained limited, and feedback was received from five residents.

Whilst resident participation was limited, consultation was supplemented through engagement with specialist VAWG organisations and subject matter experts to ensure the policy reflected best practice and lived experience.

- 4.3 To supplement this engagement, the draft policy was presented at two workshops with specialist domestic abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) partner organisations. These workshops provided detailed feedback from organisations with significant expertise in supporting victims/survivors.
- 4.4 Feedback received during the consultation informed a number of amendments to the policy, including:
- **Strengthened policy principles**
 - The policy now more explicitly embeds person-centred, trauma-informed practice and places greater emphasis on survivor choice

and empowerment. The principle previously titled '*Safety First*' has been strengthened and renamed '*Safety, Empowerment and Choice First*'.

- **Strengthened the housing response and referral pathways**
 - The policy now makes clear that support will be available regardless of whether a victim/survivor meets a particular risk threshold, together with a commitment to refer victims/survivors to appropriate support.
 - The policy also makes clear that referrals will be made through established pathways, including specialist “by and for” organisations.
- **Clarified legal action**
 - Additional wording has been included to make clear that tenancy management and legal enforcement action may result in perpetrators being excluded from a property where appropriate and proportionate.
- **Improved accessibility**
 - The wording of the policy has been simplified and unnecessary terminology removed to improve the clarity and accessibility of the document.

4.5 Throughout the consultation period, the Lead Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters were briefed on the proposed policy and supported its development.

4.6 The commitment to review the policy annually will help ensure it remains flexible and responsive to the changing needs and experiences of victims/survivors. It will also provide an opportunity to consider feedback from frontline services and strengthen the policy where needed.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 The policy presents a low direct financial risk to the Council as it formalises and strengthens existing practices rather than creating a new service or funding commitment. The principal financial risk relates to the costs that can arise where domestic abuse is not identified or addressed at an early stage, potentially resulting in homelessness, prolonged use of temporary accommodation, tenancy failure, legal action, safeguarding interventions, rent arrears and increased demand on housing management services.

5.2 By promoting earlier intervention, coordinated support and tenancy sustainment, the policy has the potential to generate cost avoidance and financial benefits, including:

- Reduced temporary accommodation expenditure through prevention of homelessness and crisis presentations.
- Lower legal and court costs associated with possession proceedings, injunctions and tenancy enforcement.

- Reduced rental income loss through prevention of tenancy abandonment, tenancy breakdown and arrears escalation.
- Reduced safeguarding and crisis intervention costs through earlier identification and support for vulnerable residents.
- Reduced officer time and management costs associated with complex repeat domestic abuse cases requiring intensive multi-agency intervention.

5.3 Whilst these benefits cannot be quantified at this stage, effective implementation of the policy should help mitigate future demand-led pressures across both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places duties on local authorities to assess the need for domestic abuse support within safe accommodation, to develop and publish strategies, commission appropriate services and work through relevant bodies to ensure victims and their children can access protection and support. The Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard (2024) requires social landlords, including council landlords, to allocate and manage tenancies fairly, support tenancy sustainment, prevent unnecessary evictions and comply with all statutory tenancy requirements.

6.2 The Council complies with its obligations under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy (2024) by having a Domestic Abuse Policy in place that sets out procedures for identifying and supporting victims.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed and is attached at Appendix B. The assessment concludes that the policy is expected to have an overall positive impact on residents with protected characteristics and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

7.2 The policy recognises that domestic abuse can affect anyone but acknowledges that some groups may face additional barriers to reporting abuse or accessing support. It requires officers to consider individual circumstances and protected characteristics when responding to cases.

7.3 The policy promotes equitable access to housing services by providing a trauma-informed and person-centred approach. This includes making reasonable adjustments and referring residents to specialist support organisations where appropriate.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 There are no climate change or environmental considerations arising from this report.

9.0 Communication Considerations

- 9.1 Following approval, the Domestic Abuse Policy will be published on the Brent Council website and made available to residents in accessible formats upon request.
- 9.2 The policy will be communicated to staff through guidance and training. Supporting operational procedures will also be updated to ensure consistent implementation across Housing Services.

<u>Report sign off:</u> Corporate Director of Residents and Housing Services
