

# Grainger Trust Limited ('GT') Domestic Abuse Policy

September 2024

## 1. Introduction

This document outlines Grainger Trusts approach to safeguarding our customers who may be at risk of or experiencing domestic abuse.

Grainger Trust condemn all incidents of domestic abuse and will take all reports of Domestic Abuse seriously. We will take steps to assist and support any person in our properties through a victim centred approach in all cases of domestic abuse.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

Grainger Trust are committed to working towards preventing and combating, domestic abuse to ensure that everybody is allowed to live free from fear, intimidation and violence.

The aim of this policy is outlined as follows:

- To provide a fair, confidential, and empathetic response to all customers who are experiencing any form of domestic abuse or violence.
- To ensure all staff have the information and support they need to understand their role in identifying and responding to domestic abuse.
- To outline how we work in partnership with other agencies to support victims/survivors and tackle domestic abuse.
- To take firm and effective action against perpetrators where possible.
- To meet our legal and regulatory requirements.

## 3. Definition of Domestic Abuse

Grainger Trust has adopted the definition of Domestic Abuse as issued by the Home Office, which states that domestic abuse is “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality”.

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

Categories of harm or abuse relating to domestic abuse are (but are not limited to):

**Physical:** includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, scalding, burning, biting, misuse of medication, being locked in a room, inappropriate sanctions or force-feeding, sleep withdrawal, inappropriate methods of restraint, and unlawfully depriving a person of their liberty.

**Sexual:** rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, sexual exploitation, sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

**Controlling behaviour** is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support (such as family, friends and co-workers), exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance, and escape, and regulating their everyday behaviour.

**Coercive behaviour:** is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten a person. This includes a range of behaviour which makes a person reliant and/or dependent on another person by isolating them from sources of support (such as family, friends and co-workers),, exploiting their resources and capacity for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. This can also include forced marriage and so-called 'honour violence'.

**Financial or economic:** theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits. Acquire, use, or maintain money, goods or services.

**Psychological or emotional:** threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, rejection, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, indifference, harassment, verbal abuse (including shouting or swearing), cyber bullying, sleep withdrawal, isolation or withdrawal from services or support networks.

#### 4. **Supporting those experiencing Domestic Abuse**

When an incident of Domestic Abuse is reported to us, our priority is the safety of the customer. We will always believe the customer and will identify a safe method of communication and make contact to agree an action plan where it is assessed as safe to do so. We rely on specialist domestic abuse support services and will encourage tenant involvement at the earliest opportunity.

Grainger Trust will signpost tenants to agencies involved in tackling domestic abuse who are able to give them the most appropriate support and assistance when faced with domestic abuse.

Where appropriate we will work with those experiencing domestic abuse and make full use of the range of civil and legal remedies available to us to safeguard the victim(s) /survivor(s) against the perpetrator.

Where necessary and safe to do so we will offer a management move to another tenancy under section 79 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the DLUHC guidance for social landlords 2022.

Where appropriate we will work with our residents to ensure homes are safe and secure to provide assurance, taking advice from lead partners as relevant.

We will support a customer to find safe alternative accommodation as required. This may be within a refuge or as a direct referral to another social landlord as outlined within Domestic Abuse legislation. This may be outside of area to ensure the safety of the customer.

We will work with the Police, as appropriate, to support criminal proceedings, as well as specialist agencies to ensure appropriate support is available.

#### **5. Customers who are alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse**

Where a customer is an alleged perpetrator of domestic abuse, we will work with the Police and local authorities who will be the lead partner to advise relating to the protection of the person being abused.

Where there is a risk to one customer from another we will ensure that the customer being abused is safe as our priority.

Where the customer who is the alleged/confirmed abuser remains in our property we may take action as defined in grounds 14a of the Housing act to remove their right to accommodation, seeking an injunction as required.

#### **6. Customers experiencing domestic abuse who have children**

When an incident of Domestic Abuse is reported to us, our priority is the safety of the customer. Where the customer has children, we will support the customer as

defined in section 4 to prioritise the safety of the family. Our staff will signpost to specialist agencies that can offer the support and guidance required. Where our staff believe that a child is at risk of significant harm, we will alert statutory services if required.

#### **7. Multi-Agency partnership working**

Grainger Trust recognises the roles of other agencies, and we are committed to working in partnership with them at strategic and operational levels aiming to protect our residents experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse. Where it is deemed appropriate, reports will be referred to partner agencies, such as the local authority and the Police. In these cases, we will support and work with them and our own actions will be guided by their findings and outcome.

We will always seek the customers consent to share information, however there may be occasions where we may have to inform partners without the customers consent. When we share information with other agencies we will comply with Data Protection legislation and our own Data Protection policies and procedures.

## **8. Legal and Regulatory Requirements**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following legislative and regulatory documents and policies:

- Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Family Law Act 1996
- Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Housing Act 1988 and 1996
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Where new or updated legislation or regulatory requirements are introduced we will ensure policies are compliant

## **9. Training**

We will ensure that all our staff have training in working with victims and perpetrators of Domestic Abuse that is appropriate to the requirements of their role. Training will be refreshed in line with best practice.

## **10. Impact on staff**

We recognise the impact that working with a victim or perpetrator of Domestic Abuse can have upon a staff member. We will offer support to staff members via debriefs, 1:1's and specialist support if required. We will ensure that all staff are offered our employee support processes and encouraged to use them.

**11. Impact on other customers**

We recognise that living next to a household where there is domestic abuse can be distressing for other customers. We will signpost to customers to agencies that can offer support and guidance.

**12. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years or when there is a change in circumstances, in work practices or the introduction of new regulation or legislation.

## Document Owner and Approval

The Data Protection Owner is the owner of this document and is responsible for ensuring that this procedure is reviewed in line with the review requirements of Data Protection.

A current version of this document is available to all members of staff on the corporate intranet.

## Document History

Policy Owner	Head of Grainger Trust
GT Board Sign Off	September 2024
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