

Domestic Abuse Policy

Policy Statement & Purpose

Bromford is committed to ensuring that we keep our customers safe from harm. This policy outlines our approach to safeguarding our customers who may be at risk of or experiencing domestic abuse.

This policy is based upon the following guiding principles:

- Everyone has a right to live their lives with dignity, respect and freedom from abuse, violence, fear and exploitation.
- Responding to Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse is everybody's responsibility - #dontdoanything

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Scope

This policy applies to all customers that Bromford, its contractors, and third-party organisations, work with. We take domestic abuse very seriously and are committed to handling any reports of domestic abuse sensitively and appropriately to work with victims / survivors to find solutions and offer protection.

Everyone who works for Bromford has a duty to safeguard our customers from domestic abuse.

List of Referenced and Related Documents

<u>Safeguarding Procedure</u>
<u>Domestic Abuse Procedure</u>
<u>Mental Capacity Procedure</u>
<u>Code of Conduct Policy</u>
<u>Data Protection Policy</u>
<u>Disciplinary Procedure FAQs</u>
<u>DBS [Disclosure and Barring Service]</u>
<u>Data and Document Retention Policy</u>
<u>Safeguarding & Domestic Abuse Statement for Contractors & third-party organisations</u>

Legislative Requirements

[Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

[Children's Act 1989 and 2004](#)

[Family Law Act 1996](#)

[Housing Act 1996 and 1998](#)

[Protection from Harassment 1997](#)

[Human Rights Act 1998](#)

[Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – Section 115](#)

[Every Child Matters Framework \(2003\)](#)

[Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 S145/S149](#)

[Domestic Violence, Crime & Victims Act 2004](#)

[Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)

[Safeguarding Vulnerable Group Act 2006](#)

1. Aims and Objectives

Raise awareness – Bromford will raise awareness of domestic abuse with all colleagues, contractors, and customers, in line with our domestic abuse and safeguarding processes. See the **Safeguarding & Domestic Abuse Statement for Contractors & third-party organisations**.

Compliance and best practice – Bromford will ensure all colleagues and contractors are vigilant and alert to domestic abuse, their own conduct, and how to respond to any concerns or suspicions they may have.

Practice safe recruitment – Bromford will check suitability of all colleagues using full references and DBS.

Make Safeguarding Personal (MSP) – Bromford will harness a person-centred approach to empower and engage the customer in any solutions and decisions to determine how best they can be protected from domestic abuse if it is appropriate and safe to do so.

Training – Bromford will ensure all colleagues and contractors have effective domestic abuse training, as part of our safeguarding processes, and understand relevant procedures to enable them to be confident and competent to identify and report concerns.

Partnership Working – Bromford will work in partnership with local authorities and specialist domestic abuse agencies to enable our customers to have access to the appropriate services and support.

2. Definition of Domestic Abuse

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

- 1) 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) Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following:
 - (a) physical or sexual abuse.
 - (b) violent or threatening behaviour.
 - (c) controlling or coercive behaviour.
 - (d) economic abuse or financial abuse.
 - (e) psychological, emotional, or other abuse; and 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 (but not exhaustive):

- **Physical;** includes 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.
 - **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, isolation or withdrawal from services or support networks.
 - **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, obtain goods or services.
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- **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, 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, 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'.
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3. Our Responsibility to our Customers

All colleagues, contractors, and third-party organisations, share the responsibility for safeguarding domestic abuse and associated risks.

Where a colleague or contractor observes or has concerns about domestic abuse connected with our customers or receives a domestic abuse disclosure from a third party, the incident must be treated seriously and immediately responded to in accordance with Bromford's 'Domestic Abuse' and 'Safeguarding' procedures.

Bromford is committed to ensuring colleagues and contractors act appropriately, promptly, and proportionately, and work in partnership with our customers and other organisations to ensure safety for all.

4. Supporting those experiencing Domestic Abuse

Bromford puts its customers first to safeguard the welfare of those experiencing domestic abuse.

We promote the Make Safeguarding Personal (MSP) initiative to empower and engage the customer in any solutions and decisions to determine how best they can be protected if it is appropriate and safe to do so.

We will treat our customers with respect and dignity, without judgement.

The Domestic Abuse procedure sets the process a colleague should follow when managing a suspected case, including making a referral to a statutory organisation or specialist service where appropriate.

5. Data Protection

Bromford, its contractors, and other organisations we work with, can rely on paragraph 18 of Schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018 (Safeguarding of children and individuals at risk). This sets out conditions for processing data (e.g. sharing information or making a referral) where necessary for the purposes of protecting an individual from neglect or physical, mental, or emotional harm, or protecting the physical, mental, or emotional well-being of an individual.

The data we use, and share is to fulfil our duties to safeguard children and individuals at risk. Colleagues recording information about safeguarding concerns and making referrals must ensure that this information is accurate.

We will dispose of data in line with Bromford's Data and Document Retention Policy.

[Bromford Privacy Notice](#)

6. Taking Action Against Perpetrators

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.

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

7. Joint Working with Stakeholders

Bromford will work in partnership with local authorities, statutory organisations, and specialist agencies who protect our customers experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse.

Each Local Authority has in place different reporting arrangements and procedures which colleagues will adhere to.

Bromford will also work closely with stakeholders such as Social Services, Health, Voluntary and specialist agencies, and the Police.

8. Escalation Process

Where colleagues or contractors are not satisfied with the response received from any other agency or stakeholder regarding a domestic abuse concern they will:

- Colleagues should discuss the concern with their leader and agree an action plan (within 1 working day). Contractors should share their concerns with a Bromford colleague who will escalate to a leader where appropriate.
- The Leader at Bromford will liaise with the equivalent Manager within the agency concerned (within 2 working days).
- If the Line Manager remains unsatisfied with the outcome, the case should be referred to a Bromford Senior Leader and be raised with an equivalent Senior Leader within the agency concerned (within 2 working days).

9. Risk management

- Responding to and reporting domestic abuse will be an integral part of day-to-day activity and leaders will review cases and learning in 1:1's / Team meetings / Team talks.
- Leaders will take action in line with our Disciplinary procedure if a colleague fails to report allegations of suspected or actual abuse and does not act in accordance with our Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Policies and procedures.
- Customer Experience and Service Delivery Leadership Teams will quarterly monitor and review safeguarding cases.
- If a contractor fails to report a safeguarding or domestic abuse concern, they could be held accountable, liable, and may be required to evidence the rationale for failing to report.
- Bromford will conduct an annual review of safeguarding which will assess the effectiveness of our approach to Safeguarding including a review of our contractors reporting, interagency working, as well as incorporating internal and external learning, such as from Serious Case Reviews and wider good practice.
- Performance updates will be recorded against Key Strategic Risk Indicators for the purposes of Safeguarding.
- Bromford will ensure our approach to safeguarding and domestic abuse is current, proportionate, and relates to up-to-date legislation.
- The overall responsibility for Safeguarding is overseen by the Director of Localities & Customer Contact.

This is a high-level policy statement and should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Procedure, Domestic Abuse Procedure, and other associated policy statements, policy guidance documents and procedures.

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