

Report to: Housing Review Board



Date of Meeting 13th November 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release

Housing Domestic Abuse Policy

Report summary:

This report presents the updated Domestic Abuse Policy 2024–27 for East Devon District Council's Housing Service. The policy outlines the Council's commitment to supporting survivors of domestic abuse, including tenants, leaseholders, and members of the public accessing housing services. It reflects current legislation, best practice standards, and incorporates trauma-informed approaches to ensure safety, inclusivity, and effective support.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

- Notes and approves the updated Domestic Abuse Policy 2024–27.
- Endorses the launch of the Detect and Protect service to enhance tenant safety.
- Supports the introduction of trained generic housing officers to provide specialist support.

Reason for recommendation:

The updated policy ensures compliance with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and other relevant legislation. It strengthens the Council's approach to safeguarding, early intervention, and partnership working. The policy also reflects feedback from service users and aligns with DAHA standards, promoting a consistent and compassionate response to domestic abuse.

Officer: Rebecca Meakin – Communities Manager, Rebecca.meakin@eastdevon.gov.uk

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Assets and Economy
- Communications and Democracy
- Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- Environment - Nature and Climate
- Environment - Operational
- Finance
- Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning

☒ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact High Impact

The policy addresses the needs of diverse survivors, including those with protected characteristics. It uses national and local data to tailor support and ensure equitable access to services.

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Medium Risk; The key risks are outlined in Section 4 of this report.

Links to background information Domestic Abuse Policy 2024–27] Council Plan Housing Service Plan

Links to Council Plan-

1. Supported and Engaged Community

This priority includes:

- Ensuring residents have safe and appropriate housing.
- Supporting wellbeing and safety in communities.
- Promoting inclusive and accessible services.

Domestic abuse support fits here through:

- Housing interventions like the Detect and Protect service.
 - Trauma-informed and person-centred housing services.
 - Collaboration with partners to support survivors and prevent abuse.
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2. Partnership Working

The Plan emphasizes:

- Working with local and regional partners.
- Sharing data and insights to improve outcomes.

This supports domestic abuse initiatives through:

- Collaboration with the Devon Domestic Abuse Alliance and Safer Devon Partnership.
 - Referrals to MARAC and safeguarding teams.
 - Coordinated responses across housing, health, and community safety.
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3. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

The Council Plan underpins all priorities with a commitment to:

- Fair and respectful treatment.
- Reducing inequalities.

Domestic abuse policy aligns by:

- Addressing intersectionality and protected characteristics.
- Using data to target support for vulnerable groups.
- Ensuring survivors are treated with dignity and respect.

4. Risks: The key risks associated with the proposed Domestic Abuse Policy for Housing Include;

Ref:	Risk	Mitigation Measure	Residual Risk
1	Tenants unable to access online services.	Digital Inclusion workshops offered to tenants. National Data Bank referrals for Sim Cards.	Medium
2	Limited specialist support for LGBTQ+ survivors	Further partnership working required with Devon Domestic Abuse Alliance and Safer Devon Partnership to identify what services are available for LGBTQ+ survivors of DA.	Medium
3	Language barriers for tenants where English is not their first language.	Use of language line and partnership working with the Resettlement team to identify and remove language barriers where possible.	Medium
4	Lack of adapted properties and places of safety for those with disabilities and needing to relocate due to DA.	To work with internal departments to ensure that we have a clear understanding of those properties that have been adapted. To work with Devon Domestic Abuse Alliance to establish provision for survivors of DA with disabilities.	Medium.

Priorities (check which apply)

- A supported and engaged community
- Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
- Resilient economy that supports local business
- Financially secure and improving quality of services

Purpose and Scope

The policy outlines East Devon District Council’s commitment to supporting individuals affected by domestic abuse, including tenants, leaseholders, and members of the public accessing housing

services. It applies to all Council staff, contractors, and agents, and is aligned with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Definition and Forms of Abuse

Domestic abuse is defined as abusive behaviours between individuals aged 16+ who are personally connected. It includes:

- Controlling and coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Online abuse
- Psychological and emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Stalking and 'honour'-based violence
- Elder abuse

Introduction

Domestic abuse remains a pervasive and often hidden issue affecting individuals across all demographics. East Devon District Council recognises its responsibility as a housing provider to respond effectively to domestic abuse and to support those affected. The Housing Domestic Abuse Policy 2024–27 sets out the Council's approach to identifying, responding to, and preventing domestic abuse within its housing services. It applies to all staff, contractors, and agents working on behalf of the Council and covers tenants, leaseholders, and members of the public accessing housing support.

Policy Objectives

The primary aim of the policy is to ensure that anyone experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse receives timely, compassionate, and effective support. The Council commits to treating all disclosures seriously, offering person-centred assistance, and working in partnership with other agencies to safeguard individuals and promote recovery.

EDDC Housing Approach

East Devon District Council's response to domestic abuse is guided by a set of core principles that promote inclusivity, respect, transparency, and trauma-informed practice. The Council aims to:

- Prioritise the safety of survivors through interventions such as the Detect and Protect service, which installs additional security measures in homes.
- Provide non-judgemental, confidential support to those disclosing abuse.
- Empower survivors to make informed decisions and regain control over their lives.
- Understand and respond to the diverse experiences of survivors, including those with protected characteristics.
- Collaborate with survivors and partner organisations to deliver coordinated support.

Core Principles

The policy is built on values that guide staff behaviour and service delivery:

- Equal access and inclusivity
- Community engagement

- Health and wellbeing promotion
- Quality and transparency in services
- Respect and trauma-informed practice
- Environmental responsibility
- Collaborative working across Council teams

Monitoring and Review

- The policy will be reviewed every three years or in response to changes in legislation or service needs. Staff will receive appropriate training, and feedback from survivors will be actively sought to inform service improvements. Case reviews will be conducted regularly to ensure learning and accountability.

Partnerships and Staffing

- To strengthen its response, the Council will introduce housing officers trained specifically to support survivors. It will also continue to work closely with organisations such as the Safer Devon Partnership and the Devon Domestic Abuse Alliance to ensure a joined-up approach to service provision.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- The Council is committed to ensuring fair and sensitive treatment for all individuals. National and local data is used to understand the demographics of survivors and to tailor services accordingly. The policy highlights that women are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse, with significant representation among younger women and older men.

Consultation

- The development of this policy has been informed by comprehensive consultation with a range of stakeholders, including senior managers, frontline staff, safeguarding leads, the anti-social behaviour officer, and external partner organisations. Their insights and recommendations have been carefully considered and fully integrated into the final version of the policy, ensuring it reflects both operational expertise and best practice in supporting individuals affected by domestic abuse.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

The policy supports compliance with a wide range of legislation, including but not limited to:

- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- The Housing Acts 1988 & 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Acts 1989 & 2004
- The Care Act 2014
- Clare's Law (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme)
- DAHA Accreditation framework
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Related Policies

- The Domestic Abuse Policy is supported by other Council policies such as the Allocations Policy, Tenancy Policy, Homelessness Strategy, Safeguarding Policy, and the Domestic Abuse Toolkit for Frontline Officers.

Financial implications:

There are no financial implications as a result of this new Policy. Delivery of the policy will be within existing teams and staffing structures.

Legal implications:

The legal implications and risk is set out within the report and requires no further comment at this stage.