

**ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL**  
**HOUSING SERVICES**  
**DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY**


**1. INTRODUCTION**

Domestic abuse does not discriminate and can affect anyone regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, class, age, sexuality, disability or lifestyle.

Housing Services of Argyll and Bute Council are committed to ensure that victims of domestic abuse are given the advice to make informed choices about their accommodation options. It is recognised that domestic abuse is a major cause of homelessness and repeat homelessness and we will take a proactive and sensitive approach to responding to domestic abuse cases and work closely with our partners (whether that is to support someone to remain in their existing accommodation, emergency accommodation or permanent rehousing).

Housing Services signed up to the Chartered Institute of Housing's Make a Stand

By adopting this policy, Argyll and Bute Council aim to:

-  Ensure that Housing Services take a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and addressing

### **3. DEFINITION**

The UK Government's definition of domestic abuse:

"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. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; emotional"

"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 their victim".

Scottish Women's Aid:

Domestic abuse is a pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and/or violent behaviour, including sexual violence, by a partner or ex-partner. Domestic abuse is overwhelmingly experienced by women and perpetrated by men. It doesn't matter how old someone is, what race or ethnicity they have, what class they are, whether or not they are disabled, or whether they have children – anyone can be a victim of abuse. Controlling and coercive behaviour was criminalised by the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 and the legislation came into force on 1 April 2019.

Source: <https://womensaid.scot/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/>

### **4. OUR APPROACH**

Argyll & Bute Council is a stock transfer local authority, as a result, we have no housing stock.

#### **4.1 Prevention**

Argyll & Bute Council work in partnership with Argyll & Bute Women's Aid and the Registered Social Landlords in the local authority area. We are represented at the MARAC partnership and the Violence Against Women Partnership.

#### **4.2 Housing Options**

Housing Services are one of the partners of the common housing register in Argyll & Bute. Information for the public on how to access support in relation to domestic abuse is available on Argyll & Bute Council's website, HOME Argyll website to

name just a few. Other agencies can also signpost or refer to local area housing teams and an appointment to discuss housing options can be made. Information how to contact Housing Services has been cascaded to various organisations including GP surgeries, Police stations, etc. Victims of domestic abuse should be made aware of support agencies that may be able to help them and be provided with details.

#### 4.3 Actions against perpetrators

We work with Registered Social Landlords in Argyll & Bute to assist with the management of tenancies affected by domestic abuse. A member of staff from Housing Services, Argyll & Bute Council attends MARAC meetings on behalf of the HOME Argyll partnership. It may be necessary to liaise with landlords to assist those affected by domestic abuse to secure their property to reduce the risk of further abuse or crime. This may include arranging for locks to be changed, fitting key chains, spy holes or approval for CCTV/ring doorbells.

#### 4.6 Temporary accommodation

Housing Services provides temporary accommodation across the local authority area. The majority of the temporary accommodation comprises of furnished properties in the main settlements of Argyll and Bute. This allows for accommodation to be offered in an area which will meet the needs of the household. We work with Women's Aid to ensure that accommodation offered is suitable for the circumstances of each individual.

#### 4.7 Permanent housing

We support victims of domestic abuse through the homeless process ensuring that they have a housing application which accurately reflects their needs.

### 5.



## **11. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

We will monitor the outcomes of all homeless presentations as a result of domestic abuse on an annual basis. We will monitor the number of cases awarded 200



## POLICY ON DOMESTIC ABUSE

### 1. Definition

- 1.1 The UK government's definition of domestic abuse is **of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional'.

### 2. Policy Statement:

- 2.1 The Council believes that everyone has the right to live free from domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is unacceptable whether it be within or outwith the workplace.
- 2.2 The Council has developed this policy as part of its commitment to support employees' health and wellbeing at work and recognises that domestic abuse affects people in all aspects of life, including the workplace.
- 2.3 The Council has a duty of care for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees at work, and for creating an environment in which employees feel safe to disclose their experience of abuse in order to access support and increase safety for themselves and others.
- 2.4



