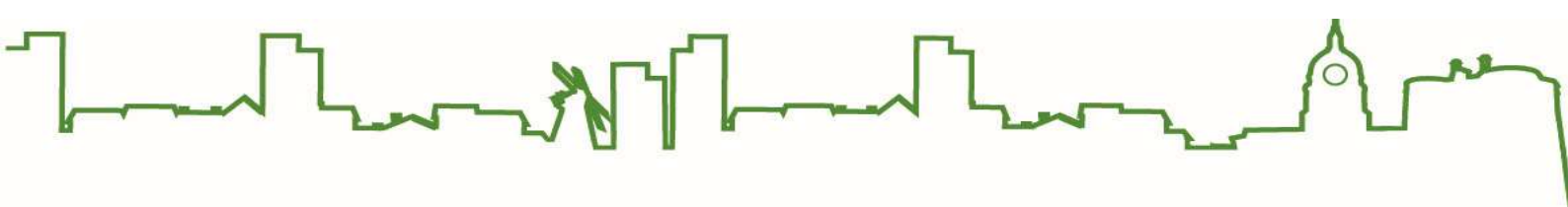


# Domestic Abuse Policy

Nottingham City Homes Registered Provider Limited  
Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham NG2 3NJ  
Registered in England and Wales, Company registration no. 09810057  
Registered Not for Profit Provider of Social Housing, Registration Number 4862



# Nottingham City Homes Registered Provider

Nottingham City Homes Registered Provider Limited (Registration number 4862) is a provider of affordable social housing and temporary accommodation in the City of Nottingham. NCH RP is a member of the Nottingham City Homes Group with Nottingham City Homes Limited and Nottingham City Homes Enterprise Limited.

NCH RP is focused on delivering a quality housing service to its existing tenants and supported housing for citizens with care, support and supervision needs in housing crisis and from Women's Aid refuges.

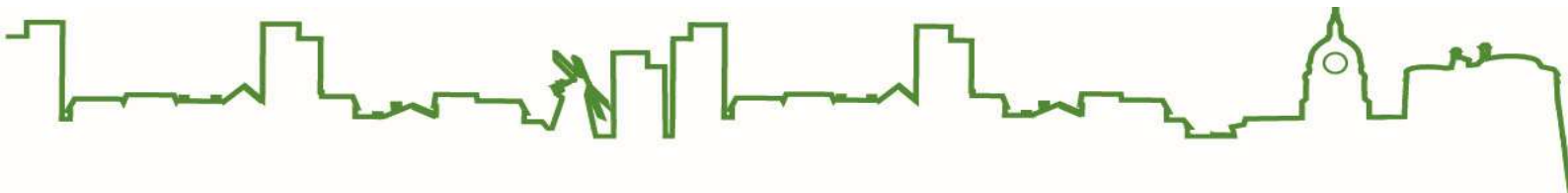
Whilst NCH RP was originally constituted to build new social housing in Nottingham, that has not been possible in recent years. Responding to this changed environment, NCH RP has directed resources to the expanding need to assist homeless families and citizens presenting to the Council in housing crisis. NCH RP has significantly extended its provision of supported temporary accommodation provision and services, supporting residents at the point of crisis, sheltering and helping them to find a permanent home and break the cycle of homelessness.

Most Nottingham City Homes Registered Provider services are delivered by Nottingham City Council Housing Services through a Service Contract. As such, our Domestic Abuse Policy follows that of the Council's Housing Services team. Where legal action is being considered, the decision will be made by the Head of NCH RP or the Chief Operating Officer of the NCH Group.

## Mark Lawson, Head of NCH Registered Provider

### Version Control

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Author/Reviewer	Name	Pratik Popat		
	Job Title	Safer Neighbourhood Housing Manager		
	Section	Tenancy and Estates Management		
Verifier	Name	Kathy Sheldon		
	Job Title	Assistant Director of Housing		
	Section	Tenancy and Estates Management		
Teams Affected	All Teams			

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## 1.0 Introduction

- Nottingham City Council Housing Services (NCCHS) vision is to create homes and places where people want to live. We are committed to ensuring that our neighbourhoods are safe places to live and recognise that we have an important role to play in tackling domestic abuse, raising awareness of domestic abuse, and supporting tenants' of domestic abuse.
- We work closely with communities and are well placed to recognise the signs of domestic abuse. Our employees are in regular contact with our tenants, either on the telephone, in our offices or in their homes and the community and are in a position where to be able to identify the signs of domestic abuse. Alternatively, a tenant may make a disclosure that they are the survivor of domestic abuse, and our employees must be able to deal with that disclosure.
- Nottingham City Council Housing Services believe that none of our tenants should live in fear of domestic abuse or violence from a partner, former partner, or other member of their household.
- We recognise that domestic abuse can happen to anyone and can occur in any household, and we will take steps to support any person suffering from or threatened with domestic abuse or violence.
- This policy sets out Nottingham City Council Housing Services approach to dealing with domestic abuse and applies to all Nottingham City Council tenants. There is a separate policy that applies to Nottingham City Council Employees.
- The aim of this policy is to
  - To ensure that tenants experiencing domestic abuse can approach Nottingham City Council Housing Services in confidence knowing that staff will be supportive and non-judgemental
  - To treat all disclosures of domestic abuse seriously and as a matter of high priority
  - To ensure we have close working relationships with our partners and adopt a community coordinated response to domestic abuse
  - Outline our responsibilities and the support that is available to people who are experiencing domestic abuse
- Nottingham City Council Housing Services has developed this policy in accordance with the changes in legislation, the social housing white paper, and has a statutory obligation to ensure that policies and procedures comply relevant legislation including (not exhaustive list):
  - Domestic Abuse Act 2021
  - Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2012
  - Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
  - Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
  - Housing Acts 1985, 1996 2003, and 2004 (as amended)
  - Children Act 1989

- Equality Act 2010
- The Care Act 2014
- Local Government Act 2000
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Links to other strategies, policies and procedures
  - Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour and Crime Strategy
  - Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy
  - Allocations and Lettings Policy
  - Equality and Diversity Strategy
  - Tenant and leaseholder Involvement Strategy
  - Document Retention Policy
  - Tenancy Sustainment Strategy
  - Tenancy Policy
  - Tenancy Fraud Policy
  - Neighbourhood Policy
  - Noise App Procedure
  - Eyes Wide Open Procedure
  - Nottingham Safe Accommodation Strategy

## **2.0 Definition of Domestic Abuse**

Nottingham City Council Housing Services have adopted the statutory definition of domestic abuse set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

### **2.1 Domestic abuse is defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 as follows.**

(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 (see below)
- e. Psychological, emotional, or other abuse

And it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct

(3) “Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to

- a. Acquire, use, or maintain money or other property, or
- b. Obtain goods or services

For the purposes of this Part A's behaviour may be behaviour "towards" B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B's child)"

Personally Connected is defined in Section 2 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 as:

(1) "For the purposes of this Part, two people are "personally connected" to each other if any of the following applies

- a. they are, or have been, married to each other
- b. they are, or have been, civil partners of each other
- c. they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- d. they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated)
- e. they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other
- f. they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child (see below); they are relatives.

(2) A person has a parental relationship in relation to a child if

- a. the person is a parent of the child, or
- b. the person has, or has had, parental responsibility for the child

(3) In this section

- "child" means a person under the age of 18 years
- "civil partnership agreement" has the meaning given by section 73 of the Civil Partnership Act 2004
- "parental responsibility" has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 3 of that Act)
- "relative" has the meaning given by section 63(1) of the Family Law Act 1996"

2.2 Examples of domestic abuse can include but are not limited to:

- **Physical abuse** - pushing, slapping, hitting, stabbing and attempted murder
- **Verbal abuse** - name calling, humiliation, degradation, accusing, verbally threatening
- **Sexual violence** - using force, threats, or intimidation to make a survivor perform sexual acts, rape and non-consensual acts of sex
- **Controlling behaviour** - can involve 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.
- **Economic abuse** - controlling money and bank accounts, running up debts in a survivor's name, allowing no say on how money is spent
- **Psychological and emotional abuse** - creating isolation, excessively checking up on people and monitoring whereabouts, using physical size to intimidate, humiliating and undermining behaviour, gaslighting, constantly criticising and putting them down, and blaming them for abuse.

2.3 Nottingham City Council Housing Services recognise that different kinds of abuse can happen in different contexts. The most prevalent type of domestic abuse occurs in relationships, however, the definition of domestic abuse also covers abuse between family members, such as child to parent or parent to child, we will consider these cases within the scope of this policy.

2.4 This policy also includes violence against women and girls, this includes serious crime types that are predominantly experienced by females, but not always.

- Stalking (domestic abuse and nondomestic abuse related stalking)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- So called honour-based abuse
- Forced Marriage

2.5 Nottingham City Council Housing Services recognise that Domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

2.6 Nottingham City Council Housing Services recognises there are also additional barriers to services experienced by tenants from protected groups and those experiencing multiple disadvantages, such as co-occurrences of factors such as risk of homelessness, drug and alcohol use, criminal justice system involvement and mental health.

2.7 Nottingham City Council Housing Services recognises that our own staff may experience domestic abuse and are committed to supporting them in any way that we can. Please see separate domestic abuse staff policy.

### 3.0 Our approach

3.1 We will take all disclosures of domestic abuse seriously. Domestic abuse is a serious crime, and we'll always treat people experiencing domestic abuse in a sympathetic, supportive, and non-judgemental way.

3.1.1 Tenants can disclose domestic abuse to us through any contact they have with us, for example, through our website, social media direct message, by telephone, by email, in person or in writing. We'll provide interpreters and/or translate information into other languages or formats as needed.

3.1.2 We will respond within one working day, adopting a survivor and person-centred approach considering the needs of the tenant and children in the household.



3.1.3 We recognise that tenants will often find it extremely difficult to make a disclosure about domestic abuse, therefore where a disclosure of domestic abuse is made, it will be dealt with in a sensitive, non-judgemental, and supportive manner.

3.1.4 We will treat all disclosures of domestic abuse seriously and action them as high priority.

3.1.5 We employ staff who are trained to deal with domestic abuse, and as soon as a tenant discloses domestic abuse to us, we'll consider their situation and preferences when selecting the employee, for example we'll offer the option of disclosing to an employee of the same gender as the tenant.

3.1.6 We'll agree the method of contact the tenant wishes us to use when communicating with them. This includes talking to us over the phone, through an online video call, at our offices or another safe venue.

3.1.7 During the interview, we'll carry out a risk assessment using a Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence Risk Identification Checklist (DASH 2009 risk model), which is a UK wide accredited form used by us and partner organisations to plan how we'll support the tenant and any children.

3.1.8 At the interview we will also agree and base our support on the individual needs of the tenant/children.

3.1.9 We recognise that not all people see themselves as victims or survivors, and therefore we'll make sure these labels are not associated with the tenant disclosing to us.

3.1.10 Our Safer Neighbourhood Housing Manager will act as our organisations domestic abuse champion, providing support and guidance to tenants, staff, and our stakeholders.

## **4.0 Our Action**

4.1 We take all disclosures of domestic abuse seriously, and where appropriate hold perpetrators of abuse to account including taking legal possession where applicable. We will be clear that domestic abuse is never the fault of the tenant or their children.

4.2 Our approach is survivor-centred, and we'll consider their views and ongoing safety when deciding the most appropriate course of action. We'll make sure the tenant is always aware of our response and that they agree any actions. This may include a referral for specialist support or additional security in their home, based on a risk assessment of that person's circumstances.

4.3 We'll use the full range of remedies as appropriate, considering the needs of each individual involved in the case. We'll advise about possible courses of action, both to respond to the immediate situation and to deal with it longer term. We won't pressure to take legal action but will offer advice if it is something they wish to pursue.

4.4 We'll provide relevant advice and help, including information about alternative housing, additional security measures (sanctuary scheme) in the home and suitable

support from specialist organisations (Juno Women's Aid, Equation, Arab Women's Network, Zola Refuge, EMCYPSAS etc).

4.5 We recognise that housing is one of the main factors why survivors/tenants don't leave abusive homes. If tenants fear for their immediate safety, we'll work in partnership with relevant partners to ensure suitable measures are in place to support the tenant's safety.

4.6 If temporary or permanent re-housing is considered, we'll work with tenants and relevant partners to identify areas that will minimise the risk of future abuse. We'll also continue to act against the perpetrator where appropriate and provide perpetrators with housing advice to ensure ongoing safety for tenants. Any move may not always be a like for like home as it would depend on housing stock available at the time.

4.7 A significant number of adults or children who experience domestic abuse will also require safeguarding. Employees are trained to be aware of this and to make safeguarding referrals as needed to make sure people are protected.

4.8 We'll keep all cases involving domestic abuse under review until the tenant is satisfied it's been resolved.

4.9 Whilst we are dealing with the case and after it's been resolved we'll provide support for tenants, their families and witnesses to make sure they feel safe in their home and the community in which they live.

## **5.0 Working in partnership**

5.1 We work in collaboration with relevant agencies, utilising the whole housing approach framework when responding to incidents of domestic abuse. We'll take account of each person's circumstances and the different courses of action that may be possible and appropriate.

5.2 We keep an up-to-date list of a range of local and national agencies which may be able to offer advice or support depending on the tenants' circumstances.

5.3 We will maintain strong partnership working with local agencies and will share information through the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and Nottinghamshire Police. We'll continue to be an active member of the Community Safety Partnership and use that to influence strategic decision-making regarding support services available in the communities where tenants live.

5.4 We'll refer tenants to relevant agencies and our Tenancy Support Team if they need any support relating to financial issues. We'll also signpost to organisations for legal advice as appropriate.

5.5 We'll work in partnership with appropriate agencies to support or signpost perpetrators of domestic abuse who recognise and want to change their behaviour.

5.6 We respect tenants' right to privacy and will act in line with our Data Protection Policy. We'll never force anyone to share any information they don't want to.

5.7 When working with other organisations we may need to share some information about tenants and their situation. We'll only share information with the tenants permission, unless there is a risk to the safeguarding of children or a vulnerable adult,

and it is a duty of care. In addition, agencies such as the police may request personal data about the tenant as part of their information gathering. In these cases, we will assess the sharing of data on a case-by-case basis, in line with our Data Protection Policy.

## **6.0 Awareness of domestic abuse**

6.1 We'll widely publicise information to raise awareness about domestic abuse, telling tenants how to get help if they need it and the type of response, they can expect from us. We'll tell tenants about the support we provide around domestic abuse when they move into their home. We'll also support national campaigns to increase awareness.

6.2 We'll carry out a rolling programme of employee quality assured training to make sure domestic abuse is always at the forefront of our minds. Our employees are aware of how to act and report any concerns confidently and sensitively, such as through our Eyes Wide Open Process.

## **7.0 Local Support & Useful Contacts**

Please see appendix 1 at the end of this document.

## **8.0 Confidentiality and data protection**

All monitoring and recording will be undertaken in conjunction with Nottingham City Council Housing Service's policies on confidentiality, access to information and data protection and will be compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR.

## **9.0 Information sharing**

An information sharing agreement exists between Nottingham City Council Housing Services and Nottinghamshire Police. This sets out the procedure for the sharing of information regarding domestic abuse. All information shared will comply with the information sharing agreement and relevant legislation and guidance.

In addition to sharing information to resolve domestic abuse, we will also share appropriate information with statutory agencies where we have reason to believe that there are safeguarding concerns, or where someone may be at risk.

## **10.0 Translation and Language**

Nottingham City Council Housing Services will arrange for translations of its documents into different languages and will make available documents in Braille, large print, and recorded onto tape whenever the need is known or requested.

We will arrange for an interpreter to be available when necessary for interviews with tenants, witnesses, and perpetrators.

## **11. Monitoring and review**

We will monitor our performance and customer satisfaction levels through a set of performance indicators and customer satisfaction surveys.

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required to reflect any legislative change, developments in best practice or tenants' suggestions.

## 12. Feedback

We will give customers the opportunity to provide feedback on the service received through our customer satisfaction survey.

Nottingham City Council Housing Services welcomes suggestions and complaints from people who use or provide our services. We believe that this can provide some important lessons to help us ensure that the service continues to improve.

Compliments, comments, or complaints can be made:

- by phone.
- by e-mail.
- by letter.
- on-line via the website
- by contacting the Customer Service Centre

## 13. Document Change History

Date	Issue No.	Section/Page	Details of Change	Authorised by
September 2023	1.0		Full draft including feedback from Assistant Director of Tenancy and Estate Services, DAHA, Tenancy and Estate Management Team, Tenant ASB Service Improvement Group, NCC Legal, NCC Community Safety and NCC Policy Team	P Popat

#### 14.0 Appendix 1 – Local Support & Useful Contacts

Name	Description		Website	Email	Phone number
<b>Juno Women's Aid</b>	Nottinghamshire Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline for women – Support for survivors and advice to professionals	24 hour free helpline.  Translation and interpretation available	<a href="https://junowomensaid.org.uk/">https://junowomensaid.org.uk/</a>	<a href="mailto:helpline@junowomensaid.org.uk">helpline@junowomensaid.org.uk</a>  Professionals please email rather than call to keep telephone lines open for victims and survivors.	0808 800 0340
	Access to 9 local and other national refuges including specialist BME and complex needs, including Zola Refuge	Deaf and hearing impaired: Text Relay/NGT: 18001 0808 800 0340			
<b>Nottinghamshire Women's Aid</b>	Support for women and children affected by domestic abuse in Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood		<a href="https://nottswa.org/">https://nottswa.org/</a>	<a href="mailto:enquiries@nottswa.org">enquiries@nottswa.org</a>	01909 533610
<b>Equation</b>	Domestic Abuse Service for men affected by domestic abuse in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	9.30am-4.30pm Monday to Friday	<a href="https://www.equation.org.uk/service-for-men/">https://www.equation.org.uk/service-for-men/</a>	<a href="mailto:info@equation.org.uk">info@equation.org.uk</a>	0115 960 5556

	Equation accept self referrals				
<b>Equation</b>	Domestic abuse and sexual violence  Equation also hold a library of resources including good practice guidance		<a href="http://www.equation.org.uk/coronavirus-and-domestic-abuse/">http://www.equation.org.uk/coronavirus-and-domestic-abuse/</a>	<a href="mailto:info@equation.org.uk">info@equation.org.uk</a>	0115 960 5556
<b>Topaz Centre</b>	Adult Sexual Assault Referral Centre for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	24 hour helpline	<a href="https://www.topazcentre.org/">https://www.topazcentre.org/</a>	<a href="mailto:notts.sarc@nhs.net">notts.sarc@nhs.net</a>	0800 085 9993
	Crisis support for adults who have been sexually assaulted or raped, including forensic examinations and access to healthcare and follow on support.	Specialist practical and emotional support and BACP registered counselling and therapy for women and men aged 13+.			
<b>Nottinghamshire SVS Services (formerly Nottingham Rape Crisis)</b>	Specialist informational, practical and emotional support and BACP registered	Helpline:  Mon-Tues: 4.30pm-7.30pm Thurs-Sat: 10am-1pm	<a href="http://www.nottssvss.org.uk">www.nottssvss.org.uk</a>	<a href="mailto:support@nottssvss.org.uk">support@nottssvss.org.uk</a>	0115 941 0440

	counselling and therapy for women and men aged 13+. Specialist counselling and group therapy for adult female sexual violence victims and survivors in Nottinghamshire county				
<b>Nottingham Women's Centre</b>	Support for children and young people under 18 who have been sexually abused or assaulted. Includes access to healthcare and all follow on support including therapy, as well as forensic examinations.		<a href="http://www.nottinghamwomenscentre.com/what-we-offer/">http://www.nottinghamwomenscentre.com/what-we-offer/</a>	<a href="mailto:reception@nottinghamwomenscentre.com">reception@nottinghamwomenscentre.com</a>	0115 941 1475
<b>East Midlands Children and Young People's Sexual Assault Service (EMCYPSS)</b>	Support for children and young people under 18 who have been sexually abused or assaulted.	Includes access to healthcare and all follow on support including therapy, as well as forensic examinations. National service providing specialist support to women, children and some	<a href="https://www.emcypsas.co.uk">https://www.emcypsas.co.uk</a>		0800 183 0023 - 24/7 Freephone

		men escaping domestic violence and other forms of violence			
<b>Refuge</b>	National domestic violence support for women, young people and children.	Live chat open 10am – midday Monday to Friday	<a href="https://www.refuge.org.uk">https://www.refuge.org.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk">www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk</a>	0808 2000 247
<b>Women's Aid England</b>	National domestic violence support for women, young people and children. National organisation providing support for male survivors of domestic abuse		<a href="https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/">https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/</a>		Live chat function:  <a href="https://chat.womensaid.org.uk/">https://chat.womensaid.org.uk/</a>
<b>Respect</b>	National organisation providing support for male survivors of domestic abuse National service providing help for adults concerned about a child. See Childline for support for children and YP		<a href="http://respect.uk.net/">http://respect.uk.net/</a>		Men's advice line: 080 801 0327



<b>NSPCC</b>	National service providing help for adults concerned about a child.		<a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk/">https://www.nspcc.org.uk/</a>		0808 800 5000
<b>Nottingham City Council – Children Safeguarding</b>	Concerns that a child is being harmed	Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm  Outside of these hours, the telephone number should be used for emergency safeguarding enquiries only.	<a href="https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/information-for-residents/children-and-families/nottingham-city-safeguarding-children-board/worried-about-a-child">https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/information-for-residents/children-and-families/nottingham-city-safeguarding-children-board/worried-about-a-child</a>		0115 876 4800