

## DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

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Table of Contents

Page No

- 1. Introduction .....3
- 2. Definition of Domestic Abuse ..... 3
- 3. Our Approach .....3
- 4. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion .....4
- 5. Legislation .....4

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This policy outlines Karibu's approach to dealing with domestic violence and abuse. Domestic violence and abuse are not simply physical violence. When working with victims of domestic abuse Karibu must take into account the cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse.

## **2. Definition of Domestic Abuse**

2.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic violence and abuse as 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 of the Family Law Act 1996 for description.

2.2 This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse.

- a. Physical abuse.
- b. Sexual abuse.
- c. Financial abuse.
- d. Coercive and controlling behaviour, gaslighting/emotional abuse.
- e. "Honour" based abuse.
- f. Forced marriage.
- g. Female genital mutilation (FGM).

2.3 We use terminology as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and used by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA).

2.4 This widens the previous definition of domestic violence to include different types of abuse as set out in the definition above.

2.5 We make reference to victims/survivors and their children to recognise that adults or children (aged under 18) can experience the effects of domestic abuse.

## **3 Our Approach**

3.1 We will ensure victims/survivors can report domestic abuse through a variety of methods, and we will investigate all reports that we receive.

3.2 Our staff will attend domestic abuse awareness training to ensure that they are conversant with the issues around domestic abuse and are equipped to carry out their duties with diligence.

3.3 We will work with the relevant partner agencies to support individuals experiencing domestic abuse, and where appropriate will take action against perpetrators where we can do so without compromising the safety of the individual experiencing the abuse.

- 3.4 We will adopt a survivor centred approach when working with individuals, family members and representatives, to support and assess their circumstances and recognise the confidentiality of all the individuals concerned. However, the safety of the individual is paramount. Where an incident is witnessed by an Karibu member of staff, they will immediately call the police. If a risk of serious harm is identified, we will share relevant and proportionate information with statutory and non-statutory services to minimise the risk.
- 3.5 We will share information with other agencies in accordance with the Data Protection Act, this may mean sharing proportionate and relevant information without the survivor's consent in some circumstances.
- 3.6 We may arrange or attend multi agency meetings to ensure appropriate support is offered.
- 3.7 People reporting abuse can speak to a member of the same sex where possible.
- 3.8 People experiencing abuse will be able to meet staff in confidence either at our office or a pre-agreed safe venue. We will also agree safe communication methods if needed.
- 3.9 In cases of joint tenancies, it should be noted that the perpetrator has the right of access to the tenancy file. We may take actions such as logging cases as anonymous so they are not associated with the tenancy and redacting confidential information to ensure it cannot be seen by the perpetrator.
- 3.10 We will provide improved security to a resident's home along with any measures provided by other agencies.
- 3.11 We will signpost an individual reporting domestic abuse to relevant agencies who provide advice and support.
- 3.12 We will take action if evidence is available against anybody perpetrating domestic abuse. This will only be done if there is no increased risk to the safety of the reporting individual.
- 3.13 We will report incidents to the police on behalf of individuals, with their permission, or support them to do so.
- 3.14 Where emergency temporary accommodation is needed, we will support the person experiencing abuse to approach the Homeless Persons Unit of their choice, we may also do this by working with refuges and support agencies such as Southall Black Sisters, and other relevant support groups.
- 3.15 We will facilitate a management transfer, ensuring the complainant has full access to the Locata system.

## **4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

- 4.1 We value diversity and promote equality, ensuring people are treated according to their individual needs. This ensures that no person or other organisation is discriminated against due to race, nationality, colour, ethnic origin, sex, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, unrelated criminal activity, or any matter that could lead to treatment which is prejudice.
- 4.2 We will endeavour to make sure that services are delivered fairly and equally to all and to a high standard. We will endeavour to provide customers with information which is required and in a format that meets the individual need and in a language they understand.

## **5 Legislation**

- a. Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- b. Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- c. The Equality Act 2010
- d. Sexual Offences Act 2003
- e. Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- f. Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- g. The Housing Act 1996
- h. The Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations
- i. Human Rights Act 1998