

Zen Group: Domestic Abuse Policy

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Zen Group - Zen Housing Limited (12534088), Zen Housing 2 Limited (14508750), Zen Rented Limited (16108980)

1 | Introduction

- 1.1. Zen Group has zero tolerance to domestic abuse. We recognise that anyone can experience abuse and that it affects both men and women including those in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) relationships. We are committed to supporting victims/survivors of domestic abuse regardless of sex, gender reassignment status, sexuality or any other protected characteristic.

2 | Purpose and Scope

- 2.1. The policy applies to all staff and representatives carrying out work on our behalf.
- 2.2. The purpose is to define how we will respond to reports of domestic abuse that affects our residents and their families. This includes:
 - providing support and assistance to victims/survivors of domestic abuse
 - taking appropriate action against perpetrators
 - providing support for vulnerable perpetrators
 - working in partnership with agencies and organisations to prevent and tackle domestic abuse

3 | Definitions

- 3.1. We recognise the definition of domestic abuse as defined in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 3.2. Domestic abuse is an incident or course of conduct where the behaviour of A towards B, if they are aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other and the behaviour is abusive. Behaviour is considered abusive if it consists of any of the following:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse

3.3. Children are also considered to be victims of domestic abuse if they see or hear, or experience the effects of domestic abuse and are related to A or B.

3.4. We have used the term victim/survivor as we understand that some people experiencing domestic abuse may not identify themselves as victims of abuse.

4 | Policy

4.1. Zen Group will take all reports of domestic abuse seriously. Our staff and managing agents will be trained to recognise signs of domestic abuse and, where there are concerns of domestic abuse, will not treat cases as anti-social behaviour.

4.2. We will ensure it is easy to report cases of actual or suspected domestic abuse. For example by:

- Telephone
- Online or via email
- In writing
- Through a third party or representative
- In person
- Through telling any employee of Zen Group companies or any employee of our managing agent

4.3. Zen Group will use a variety of sources to raise awareness of how domestic abuse can be reported and how we will respond including, but not limited to, on the website, in newsletters, to new tenants when signing their tenancy agreement or lease, speaking directly to tenants where there are concerns, and in community engagement activities.

4.4. Anonymous reports will be investigated sensitively and appropriately recognising that they may be a referral from a concerned party or a malicious report.

4.5. The approach to each case will be person-centred and a risk assessment will be undertaken for the victim/survivor and the alleged perpetrator. When a report is received, the alleged victim/survivor will be contacted promptly (usually within one day) and the risk assessment undertaken. Actions will then be agreed with the victim/survivor depending on the case and the diverse needs of the victim/survivor.

Zen Group and our managing agents will use the SafeLives Dash risk checklist for the identification of domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour-based' violence.

- 4.6. If it is an anonymous report, it may not be appropriate to contact the alleged victim/survivor within the one working day. Timescales and a plan will be agreed depending on the circumstances.
- 4.7. We will raise awareness and understanding amongst our employees and those of our managing agents to be able to recognise the signs of domestic abuse. Training will be provided on how to respond to and deal with domestic abuse cases and support victims/survivors.
- 4.8. We will offer advice and support to victims/survivors of domestic abuse and we will offer to make referrals to specialist domestic abuse agencies.
- 4.9. Cases of domestic abuse will be managed in line with the action plan agreed with the victim/survivor and taking into account the diverse needs of the victim/survivor. They will be monitored until they reach a satisfactory outcome.

5 | Housing

- 5.1. We will discuss housing options with the victim/survivor and provide support, if required. This includes where it is a joint tenancy and the joint tenant is the alleged perpetrator.
- 5.2. We will refer high risk cases to the relevant local housing options service where emergency rehousing is needed, in agreement with the victim/survivor.
- 5.3. Referrals may be made to local Sanctuary Schemes, where appropriate, to support the victim/survivor to remain safely in their home.
- 5.4. We will cooperate with local authority departments to support the local authority to meet its duty to develop a strategy and commission services for victims/survivors and their children within safe accommodation.

6 | Perpetrators

- 6.1. Any intervention against perpetrators will consider the needs and wishes of the victim/survivor, the severity of the case and if there are additional criminal factors.
- 6.2. Any additional risks to the safety of the victim/survivor will be considered before any action is taken. Action may include, but not be limited to:
 - Possession proceedings for breach of tenancy
 - Injunctions including non-molestation orders
- 6.3. We will also work with other specialised agencies on any action or interventions they may take.

- 6.4. Where the perpetrator is, themselves, vulnerable, we may refer them to appropriate support agencies and specialised services, where available, in agreement with the perpetrator.

7 | Partnership Working

- 7.1. We will work co-operatively with other agencies tackling domestic abuse and enable tenants to access appropriate support and advice.
- 7.2. We will work closely with other agencies, like the Police, local authorities and specialised domestic abuse agencies to ensure a co-ordinated response to reports of domestic abuse.
- 7.3. We will collaborate with local agencies and groups like MARAC and local action partnership to prevent and tackle domestic abuse.

8 | Confidentiality

- 8.1. We respect the privacy of all parties involved in domestic abuse cases.
- 8.2. The cases will be dealt with in compliance with all data protection legislation.

9 | Monitoring

- 9.1. All cases will be monitored by Zen's management team to ensure compliance with target dates and with policy until a satisfactory outcome is achieved.
- 9.2. Performance reporting on domestic abuse cases will be undertaken and reported to the Board.

10 | Review

- 10.1 The Domestic Abuse Policy will be reviewed **every Two Years** or when there is a change in statutory or regulatory requirements.

11 | Linked policies, procedures and documents

- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Children and Young Person Safeguarding Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

- SafeLives Dash risk checklist for the identification of domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour-based' violence

12 | The following legislation is relevant to this policy:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
 - Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
 - Protection from Harassment Act 1997
 - The Family Law Act 1996
 - Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Data Protection Act 2018
 - Housing Act 1996
 - Housing Act 1988
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
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