

CAMBRIDGE
CITY COUNCIL

Supporting Customers Affected By Domestic Abuse Policy

Reviewed March 2026

Supporting Customers Affected by Domestic Abuse

1. Policy Statement

Cambridge City Council is committed to ensuring that all customers affected by domestic abuse are supported in a sympathetic and sensitive manner and that staff act in a non-judgemental way.

This policy provides guidance for staff in contact with or managing enquiries/cases of customers who may be affected by domestic abuse. This Policy sets out the level and quality of service that the Council aims to provide.

The policy supports the Council's vision: 'One Cambridge - Fair for All'. It is compliant with the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act), and Domestic Abuse Act 2021[1].

We recognise that survivors' experiences of domestic abuse may in part be defined by their background, for example, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, religion, ethnic group, or immigration status. We will recognise this intersectionality and understand that certain individuals may face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. We will consider the individual needs of each survivor when tailoring our approach.

The Council has a Domestic Abuse Policy Support for staff, is committed to the 'Work to Stop Domestic Abuse' campaign, has been accredited for the White Ribbon Campaign since 2015, and was the fifth local authority in the UK to be awarded the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation in December 2019.

This Policy links to all relevant policies including but not restricted to the Cambridge City Council Safeguarding, Anti-social behaviour, Rent arrears, Allocations and Repairs policies.

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[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-overarching-factsheet *(Overarching factsheet updated January 2024)*

or https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/statutory-definition-of-domestic-abuse-factsheet *(Statutory definition updated January 2024)*

[2]https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwalesoverview/november2025

[3] https://safelives.org.uk/research-policy/children-and-young-people

2. Introduction

Domestic abuse can affect anyone[2], including children[3]. Some groups may be more at risk of experiencing domestic abuse than others such as women, those in low-income households, those who are pregnant or who have recently given birth.

What is domestic violence and abuse?

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse

"as any incident, or pattern of incidents, between those aged 16 years or over who: - are a partner
- **are an ex-partner**
- **are a relative**
- **have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental responsibility in relation to the same child**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 outlines the following behaviours as abuse:

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:	**Other forms of domestic violence and abuse are:**
• physical or sexual abuse • violent or threatening behaviour • controlling or coercive behaviour • financial / economic abuse • psychological, emotional, or other abuse	• so called 'honour' based violence • female genital mutilation (FGM) • forced marriage • stalking and harassment

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children under the age of 18 years who see, or hear, or experience the effects of the abuse, as a victim of domestic abuse if they are related or have a parental relationship to the adult victim or perpetrator of the abuse.

3. Working In Partnership

Whilst we do not provide direct support services, Cambridge City Council has specific roles and responsibilities towards those affected by domestic abuse:

- All staff will support individuals by listening, signposting, and referring as appropriate
- The Housing Service – City Homes, Housing Advice, Supported Housing, Temporary Housing and Tenancy Sustainment - offers advice and provision where appropriate
- The Council works strategically with partners in relation to the development of policy, procedures as well as raising awareness
- The Commercial and Licensing Team require taxi and private hire license holders to attend bespoke Customer Awareness: Safeguarding, Equality and Protection training[4]
- All staff will follow the council's safeguarding procedures

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Cambridge City Council works in partnership with other agencies such as the Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Health, Probation, the Universities, and the Voluntary Sector to tackle crime and disorder in the city. We are statutory members of the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership[5].
The Council also works closely with Cambridgeshire County Council's Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership[6], which aims to reduce the harm, risks, and costs associated with domestic abuse and sexual violence, and to prevent these crimes occurring across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) are held regularly to discuss high risk cases of domestic abuse. These are led by the Police but involve other agencies as appropriate, which can include the Council, Children's Social Care and Health. City Council staff can refer into the MARAC if they are concerned that someone is at high risk of domestic abuse.

4. Supporting our customers who are experiencing domestic abuse

The aim of any intervention around domestic abuse is to increase and protect the safety of those at risk of harm. This process of supporting can be summarised in the 3Rs:

Recognise the problem (look for signs and ask)
Respond appropriately
Refer on to appropriate help

Recognise: Identifying domestic abuse

[4] https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/taxi-safeguarding-and-disability-awareness-training

[5] https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/cambridge-community-safety-partnership

[6] https://www.cambsdasv.org.uk

The following may be indicators of abuse[7] with the potential behaviours:

- Anxiety and / or depression - psychological, emotional, or other abuse
- Being isolated from friends and family - controlling or coercive behaviour
- Physical signs such as repeated injuries including unexplained bruising or explanations that that do not fit the injuries displayed - physical or sexual abuse
- Limited access to resources, such as own finances - financial / economic abuse
- Being fearful / watchful / wary when partner / family member is around - violent or threatening behaviour

Other considerations may be[8]:

- Residents living with domestic abuse are 4 times more likely to have Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) complaints made against them
- Residents experiencing domestic abuse are 7 times more likely to be in rent arrears of £1,000 or more
- A high level of property damage can occur in a home where there is domestic abuse and the need for repeated repairs in the same property
- Victims of domestic abuse who have a disability may also experience the dynamics of a perpetrator such as being their carer
- LGBTQ+ people may have their sexuality and gender identity used against them as a tactic for the abuser to keep the power and control in the relationship
- Perpetrators may insist on acting as a translator for victims who cannot speak English to prevent them from being able to disclose abuse. It is important to use independent translators, not family or community members as interpreters for those who do not speak English as their first language
- Signs of a forced marriage, this is where one or more of the parties is married without their consent or against their will. This differs from an arranged marriage in which both parties' consent
- A child mentioning that they are going abroad on a trip, where there will be "cutting". This is often a term used to describe Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons**.** It is dangerous and a criminal offence in the UK

[7] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-recognise-the-signs/domestic-abuse-recognise-the-signs

[8] https://www.dahalliance.org.uk

Indicators of abuse are not limited to the above list and their presence or absence alone is not sufficient to determine whether domestic abuse is the cause. The completion of a thorough risk assessment (https://www.cambsdasv.org.uk/make_a_referral), including if relevant, a Young People's Risk Indicator Checklist (https://www.cambsdasv.org.uk/young_people_a8__ethnic_minority_idvas) or the Older People DASH (**D**omestic **A**buse **S**talking, **H**onour-Based Violence Risk Indicator), will determine this. We encourage anyone experiencing any of the above to confide in a member of Cambridge City Council staff.

Respond: Supporting customers

The Council is committed to providing support to those affected directly and indirectly by domestic abuse. We will respond confidentially, sympathetically, and effectively to any customer who discloses that they are experiencing domestic abuse. All support options should be orientated around the individual and their wishes, safety and well-being should take priority in all matters and procedures:

- Staff can arrange to meet customers in private interview rooms or at an agreed choice of safe venue with the safest method of contact agreed
- Translation services will be provided where required
- Reasonable adjustments to be able to support people with disabilities such as accessible documents, a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter, and signposting to health services
- Housing Advice drop-in service offers free, confidential advice offering assistance with a range of housing issues
- Information can only be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with the Council's Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy and staff can discuss concerns with a Safeguarding or Domestic Abuse Designated Officer
- Staff who are leading on cases involving domestic abuse must follow the Council Procedures.
- If the Perpetrator works for the council or one of the council's contractors, information will be kept restricted. Guidance is available in our Domestic Abuse Policy – Support for Staff.

Refer: Help and support available for those affected by domestic abuse

The Council respects the right of the customer to make their own decision on what, if any, action is to be taken. However, if there are safeguarding concerns, we have a legal duty to share information with relevant agencies.

Domestic abuse is a serious matter. If someone is in immediate danger police support should be requested in an emergency by ringing 999.

In non-urgent situations, the police can be called by ringing 101.

Council staff can utilise the following resources:

- Housing Advice provide support and has a drop-in service https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/get-advice-about-housing

- Sign post to relevant organisations for advice and support (Appendix 1).

  A comprehensive, up to date list of support agencies on the Council's webpages;

- Domestic violence directory: https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/domestic-violence-directory and

- Advice for people affected by domestic abuse: https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/advice-for-people-affected-by-domestic-abuse

5. Training and Support

The Council will provide appropriate training for staff and managers, this includes:

- Corporate Inductions which introduce the Council's Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse policies, procedures, and training
- Mandatory Level 1 Domestic Abuse training to be completed by all colleagues within 3 months of starting with the organisation, and then every 24 months
- Specific training as appropriate to the service identified for relevant posts such as in housing
- Team and service procedures and how they incorporate domestic abuse.
- Supervision framework: 1 to 1's and as part of My Conversations, and team meetings
- Domestic Abuse Designated Officers and Champions: a person with specialist knowledge to provide support to peers when working with adults, children and young people and families affected by domestic abuse or sexual violence, and to inform colleagues of updates and projects.

6. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless required earlier.

Policy Review Date: March 2029
Owner: Resettlement and Community Equity Team

Appendix 1: Sources of help and support for people experiencing domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is a crime. Always call 999 in an emergency.

Cambridge City Council Advice for people affected by domestic abuse
Website: https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/advice-for-people-affected-by-domestic-abuse

Cambridge City Council Domestic Abuse Directory
Website: https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/domestic-violence-directory

Cambridge Rape Crisis
Helpline Telephone: 01223 245888
Office Telephone: 01223 313551
Local Website: http://cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk
Email support service: support@cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk
National Helpline Freephone: 0808 500 2222
National Website: https://rapecrisis.org.uk

Cambridge Women's Aid
Telephone: 01223 361214 Website: http://cambridgewa.org.uk
National email**:** helpline@womensaid.org.uk - response within 5 working days
National Helpline Freephone 24 hour Tel: 0808 2000 247
National Website: https://www.womensaid.org.uk

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (DASV) Partnership
Website: http://www.cambsdasv.org.uk

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Victims Services - Victim and Witness Hub with Support Directory
Telephone: 0800 781 6818
Website: https://www.cambsvictimservices.co.uk

Cambridgeshire Deaf Association
Text: 07387 266153
Website: https://cambsdeaf.org/get-support/freedom-programme

Childline
Telephone: 0800 1111 Website: https://www.childline.org.uk

Digital Tech Safety
Website: https://refugetechsafety.org/digitalbreakup

Discrimination and harassment
Website: https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/discrimination-and-harassment

Domestic Abuse National Helpline
Telephone: 0808 2000 247
Website: http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk
Domestic Abuse Support Services (DASS) – IMPAKT provides a countywide mobile advocacy/outreach service offering a range of support to victims and survivors.

Telephone: 0300 3731073
Website: https://impakt.org.uk/domestic-abuse

The Elms Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)
Tel: 0330 223 0099 (Monday to Sunday 9am- 5pm)
Website: https://www.theelmssarc.org

Female Genital Mutilation
Website:
http://safeguardingcambspeterborough.org.uk/children-board/ professionals /fgm-2

FLOWS - Finding Legal Options for Women Survivors
Telephone: 0203 745 7707 (Monday to Friday 9am-5pm)
Website: https://www.flows.org.uk

Galop - LBGT + anti-violence charity
National Helpline Telephone: 0800 999 5428
Website: http://www.galop.org.uk

Hourglass - supporting older people
National Helpline Telephone: 0808 808 8141
Website: https://wearehourglass.org

Jewish Women's Aid
National Helpline Telephone: 0808 801 0500
Website: http://www.jwa.org.uk

Karma Nirvana - supporting victims of 'honour' crimes and forced marriages
National Helpline Telephone: 0800 5999 247
Website: https://karmanirvana.org.uk

Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)
National Helpline Telephone: 0808 145 4909 (Monday to Friday 11am-1pm)
Website: https://lawrs.org.uk

Loving Me - specialist service for transgender and non-binary victims of domestic abuse or sexual violence who are aged 18 and older
National Helpline Telephone: 07902 478958
Website: https://www.lovingme.uk

Men's Advice Line
National Helpline Telephone: 0808 801 0327
Website: http://www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Muslim Women's Network UK
National Helpline Telephone: 0800 999 5786
Website: http://mwnhelpline.co.uk

National Stalking Helpline
Telephone: 0808 802 0300
Website: https://www.suzylamplugh.org/Pages/Category/national-stalking-helpline

One Voice for Travellers – help and information for survivors of violence within the travelling community
Telephone: 07930 958274
Email: onevoice4travellers@hotmail.com
Website: https://onevoice4travellers.co.uk

Parental Education Growth Support (PEGS) - Child to Parent Abuse
Website: https://www.pegsupport.co.uk

Respect Phone line – Help & Information for domestic abuse perpetrators
National Helpline Telephone: 0808 802 4040
Website: http://respectphoneline.org.uk

Restored – International Christian Alliance offering help & Information for supporting survivors within Christian faith
Website: https://www.restoredrelationships.org

Sikh Helpline
Telephone: 03000 3000 63 or 07999 004 363
Website: https://www.sikhhelpline.com

Surviving Economic Abuse (SEA)
Website: https://survivingeconomicabuse.org/about-us

Southall Black Sisters - Black (Asian and African-Caribbean) women
National helpline telephone: 0208 571 0800 (Monday to Friday 10am-4pm)
Website: https://southallblacksisters.org.uk

Trafficking
Website:
https://www.cambs.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/ms/human-trafficking