



Domestic Abuse – Policy Overview

Purpose

YMCA Black Country Group is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all residents, staff and service users. This policy explains how we identify, prevent and respond to domestic abuse, ensuring that survivors receive the support they need and that perpetrators are held accountable. Our aim is to ensure residents feel safe, supported and able to access help when needed.

Our Approach – Person Centred, Co-Produced, Strengths Based and Trauma Informed

All staff must work in a trauma-informed way, recognising that experiences of abuse can significantly impact an individual's wellbeing and behaviour. Staff should:

- Focus on “What does this person need?” rather than “What is wrong?”
- Promote safety, trust and confidentiality
- Respond sensitively and respectfully to disclosures
- Support individuals to access appropriate help and services
- Work collaboratively with safeguarding partners and specialist agencies

What We Mean by Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is defined under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 as a pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening or violent behaviour between people aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members. Domestic abuse can include:

- Physical abuse – violence, assault or threats of harm
- Emotional or psychological abuse – humiliation, intimidation, manipulation or isolation
- Sexual abuse – rape, sexual assault or coercion
- Economic abuse – controlling finances or preventing access to money or resources
- Digital abuse – harassment or monitoring through technology
- Coercive control – behaviour designed to intimidate, isolate or control a victim

Our Commitments

YMCA Black Country Group aims to:

- Promote awareness and early identification of domestic abuse
- Provide safe and supportive responses to survivors
- Treat all reports of domestic abuse seriously and sensitively
- Work in partnership with police, local authorities and specialist domestic abuse services
- Ensure individuals are treated with dignity, privacy and respect

Reporting Domestic Abuse

Anyone experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse is encouraged to report concerns safely and confidentially. Reports can be made:

- By speaking to a YMCA staff member or Housing Officer
- In person, by phone or by email
- By residents, staff or members of the public
- Staff must ensure individuals feel safe, listened to and supported when raising concerns.

Responding to Domestic Abuse

When a report of domestic abuse is made, staff will:

- Assess immediate risk and prioritise safety
- Work with the survivor to develop a safety plan
- Provide emotional support and practical advice
- Signpost or refer to specialist domestic abuse services
- Work with police or safeguarding partners where appropriate



- Record the incident on MyConcern safeguarding system within 24 hours
- Continue to monitor and support the individual

Supporting Survivors

YMCA Black Country Group will support survivors by providing:

- Safe accommodation options where necessary
- Confidential emotional support from trained staff
- Referrals to specialist domestic abuse services
- Access to legal advice, counselling or refuge services
- Safety planning tailored to the individual's needs
- Provide ongoing support to help individuals remain safe and stable

Managing Perpetrators

Domestic abuse will not be tolerated within YMCA accommodation. Actions may include:

- Early Intervention - Behavioural support or signposting to perpetrator programmes
- Formal Warnings - Written warnings in line with tenancy agreements and the Fair Exit and Support Intervention Policy
- Exclusion or Eviction - Removal from accommodation where others are at risk
- Legal Measures - Injunctions, restraining orders or police involvement where necessary

Staff Training and Awareness

YMCA Black Country Group will ensure staff receive training to:

- Recognise the signs of domestic abuse
- Respond appropriately to disclosures
- Understand referral pathways and safeguarding procedures
- Work effectively with partner agencies
- Awareness information will also be shared with residents to help promote understanding and encourage reporting.

Key Message for Staff

Our role is to:

- ✓ Take all disclosures of domestic abuse seriously
- ✓ Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of survivors
- ✓ Respond sensitively and confidentially
- ✓ Work with safeguarding partners and specialist services
- ✓ Take appropriate action to protect residents and hold perpetrators accountable

By responding effectively to domestic abuse, we help ensure residents feel safe, supported and able to thrive within our accommodation.