



## Bridgewater Housing Association Policy

<b>Policy name</b>	Domestic Abuse (Staff)
<b>Policy category</b>	Corporate (HR)
<b>Policy number</b>	CS56
<b>Date adopted</b>	16/08/23
<b>Last review</b>	16/08/23
<b>This review</b>	16/08/23
<b>Next review</b>	2026
<b>Equalities impact assessment required</b>	Yes
<b>Links to other documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a Stand Pledge</li> <li>• Domestic Abuse Policy (customers)</li> <li>• Dignity at Work Policy</li> <li>• Unacceptable Behaviour Policy</li> <li>• Equality and Diversity Policy</li> <li>• Health &amp; Safety Policy</li> <li>• Data Protection Policy</li> <li>• Disciplinary Policy</li> <li>• Staff and Volunteer Privacy Notice</li> <li>• Staff Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation</b>	This policy was circulated to all staff for comment.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Bridgewater recognises that staff may be affected by domestic abuse and this Policy sets out Bridgewater's approach to assisting staff who have been affected and the Association's approach to dealing with perpetrators of domestic abuse. In 2021, Bridgewater signed up to the Make a Stand Pledge and the commitment was made then to produce a staff policy.

## 2. SHR STANDARDS OF GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This policy is intended to provide additional assurance to the Board of Bridgewater Housing Association that it is complying with:

### Standard 5

The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.

### Standard 6

The governing body and senior officers have the necessary skills and knowledge they need to be effective.

## 3. DEFINITION

Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service see domestic abuse as:-

"Any form of physical, verbal, sexual, psychological or financial abuse which might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, cohabiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse may be committed in the home or elsewhere including online".

## 4. MAKE A STAND – THE FOUR PLEDGES

In 2021, Bridgewater joined the Make a Stand Pledge, developed by the CIH in Partnership with Women's Aid and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance. In joining the campaign, Bridgewater has made four pledges:

**Pledge One:** Put in place and embed a policy to support residents who are affected by domestic abuse.

**Pledge Two:** Make information about national and local domestic abuse support services available on your website and in other appropriate places so that they are easily accessible for residents and staff.

**Pledge Three:** Put in place a HR policy, or amend an existing policy, to support members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse.

**Pledge Four:** Appoint a champion at a senior level in your organisation to own the activity you are doing to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

Pledges Three and Four apply to this policy. The Domestic Abuse Policy for customers is a separate policy.

Further information is available here:-

<https://www.cih.org/media/ob5oirgo/make-a-stand-the-pledge-document.pdf>

## 5. CONTEXT

Bridgewater is committed to providing a safe, comfortable environment where staff can grow and thrive. Bridgewater also has policies in place that address staff conduct including our Health & Safety policy and the Staff Code of Conduct.

## **6. SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE**

Bridgewater accepts that not all domestic abuse victims will share their information at work. However, in the event that they do share, and in order to support victims of domestic abuse Bridgewater will:

- Create an environment where staff feel safe to open up about such a difficult subject. Those reporting the abuse should never feel they have to prove the abuse, be forced to accept help or think that Bridgewater staff would contact the abuser.
- Provide training to all staff to help them identify and support victims of domestic abuse including looking for the signs of abuse such as a decline in productivity, frequently late or absent and changes in behaviour.
- Support our domestic abuse champions to ensure their knowledge is up to date. And they can tackle issues in a non-judgemental, supportive, sensitive and discrete manner.
- Create good practices around support such as (but not exclusively):
  - Counselling service.
  - Consideration to compassionate leave to deal with issues.
  - Provide information to signpost to support agencies.
  - Risk assessments to ensure the person's safety should an abusive partner visit the office.
  - Keeping documents on behalf of the victim such as passports which help the victim if they have to remove themselves from their home.

Bridgewater also has a Dignity at Work policy which seeks to address bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation. Please also refer to the Equality and Diversity policy as Bridgewater recognises that abuse can be across all genders.

## **7. PRIVACY**

Any report of domestic abuse will be treated in the strictest confidence by the person to whom it has been reported and any sharing of the information will be with the consent of the victim and only to those who need to know.

- Only in very exceptional circumstances will the knowledge be shared without consent and this is only if the victim or a colleague are at risk of serious injury or death, or;
- It is believed that there is a substantial risk of harm to any children who are witnessing the violence or abuse.

All violence, threatening behaviour or breaches of security in the workplace will be recorded and retained for evidence purposes, if required. The record will be clear and accurate and include dates, times, locations, and any witnesses. Breaches of orders, for example, non-molestation orders will also be noted.

Bridgewater's Staff and Volunteer Privacy Notice details what personal data the Association collects and what it is used for. All data will be treated in accordance with Bridgewater's Data Protection Policy.

## **8. STAFF MEMBER WHO IS A PERPETRATOR OF ABUSE**

Domestic abuse is a very serious matter that can lead to a criminal conviction. Misconduct inside and outside the workplace can lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal, in line with Bridgewater's Disciplinary Policy.

If the perpetrator chooses to manage their abusive behaviour, Bridgewater will signpost them to relevant support agencies and groups and will take this in to account when dealing with the behaviour. While the matter is being dealt with, the Chief Executive may choose to suspend the person with pay while an investigation takes place.

Bridgewater's Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment, Section A13 sets our Disciplinary Procedures.

## 9. FALSE ALLEGATIONS BY STAFF MEMBERS

False allegations about domestic abuse are very rare, however, if a staff member is found to have made a false allegation, it may be regarded as misconduct and our Disciplinary Policy will apply.

## 10. SUPPORT SERVICES

- In an emergency call **Police Scotland**:  
999
- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline**:  
0808 2000 247  
<http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk/>
- **Respect** is the UK membership organisation for work with domestic abuse perpetrators, male victims of domestic abuse and young people's violence in close relationships.  
  
Help for people concerned about their behaviour: 0808 802 4040  
Help for men experiencing domestic abuse: 0808 801 0327  
<https://www.respect.uk.net/>
- **Glasgow Women's Aid** assists in providing support to women, children and young people who are experiencing domestic abuse:  
0141 553 2022  
<https://glasgowwomensaid.org.uk>
- **ManKind** is a specialist charity which focuses on supporting male victims of domestic abuse:  
01823 334244  
<https://www.mankind.org.uk>
- **Scottish Domestic Abuse & Forced Marriage Helpline** supports anyone with experience of domestic abuse or forced marriage, as well as their family members, friends and colleagues:  
0800 027 1234  
<https://www.sdafmh.org.uk>
- **Employee Counselling Service**  
This consultancy service is available through EVH, who act as intermediary. Please speak to a departmental manager should you wish to be referred for an appointment.

## 11. POLICY AVAILABILITY

This document can also be provided in large print, braille, audio or other non-written format and in a variety of languages, on request.

## 12. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every three years, unless amendment is prompted by a change in legislation, operational requirements, staff feedback or if there are substantive changes to the Make a Stand Pledge.