

Domestic Violence

Together we can stop this



Cobalt

■ ■ ■ Housing



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Cobalt believes that it is the fundamental right of all people to be free of domestic violence. Domestic violence takes various forms and can affect anyone, although it is mostly women who suffer.

Cobalt's approach to dealing with domestic violence

Domestic violence and abuse will not be tolerated and Cobalt investigates any complaints of domestic violence that have taken place in the area whether victims and alleged perpetrators are Cobalt tenants or not.

The Cobalt tenancy agreement states that tenants and anyone living with or visiting the tenant must not . . . **'Harass any person on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, caring responsibilities, appearance, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or any other reason'**

Examples include:

- Violence or threats of violence towards any other person
- Abusive or insulting words or behaviour
- Stalking someone
- Damage or threats of damage to property belonging to another person, including damage to any part of the persons home
- Writing threatening, abusive or insulting graffiti.

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Cobalt is adopting the definition of domestic violence as outlined by the Home Office in 2004 which is:

‘Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality’.

An adult is defined as any person aged 18 yrs or over. Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, and grandparents, whether directly related, in laws or stepfamily.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence often takes place without witnesses being present. The absence of witnesses will not determine whether or not the matter is investigated or taken seriously.

Cobalt will follow a victim centred approach in dealing with domestic violence, and we will consider the following to be forms of domestic violence:

- **Physical violence and abuse** - which may include murder or attempted murder, kicking, punching, slapping, pulling hair, assault with weapons, strangling, burning, pushing, throwing and breaking objects
- **Sexual violence and abuse** - this may include using force to have sex, (rape), pressuring a partner to have sex when they don't want to (rape), using threats or coercive behaviour to make someone participate in unwanted sexual acts, degrading treatment, obsessively jealous

behaviour, unreasonable accusations of infidelity, verbal put downs about a partner's sexuality and not allowing someone to practice safe sex or birth control

- **Psychological violence and abuse** - such as verbal abuse, playing mind games, constant criticism, deliberately undermining and/or embarrassing someone in front of others, acting one way in public and another way in private, lying to others about what is really going on in the relationship, denying the abuse is happening
- **Emotional violence and abuse** - this includes blaming the victim/survivor for the abuse, telling someone that they ask for it, using threats to make someone do something, using threats to prevent someone from doing something, saying it will never happen again and continuing the abusive behaviour, threatening to spread or actually spreading rumours about lifestyle such as suffering from aids
- **Financial abuse** - examples of this are using and/or taking someone's money, not allowing someone to work or access money, accruing debts in someone's name, only giving money to someone when they do what the perpetrator wants, making someone account for what is spent, not consulting, involving or informing someone about financial issues or decisions which affect them
- **Socially isolating abusive behaviour** - this may include cutting victims off from social networks, not allowing someone to go out on their own, preventing someone from seeing friends or family, preventing someone from working, preventing someone from having enough money to go out, preventing someone from learning English.

REPORTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A complaint could come via:

- Face to face contact with the victim
- A telephone call from the victim
- Letter
- E-mail
- Report from a third party

Following a new report of domestic violence where there is violence or the threat of violence, the victim/complainant will be interviewed either immediately (if possible) or contacted within one working day by a member of Cobalt's ASB team.

If the report does not consist of violence, the ASB team will aim to contact the victim/complainant within two working days.

Any member of Cobalt staff can make a referral to the ASB team if you are suffering from domestic violence.

Cobalt's approach will be victim centred. While all reports of domestic violence have to be investigated as thoroughly as possible, every complaint will be dealt with seriously and as sensitively as possible.

A dedicated officer will be assigned to deal with your case.

Support measures exist for victims ranging from 'target hardening measures' (such as lighting, spy-holes, or fire proof letter boxes) to referrals for practical and emotional support (such as Worst Kept Secret). Please also see the list of contacts at the end of this leaflet and the Cobalt leaflet relating to 'Supporting victims and witnesses'.

DEALING WITH CASES

Cobalt has developed procedures for dealing with claims of domestic violence, covering issues such as:

- Receiving complaints
- Commencing investigations
- The first interview
- Supporting the victim
- Preparing a case file
- Progressing the case
- Interviewing witnesses and alleged perpetrators
- Reviewing a case
- Possible case outcomes
- Taking action against perpetrators
- Assistance from the Criminal Justice system
- The victims housing situation
- Confidentiality
- The affect on children

JOINT WORKING

Cobalt is committed to dealing with domestic violence in partnership with the Police, other agencies, other social landlords, and working closely with them on the collection of intelligence and evidence, and in pursuing prosecutions for domestic violence and abuse related offences.

Cobalt will work with any body or agency to collate details of cases of domestic violence and ensure that our response is appropriate on both a case by case and strategic basis. We will

actively participate in citywide initiatives such as the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

Cobalt will also work with the above and any other organisations such as local Tenant and Resident Associations, The Worst Kept Secret, the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) Service, and interpreter provision agencies, in order to provide the best possible support to victims and witnesses.

REVIEWING A CASE - Deciding what to do

The possible outcomes include:

- Monitor the case and review after a specified time period
- Assist in providing support and measures to allow the victim to stay in their home
- Assist in the re-housing of the victim in certain circumstances
- Take action against perpetrators
- Close the case.

ACTION AGAINST PERPETRATORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Action that can be taken against any perpetrator includes:

1. Non Legal Remedies

Non legal remedies against anyone living in the area regardless if they are a Cobalt tenant, living in a Cobalt property or living in a non Cobalt property:

- Verbal and written warnings
- Acceptable Behaviour Contract to stop certain types of behaviour.

2. Tenancy Action

Tenancy proceedings against a Cobalt tenant due to the behaviour of anyone living at or visiting the property:

- Starter tenancy proceedings for a serious or continuous breach of tenancy. These tenants have less security than those with Assured or Protected Assured tenancies
- Demotion proceedings when the court is asked to downgrade an assured or protected assured tenancy for a 12 month period. This gives the tenant less security (similar to a starter tenant) which means we can act quickly if there are further breaches within the demotion period
- Possession proceedings against assured or protected assured Cobalt tenants to end a tenancy and take back a property due to a serious or continuous breach of tenancy and other remedies have been tried and failed.

3. Assistance from the Criminal Justice System

There are many different crimes under the term 'Domestic Violence' for which perpetrators may be arrested. These include:

- Common Assault. This includes threats of violence, shoving, slapping and hitting without causing injury. Note the police can decide to arrest the perpetrator if there is evidence even without the victim's consent
- Assault occasioning actual bodily harm (ABH)
- Unlawful wounding or inflicting grievous bodily harm (GBH)

- Malicious wounding
- Rape, attempted rape or indecent assault
- Threats to kill
- Criminal damage and public order offences
- Breach of bail conditions
- Breach of civil law injunctions (if they carry a power of arrest).

There is also civil action that the victim can try to take in the Magistrates Court or County court. This includes:

- Non-Molestation Orders (all such orders carry the power of arrest)
- Occupation Orders, which depend on the victims tenancy or occupation rights. The power of arrest is discretionary
- Injunction under the 'Protection from Harassment Act'. If breached, a victim can apply for a warrant for arrest. A second breach will constitute a criminal act
- Court Ordered Transfer of Tenancy, which the victim can seek to obtain under the Family Law Act.

THE VICTIMS HOUSING SITUATION

There are basically three options for someone who has experienced domestic violence to consider:

- Stay in the existing property but getting the perpetrator to leave and then improve security
- Emergency move when safety is the paramount consideration
- Planned permanent rehousing.

OUR SERVICE STANDARDS

We will:

Monitor, report, and where necessary publicise the activities of the anti-social behaviour team with regards to domestic violence.

REPORTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

We will:

1. Contact you within 1 or 2 working days of your initial report. This will be dependent on the seriousness of your report
2. Advise you of the steps that will be taken to help address the matter you have reported. This will be referred to as the action plan and you will receive a signed written copy
3. Contact you on a regular basis (as agreed in the action plan) updating you of the progress of the case
4. Notify you in writing when your case has been closed, advising you of the outcome or explaining the reason for closure
5. Contact you within 5 working days of your case being closed and gather your views on the quality of the service you have received from the ASB team

If you have any ideas on how we can improve our service to you and other customers please contact us.

CONTACTS

If you or someone you know is suffering from domestic violence, or you have witnessed an incident, then ring Cobalt Housing on 0151 633 8000.

For support and advice, contact 'Worst Kept Secret' on **0800 028 3398**

To report incidents to the police contact **0151 709 6010** and advise them it is relating to domestic violence

In an emergency contact **999**

To report anonymously contact Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**

OTHER USEFUL ORGANISATIONS INCLUDE:

Women's Aid – 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline: Women's Aid is the national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children.	Tel: 0808 2000 247 Website: www.womensaid.org.uk
Amadudu Refuge: Provides a refuge for black women suffering from domestic violence	Tel: 0151 734 0083
RASA (Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre for Woman on Merseyside): Even the shortest journey begins with a single step	Tel: 0151 666 1392 Website: www.rasamerseyside.org
Male Helpline: Helpline for male victims of domestic violence	Tel: 0800 328 3623 Website: www.mencrytoo.homestead.com
Broken Rainbow: Working to change the situation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals facing domestic violence.	Tel: 0845 260 4460

If you need this information in Braille, large print or as an audio version, please contact Cobalt Housing at the address below.

If you need this information translated please tick your language. If your language is not listed below, please write it in the box and return the form to Cobalt Housing at the address below.

ARABIC

إذا أردت هذه الوثيقة بلغة أخرى أو بطريقة أخرى، أو إذا كنت بحاجة إلى خدمات مترجم، فنرجو أن تقوم بالاتصال بنا.

MANDARIN

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

HINDI

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

SOMALI

Haddii aad ku rabtid dokumentigaan luqado kale ama daabacaad kale, ama haddii aad u baahan tahay turjibaan, fadlan nala soo xiriir.

URDU

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

POLISH

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać ten dokument w innym języku lub w innym formacie albo jeżeli potrzebna jest pomoc tłumacza, to prosimy o kontakt z nami.

KURDISH

ئەگەر دەتەوی ئەم بەلگەییەت بە زمانیکی که یا بە فۆرمیکی که هەبێ، یا پێویستت بە مۆتەرجم هەبێ، تکایە پەییوەندیمان پێوه بکە

FRENCH

Si vous souhaitez obtenir ce document dans une autre langue ou sous un autre format ou si vous avez besoin des services d'un interprète, veuillez nous contacter.

Language:

Name:

Address:

Tel:

Cobalt Housing, 199 Lower House Lane, Liverpool, L11 2SF
Tel: 0151 633 8000 www.cobalthousing.org.uk

Cobalt Housing is a charitable organisation and part of the Vicinity Group