

# GUIDE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



## Definition of Domestic Violence

**Domestic Violence may take many different forms but the Housing Act 1996 defines it as “Violence or threat of violence from a person who is associated with the person under threat”.**

Physical assault, sexual abuse, rape, threat of intimidation can form domestic violence, as can other kinds of intimidations such as degradation, mental and verbal abuse, humiliation, deprivation, systematic criticism or belittling (Home Office 2000).

We can help if you are experiencing domestic violence. We recognise that there are many problems associated with domestic violence and that solutions often take time. However there are people and agencies that are able to listen and advise with strict confidentiality.

Although statistics and research shows that domestic violence tends to be perpetrated by men against women this advice extends to both women and men, to heterosexual, gay or lesbian relationships.

Domestic Violence usually involves partners or ex partners, but it can also include violence between other family members e.g. by children to parents. Furthermore it is the victim's perception of the situation that has to be paramount at all times.

### Service Standards

If we receive a report that domestic violence has taken place we will:

- take the matter seriously;
- respect the confidentiality of victims and complainants;
- ensure that interviews take place in appropriate surroundings and those complainants can be accompanied for support if necessary;

- provide “same sex” interviewers, if requested;
- investigate complaints in an objective, sensitive, confidential and unbiased manner;
- take firm and prompt action against perpetrators where appropriate and make every effort to support victims in their homes;
- work with other agencies where appropriate, and with the victim's consent, subject to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which contains an explicit power for us to disclose information to a number of different agencies;
- discuss our proposed course of action with the complainant;
- communicate and review within 5 working days of first report;
- carry out emergency repairs if necessary; and
- exercise discretion on whether or not to charge for repairing damage to property.

### Advice

All our staff will give as much advice as we can on the following:

- emergency housing;
- support to help you stay in your own home;
- referral to the Homeless Outreach Service;
- housing applications, tenancy rights and related matters; and
- Leeds Victim Support or other support agencies.



## **CONTACT NUMBERS**

Police, in an emergency	<b>999</b>
National Domestic Violence helpline	<b>0800 200 0247</b>
Leeds Women's Aid	<b>0113 246 0401</b>
Sahara Black Women's Refuge	<b>0113 230 3094</b>
Rape Abuse Line	<b>0808 800 0123</b>
Victim Support	<b>0845 303 0900</b>
Samaritans	<b>0845 909 090</b>
Shelterline	<b>0808 800 4444</b>
Help Advice and Law Team (HALT)	<b>0113 243 2632</b>
Leeds Lesbian and Gay Switchboard	<b>0113 245 3588</b>
Yorkshire Mesmac	<b>0113 244 4209</b>
Aire Valley Homes – Equality Officer	<b>0113 214 1942</b>

If you would like this information in any other format including large print, audio CD/tape, Braille or translated into another language please telephone **0113 214 1942** and speak to the Equality Officer.



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**Aire Valley Homes Leeds Head Office:**

Navigation House  
8 George Mann Road  
Leeds  
LS10 1DJ

**email:**  
[avhleeds.enquiries@avhleeds.org.uk](mailto:avhleeds.enquiries@avhleeds.org.uk)

**website:**  
[www.avhleeds.org.uk](http://www.avhleeds.org.uk)



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