

## Domestic Abuse Policy Statement

In 2017/18 the police in East Ayrshire recorded 1,348 domestic abuse incidents. Domestic abuse is emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse by a partner or ex-partner. It is characterised by a pattern of controlling behaviour which escalates in frequency and severity over time.

East Ayrshire Council has a unique opportunity to make sure that people experiencing domestic abuse have immediate access to the help and support they need. This statement sets out how we aim to make this happen.

The Council's Domestic Abuse Policy aims to:

- ensure confidential, non-judgemental and sympathetic handling of situations arising from domestic abuse, whether during normal working hours or out of hours;
- assist and support anyone who asks for help to address problems arising from domestic abuse, by providing accurate and appropriate advice about their housing options and their legal rights and responsibilities;
- improve the safety of East Ayrshire residents affected by domestic abuse, and prevent further incidents by encouraging earlier reporting and rapid responses;
- ensure that the support we provide is equally available to all, regardless of gender, race, religion, language, age or sexual orientation.

We will:

- raise awareness and encourage the reporting of domestic abuse through training, campaigns and widespread communication;
- make information about national and local domestic abuse support services available in a number of formats to ensure accessibility to everyone;
- where domestic abuse occurs in a Council tenancy, we are committed to support survivors/victims and their dependants to remain in their own home or provide support to move home;
- fully exhaust available legislation when rehousing perpetrators of domestic abuse and work together with other agencies to ensure robust action is taken to address incidents of domestic abuse and hold perpetrators to account.

The Council supports various campaigns against domestic abuse and broader violence against women issues including affiliation to the [White Ribbon Scotland](#) campaign which aims to involve men in tackling violence against women. Eliminating gender violence is the aim of '16 Days of Action', an international campaign which runs from 25 November until 10 December.

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, there are people who can help. Contact [Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline](#) on 0800 027 1234. The helpline is free, confidential and won't show on your phone bill. You can also contact [East Ayrshire Women's Aid](#) on 01563 536001 and East Ayrshire Council 24 hour emergency helpline on 0845 724000.