Domestic Abuse Policy

PRN-49: **Domestic Abuse Policy**
Company Name: AI Auto-Tech Ltd
Trading/Business Name: CAREHOPES
Company Registration Number: 15556946
SIC Code: 88100 – Social Work Activities Without Accommodation for the Elderly and Disabled
Email: admin@carehopes.com
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1. Policy Introduction

CAREHOPES, the trading name of AI Auto-Tech Ltd, is committed to safeguarding adults and children who may be affected by domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is a serious safeguarding concern that can affect individuals physically, emotionally, psychologically, financially, and socially. It can occur in any relationship, regardless of gender, age, disability, culture, or background.

Our companions frequently work in private homes, community settings, and digital environments where domestic abuse may be present or disclosed. This policy outlines how CAREHOPES identifies, responds to, and manages domestic abuse concerns in line with UK legislation, safeguarding frameworks, and international best practices.

2. Key Principles

- **Zero tolerance:** Domestic abuse is never acceptable.
- **Safety first:** The safety of the service user, companion, and any children present is paramount.
- **Confidentiality:** Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- **Empowerment:** Individuals are supported to make informed decisions where capacity exists.
- **Protection:** Additional safeguards apply where capacity is impaired or risk is high.
- **Professional boundaries:** Staff must maintain strict boundaries and avoid escalating risk.
- **Non-judgement:** Staff respond with empathy, professionalism, and neutrality.
- **Multi-agency cooperation:** Domestic abuse concerns may require collaboration with external agencies.

- **Reflective practice:** Staff must reflect on domestic abuse encounters to improve future practice.

3. Policy Statement

CAREHOPES is committed to preventing, identifying, and responding to domestic abuse. Staff must act immediately when concerns arise, follow reporting procedures, and uphold the highest standards of safeguarding practice.

Domestic abuse may involve:

- Physical violence
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial control or exploitation
- Coercive or controlling behaviour
- Digital abuse
- Threats, intimidation, or isolation

Domestic abuse affects adults, children, and families. Staff must remain vigilant and respond appropriately.

4. Purpose

- Define domestic abuse and its indicators
- Establish clear procedures for responding to concerns
- Protect service users, companions, and children from harm
- Ensure compliance with safeguarding legislation
- Promote safe, ethical, and professional practice
- Support multi-agency collaboration
- Embed domestic abuse awareness into training and supervision

5. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Agency workers

It covers domestic abuse concerns arising in:

- Service user homes
- Community settings
- Digital environments
- Transport and travel
- Communication channels
- Assistive technology interactions

6. Related Policies (Selected ONLY from relevant categories)

Safeguarding & Protection

- **PRN-003** Adult Safeguarding Policy
- **PRN-136** Safeguarding Children Policy
- **PRN-144** Child Abuse Policy
- **PRN-131** Prevent Duty Awareness Policy
- **PRN-056** Mental Capacity Act Policy
- **PRN-070** Safeguarding Reporting and Escalation Procedure
- **PRN-113** Deprivation of Liberty Awareness Policy

Conduct, Ethics & Behaviour

- **PRN-014** Code of Conduct Policy
- **PRN-015** Code of Ethics
- **PRN-099** Professional Boundaries Policy
- **PRN-004** Anti Harassment & Anti Discrimination Policy
- **PRN-030** Dignity and Respect Policy

Safety, Health & Risk Management

- **PRN-046** Health and Safety Policy
- **PRN-069** Risk Assessment Policy
- **PRN-100** Environmental Safety & Home Condition Policy

Digital, Cyber & Information Governance

- **PRN-112** Data Protection and GDPR Policy

- **PRN-023** Confidential Information Management Policy
- **PRN-024** Confidentiality Policy
- **PRN-050** Information Sharing and Confidentiality Procedure

Lone Working & Multi-Agency Work

- **PRN-054** Lone Working Policy
- **PRN-053** Lone Working and Community Visits Procedure
- **PRN-145** Working in Pairs Policy
- **PRN-146** Working with Other Social Workers and Carers Policy
- **PRN-147** Proxy Working Principle
- **PRN-058** Partnership Working and External Agencies Policy

7. Definitions

Domestic Abuse: Any incident or pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading, or violent behaviour between intimate partners or family members.

Coercive Control: A pattern of behaviour that seeks to take away a person's freedom and sense of self.

Victim/Survivor: Any person experiencing domestic abuse.

Perpetrator: Any person causing harm through domestic abuse.

DSL: Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for managing domestic abuse concerns.

8. Types of Domestic Abuse

- **Physical abuse:** hitting, choking, restraining
- **Emotional abuse:** humiliation, manipulation, threats
- **Psychological abuse:** gaslighting, intimidation
- **Sexual abuse:** coercion, assault, exploitation
- **Financial abuse:** controlling money, restricting access
- **Digital abuse:** monitoring devices, online harassment
- **Coercive control:** isolation, domination, micro-management
- **Cultural or honour-based abuse:** forced marriage, honour violence

9. Recognising Signs of Domestic Abuse

Staff must be alert to:

- Unexplained injuries
- Fearful or withdrawn behaviour
- Partner dominance or control
- Restricted communication
- Signs of isolation
- Financial distress
- Sexualised behaviour
- Digital monitoring or surveillance
- Sudden changes in mood or confidence
- Children showing distress or behavioural changes

10. Responding to Domestic Abuse Concerns

10.1 Immediate Safety

- Ensure the service user is safe
- Remove the companion from danger
- Contact emergency services if required
- Avoid confrontation with the perpetrator

10.2 Communication

- Speak calmly and respectfully
- Do not blame or judge
- Do not pressure the victim to disclose
- Do not promise confidentiality (due to safeguarding duties)

10.3 Reporting

- Report immediately to the DSL
- Document factual observations only
- Follow safeguarding escalation procedures

10.4 Multi-Agency Collaboration

May include:

- Police
- Local Authority
- Domestic abuse services
- Health professionals
- Social workers

10.5 Protecting Children

If children are present:

- Treat domestic abuse as a child safeguarding concern
- Follow PRN-136 Safeguarding Children Policy
- Report immediately to DSL

11. Staff Safety During Domestic Abuse Situations

- Follow lone-working procedures
- Use Working in Pairs Policy where risk is high
- Avoid entering homes where violence is active
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Leave immediately if unsafe
- Contact the office for emergency support

12. Confidentiality

Information is shared only:

- With the DSL
- With emergency services
- With safeguarding authorities
- On a strict need-to-know basis

Records must be stored securely.

13. Training Requirements

Staff must receive training in:

- Domestic abuse awareness
- Safeguarding adults and children

- Coercive control
- Professional boundaries
- Lone-working safety
- Digital abuse awareness
- Reporting and escalation procedures
- Trauma-informed practice

14. Documentation & Record Keeping

- All domestic abuse concerns must be documented
- Records must be factual, accurate, and timely
- Documentation must be stored securely
- Records may be shared with authorities when required

15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to:

- Legislative changes
- Safeguarding updates
- Organisational changes
- Feedback from staff or regulators