

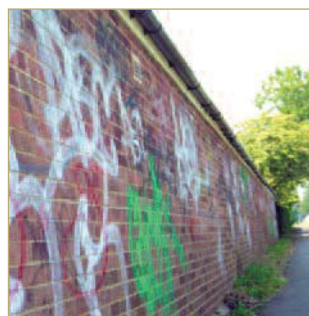


# Anti-social Behaviour



## Anti-social Behaviour

We have signed-up to the Government's Respect Agenda which demonstrates our commitment to take swift and effective action to tackle and protect our residents from anti-social behaviour.



We want our neighbourhoods to be peaceful, pleasant and safe places to live. To help achieve this, we use a number of measures to try to prevent anti-social behaviour.

Some of the problems associated with anti-social behaviour you can solve yourself. Here are some of the things we do already to help stamp out anti-social behaviour:

- We're sensitive about how we allocate properties;
- We explain to new residents the conditions of their Tenancy Agreement relating to anti-social behaviour;
- We work with residents and others to build local communities;
- We have a reward scheme for good residents;
- We provide floating support for vulnerable residents;
- We work with the police, probation services, social services, community mental health and youth workers to stop anti-social behaviour;
- We also have an Anti-social Behaviour Officer, whose time is dedicated to dealing with problems of anti-social behaviour and working with other organisations to tackle the causes of nuisance;

Our Anti-social Behaviour Officer is trained to facilitate Restorative Justice conferences. This is a process where the victim and offender are brought together in a safe environment to give the victims the chance to tell the offender the real impact of their actions, to get answers to their questions and to receive an apology. It gives the offenders the chance to understand the real impact of what they've done and to do something to repair the harm. Restorative Justice holds offenders to account for what they have done, personally and directly, and helps victims to get on with their lives.

#### **What is anti-social behaviour?**

It is behaviour that is likely to cause alarm or distress to any person who normally does not live in the same household. Your tenancy agreement with us says that you are responsible not only for your own behaviour, but also for the behaviour of everyone who lives with you, including children, and for the behaviour of anyone visiting your home. Neither you nor the people for whom you are responsible must cause a nuisance, annoyance or distress to any other person.

You should expect to hear a certain amount of noise from neighbours, for example:

- One-off parties;
- Babies crying and children playing;
- Washing machines and vacuum cleaners.

It is important, however, to remember your neighbours and keep noise to a minimum.

Some examples of anti-social behaviour are:

- Noise;

- Verbal abuse/harassment/intimidation/threatening behaviour;
- Hate-related incidents;
- Vandalism and damage to property;
- Pets and animal nuisance;
- Nuisance from vehicles;
- Drugs/substance misuse/drug dealing;
- Alcohol-related;
- Domestic abuse;
- Physical violence;
- Litter/rubbish/fly-tipping;
- Garden nuisance;
- Misuse of communal areas/public space or loitering;
- Prostitution/sexual acts/kerb crawling;
- Criminal behaviour.

### **Harassment**

Harassment is the term used for incidents that are more serious than nuisance or annoyance. Harassment is a criminal offence and we will act quickly with the police to stop people who victimise others. Examples of behaviour likely to be described as harassment include:

- Racist behaviour or language;
- Using, or threatening to use violence;
- Using abusive or insulting words or gestures;

- Damaging or threatening to damage another person's home or property;
- Writing threatening, abusive or insulting graffiti.

### **How do I deal with a problem with my neighbour?**

First try to sort out the problem between yourselves. Neighbours may not have realised that they are causing a nuisance and a friendly, polite and calm approach often solves the problem without any long-term ill feelings.

- Before you approach your neighbour, plan carefully what you are going to say;
- Discuss the problem calmly, explain how their behaviour is causing a nuisance, and offer polite suggestions on how to resolve the problem;
- Listen to what your neighbours have to say and be willing to come to an agreement or compromise;
- Do not get into an argument;
- Walk away if your neighbour reacts unreasonably.

As well as contacting your neighbour, you should make a note of any incidents, in case you wish to take further action. It may also be helpful for you to find out if other neighbours are being affected by these problems.

### **How we can help**

If you have been unable to solve the problem yourself please call us for help and advice. As your landlord, we are here to help. Your Area Housing Officer can offer advice if the situation does not get any better, or if you think that it is too serious for you to deal with yourself. They will look into your complaint and discuss the matter in detail with you to agree

the best course of action. If suitable, and both parties are willing, your Area Housing Officer may suggest that you and your neighbour take part in independent mediation. The mediator will arrange a meeting at which you and your neighbour can discuss the problem, and then attempt to agree a compromise. Some of the other options that we could consider are:

- Visits and warnings;
- Parental orders;
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts for both adults and children;
- Anti-social Behaviour Orders;
- Injunctions, sometimes with the power of arrest;
- Exclusion orders;
- Possession proceedings.

#### **Our response to your complaints**

We have guidelines setting out how quickly we respond to complaints about anti-social behaviour:

- For extreme anti-social behaviour, such as racial harassment, drug dealing and violence – response within one working day;
- For serious anti-social behaviour, such as threatening and abusive behaviour, excessive noise – response within two working days;
- For less urgent cases, such as noise, dumped rubbish and vandalism – response within five working days.

Your Area Housing Officer will offer support, and discuss with

you what further action should be taken and when. We will check with you before contacting or involving anyone else. We will do all we can to resolve the problem without delay and the need to take legal action.



We want to avoid additional stress to anyone suffering as a result of anti-social behaviour.

If at any time there is a risk of danger, you must call the emergency services immediately.

If the problem is criminal, including violence, threats of violence, intimidation, vandalism and dangerous driving, you must report this to the police as a crime and ask for a crime number.

### **Who else can help?**

Other organisations have powers to deal with some aspects of anti-social behaviour. If you report anti-social behaviour to us we will normally work with other organisations to tackle the problem. For example you can get independent advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau. Below are examples of the types of anti-social behaviour other organisations can deal with. Within your local authority the following can help:

#### **Environmental Health Officers**

Can measure noise and are able to take legal action where it is causing a legal nuisance. They can also help with problems such as constant dog barking, vermin, litter and refuse.

#### **Planning Enforcement Officers**

Can take action in cases where an unauthorised structure has been built, or a home is being used for business purposes.

### Social Services

Can help where children are not being controlled by their parents or people with mental health problems are involved.

### The Police

Can help in cases involving harassment (physical, verbal and racial), vandalism, dangerous dogs and inconsiderate or dangerous parking. The Police can also put you in contact with a local Victim Support Group, if this is suitable.

### The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Can provide independent advice on what you should do to try and resolve a problem with neighbours, and can also offer assistance with other queries. A full list of contact telephone numbers is given at the back of this handbook.

**Remember, if at any time there is a risk of danger, you must call the emergency services immediately.**

### Domestic Abuse

We are opposed to all forms of domestic abuse and will positively support residents who are victims of domestic violence. Working with other organisations, including the police, local authorities and support groups we will take the strongest action possible against those who commit domestic violence.

We aim to offer assistance to any of our residents who are victims of domestic abuse, or threats of abuse, either from someone within their own



home, or from someone outside their home (such as a boyfriend / girlfriend or former partner).

If you are the victim of domestic abuse you should inform the police.

The National Centre for Domestic Violence offers free legal advice and support to victims of domestic abuse. You can contact them on: 0870 9220704. Their emergency number is: 0800 9702074. Information about their service is available on their website at: [www.ncdv.org.uk](http://www.ncdv.org.uk)

Contact numbers for other organisations which can provide support and help are listed in the Useful Telephone Numbers section at the back of this handbook.

We will provide additional home security for victims, where it is practicable for the victim to remain in their home, every effort will be made to provide additional security and support as appropriate. This may include:

- Installation of a panic alarm in the home;
- Provision of security equipment, such as a safe letterbox, additional door and window security, to safeguard the victim and their home;
- Replacement of broken windows, the removal of rubbish or the carrying out of any other emergency repair to the home as a result of a domestic violence incident without delay (within 24 hours).

Generally, victims of domestic violence will not be charged for these security measures or clean-up operations.