

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

Policy Category	Housing
Policy Reference Number	HG_GRP_HSG_008
Version Number	4.5
Date Effective From	8 th March 2024
Applicable to	Colleagues, agency workers and volunteers working in Operations (rented and supported, including specialist care services); Home Ownership (including Leasehold); agency managed properties; and mid-market rent.
Policy Owner	Director of Housing and Communities
Policy Author	Policy Business Partner
Approved by	Board
Equality Assessment	May 2019
Date of last review	February 2024
Next review of policy due	March 2025
Distribution	Internal: All Home Group colleagues, volunteers and agency workers. Communicated via Home World Intranet External: Summary on Home Group website. Full policy available on request to Home Group policy team
Key search terms	Anti-social behaviour; safeguarding; domestic abuse; harassment; violence; drugs and substance misuse; hate crime
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the full version history of this policy, click HERE (see back page) Please avoid referring to printed versions of this policy or saving it on shared/ individual drives. All policies and supporting resources can be found under 'Policy and Procedures' on the intranet. Printed and saved versions may quickly go out of date- contact policy@homegroup.org.uk for support and advice. 	

1.0 Policy statement

Living where there is anti-social behaviour can be a horrendous experience, causing widespread misery to individuals and communities. We want customers to peacefully enjoy their homes and we understand the devastating impact that anti-social behaviour can have on people's lives. We do not tolerate anti-social behaviour and have robust systems in place to deal with it in the most effective and sympathetic way.

We are committed to preventing anti-social behaviour wherever possible and tackling cases effectively. We acknowledge that anti-social behaviour can affect anyone regardless of gender, sexual orientation, social group, class, age, race, disability, religion or geographic location and that some individuals and groups may be at greater risk or have specific needs.

We make sure that colleagues are highly trained to recognise cases of anti-social behaviour and respond quickly and sensitively. By using technology such as noise apps, or offering mediation, and monitoring how effective all our tools and systems are, we are committed to resolving cases as speedily as possible, whilst taking account of individual needs.

We want our communities to be safe environments, where people want to live - as outlined in our 'Building homes, independence and aspirations' Strategy. Community patches enable colleagues to build their knowledge of local communities, helping to prevent anti-social behaviour and providing a clear point of contact for customers.

We recognise how powerful and valuable working in partnership can be and when anti-social behaviour incidents occur, we utilise these relationships at the earliest opportunity.

This policy reflects best practice and helps us deliver key elements of our customer promise, which is to:

- Provide you with a safe place to live
- Deliver you a reliable repairs service
- Care about you
- Help communities grow
- Tell you where your money goes
- Work together with you and our partners

Our Anti-Social Behaviour Commitments provide more details about how we will keep our customer promise in relation to anti-social behaviour.

This policy complies with relevant legislative and regulatory requirements at the time of publishing, including but not limited to:

Housing (Scotland) Act 2001; Housing (Scotland) Act 2014; Anti-Social Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004; Civic Government (Scotland) Act; Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018; Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021; Scottish Social Housing Charter.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998; Environmental Protection Act 1990; Dangerous Dogs Act 1989 and 1991; Data Protection Act 2018; Housing Act 1988; Housing Act 1996 (as amended by

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003); Regulatory Standards for Social Housing (England); Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014; Protection from Harassment Act 1997; Equality Act 2010; Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

Feedback from colleagues and customers also helped shape this policy.

2.0 Policy scope

This policy sets out our approach and standards of practice including how we take a proactive approach and swift action, how we respond to domestic abuse and how we provide support and learn from incidents.

It applies to colleagues, agency workers and volunteers working in Operations (rented and supported); specialist care services; Home Ownership (including Leasehold); agency managed properties, and mid-market rent.

Information for colleagues affected by issues such as bullying, harassment or domestic abuse can be found in our Human Resources documentation.

This policy should be used in conjunction with many of our other policies and supporting resources, including our Allocations Policy, Tenure policy, Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy, Communities and Neighbourhood Management Policy, Information Governance Policy, Support Practice Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

Further detail and specific guidance on anti-social behaviour can be found in our supporting resources on Homeworld..

3.0 Standards

Standard 1: Accessible services and communication

Our customers and those affected by anti-social behaviour can communicate with us in a variety of ways and information about our services is available in different formats. We also accept anonymous and confidential reports of anti-social behaviour.

We listen to everything we are told in a fair and unbiased way and our response to anti-social behaviour is thorough and consistent.

Where anti-social behaviour is brought to our attention, we acknowledge this and ensure those who have reported the incident(s) are kept up to date with the progress and any ongoing action or investigations where appropriate. We recognise that anonymity may not always be possible, and we discuss this with the complainant at the time of reporting.

We reserve the right to close cases where there is no further action we can take or where the parties involved are unwilling to engage in the support we offer. We always let those involved know when we have decided to close a case and the reasons for this.

We take complaints about our services seriously and handle these in accordance with our Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy and procedures.

Our anti-social behaviour policy is publicly available.

Standard 2: Taking a proactive approach

We take a proactive approach to reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour occurring in the first place. Our approach includes taking steps to reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour in the design of our new homes, making improvements to our existing homes and communities where reasonable and appropriate to do so, carrying out area inspections in accordance with our Communities and Neighbourhood Management policy and spending time to ensure our customers understand their rights and responsibilities when they sign up to a tenancy. We stress to our customers that if they engage in anti-social behaviour, this may lead to legal action being taken against them, which could ultimately result in them losing their home.

We recognise that prevention is better than enforcement and where possible, we use early intervention to stop problem behaviour before it escalates. The intervention we use varies according to the type of anti-social behaviour and is decided on a case-by-case basis. This may include using warnings and Acceptable Behaviour Agreements.

Standard 3: Taking swift action

We treat all reports of anti-social behaviour seriously and take swift action to protect individuals and communities. Where it's safe and appropriate to do so we encourage and support customers to resolve issues themselves without our involvement, or through the use of mediation.

We investigate reports of anti-social behaviour within an agreed timescale, using a Risk Assessment Matrix to prioritise the most serious cases. We do this in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy.

We work with other agencies, such as the police and local authority, to investigate and tackle anti-social behaviour. The action we take is carefully considered and colleagues are aware of the range of tools and powers available to them and partner organisations. We use professional witnesses to help validate instances of anti-social behaviour whenever appropriate, as set out in our policy compliance note.

We take appropriate enforcement action against perpetrators where we have sufficient evidence to do so and use all the legal powers available to us, including ending tenancies and evicting perpetrators where appropriate. In Scotland, this includes the powers outlined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.

We record all instances of anti-social behaviour on our internal contact management system.

Standard 4: Adopting a supportive approach

We offer and provide ongoing support when working with victims, witnesses, and perpetrators, including regular contact and referral to other agencies where appropriate. We aim to identify and take steps to address issues such as mental health problems,

learning disabilities, domestic abuse and drug and alcohol misuse where these may be underlying factors affecting behaviour.

Standard 5: Learning and development

We are committed to embedding a culture of sharing best practice and learning from each other, so that we can deal with anti-social behaviour in the most effective way. This may include publishing successful prevention action, enforcement, or other initiatives.

Due to the range of skills required to manage anti-social behaviour we provide colleagues with relevant training and take advantage of external training where this is available.

Standard 6: Domestic abuse

We do not tolerate domestic abuse in any form – whether domestic violence or other forms of abuse such as coercive control.

We recognise that domestic abuse can have a devastating impact upon victims and are committed to supporting any person who is experiencing or has been threatened with it.

We take into account the needs and wishes of the victim and work closely with partner agencies to enable them to live a life free from abuse. The safety of the victim and their family is paramount, and we do all we can to ensure they are protected and have access to support as soon as possible.

We make sure that information about domestic abuse is publicly available to help our customers recognise the signs of domestic abuse and know about the support we can provide and how other agencies can help.

We take firm action against customers who perpetrate domestic abuse in our accommodation by enforcing the anti-social behaviour terms in our tenure agreements wherever appropriate.

Standard 7: Taking action against, harassment, threats or acts of violence

We do not tolerate harassment, threats or acts of violence towards customers, colleagues, contractors or any other person acting on our behalf.

We provide additional training and guidance to colleagues in specialist care or supported housing services on the prevention and management of violence and aggression.

We take full account of any hate dimension when investigating incidents of harassment and all identifiable incidents of hate crime are recorded and monitored.

Standard 8: Drug and substance misuse

We recognise the importance of keeping people safe and adopt a robust approach to managing risk, including taking legal action to enforce conditions in tenure agreements. In our care and supported housing services, support plans, risk management plans and house rules are also used to effectively manage drug, alcohol and substance misuse. Any action we take is appropriate to the circumstances and considered on a case-by-case basis.

All supported services develop local drug and substance misuse procedures using a pre-defined framework and in accordance with this policy.

Standard 9: Value for money

We are committed to improving how we monitor and manage the costs associated with anti-social behaviour to ensure we work as efficiently and effectively as we can. This includes using technology where it's appropriate to support our approach to anti-social behaviour, and the costs relating to litigation and legal challenges.

Key definitions

Word / phrase	Definition
Anti-social behaviour	Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person.
Hate crime	Any incident that is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be racist, homophobic, transphobic, or due to a person's religion, belief, gender identity or disability.
Risk Assessment Matrix	A risk assessment tool designed by the Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group and police to identify vulnerable victims, witnesses and complainants.
Harassment	Causing alarm or distress to another person and putting a person in fear of violence.
Domestic Abuse	<p>England: Any incident of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are personally connected to each other. This is defined as intimate partners, ex-partners, family members or individuals who share parental responsibility for a child. There is no requirement for the victim and perpetrator to live in the same household.</p> <p>Scotland: A course of behaviour towards a partner intended to cause them harm, or which is reckless as to whether it cause harm.</p> <p>Legislation differs in England and Scotland. Our supporting resources provide further information.</p> <p>Abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological • Emotional • Physical • Sexual • Economic

4.0 Supporting documents

In order to comply with Home Group's approach to Tackling Anti-Social behaviour, and achieve the standards set out above, the relevant processes and policy compliance notes must be followed in line with stated roles and responsibilities. Colleagues should refer to our internal index for the full list of supporting documents.

5.0 Version history

Version Number	Effective Date	Amendment made by	Version approved by	Description of Changes
2.4	November 2013			New group wide policy
3	2016			Full policy review
3.1	May 2017			Slight amendment to wording in standard 11: providing support
3.2	November 2017			Updated standard 15 local procedures for drug misuse for new job roles
3.3	February 2018			Re-branded
4.0	26 th May 2020	Policy Business Partner	Board	Strengthened wording of policy statement to include reference to seriousness of ASB, customer pledge and new initiatives such as community patches. Reduced number of standards from 19 to 9 to improve clarity of approach. Increased focus of proactive / preventative measures, and good communication, including publishing examples of good practice.
4.1	25 th February 2021	Policy Business Partner	Director of Housing and Communities	Desk top review completed, and risk assessment approved 21.1.21.
4.2	2 nd February 2022	Policy Business Partner	Director of Housing and Communities	Desk top review completed, and risk assessment approved 2.2.22. Policy owner job title amended.
4.3	31 st March 2023	Policy Business Partner	Director of Housing and Communities	Desk top review completed, and risk assessment approved 22.3.23.
4.4	13 th April 2023	Policy Business Partner	Director of Housing and Communities	References to Live Smart removed; New Models of Care terminology changed to specialist care services; up to date domestic abuse legislation added; domestic abuse key definitions updated; names of associated policies updated to reflect changes made to approved policies. Reference to Anti-Social Pledge changed to Anti-Social Commitments.
4.5	8 th March 2024	Policy Business Partner	Director of Housing and Communities	Desk top review completed, and risk assessment approved 23.2.24. Policy name change

				made to section 2 (Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy)
--	--	--	--	---