



ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

1. Introduction

Black Country Housing Group aims to provide a safe and secure environment for residents to live in. To help achieve this aim we will develop strong partnerships with Local Authority partners, the Police, local housing associations and statutory and voluntary agencies.

This policy details the arrangements for the receipt, handling, recording and resolution of complaints of nuisance or anti-social behaviour made to the Group.

2. Background

The Group has housing stock within 5 Local Authority boroughs in which we have diverse communities. Our aim is to enable neighbourhoods to thrive and to achieve this we want to tackle individual or estate based forms of anti-social behaviour that can blight and stigmatise neighbourhoods.

3. Definition

Anti-social behaviour is defined as “activity causing or likely to cause harassment, alarm, distress or fear to persons not of the same household”.

Any such behaviour taking place within the same household is dealt with under the Domestic Abuse policy.

The term resident used in this policy applies to all tenants, leaseholders and shared owners of the Group.

4. Related Policies, Procedures and Other Documents

- 1 Tenancy Agreement
- 2 Resident Involvement Strategy
- 3 Respect Standard for housing management
- 4 Housing Act 1985 and 1996 and 2004
- 5 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- 6 Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- 7 Police and Justice Act 2006
- 8 Police Reform Act 2002
- 9 Criminal Justice & Immigration Act 2008
- 10 Environmental Protection Act 1990
- 11 Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- 12 Human Rights Act 1998

5. Structure of the Anti-Social Behaviour Service

There are different forms of anti-social behaviour including by way of example:

- 1 **Nuisance**
- 2 **Harassment**
- 3 **Environmental Nuisance**
- 4 **Using a property for unlawful purposes**

Nuisance is inconsiderate action, or inaction, by an individual or group, which prevents other residents from living in a safe and pleasant environment. For example unruly behaviour, animal nuisance, noise, loitering and causing a nuisance, illegal drug use and supply.

Harassment is a deliberate action intended to cause fear or distress, including verbal and physical abuse. It is often centred on one or more prejudices.

A hate crime is any incident which the victim, or any other person, perceives to be motivated by prejudice or hate, for example age, gender, ethnicity, disability, religion. Harassment may or may not amount to a hate crime.

Harassment could be carried out by physical assault, threats, verbal abuse, offensive graffiti, property damage and arson, among other methods.

Environmental nuisance is nuisance associated with the environment and not aimed at a person, for example dog fouling, graffiti, fly-tipping, untidy gardens and abandoned cars.

Using a property for unlawful purposes, such as to store stolen goods, using the property for the use, storage or cultivation of drugs etc.

6. Our Approach

There are many ways to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour.

Prevention

- 1 During the pre-tenancy period the Group will consider the suitability of applicants for a tenancy – prospective tenants are assessed prior to being made an offer of accommodation and suitability for a property is assessed.
- 2 During the sign up process, the conditions of tenancy will be fully explained.
- 3 All new tenants (except for those who have become tenants through the Mutual Exchange process) will be given 'starter' tenancies, which initially last for 12 months. If there are no problems within the 12 months the tenancy will be converted to an 'assured' tenancy. However, if the tenant is involved in any anti-social behaviour, their tenancy will be reviewed and could be extended or possession action taken in serious cases.
- 4 All new tenants will receive a move in visits within the first 6 weeks and a discretionary second visit at six or nine months.
- 5 Estates will be visited regularly and residents encouraged to be involved in 'walkabouts' to monitor the environment for rubbish dumping, graffiti, abandoned vehicles etc
- 6 The Group will continually look for estate improvements which can be made

- to 'design out' anti-social behaviour, e.g. fencing, lighting etc.
- 7 The Group will work with residents to empower and encourage them to deal with anti-social behaviour and look at the potential for community facilities for residents.

Response

Our Officers will respond promptly to any report of anti-social behaviour in order to rectify any breaches of tenancy at an early stage. If a case is of an urgent nature contact will be made with the victim within 24 hours of the complaint being made (or the next working day if the complaint is made on a weekend).

Consistent

Officers will follow a practical working guide and will review cases regularly to ensure there is a consistent and fair service delivery across all of our housing stock.

Information Sharing

We work in partnership with the police, local authorities and other relevant agencies to formally exchange information in order to effectively prevent, detect and reduce crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour on our estates.

Community Responsibility

We will work with communities and encourage and assist them in working together to prevent anti-social behaviour.

Accuracy & Consistency in Recording Data

Our staff are trained in recording information regarding incidents that occur. Our staff will show complainants how to record incidents or will record them for the complainant if they are unable to do so themselves.

Promote Continuous Improvement

As an organisation we aim to continuously improve our service delivery. We will meet with tenants and tenant representatives to demonstrate our commitment to resident involvement. Our aim will be to obtain direct feedback regarding the delivery and performance of the service against our standards.

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