

Antisocial behaviour

We take antisocial behaviour (ASB) seriously and will do our best to help solve any problems. Everyone has the right to live peacefully in their home and community, and we expect you, your household and your visitors to behave in a responsible way and to respect other tenants and residents in your local area.

What is antisocial behaviour?

Antisocial behaviour is classed as any behaviour that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress. It can range from low level persistent nuisance to serious violence. It includes all behaviour that harms residents' quality of life in and around their homes such as:

- Harassment of other residents
- Drug dealing
- Dumping rubbish
- Shouting, swearing, offensive gestures etc
- Creating excessive noise
- Using parking areas for non-authorised use
- Allowing pets to be a nuisance
- Behaving violently or making threats of violence.

What to do if you experience ASB?

What actions to take depends on the seriousness of the situation. Often it is best for you to try to speak to the person causing the problem as they may not realise the effect their behaviour is having. However, this may not be appropriate in all situations. For example, if you are experiencing harassment, intimidation, actual or threatened violence you should contact the police immediately.

If you have tried speaking to the person causing the problem and this has made no difference, please report it to us and we can discuss how best to deal with the situation. We will offer you advice and arrange for a Housing Officer to contact you to assess the problem.

In most cases we will agree an action plan with you within 5 to 10 days of you reporting the problem. The action plan will include an agreement on how and when we will communicate with you and how any necessary support can be provided.

We will complete a risk assessment and tell you the grade of the case. Our response times will be as follows:

- High level ASB case – 24 working hours
- Medium level ASB case – 48 working hours
- Low level ASB case – 5 working days

What actions can be taken?

We use a range of measures to deal with antisocial behaviour, including early intervention such as warning letters, home visits and mediation, as well as multi-agency approaches to enforcement action if the behaviour does not stop. The measures we use depend on the circumstances, and we will discuss with you the best options for resolving your particular case.

Most of our approaches will involve you and/or other agencies. These may include:

- Warnings and home visits
- Using other agencies e.g. local environmental health
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs)
- Parenting contracts or PCAs (Parental Control Agreements)
- Mediation
- Injunctions
- Tenancy demotions
- Possession action to evict the tenant.

Where appropriate, we will work with the police on closure orders and disbursement orders.

The actions we take will depend on:

- The type of behaviour and its impact on others
- The age of the perpetrator
- Whether the perpetrator is a resident
- Whether the perpetrator is vulnerable
- What actions are likely to be most effective.

We will aim to remove offensive or discriminatory graffiti within 24 hours of it being reported.

What about legal action?

Whilst legal action is not the answer in most cases of antisocial behaviour, sometimes it is the best option. Some legal options that we can use are: injunctions, Community Protection Notices (CPN), Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO), Tenancy demotion orders and Possession orders.

We can provide you with more information about these. If you decide to take legal action we will need good evidence to present to the court so we will often ask you to keep a diary of incidents. You will usually also need to attend court and give evidence.

How can I find out more?

You can read more about our approach to antisocial behaviour in our antisocial behaviour policy and our service standards:

www.hastoe.com/antisocial-behaviour/
www.hastoe.com/standards/

Domestic violence and harassment

We define domestic violence as an actual or threatened act of harassment, assault or abuse (mental, physical or sexual) against any person living in the same property. Domestic violence is a crime and will not be accepted.

We recognise that harassment may occur in a range of circumstances and, amongst other reasons, can be linked to someone's (or a group's) race, religion, sex, disability, sexuality or age.

Acts of harassment include: racist behaviour or language, hate crimes, actual or threatened violence, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, actual or threatened damage to another person's home or possessions, writing threatening, abusive or insulting graffiti, behaviour that interferes with the peace, comfort or convenience of others.

How will we support residents experiencing this?

To support and protect tenants experiencing domestic violence or harassment, we will:

- Provide a supportive environment to encourage you to report it
- Give information and advice to help support victims
- Take action against those responsible where possible
- Provide a range of options to support victims
- Work with relevant agencies if we cannot help
- Always make sure tenants are safe and keep all information confidential
- Respect the tenant's choice.
- If you cannot stay in the home due to domestic violence, we will do all we can to help you find alternative accommodation and discuss your options with you.

You could also try:

- Friends or relatives
- The local authority housing department
- Women's Aid Refuges on FREEPHONE 0800 2000 247.

How to report domestic violence and harassment

To report domestic violence or harassment, please call us on 0300 123 2250. If you need help outside of our normal office hours, you should phone your local police who will be able to contact the emergency duty team of Social Services.

Alternatively, if you have concerns about a neighbour's wellbeing please contact us to talk to one of our Customer Service Advisors in confidence.

We have a domestic violence and harassment clause in our tenancy agreements, and there are a number of ways we can take action against those who carry out harassment or domestic violence.

If you report domestic violence or harassment, a Housing Officer will contact you within one day. We will work with you to agree an action plan for managing your case, including agreeing on how we will communicate with you throughout the case.

Find out more at www.hastoe.com/dv/