

## Your guide to Anti Social Behaviour

### Antisocial behaviour

We want you to enjoy living in your own home while allowing other people to enjoy theirs. This means being considerate to your neighbours by:

- limiting noise late in the evening and early in the morning;
- giving neighbours advance warning of occasional late night parties;
- doing building work or noisy housework, such as washing and vacuuming, at a time that would cause least disturbance;
- keeping a careful watch on the activities of your children, pets or visitors;
- parking sensibly and making sure your vehicles are taxed and roadworthy; and
- not using your home for illegal purposes.

### When will we get involved?

We will get involved to try and sort out problems with antisocial behaviour if one of our tenants, their family or visitors, is causing the problem.

### What can I do?

It is important that you also try and help by taking the following steps.

- Firstly, if your neighbour is causing a disturbance, such as playing loud music, their dogs are barking all the time, or their children are causing a nuisance, try and talk to them politely before you involve us and tell them about the problems you are having. They may not realise they are causing a problem, and hopefully this may sort out the situation and we will not need to get involved.
- If speaking to your neighbour does not work, please contact us and give us full details of your complaint. We may send you some diary sheets to record the antisocial behaviour. You must send these back to us with full details of dates, times and the names of who is causing the problem. It is useful to record incidents over a period of at least a few days.

- If you are having problems with noise, you can also contact the environmental health department who monitor levels of noise and nuisance. They will be happy to work closely with us in investigating noisy neighbours. If the problem is with dogs, the dog warden can get involved. For more information about these services ring 01925 444400 or go onto the council's web site.
- For more serious cases of antisocial behaviour, you may also want to involve the police. Always ask for an incident number.

### We class antisocial behaviour in three categories. These are as follows:

#### Category A

This is the most serious antisocial behaviour and we will respond within two working days. (If there Your guide to Anti Social Behaviour Charter is a severe safety risk we will visit immediately) This includes physical threats or actual violence against people, drug dealing, intimidation or harassment for any reason. It also includes criminal activity.

#### Category B

This is not as serious but is still unacceptable and includes loud and frequent parties, regular loud noise especially late at night and early in the morning, and damage to property and vandalism. We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days or send you some diary sheets if this is appropriate.

#### Category B

This is all other antisocial behaviour Other behaviour we do not class as antisocial, and which we may not take action against but simply recommend other solutions such as mediation, includes children's play, occasional parties or noise, and normal domestic activities.

## What can you do?

- Depending on how serious the antisocial behaviour is and what category it is, we may give you some incident diary sheets and ask you to record the noise and nuisance over a period of time. We will send these to you within three days of your complaint. It is important to keep as much detailed information as possible for us to see how serious the problem is. This means recording the dates and times of incidents accurately, and giving a full account of what the problems are and what happened. If you know the names and addresses of the people involved please give full details. Please remember that we may use these incident sheets as evidence if we need to take legal action. It may be difficult for us to take action without these incidents sheets.
- If the nuisance is likely to be short-term, such as building work or a one-off party, please do try and be tolerant. However, depending on how serious the problem is, we can contact the person causing the nuisance to try to sort out the problem.
- Once you return the filled-in incident sheets and we have all the other evidence we need such as police incident reports, witness statements and so on, and the problem is serious and ongoing, we will contact the person or people causing the problem within 10 days of receiving the information and ask them to stop causing any further nuisance as this is breaking their tenancy agreement.
- If, after receiving the incident sheets and making further investigations, we feel there is not enough evidence to prove the complaint, we may tell you that we cannot take any further action at this time.
- If you do not return the incident sheets or tell us that the problem is ongoing within 28 days of your initial complaint, we will write to you to tell you that we are closing the case.
- If we have warned the residents causing the problem but the problem carries on, you must contact us again. Depending on the seriousness of the problem, and the

evidence we have, we may then consider taking legal action. This may involve serving a notice of seeking possession, applying for an injunction, or applying for other orders such as parenting orders, antisocial behaviour orders or acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs). Please note that for us to serve a notice or apply for the orders, we need detailed evidence of an ongoing problem with evidence to support this.

- Once we have served a notice of seeking possession, if there are no other complaints we will take no further action. This notice lasts for 12 months, so we can start legal action any time during this period if the problem starts again.
- If the problem continues after we have served a notice, we may consider applying to the county court for a possession order or to demote the tenancy. This means that you may lose some of the rights you have in your tenancy agreement. However, before we will do this, there must be strong evidence that there is a serious problem of nuisance and that the problem is still ongoing. Statements from neighbours or other witnesses will be essential, and you may have to go to court.
- If you do not think that we have dealt with your complaint about antisocial behaviour correctly, please write to the housing services director who will investigate your case further. If you are still not satisfied with the response, please refer to our formal complaints procedure.

## Harassment

We have a separate harassment policy and will deal with all forms of harassment or similar action against or by tenants. Your tenancy agreement says that we will not accept harassment of any kind and will take action against people who harass anyone.

Racial discrimination is a criminal offence and we will co-operate with the police and any other organisations to protect minority groups.

If you are being harassed for any reason, please do not hesitate to contact us and ask for an immediate appointment.