

Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Policy

Scope of Policy

This Policy sets out Platform Housing Group's commitments to dealing with Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) in the communities in which we work.

Applicability

The Policy applies to all members of Platform Housing Group (the Group).

1. Policy Statement

1.1 The Group recognises that ASB can have a very serious impact on people's lives. We seek to tackle these impacts by:

- Demonstrating leadership and strategic commitment
- Taking swift action to protect communities
- Adopting a supportive approach to working with victims, witnesses and perpetrators
- Having a clear focus on prevention and early intervention
- Ensuring a value for money approach is embedded in the service

The Group will take a balanced approach in dealing with ASB by using a combination of prevention, enforcement and support provided in house by the Group, or by signposting to external agencies as appropriate and necessary on a case by case basis.

The Group aims to build safe and sustainable communities for the customers who live in its properties. The Group recognises the need to work with its customers and communities to tackle ASB.

2. Context

2.1 ASB is defined as "...that (a) person has acted... in an antisocial manner, that is to say, in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as himself..." (Crime and Disorder Act 1998).

2.2 In addition to this definition, the statutory guidance on the new Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 states that ASB is a "...broad term used to describe the day-to-day incidents of crime, nuisance and disorder that make many people's lives a misery – from litter and vandalism, to public drunkenness or aggressive dogs, to noisy or abusive neighbours..."

The reforms introduced under the new Act are designed to put victims at the heart of the response to ASB, and give professionals the flexibility to deal with any given situation. The reforms also introduce a revised way in

which incidents of ASB are reported, no longer focusing on the behaviour, but on the impact it has on the victim.

3. Aims and objectives

- 3.1 The Group is committed to reducing ASB and improving customers' quality of life by partnership working in its communities. In doing so the Group hopes to create safer, peaceful and more tolerant communities. The Group will work with relevant specialist agencies in order to provide the necessary support for victims of ASB.

The Group will encourage its customers to play an active role in setting acceptable standards of behaviour within the communities in which they live.

4. Policy outline

4.1 Leadership & Strategic Commitment

The Group recognises that ASB can severely damage quality of life and it is committed to tackling incidents wherever they occur in its communities. The Group aims to create a culture of respect in the communities in which it works.

The Group will not tolerate ASB and a robust procedure will be followed to address matters quickly and effectively.

The Group will show strong leadership, corporate commitment and accountability in preventing and tackling ASB. This relates to the Group itself and also across its key partners.

This will be achieved by:

- Ensuring the management and prevention of ASB is seen as a core operational business activity, supported by sufficient resources to tackle ASB effectively;
- Providing training and support for all those involved in tackling ASB. This includes staff, customers and relevant partner agencies;
- Recognising that working in partnership is key to dealing with ASB, and the Group will work with all its partner agencies;
- Participation with partners and entering into Information Sharing Protocols. The Group will share information with other registered partners to prevent and deter ASB in line with all current Data Protection protocols;
- Clearly communicating to customers that ASB will not be tolerated; and
- Having systems in place to monitor and report on ASB. Performance against ASB targets will be monitored and reported to staff, Board, customers and relevant partners.

4.2 **Accessible & Accountable Service**

The Group will ensure that customers can easily report incidents of ASB. This will be achieved by:

- Ensuring the Group provides clear and concise information about how customers can access the ASB services offered. Information will be available in different formats to meet the diverse needs of its customers;
- Promoting how the Group is working with partners to tackle ASB in the communities in which it works;
- Taking action where there is a significant risk to customers and communities and will use the full range of enforcement tools and powers available;
- Selecting the tools or powers most appropriate to resolve the case, via a multiagency approach, on a case by case basis;
- Ensuring the protection and wellbeing of all employees, customers, visitors and others who may be affected by the Group's actions by carrying out risk assessments as necessary and taking appropriate action;
- Adopting all available measures to comply with the statutory requirements and codes of practice in all matters of health and safety including the provision of appropriate training;
- Offering a range of support to tackle the causes of ASB and ensure that it is linked to triggers such as early intervention and the use of mediation, taking appropriate enforcement action and signposting to the relevant supporting agencies; and
- Where appropriate, supporting a perpetrator to encourage them to amend their behaviour, and will make referrals to suitable support agencies to help them sustain their tenancy.

4.3 **Swift Action**

The Group will take prompt, appropriate and decisive action to deal with ASB incidents. The Group's procedures set out clear timescales for responding to complaints about ASB.

The Group will use the full range of legal remedies available to enforce the terms of the tenancy agreement. This includes the use of the absolute power of possession made available under the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

This will be achieved by:

- Providing support and training to employees so that they are aware of the range of tools and powers available to them;
- Briefing employees about the Group's ASB related policies and procedures so that they are fully aware of commitments in this area;
- Developing a procedure that allow employees to use relevant tools and powers to swiftly deal with cases of ASB; and
- Developing strong relationships with local partners (including local authorities, police, and court services).

4.4 **Supportive Approach**

The Group's procedures are designed to ensure that victims and witnesses of ASB are given the necessary support and protection.

This will be achieved by:

- Providing training to employees, so that they are aware of how to access the relevant support that is available to protect victims and witnesses, particularly those that may be vulnerable;
- Regularly communicating with complainants so that they are aware of progress made with their case;
- Developing a clear understanding of our customer base so that potentially vulnerable customers can be provided with the necessary support; and
- Ensuring that support is provided for those individuals who are required to attend court.

4.5 **Individual & Community Responsibility**

The Group will work with local community groups and partners to promote community cohesion and tolerance. Customers will be informed about their rights and responsibilities.

4.6 **Prevention & Early Intervention**

The Group believe there must be a balance between preventative measures, early intervention and enforcement.

The Group is committed to the appropriate use of mediation and low level interventions and firmly believe this should always be looked at as the first stage in any complaint where appropriate.

The Group will deal with low level incidents of ASB quickly and sensitively as early intervention may avoid escalation. The Group will ensure its response to each individual case will be proportionate and reasonable to the level of ASB being perpetrated and will take account of the wishes of the complainant.

4.7 **Value For Money**

The Group will ensure that it understands the costs associated with managing ASB so there is a strong focus in achieving value for money for our customers.

This will be achieved by:

- Ensuring that appropriate prevention tools are used prior to undertaking enforcement action;
- Ensuring the correct tool is used when enforcement action is considered proportionate, appropriate and necessary; and

- Meeting regularly with instructed solicitors and negotiating appropriate terms and costs for legal services.

4.8 Safeguarding

The Group will always consider the wellbeing and safety of children and vulnerable adults. All those involved in the delivery of this policy should ensure that they are familiar with the Group's Safeguarding Policy.

5. Equality and Diversity

5.1 The Group is committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of their colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or belief, family circumstances or offending history, as referred to in relevant Group policies. The Group's aim is to ensure that its policies and procedures do not create an unfair disadvantage for anyone, either directly or indirectly.

5.2 Please see further information regarding this in the associated Impact Assessment for this Policy.

6. Monitoring and review

6.1 The responsibility for the delivery of this Policy will be through the Prevention and Enforcement Group (PEG) led by the Regional Managers (Communities and Neighbourhoods).

6.2 This policy will be monitored through the regular presentation of information to the Senior Management Team and The Board as appropriate.

7. Associated documents and policies

7.1 The Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 extended and introduced new powers to tackle antisocial behaviour in local communities.

7.2 Other important legislation, regulation and guidance affecting the management of antisocial behaviour includes:

- Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Antisocial Behaviour in Social Housing Parliament UK 2015
- Respect – ASB Charter for Housing 2011
- Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003
- Equality Act 2010
- Housing Acts 1985, 1986 and 1998
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Children Act 2004
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Police and Justice Act 2006
- Homeless Reduction Act 2017

- Community Trigger – this is a victim led initiated process which requires Local Authorities, The Police, Housing Associations and local health teams to jointly deal with ASB
- the Group’s Lettings Policy
- the Group’s Complaints Policy
- the Tenancy Agreement

7.3 The Homes and Communities Agency Regulatory Framework requires the Group to demonstrate that it makes its customers aware of their responsibilities and rights in relation to ASB. Also, that the Group has strong, committed and accountable leadership that reflects a shared understanding of responsibilities with other local agencies.

Author:	Jon Elger
Version:	Final
Release date:	August 2019
Next Review date:	July 2022
Document type:	Policy
Approved by:	Risk & Performance Forum
EIA/PIA Completed: (where required)	Y
Customer consultation: (where appropriate)	Y/N
Employee Handbook amends: (where appropriate)	Y/N