

Good Neighbourhood Management Policy

Scope of Policy

This policy sets out Platform Housing Group's (the Group) commitments when responding to issues that do not suit management under our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy.

Applicability

The policy applies to all members of the Group.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a term that relates to a wide range of behaviour types and the law does not provide a set list of what is and what is not ASB. We may receive reports which do not meet the definition of ASB, and we recognise that trying to deal with them as such is likely to frustrate and escalate matters.
- 1.2 This policy is designed to outline our considerations, actions and limitations when dealing with issues that do not suit management under our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy.

2. Policy Principles

The following principles underpin this policy:

- 2.1 We will triage and assess all reports to understand the most appropriate approach for managing them. This will be determined considering each case on its own circumstances.
- 2.2 We take an informed approach to our decision making and will ensure that we have enough information before making a final decision.
- 2.3 We will communicate the outcome of the triage and assessment to the person making the report, ensuring they are clear on which policy applies to their concern and the reasons for this (within the boundaries of legal requirements relating to information sharing and data protection).
- 2.4 We recognise that reported behaviour can change in terms of severity and that something initially assessed as being a 'good neighbourhood management' issue can evolve into ASB. We will continue to reassess our decision each time a new report is received.
- 2.5 The purpose of this policy is not to find fault or blame. Often in these matters there will not be a 'wrong doer.' Our focus is on fostering good relationships, identifying practical solutions, and ensuring correct support is in place. We seek to understand the root cause of the problems and the solutions that have the best chance of

resolving it. Because of these objectives, we are extremely unlikely to consider legal action as a response to matters that we are dealing with under this policy.

- 2.6 In many situations, that are appropriate for management under this policy, we seek to empower the parties involved to find their own solutions and adopt the suggestions that we think helpful. Where any party withholds cooperation unreasonably, we may be unable to assist any further.
- 2.7 We will consider the support needs of the parties involved in a matter dealt with under this policy. We recognise that sometimes personal circumstances may affect a person's tolerance, perception or ability to cope with certain situations. When we recognise that this could be contributory factor, we will work to identify suitable referrals and support.
- 2.8 Matters dealt with under this policy often require a partnership response. There may be times when another agency has more appropriate powers to deal with a problem. We may require the support of other agencies to assist us in being able to take our own action.
- 2.9 Creating peaceful and harmonious communities in neighbourhoods where there is a mix of tenures, often requires a joint response between us and our partner agencies. Where we receive reports that fall within the definition within this policy, but not all parties are a Platform customer, we will consider the most appropriate response on a case-by-case basis.

3. Good Neighbourhood Management Definition

- 3.1 Because each report is assessed on its specific circumstances, it is not possible to create an exhaustive list of behaviours that will be dealt with under this policy, however, the following categories give some examples:
 - a) Where the behaviour is reasonable and does not meet our definition of ASB. Examples may include parking, DIY, children playing, a one-off party, TV/music at reasonable volume and the use of household appliances.
 - b) Where a neighbour dispute is at the centre of the problem. We class a neighbour dispute as a situation where one or more parties are contributing towards a disagreement, there is no clear victim/harmer, and often the behaviour reported does not meet our definition of ASB.
 - c) Where the root cause is assessed to be an environmental factor, such as the location of the issues and the external environment, or the fabrication of the building.
 - d) Where the behaviour/its impact is being driven by health e.g., the nuisance is a direct consequence of a health condition, or the impact the nuisance is having is amplified by such.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Many of the situations that will be managed under this policy will require the cooperation, compromise and goodwill of the parties involved. The below outlines our role as well as that of our residents.

4.2 We commit to:

- a) Making informed decisions based on the specific circumstances of each matter.
- b) Clearly communicating this decision.
- c) Being fair, open, and transparent.
- d) Seeking to understand the true root cause of a problem.
- e) Taking/suggesting solutions that are reasonable, considering the needs of the parties involved.

4.3 We ask residents involved to commit to:

- a) Being mindful of their neighbours and considering the impact actions may have on others.
- b) Listening to the views of others and considering alternative viewpoints.
- c) Being open to making reasonable changes to behaviour and/or environment.
- d) To accept to undertake processes such as mediation, and accept advice and support that is offered etc.

4.4 Our ability to assist in these cases will be reduced where parties are not willing to cooperate with us in these ways and may mean that we can assist no further and the case is closed.

5. Case Management

5.1 Assessing and Triaging Reports

5.1.1 When we receive a report relating to a behaviour concern, we will triage the matter to determine which policy best applies.

5.1.2 When deciding whether a report should be dealt with under this policy, we will consider the following:

- The type of behaviour that is being reported, how serious it is and whether it is reasonable activity or not.
- How often the behaviour is happening, the times that it is taking place and how long it is happening for.
- The needs of the parties involved.
- The root cause of the issue and whether there is intention to cause harm.

5.1.3 Fully understanding the reasons and circumstances of a report is important, to make informed and appropriate decisions. This means that we may need to undertake some investigative work before we are able to determine the types of responses we may take. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Carrying out interviews with the parties involved in a report.
- Conducting wider investigations, such as speaking to other neighbours, using noise capturing equipment, liaising with our partner agencies etc.
- Attending the areas/homes concerned to observe the matter first hand.
- Seeking specialist views/opinions, such as a surveyor report.
- Asking a party to provide details, such as confirmation of a medical condition.

5.1.4 The outcome of the assessment will be communicated clearly to the person making the report.

5.1.5 Where new reports and/or information is available in a case, we will review our decision and determine whether we need to change approach and deal with the matter under our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy.

5.1.6 We will also consider whether we are the most appropriate agency to be dealing with the matter. If we are not, we will provide advice to the reporter about how to notify the appropriate agency.

5.1.7 Where an involved party is a non-customer, and is a tenant of another social landlord, we will consider taking steps to contact the landlord and agree how the matter will be progressed and by who.

5.1.8 Where an involved party is a private occupier, we may consider it appropriate to contact the relevant local authority and/or police to discuss and agree how the matter will be progressed and by who.

5.1.9 The role and level of action/ownership we take in each case will be determined by the tenure of the parties involved, the type of behaviour and the likelihood of escalation. We will ensure that the person making the report is updated on who is the lead agency for their concern and explained what action is being taken and any limitations to what we can offer.

5.2 **Risk Identification and Management**

5.2.1 We recognise that if a report is not a matter which we consider to be ASB, it does not necessarily follow that there is a low risk of harm and/or no vulnerability. In fact, sometimes a person's needs can be a contributing factor to how they perceive, respond to, or are impacted by, behaviour.

5.2.2 We consider harm at assessment stage and when we are deciding how to respond to a report. We will complete a risk assessment after we have details from the person

making the report, to determine the types of support that they may require and the most appropriate solutions to offer.

5.3 Possible Solutions

5.3.1 When we have assessed the situation, we will then consider what solutions may be appropriate and proportionate considering the level of harm being caused and what the least intrusive solution we believe likely to have a genuine chance of resolving the issue.

5.3.2 We make decisions about solutions on a case-by-case basis. This means that cases which appear similar may result in different outcomes. Action in one case does not set a precedent to be applied to all that are similar.

5.3.3 Matters dealt with under this policy often require a pragmatic, practical solution, meaning that providing an exhaustive list is not possible. The following are examples of common solutions that may be considered under this policy:

- Providing practical advice and guidance to parties, including details of other agencies who may be better placed to assist.
- Inviting parties to be part of creating a solution, which may be written into a voluntary agreement (e.g., residents in a block creating agreed guidelines for use of communal areas).
- Sending advisory letters.
- Referring parties to mediation/conflict resolution services.
- Considering practical measures such as anti-vibration mats, headphones, slow-release hinges etc.
- Referrals to support services.

5.4 Limitations

5.4.1 There are times where we may be limited in the solutions that we can offer. For example:

- We may not have control over the issues at the centre of the matter. An example of this is where a resident lives in a block of flats which is situated in a town centre or near a licensed premises. The environment is one where there will be a high volume of people, coming and going at all times of day and night, and not something that we can change.
- We require the support of another agency/partner and are hindered in our ability to act further without it.
- The solution identified is disproportionate in terms of the cost and/or time investment required.
- Where a party refuses to engage with the solution offered, without good reason, we may be unable to provide any further assistance and need to close our involvement in the matter.

5.5 Closing a Case

5.5.1 There are several reasons why we may close a case dealt with under this policy, including:

- The problems have been resolved or reduced to a level that parties agree is reasonable.
- Either or all parties are not engaging/cooperating.
- There is no further action that is reasonable or available to us.

5.5.2 We will inform the parties involved in the case that we are withdrawing our assistance, ensuring they are clear where to report any further concerns in future.

5.5.3 Should any party express dissatisfaction in the management of the matter, we will provide details of our internal complaints service.

5.5.4 A matter dealt with under this policy has been done so because we do not believe that it meets our definition of ASB. There may be times where a party disagrees with this decision. The party concerned does have the legal right to request an ASB Case Review. Each local authority area has its own case review process – details of the process for each area can be found using this third-party [directory](#).

6. Equality Act Considerations

6.1 We understand our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will:

- Make enquiries to determine whether the behaviour reported is a direct consequence of a person's disability.
- Consider whether any reasonable adjustments may be required to our standard processes.
- Consider our Public Sector Equality Duty.

6.2 These enquiries and considerations will be taken into account when making key decisions, such as the most appropriate solution.

7. Guidance on Specific Behaviours

7.1 CCTV and Video Doorbells

7.1.1 There has been a significant increase in the domestic use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) and video doorbells. Any person who uses these devices has a responsibility to do so within the law. Further information about these responsibilities can be found on the Information Commissioner Office (ICO) website.

7.1.2 We are unable to enforce any breaches of these laws. Concerns should be referred to the ICO and/or the police. The ICO website provides details of what a resident should do if they have concerns about another person's use of CCTV or video doorbells and

this should be referred to in the first instance. We may offer advice and guidance to parties involved, including details on how they can seek private legal advice, or refer the matter to mediation if we think this could assist, however we are unlikely to be able to take any enforcement action ourselves.

7.1.3 Where the use of the CCTV cameras and/or video doorbells is causing significant nuisance or harm then we will assess the report and decide whether it meets our definition of ASB. If we believe that it does, we will deal with the matter in line with our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy and procedure. The factors we will consider in deciding whether the use of CCTV or video doorbells is anti-social include:

- What the legitimate purpose of the device(s) is.
- How many devices the person has and whether this is reasonable.
- Whether the legitimate purpose can be achieved in another, less intrusive way.
- Where the devices are directed.
- Whether the device(s) are clearly being used to cause intimidation to others.
- How the reporter has identified the issue. For example, we may be less likely to act if the issue concerned has been identified retrospectively from reviewing footage.

7.1.4 If a resident informs us that they have recorded incidents of ASB on CCTV and/or video doorbells we will request a copy of the recording(s). We require sight of the full incident, including periods of time immediately before and after the incident itself. A failure to provide such information may mean we are unable to progress our investigations further.

7.2 **Cannabis Smoking**

7.2.1 We may receive reports relating to a resident smoking cannabis in and around their home. We consider cannabis smoking as a housing related issue in two ways:

- a) That the act of smoking cannabis is a criminal offence.
- b) That the odour/smoke arising from the cannabis may be causing a nuisance or annoyance and therefore be anti-social.

7.2.2 To take action in relation to cannabis smoking as a criminal offence, we require the matter to be reported to the police by the resident. We will liaise with the police and, where a criminal offence is proven, we will consider proportionate tenancy action which will likely be determined by the level of criminal sanction.

7.2.3 We do not consider the act of cannabis smoking to automatically be something we deal with as ASB. Instead, we consider the harm and impact that is being caused by it. To determine whether the smoke/odour arising from the cannabis smoking is anti-social, we will consider several factors, such as:

- The harm that the smoking is causing, including whether it is having an impact on the health of the person experiencing the smoke. In these cases, we will require the person experiencing the harm to provide medical evidence to allow us to accurately assess the matter.
- The intensity, frequency, and duration of this harm.
- The impact of the behaviour, such as whether the reporter is having to change their own environment or living pattern unreasonably.

7.2.4 Partnership working is often important in these cases, and we will ensure that all relevant agencies are involved in creating solutions to these types of issues. Where we have housing stock in an area that adopts a partnership process relating to noxious odours we may refer appropriate matters accordingly.

7.2.5 Should the person using state that it is for medical use, we will require evidence of this or will progress the matter on the basis that it is for recreational use until such a time the evidence is provided to show otherwise.

8. Unreasonable Behaviour

8.1 We aim to ensure that we are clear, transparent and fair in providing information about the reasons for our decision. However, we understand that we may not always make the decision a resident would have liked us to. Repeated and/or unreasonable contact may result in the matter being dealt with under our Guidelines for Unreasonable Behaviour.

9. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

9.1 Information provided to us in respect of this policy will always be treated as confidential and will not normally be used or shared for any other purpose without the consent of the person providing it. There are, however, exceptions to this principle, such as in cases of safeguarding. Where this is the case, a clear rationale for the sharing of the information will be recorded.

10. Safeguarding

10.1 We will consider the wellbeing and safety of children, young people and adults at risk. All those involved in the delivery of this policy should ensure that they are familiar with the Group's Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy.

11. Training

- 11.1 Appropriate training will be given to colleagues to raise their awareness and to equip them to implement this policy and its related procedures effectively.

12. Equality and Diversity

- 12.1 We are 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 our relevant Group policies. Our aim is to ensure that our policies and procedures comply with our legal duties and do not unlawfully discriminate, either directly or indirectly, and adjustments which are reasonable, in law, may be made to the policy to where required.

13. Complaints

- 13.1 We aim to meet the needs of our customers by providing an excellent service. However, it is acknowledged that occasionally things go wrong and customers may wish to complain. Should the need arise to make a complaint, please refer to our Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

14. Monitoring and Review

- 14.1 Key performance information will be provided to the Senior Leadership Team which will determine the effectiveness of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or on the introduction of new legislation, best practice guidelines or operational changes, whichever is sooner.

- 14.2 Approved documents are valid for use after their approval date and remain in force beyond any expiry of their review date until an updated version is available.

15. Associated Documents

- 15.1 List of documents - associated policies, procedures and publications:

- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy and Procedure
- Hate Crime Policy
- Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Lettings Policy
- Customer Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure
- Condition of Property Policy and Procedure
- Reasonable Adjustment Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy

- Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy
- Guidelines for Unreasonable Behaviour
- The Tenancy Agreement
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Anti-social 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
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard – Regulator of Social Housing
- Tenancy Standard – Regulator of Social Housing

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