

A summary of our anti-social behaviour policy



This leaflet explains what to do about neighbour problems and BPHA's approach to anti-social behaviour

What is 'anti-social behaviour'?

Anti-social behaviour is activity that causes a nuisance to others and which most people consider is unacceptable. It can take many different forms and degrees of severity. It includes:

- Noise & rowdy behaviour
- Neighbour disputes
- Racial & other harassment
- Vandalism, graffiti & damage to property
- Criminal behaviour
- Intimidation & verbal abuse
- Using the home to sell drugs, or for other illegal activity
- Drug, alcohol & solvent abuse
- Domestic violence & abuse
- Litter & rubbish - eg dumping furniture
- Animals not kept under control
- Vehicle related nuisance, including abandoned vehicles

But anti-social behaviour doesn't include all activities by neighbours that might be annoying. Everyone needs to

be tolerant of others' lifestyles. So behaviour which would not be considered unreasonable by most people is not anti-social behaviour.

Why is it important to deal with it?

No-one wants to live with their neighbours behaving in an anti-social way. We know that anti-social behaviour can have a big impact on people's lives and on the neighbourhood you live in. Some of the people causing problems are BPHA residents. Other BPHA residents and other neighbours may suffer from it. And sometimes BPHA residents suffer from problems caused by people who are not BPHA residents.

Some forms of anti-social behaviour are particularly serious. We aim to promote good relations between different groups within BPHA's resident population, including different racial groups. We do not tolerate racial and other harassment by or against our residents, and will work with the Police and other agencies to use all appropriate remedies against anybody found to be harassing others.

What can I do about it?

Unless the problems are extremely serious - such as if you've been threatened - we normally expect you to first approach a neighbour directly if you have a problem with their behaviour. While you may be upset or angry, it's best to think carefully first about what you are going to say:

- Be clear about what the problem is and how it affects you
- Think about how they are likely to react - try to stay calm: being aggressive won't help!
- Listen to what your neighbour says and try to see the situation from their point of view as well as your own
- Try not to bring up incidents from the past - try instead to look at the future and how you want things to change
- If your neighbour is unreasonable - walk away

We aim to make it easy to report problems to us. You can telephone your Housing Officer, visit our offices at Pilgrims House or write to us. In addition to this, BPHA are a reporting centre for Racial Harassment and

other hate crimes. If you are a victim of race or hate crime, you should contact us. We work closely with the Police and other agencies to assist victims of harassment.

We want people experiencing problems to feel safe about approaching us. But sometimes we do receive anonymous complaints. While we will look at what is being said, it does limit any action we can take.

Some types of problems are best dealt with by other agencies. Report criminal behaviour to the Police. If the criminal behaviour also affects our role as a landlord - such as if you believe a neighbour is selling drugs from their property - then tell us as well and we will look to approach the problem jointly with the police. If the problem is a neighbour being unreasonably noisy, then report it to the council's Environmental Health Department. They may ask you to keep a record of incidents so that they can investigate further. They have powers to serve legal notices on those causing unreasonable disturbance - as well as the powers we have to take action if the person causing the problem is a BPHA tenant.

Mediation can be an effective way of resolving many problems between neighbours. It involves a skilled person helping those in dispute to reach a compromise that they can both accept. We can make a referral for mediation if we feel the situation is suitable for this.

How can BPHA help?

We can take action where the anti-social behaviour takes place at or near the home of a BPHA resident, relates to our role as a landlord, and:

- affects a BPHA resident's household, or
- is caused by a BPHA resident, their friends, relatives or invited visitors

We will take proportionate, prompt and flexible action within our powers in dealing with people causing a nuisance or harassment on estates or in individual dwellings. Effective action means BPHA working with residents - individually and residents' groups - to tackle problems that occur. It also means us working with the Police, the local council, and other agencies to stop problems in the first place and deal with them when they do occur.

The action we take depends on the type of problem and how serious it is. If you have a serious problem of anti-social behaviour we will work with you to develop an agreed Action Plan - so you can help decide what needs to be done, and so you know what we are doing. Possible actions include:

- Informal measures for minor incidents.
- Joint working with other agencies and residents' groups.
- Mediation - getting two parties in dispute to agree how to resolve a problem.
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) - these are agreements setting out what someone has to do to behave towards their neighbours, monitored by BPHA and the police. They are often used when the problems are caused by children.
- Legal action including seeking:
 - Anti-social behaviour Orders (ASBOs) or Injunctions. These are types of Court Order setting out what a person needs to do to behave acceptably

- Demoted tenancies - where a tenant loses many rights of their tenancy because of their behaviour - i.e. the tenancy becomes a Shorthold tenancy rather than a permanent tenancy. People on Assured Shorthold tenancies can be evicted if they do not stop causing problems.
- In very serious cases where we can gather enough evidence we consider seeking a Possession Order to evict those causing the problem.
- Identifying any support needs of both those causing the problems and anyone affected by it, and seeking to offer appropriate help.
- Giving clear messages to new tenants about how they need to behave towards their neighbours.

If I complain, what help will I get?

We aim to offer a high quality service to all. Our key standards are:

- You can report a problem of Anti-social behaviour at any time that our offices are open ie. 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Thursday and 9.00 am to 4.30 pm on Fridays.
 - We acknowledge, in writing, within 3 days, that we have received your report.
 - We investigate minor cases within 7 days.
 - If the report shows the matter is especially serious, we will visit within 2 days - and if it involves harassment then we will visit the same or the next day.
 - If your property needs emergency repairs as a result of the problems you report we will do these within 24 hours.
- If you are experiencing domestic violence or abuse we may be able to help. Ask your housing officer for further information.
- We aim to minimise anti-social behaviour using a range of approaches including:
- Working with those causing problems to support them to change their behaviour.

- If the matter is serious, we will make an Action Plan to show you what you and we are going to do to resolve it. We will do this within 5 days of visiting you.
- You will deal with a single person at BPHA - normally your Housing Officer. If the matter is serious they will keep in touch with you regularly.
- We will only close a case after giving you a chance to tell us about anything we weren't already aware of and we will reopen it if the situation changes.

We respect your confidentiality. This means that we won't talk to those causing the problems without your knowledge, and won't mention your name unless you agree to this. It also means that there are strict rules about what information we share with other agencies such as the Police. Ask for more details of these if you need to know more.

In serious cases, many types of action need detailed evidence from witnesses to show how serious the problem is. The Action Plan will set out how this evidence will be

collected. This could include evidence from:

- Those directly suffering the effects of the problems. Often, you need to keep a diary of what happens and when. We can help to show how to keep a clear record.
- Witnesses - such as other neighbours
- The Police and other agencies

Sometimes witnesses can be reluctant to come forward. We seek to support witnesses effectively to give people the confidence to work with us to tackle the problem. Support can include - where needed - extra security, help from specialist agencies, and in extreme cases helping with a move to another home. If there is a court case, we will help during the legal process.

Where can I find out more?

We have a detailed policy that sets out how we approach dealing with anti-social behaviour. We can give you a copy if you would like - ask your Housing Officer. We have also developed a detailed Toolkit for

staff to assist them in dealing with problems of anti-social behaviour.

Victim Support is a national charity helping people affected by crime and anti-social behaviour. You can contact them on 0845 30 30 900, or via their website www.victimsupport.org

What can I do if I'm unhappy with the service?

We aim to offer a clear and effective approach to dealing with problems of anti-social behaviour. But we know that those experiencing a problem can sometimes become unhappy with progress being made. Or you may feel that we should be taking a different kind of action. We seek feedback at the end of the case from everyone who reports problems to us, asking whether you were happy with how we handled it and what you think we could have done better. We will use the information to improve the way we handle cases in future.

If you are unhappy with the service you are getting there are two things you can do:

1. You can ask to see the records we have relating to your case. You have a right to see all records other than information given to us in confidence by another person. Ask your Housing Officer about how to do this.
2. You can use BPHA's Complaints Procedure. Ask us for the leaflet 'Making a Formal Complaint'.

**For a large print, audio or braille version,
please telephone 01234 791080**

Bengali

সমাজবিরোধী আচরণর বিরুদ্ধে ব্যবস্থা নিতে হলে
এটা বুঝতে সাহায্যের জন্য অনুগ্রহ করে
01234 791081 নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

Punjabi

ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਚਰਚਾਈਏ ਨਾਲ ਨਜਿੱਠਣ
ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨੀ
ਕਰਕੇ 01234 791082 ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ।

Urdu

غیر سماجی رویے سے نمٹنا
اس کو سمجھنے میں مدد کے لیے براہ کرم فون کریں۔ ٹیلی فون نمبر
01234 791083

Italian

Riguardo Comportamenti Antisociali
Per aiuto a capire questo documento,
telefona 01234 791084

For help to understand this, please
telephone 01234 791089