



Anti-social Behaviour & Hate Crime Policy

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Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to set out Accent Housing's approach to preventing, responding to and resolving anti-social behaviour (ASB) and hate related behaviour in a way that is fair, transparent, consistent and legally compliant. This policy aims to:

- provide clear and accessible information about how customers can report ASB and hate related behaviour and what they can expect from our service.
- support safe, sustainable and well managed neighbourhoods.
- ensure concerns are assessed and managed proportionately and consistently
- set out the standards of behaviour expected from customers, members of their household and visitors to their home.
- support effective partnership working to tackle ASB, hate related behaviour and wider community safety concerns.

We are committed to delivering fair, accessible and accountable ASB services.

We approach reports of anti-social behaviour and hate related behaviour with curiosity, empathy and a commitment to understanding the lived experience of those affected. Every report provides an opportunity to strengthen trust, improve services and create safer communities.

Our approach to tackling anti-social behaviour and hate related behaviour is guided by Accent's values of being Caring, Inclusive, Smart and Driven. We aim to support safe communities, treat people with dignity and respect, make fair and informed decisions, and take appropriate action where necessary to protect residents and neighbourhoods.

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1. Introduction

Preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) and hate related behaviour is a priority for Accent Housing. We recognise that, if left unaddressed, ASB can have a significant and detrimental impact on individuals, families, communities and residents' sense of safety and wellbeing.

We are committed to providing safe, sustainable and well managed homes and neighbourhoods where residents are treated with dignity and respect and are able to enjoy peaceful occupation of their home. We want residents to feel confident reporting concerns and will seek to create an environment where individuals feel listened to, respected and supported throughout the process

Accent Housing adopts a victim centred and proportionate approach to preventing and managing ASB and hate related behaviour. We recognise that the impact of behaviour on victims, witnesses and communities should be central to decision making and case management.

We aim to prevent issues from escalating wherever possible through early intervention, effective neighbourhood management, support and partnership working, while taking appropriate enforcement action where necessary to protect residents and communities.

We recognise that ASB can often involve wider issues such as vulnerability, safeguarding concerns, domestic abuse, exploitation, mental ill health, substance misuse and wider community safety risks. We are committed to ensuring these factors are appropriately considered when responding to reports and making decisions.

We will work collaboratively with residents, local authorities, police, safeguarding teams, health and support services, community safety partnerships and other relevant agencies to support victims, address ASB and improve neighbourhood safety.

Cases involving domestic abuse will be managed in line with our Domestic Abuse Policy and safeguarding procedures. We recognise that domestic abuse requires a trauma informed and victim centred response and should not be treated as a standard neighbour nuisance issue.

The legal and regulatory framework relevant to this policy is set out within the References section of this document.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- tenants
- leaseholders
- shared owners
- members of a customers household

- visitors to Accent Housing properties
- people living in or using the locality of homes owned or managed by Accent Housing

This policy also applies where anti-social behaviour or hate related behaviour affects Accent Housing employees, contractors, agents or representatives acting on Accent Housing's behalf.

Accent Housing will not tolerate abuse, threats or violence towards colleagues, contractors or representatives acting on Accent Housing's behalf. This includes the use of social media and other forms of electronic communication to threaten, abuse or intimidate.

This policy covers behaviour occurring:

- within or around Accent Housing homes
- in communal areas
- in neighbourhoods where Accent Housing owns or manages homes
- in shared spaces connected to Accent Housing properties
- online or through digital platforms where the behaviour impacts residents, communities or housing management functions
- In or around Accent Housing offices

Where anti-social behaviour involves people who are not Accent Housing customers, we will work with relevant agencies and partners to consider appropriate action within our powers.

Cases involving domestic abuse will be managed in line with Accent Housing's Domestic Abuse Policy and safeguarding procedures, although some cases may also involve anti-social behaviour, hate related behaviour or tenancy enforcement considerations.

3. Definitions

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 defines anti-social behaviour as:

- conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person
- conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that persons occupation of residential premises
- conduct capable of causing housing related nuisance or annoyance to any person
- For the purposes of this policy, anti-social behaviour includes behaviour which negatively impacts individuals, households, communities or Accent Housing's ability to effectively manage homes and neighbourhoods.

Examples of anti-social behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

- persistent or unreasonable noise nuisance
- verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation or threatening behaviour
- hate related incidents
- vandalism or criminal damage
- drug related activity or substance misuse
- alcohol related nuisance
- physical violence or threats of violence
- misuse of communal areas or shared spaces
- criminal behaviour
- Animal related nuisance
- Using a property for illegal or unlawful purposes
- other criminal or nuisance behaviour affecting residents or communities

4. Hate Crime and Hate Incidents

A hate crime or hate incident is any incident perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility, prejudice or discrimination towards a person based on their actual or perceived:

- race
- religion or belief
- disability
- sexual orientation
- gender identity or reassignment

A hate incident may not always amount to a criminal offence; however, Accent Housing will still take reports seriously and consider appropriate action in line with this policy.

Accent Housing has a zero tolerance approach to hate-related behaviour. We will treat all reports seriously, assess risk promptly, and take proportionate action, including support, safeguarding and enforcement. We recognise the significant impact hate-related behaviour can have on victims and communities, particularly on individuals' sense of safety and wellbeing.

Examples of hate related behaviour may include:

- threatening or abusive behaviour
- harassment or intimidation
- assault or threats of violence
- damage to property
- hate related graffiti or vandalism
- online hate related abuse
- inciting others to commit hate related acts

Where the term “hate crime” or “hate related behaviour” is used throughout this policy, this includes both criminal offences and non-criminal hate incidents.

5. Behaviour Not Normally Considered ASB

We recognise that people have different lifestyles and living habits and that not all neighbour disputes or lifestyle differences will constitute anti-social behaviour. Examples of behaviour not normally considered anti-social behaviour include:

- everyday household noise
- babies or young children crying
- children playing
- occasional social gatherings or celebrations
- cooking smells
- reasonable DIY at appropriate times
- lawful parking
- minor disagreements between neighbours where there is no evidence of harassment, intimidation or nuisance

Where behaviour does not meet the threshold for ASB, we may still:

- provide advice
- encourage neighbour resolution
- offer mediation
- signpost residents to appropriate support services

Where residents choose not to engage with reasonable early intervention measures, including mediation where appropriate, this may limit the options available to Accent Housing in resolving the issue.

6. References

This policy should be read alongside relevant legislation, regulation, guidance, policies and procedures.

This policy is informed by relevant legislation, regulation and statutory guidance including:

- Housing Acts 1985, 1988, 1996 and 2004
- Public Order Act 1986
- Children Act 1989
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Care Act 2014
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2023
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards
- Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code
- Victims' Code

Accent Housing policies, procedures and guidance documents can be accessed through the Corporate Library. Related documents include:

- Anti-social Behaviour and Hate Crime Procedure
- Safeguarding Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Allocations and Lettings Policy and Procedure
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Customer Income and Arrears Policy
- Good Neighbourhood Management Policy
- Complaints and Compensation Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Customer Inclusion and Support Policy
- Starter Tenancy Procedure

7. Requirements

We will ensure residents are able to access our ASB service through a range of communication channels. Reports of ASB and hate related behaviour can be made:

- By telephone
- In person
- In writing
- By email
- Through the Accent website
- Through approved digital reporting tools
- Through third parties or partner agencies where appropriate

We will make reasonable adjustments where required to ensure customers can access our services and participate fully in investigations and support processes.

All reports will be logged promptly and acknowledged within 1 working day and we will follow the steps outlined in the Anti Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Procedure.

Reports involving hate crime, domestic abuse, threats, violence, exploitation or serious harassment may require an immediate or enhanced response, including multi-agency intervention.

In all cases, unless the complaint is anonymous we will agree an action plan with the person reporting the ASB, including:

- agreed actions
- contact arrangements
- support needs
- evidence gathering arrangements

Where appropriate, alleged perpetrators will be contacted as part of the investigation. While all reports are taken seriously, there may be cases where legal thresholds or evidence do not support formal enforcement. In such circumstances, we will clearly explain our decisions and consider alternative support or partnership actions. We will also confirm case closure, explaining the reasons and any further options, including the complaints process or ASB Case Review.

Colleagues managing ASB and hate related behaviour cases will act professionally, respectfully and fairly, demonstrating empathy, accountability and a commitment to finding appropriate solutions.

8. Supporting Victims and Witnesses of ASB and Hate Crime

We are committed to supporting victims and witnesses of ASB and hate related behaviour and recognise the significant emotional, psychological and practical impact these issues can have on individuals and communities.

Where appropriate we will:

- provide a named contact
- agree action plans and communication arrangements
- maintain regular contact
- explain what action can and cannot be taken
- signpost to specialist support services
- consider safeguarding referrals and safety measures
- support residents through the ASB Case Review process where appropriate
- take reasonable steps to protect confidentiality and reduce the risk of retaliation where possible.

We will identify repeat victimisation and consider enhanced support, safeguarding and partnership interventions where appropriate.

Our priority is to address the behaviour of perpetrators rather than relocate victims; however, in exceptional cases, rehousing may be considered to ensure safety and wellbeing.

9. Prevention and Enforcement

Accent Housing is committed to preventing anti-social behaviour and hate related behaviour wherever possible through effective neighbourhood management, early intervention and partnership working. Where serious or persistent ASB occurs, or where behaviour has not improved following support or early intervention, we will

consider proportionate enforcement action to protect victims and communities.

Enforcement action may include:

- verbal or written warnings
- acceptable behaviour agreements
- mediation
- injunctions
- possession proceedings (which may result in eviction)
- closure orders
- eviction (where the anti-social behaviour warrants it or as a last resort)

We may work jointly with police, local authorities and other partners where coordinated action is appropriate. Before taking formal enforcement action we will consider:

- available evidence
- seriousness and persistence of behaviour
- vulnerability and safeguarding concerns
- equality and human rights considerations
- proportionality
- impact on victims and communities

All enforcement action will be lawful, evidence based and proportionate.

10. Partnership Working

We recognise that ASB and hate related behaviour are often most effectively addressed through partnership working. We will work collaboratively with:

- local authorities
- police
- safeguarding teams
- health and support services
- community safety partnerships
- environmental health
- victim support services
- youth offending services
- other housing providers and relevant agencies

ASB and hate-related behaviour may involve individuals across different tenures, including owner occupiers and private tenants. Where appropriate, we will work with partner agencies and landlords to investigate concerns, share information lawfully and take action within our powers.

We are committed to proportionate information sharing, joint action planning, multi-agency working, coordinated responses to community safety issues, and supporting victims and witnesses through partnership approaches.

11. Statutory Nuisance

Where appropriate, we will work with relevant statutory partners, including local authorities and police, to investigate and address complaints relating to statutory nuisance or environmental anti-social behaviour. This may include issues such as:

- persistent noise nuisance
- vandalism or graffiti
- fly tipping or rubbish accumulation
- abandoned vehicles
- environmental nuisance affecting residents or communities

12. Dealing with Perpetrators

We recognise that some perpetrators of ASB or hate related behaviour may have vulnerabilities or complex support needs.

Where appropriate, we will seek to address the underlying causes of behaviour through support, early intervention and partnership working. This may include referrals or signposting to:

- mental health services
- substance misuse services
- tenancy sustainment support
- domestic abuse interventions
- family support services
- safeguarding services

Alleged perpetrators will be given the opportunity to respond to allegations and participate in appropriate interventions where possible. Where behaviour persists, escalates or creates serious risk, we will consider proportionate enforcement action.

13. Vulnerability and Safeguarding

We recognise that victims, witnesses and alleged perpetrators may have vulnerabilities or safeguarding needs which require consideration. Where appropriate, we will:

- make reasonable adjustments
- consider equality and human rights impacts
- work with safeguarding agencies and support services
- consider the impact of disability, mental health conditions or needs, substance misuse, trauma or exploitation
- take safeguarding action where there is risk of harm

Safeguarding and vulnerability considerations will remain central to our decision making throughout the management of ASB cases.

We recognise that managing anti-social behaviour and hate related behaviour can have an emotional impact on colleagues. Accent is committed to supporting colleagues through appropriate management support, wellbeing resources, safeguarding processes and access to specialist advice where required

14. Children and Young People

We recognise that children and young people involved in anti-social behaviour may have vulnerabilities or complex support needs. Where appropriate, we will work with relevant agencies and support services, including Children's Services and Youth Offending Services, to support early intervention, safeguarding and positive behavioural change.

15. Anti-social Behaviour Case Review

An anti-social Behaviour Case Review (also known as the Community Trigger) is a process which allows victims of persistent anti-social behaviour to request a multi-agency review of their case where a locally defined threshold has been met.

The purpose of the review is to ensure relevant agencies work together to:

- review the action already taken
- share relevant information
- identify any additional actions or support that may be appropriate
- seek to improve outcomes for victims and communities

The Anti-social Behaviour Case Review process is not a replacement for Accent Housing's complaints process and does not seek to apportion blame. Its purpose is

to support partnership problem solving and ensure the victim's concerns and experiences are appropriately considered.

A request for an ASB Case Review may be made by:

- the victim
- a family member
- an advocate or representative
- an MP, Councillor or other acting representative

Requests should be made through the relevant local authority responsible for administering the process in the area where the resident lives.

Accent Housing is committed to working collaboratively with partner agencies to participate in ASB Case Reviews, share information lawfully and contribute to coordinated action planning where appropriate.

16. Information Sharing

We recognise that effective information sharing is important in preventing and addressing anti-social behaviour, hate related behaviour and safeguarding concerns. We will share information with relevant agencies and partners where it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to do so, including for the purposes of:

- safeguarding
- protecting victims and communities
- preventing crime and anti-social behaviour
- managing risk
- supporting enforcement action
- supporting partnership problem solving

Information may be shared with:

- local authorities
- police
- safeguarding teams
- health and support services
- community safety partnerships
- other relevant statutory or partner agencies

Information will be shared in line with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR, relevant agreements, safeguarding duties, and applicable legislation and guidance.

We will handle sensitive information appropriately, particularly in cases involving hate crime, domestic abuse or safeguarding concerns. Where there is a risk of harm, exploitation or abuse, we may share information with relevant agencies to support protection and risk management.

17. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or sooner in response to legislative, regulatory or organisational change, or significant service learning, including Housing Ombudsman findings.

Approved changes will be communicated to colleagues and relevant stakeholders, with associated procedures, guidance, training and materials updated accordingly.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through performance reporting, service reviews, customer feedback, complaints and Ombudsman learning, ASB Case Review outcomes, safeguarding oversight, and governance processes.

Performance and assurance information will be reported to senior leadership and relevant governance groups to support oversight, accountability, regulatory compliance and continuous improvement.

18. Complaints

Residents dissatisfied with the service may raise concerns through Accent Housing's Complaints and Compensation Policy.

Accent will use insight from ASB cases, complaints, customer feedback, safeguarding concerns and Housing Ombudsman learning to identify themes, improve services and strengthen neighbourhood management approaches

19. Equality, Diversion & Inclusion

We recognise that individuals may experience anti-social behaviour differently depending on their personal circumstances, identities and lived experiences. We will consider these factors when assessing risk, support needs and appropriate responses.

20. Exceptions

There may be circumstances where standard application of this policy is not appropriate. In such cases, we will consider individual circumstances and apply discretion to ensure fair, lawful and compassionate outcomes. Colleagues will take into account vulnerability, safeguarding, disability or health needs, communication needs, cultural factors, equality impacts, trauma and overall case context. Reasonable adjustments will be made in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Any exceptions must be proportionate, evidence-based, appropriately authorised, and clearly recorded, with full consideration of the safety and wellbeing of victims and communities. Exceptions will be applied on a case-by-case basis and will not prevent action where there is significant risk of harm, serious nuisance, criminality or safeguarding concerns.

In applying discretion, we will balance support and enforcement, individual circumstances and community impact, proportionality and risk, and legal and

safeguarding responsibilities.