

# Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

## 1 Purpose

Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing (MTVH) is committed to working to prevent, and where possible, resolve cases of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in a robust and effective manner. Our aim is to ensure our customers and colleagues can enjoy a peaceful and safe environment in which to live, work and play; this applies to all our properties and communities whether rented, leased or otherwise.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, simplified powers of enforcement for Registered Providers, the Police and Local Authorities, and is incorporated within this policy and accompanying documents. You will also find the framework for managing anti-social behaviour (ASB) across our housing stock, and includes measures introduced by the act.

## 2 Scope

MTVH is committed to tackling ASB and promoting a culture of respect in communities.

We aim to:

- Tackle the causes of ASB and prevent incidents of ASB from arising and escalating
- Take the necessary management intervention and legal action to deal with perpetrators of ASB
- Provide customers with appropriate advice and assistance
- Work in partnership with other specialist agencies where appropriate
- Support staff to tackle ASB
- Support customers and sustain tenancies

ASB is defined in the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 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 person’s occupation of residential premises or Conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.”*

### Policy Aims

- To ensure relevant employees of MTVH are trained and equipped to respond quickly and effectively to reports of ASB, and to prevent reports escalating into more serious incidents
- To raise awareness amongst residents, staff and other relevant stakeholders, of the tools and powers available to tackle ASB
- To minimise the frequency of ASB through preventative actions, community cohesion activities and partnership working
- To support tenants, leaseholders and staff to address any form of nuisance which may lead to ASB

### Our Commitment

- To ensure a service for reporting ASB is available and accessible for customers, colleagues, partner agencies and members of the public
- To respond to reports of ASB in a timely manner, based on risk
- To liaise with partner organisations and work together to find solutions

- To stay in contact with victims and witnesses, keeping them informed of progress along the way
- To use our professional judgement as to whether reports of ASB can be realistically investigated and resolved
- To undertake action that is reasonable and proportionate
- To be clear with customers on the range of interventions and solutions available
- To carry out sensitive lettings in areas where there are serious cases of ASB

## 3 Our Approach

### 3.1 ASB Thresholds

MTVH consider the following as some examples of behaviour that would be treated as ASB

- ASB related to drug or alcohol abuse
- Vandalism and damage to property
- Extreme noise that is persistent
- Persistent pet and animal nuisance
- Actual violence/threats of violence against people or property
- Verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation or threatening behaviour
- Hate-related incidents (based on race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion, age)

Full threshold criteria examples are available in our **ASB Manual**. If the customer is vulnerable, exemptions may apply, and MTVH will investigate all reports where the complainant or perpetrator is considered to be vulnerable.

Non ASB reports will be managed by our colleagues but will not be an ASB case, issues may be dealt with as general housing queries.

### 3.2 Case Priority

The initial assessment for reports meeting the ASB threshold will determine case priority, response times and frequency of contact. Cases will also be regularly assessed throughout the investigation using a Risk Assessment Matrix. Where the initial reports do not meet the threshold, we may ask for more information.

High priority cases are likely to include imminent danger, violence or threats of violence or hate crime. Customer vulnerability will be a deciding factor when assessing case priority.

### 3.3 Customer Responsibilities

We expect our residents to show consideration to their neighbours and their community, and not to commit, or allow their family or visitors to commit acts of ASB. This includes harassment, noise nuisance, annoyance or disturbance, to other residents, their visitors or other people in the area, including colleagues and contractors.

In addition to the contractual responsibilities set out in their tenancy agreement or lease, we will encourage customers to:

- Report all crimes, including threats or acts of violence, to the police
- Report all incidents of ASB and harassment to MTVH and the relevant statutory agencies
- Take responsibility for minor personal disputes with their neighbours and to try to resolve such problems themselves in a reasonable manner

- Respect other peoples' right to their chosen lifestyle and everyday reasonable level of disturbance
- Work with us to resolve disputes/issues, for example by reporting incidents, providing witness statements, attending court etc

### **3.4 Safeguarding**

Our Safeguarding policy ensures that anyone working for us is trained to identify and prevent safeguarding issues, and understands the different aspects of safeguarding, that they have a duty to report.

Where children are involved or where there is an adult at risk, or vulnerabilities in the household and there is risk of harm, safeguarding concerns will always be raised. The case owners will liaise closely so that information is shared and updated, and we can work together with our customers to ensure their wellbeing.

### **3.5 Working Together in Partnership**

We are committed to working in partnership with specialist services. We will work with the Police, Social Care teams, Health and Local Safeguarding Children or Adult Boards (LSCB and SAB) or their equivalent Strategic Partnership Boards in accordance with their local procedures, thresholds and information-sharing protocols.

### **3.6 Third Party Organisations**

We will comply with our Data Protection and Confidentiality policies when dealing with ASB. Personal information may be shared between agencies without the consent of the person concerned. Our organisation is committed to working in partnership with the police, social care departments, and other relevant organisations or their equivalent strategic partnership boards in accordance with their local procedures, thresholds and information-sharing protocols. This is essential to enable these organisations to carry out their statutory duties to investigate concerns and protect vulnerable people.

We have several third-party contract arrangements with landlords, support providers, contractors and suppliers. Our contract specifications will require our partners to comply with this policy and accompanying procedures and for this to be reflected in their own policies and procedures.

### **3.7 Quality assurance and monitoring**

All cases of ASB will be monitored via regular supervision with the relevant case owner. The level of monitoring will depend on the frequency and seriousness of the ASB. Tenancy Enforcement Leads and Local Housing Managers will provide appropriate advice and support to case owners, ensuring that cases are progressed in line with operating procedures.

We may benchmark performance with other organisations and provide regular reports to the Executive Team, and Senior Leadership Team.

As part of our quality assurance and monitoring approach, the ASB panel will analyse data, agree on appropriate actions and look at lessons learnt. Our approach will be integrated across the organisation, with individual and collective responsibilities being understood at all levels.

## 4 Background legislation

- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Landlord & Tenant Act 1985
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Care Act 2014
- The Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

## 5 Our commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

In implementing this policy MTVH will not discriminate against any colleague, customer, or stakeholder on the grounds of their sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment status, ethnic origin, age, religious belief, disability, marital status, and pregnancy/maternity.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this Policy and is retained by the Policy Team.

## 6 Key Policy Information

Policy Owner	Director of Customer Services
Author	Head of Housing
Approved by	Customer Services SLT
Effective from	May 2022
Approach to review	This Policy & associated Procedures will be reviewed as required by the owner for changes in legislation, regulation, and operational need. Any amendments will be appropriately consulted on and signed off before being clearly communicated to customers and colleagues. Next expected review is 5 years from the 'Effective date' of this document.
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