

# Anti-social behaviour information pack



Hightown is committed to working with residents to create safe and secure communities. This pack contains all of the information that you will need to report anti-social behaviour. Only by reporting incidents to us can we assist you.

## Contents

In this pack you will find the following information:

- Why we need you to help us to stop anti-social behaviour - we can't do it without you!
- Taking a stand against anti-social behaviour—what you need to do, and how we will handle things
- Tackling anti-social behaviour - the actions we can take to tackle anti-social behaviour
- Guidance notes on completing diary sheets
- Anti-social behaviour diary sheets

## Reporting Anti-Social Behaviour

You can report anti-social behaviour online via Hightown's website or using your MyHightown account.

Alternatively, you can contact your housing officer during office hours on 01442 292300.

Or you can leave a message out of hours on our 24-hour messaging service by calling 07768 286694. This is a message service only, a member of staff will contact you within two working days of the message being received.



## THINK! Is this a matter that should be reported to the police?

Criminal activity such as drug use should also be reported to the local police on 101 or 999 in cases of emergency.

Reports can also be made to police anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



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01442 292300 info@hightownha.org.uk www.hightownha.org.uk  
A charitable housing association.

Aug 2015

# Take a stand against anti-social behaviour



Hightown is committed to working with residents to investigate anti-social behaviour when this is reported to us. We take the issue of anti-social behaviour very seriously and understand the effect it can have on the lives of residents. That is why we are committed to the Government's Respect ASB charter for housing.

## What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour may include noisy neighbours, loud music, abandoned cars, problems with animals, verbal abuse, vandalism, graffiti, litter and nuisance from young people.

Examples of behaviour which will **not** be considered anti-social behaviour include noise caused by everyday living, children playing, DIY activities (during reasonable hours), cooking smells, religious or cultural practices, neighbour disagreements or lifestyle clashes, smoking cigarettes (unless in communal areas) or pet ownership where there is no related nuisance.

We categorise ASB as Type 1 or Type 2 depending on its nature, frequency and severity.

**Type 1** - If the situation is not urgent but requires action, for example repeated noise nuisance, we will deal with this within 7 working days of receipt of the complaint.

**Type 2** - If the situation is urgent and requires immediate action, for example threats around violence, we will deal with this within 1 working day of receipt of the complaint.

Hightown will always work to support both victims and perpetrators of anti-social behaviour.



## Take the first step yourself

If the problem is not too serious, it is often better for you to talk to the people involved directly if you feel comfortable to do so. Involving Hightown at an early stage can turn a minor problem into a dispute.

They may not realise how their behaviour is affecting you. By approaching them in a polite and courteous manner you may find you can work out a friendly solution.

## Next step - involve Hightown

If the problem is serious, or you feel in any way threatened, then you should contact your Housing Officer. What we can do will depend on how serious the problem is. If crime is involved then you should of course contact the police.

In a typical case, Hightown will:

- Gather further information from any victim about ASB.
- Contact the alleged perpetrator about their behaviour, and agree an action plan.
- Signpost you to other appropriate organisations, such as the police or environmental health team.
- Consider more urgent legal action if necessary.
- Keep victims updated on our actions throughout a case.
- Review the case for escalation, or closure.



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March

# Tackling anti-social behaviour



There are various ways in which we can tackle anti-social behaviour, and your Housing Officer will discuss the ones most relevant to you. The action we can take will depend on the seriousness of the anti-social behaviour and whether the person causing the nuisance is a Hightown resident.

## Non-legal action

### Warning letters and interviews

Once we have the facts, we will interview the person causing the problem and agree an action plan with them and you. In a case Hightown will not disclose personal information without your permission.

### Mediation

This is where an independent person (a mediator) listens to both parties and helps to resolve the matter in a friendly way. We are happy to refer cases to mediation and pay for this service.

### Good Neighbour Agreements

These are voluntary agreements that everyone in the estate/street signs, they outline what behaviour everyone thinks is acceptable and are a good way of showing people what their neighbours consider to be unacceptable behaviour.

### Acceptable Behaviour Agreements

Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABAs) are agreements drawn up between the housing association, the police and the person causing the nuisance. ABAs are not legally binding, but are a tool in trying to deal with anti-social behaviour before going to court. It is a voluntary agreement but if the person refuses to sign it we may decide to take further legal action.

## Legal Action

If Hightown think that legal action may be necessary, legal assessments need to be completed to see if legal actions can be justified. These legal assessments are an ongoing process, as Hightown may need to take a different approach if a situation changes. The courts will only consider acting if we can provide evidence of anti-social behaviour. The outcome of any legal action is the decision of the court.

### Being a witness

If we want to take legal action against somebody causing anti-social behaviour or harassment then the court will need to know exactly what happened. Anyone who has seen or heard what has happened can be a witness.

Witnesses help the court to reach a decision and so can enable Hightown to take legal action. Hightown would always try to support witnesses in court.

### Anti-Social Behaviour Injunctions

An injunction is an order made by the court to stop someone from doing something which is, or could cause a nuisance, annoyance or harassment.

To get an injunction we must be able to show the court that the action complained about is capable of causing a nuisance.

## Possession Action (Eviction)

Evicting someone from their home is always a last resort. If all other action has failed we may decide to apply to the court to ask the judge to give us possession of the property. The first step is to serve a Notice of Seeking Possession, this will outline the breaches of the person's tenancy. If the bad behaviour still continues we will apply to the court for possession. In order to go to court we need details of continuous nuisance behaviour. When the judge looks at all the information he may decide to give us possession, this will mean we will evict the tenant, the judge may decide to make an order that postpones the eviction on the condition that the anti-social behaviour stops.

## How is the information provided by witnesses used?

Before Hightown starts legal action we will contact any witnesses.

You will always be consulted before we use any information that you have provided to take legal action. We will visit you to take a statement, ask you to check it and confirm that the contents are accurate. It is important that your statement includes everything that is relevant to the case. You will then be asked to sign it before it is used for any court action.

The papers will be sent to the court to request a date and time for the hearing. Copies of the summons will then be sent to the defendant (the person against whom the court order is being sought).

## Case Closure

In order to hold people accountable for their ASB, we need to know when and where it is taking place. Without times and dates of when incidents are occurring ASB is extremely difficult to prove.

The success of dealing with ASBV relies heavily on the assistance of the people who live in the area and witness these issues first hand.

There may be some situations where a case has to be closed without a successful outcome. This could happen in situations such as:

- If a complainant in a case is not prepared to support the actions that Hightown can offer.
- The ASB reports cannot be proven.
- The ASB report consists of fear of ASB rather than incidents of ASB.



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Aug 2015

# Guidance notes for completing anti-social behaviour diary sheets



Your information is crucial to help us combat anti-social behaviour (ASB). These guidance notes will help you to record incidents and report the problems you are experiencing.

**Only by reporting incidents to us can we assist you.**

- Fill in the diary sheet as soon as possible after the incident has taken place and the information is still fresh in your mind.
- Write down everything you see and hear in as much detail as possible, a general summary is not as useful as a detailed account.
- Write down any offensive language – sometimes when you hear offensive words you don't want to repeat them, but it gives a much better understanding of what happened if you write the exact words.
- Try to identify people involved in each occasion, if you don't know their name put down a brief description or a nickname you may know. Please be advised that where the perpetrator is unknown Hightown are unlikely to be able to take action.
- The diary is your personal record, write down what you have seen or heard first hand.
- If there is not enough space on the sheet for all the information use a separate piece of paper and keep it with the diary sheets. You can also request more diary sheets from Hightown.
- If you need any help recording incidents, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the housing team on **01442 292300**.



Your diary sheets can be used in a number of ways including:

- To help Hightown to understand the reported behaviour
- To identify patterns of behaviour
- To see if another organisation needs to be involved (such as the Police or Environmental Health team)

*The information on the diary sheets will be kept confidential, however it may be necessary to share it with partner agencies such as the police in the interests of reducing crime and disorder.*



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# Anti-social behaviour diary sheets



**We can only help if we know in detail what is going on.** You can make this possible by keeping a diary of everything that happens.

Please keep the diary for 2 weeks and ensure that you return the log no longer than 10 days after the last incident occurs to:

Hightown House  
Maylands Avenue

## Your details

Your full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact telephone no: \_\_\_\_\_

**For office use only**

Date diaries sent \_\_\_\_\_

Date diaries returned: \_\_\_\_\_

**We reserve the right to pass copies of completed diary sheets on to other agencies, such as the police or environmental health, where appropriate, to assist with the case.**

# Anti-social behaviour incident diary sheet



Your full name: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Date of incident</b> If overnight write both dates e.g. 12/13 Nov 2014	<b>Time of incident</b> (Please put am or pm)	<b>Description of incident, where it took place and any other witnesses</b>	<b>Name and address of person/s responsible</b> If not known, put description	<b>How did this affect you/your household and/or visitors?</b>	<b>Police informed? Other agencies?</b>
	Started           Finished				Log no.
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