

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Approved by
Chief Executive

Issue number 13

Approved date May 2024

Review date May 2026

Previous Version
N/A

Responsible Officer
Head of Housing

1. Aims and Objectives

- 1.1 This document sets out the way in which Hightown deals with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). Hightown has certain obligations as defined by the Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community Standard, the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014, and the ASB Action Plan March 2023.
- 1.2 ASB is one of the most challenging areas of housing management work for Hightown. It can cause distress, disruption and frustration for residents, is time consuming and complex for officers to deal with and a failure to effectively deal with it can be damaging for our reputation. Hightown will take reasonable steps within our powers to tackle ASB and will work with other agencies where they have powers to address the issues.
- 1.3 Hightown is committed to taking robust action against perpetrators of ASB, making use of the range of legal solutions available to us. We will work in partnership with other agencies including Local Authorities, Support Agencies and the Police to prevent and tackle ASB in the neighbourhoods where we own homes and/or provide support services.
- 1.4 As part of our commitment Hightown signed up to the Respect ASB Charter for Housing in 2012. We are also members of Resolve ASB.
- 1.5 The complainant plays a key part in the successful management of ASB. Complainants must co-operate with reasonable requests to assist in progressing reports of ASB, as Hightown may not be able to take any further action to resolve the problem without their support.
- 1.6 The purpose of this policy is to outline Hightown's approach to preventing and effectively dealing with ASB in order to give those experiencing it both the confidence and reassurance to make reports and work with Hightown to resolve the issue.
- 1.7 In order to tackle ASB in its area of operation Hightown will devote resources in terms of staff and resources to meet the purpose of the Anti Social Behaviour Policy.
- 1.8 All relevant staff should have the knowledge, skills and support to deal effectively with ASB, and provide support for those experiencing it. Well-developed performance monitoring will identify staff training requirements, and ensure staff

are working as effectively as possible, with sufficient resources targeted where they are required.

- 1.9 This policy is also part of our commitment to continuous improvement in all our areas of operations.

2. Definitions and Scope

- 2.1 The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014 brings together Police, Local Authority and Registered Provider powers to tackle ASB.
- 2.2 This policy will also be applied in the management of hate crime or harassment cases. This policy does not apply to Domestic Abuse.
- 2.3 Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is defined in the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime & Policing Act 2014 :

Anti-Social behaviour means –

- (a) conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person,
- (b) 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

- 2.4 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 recognises five types of hate crime on the basis of:

- Race
- Religion
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Transgender Identity

Where the alleged perpetrator has either demonstrated hostility or has been motivated by hostility based on these protected characteristics.

3. Policy Statement

- 3.1 Hightown will respond to reports of ASB from whatever source if it is alleged that our residents, members of their household or visitors are perpetrating ASB.
- 3.2 Hightown will work to prevent ASB from occurring, and will react quickly when incidents occur. We will work in partnership with other agencies to prevent and tackle ASB in the neighbourhoods where we own homes and/or provide support services.
- 3.3 Signing up to the Respect ASB Charter for Housing demonstrates our commitment to tackling ASB and creating a culture of respect.
- 3.4 Hightown is committed to supporting those experiencing and witnessing ASB. Hightown is also committed to ensuring that staff, resident representatives and voluntary workers are also protected from suffering abuse or other types of ASB.
- 3.5 Hightown is committed to promoting stable and secure communities, and will work to achieve this in all aspects of its operations.

- 3.6 Not all reports relating to behaviour which impacts on others can be considered to be anti-social behaviour. Staff will give clear advice to people reporting issues which are not ASB.

4. Prevention

Prevention is an essential part of our approach in dealing with ASB. Directly, and in association with partner agencies, we will adopt methods that aim to prevent ASB occurring where possible.

4.1 Tenancy and Lease Agreements

Tenancies and leases issued by Hightown contain specific clauses relating to harassment and ASB.

4.2 Starter Tenancies

Hightown issues Starter Tenancies to all new general needs tenants who have not previously held an Assured or Fixed Term social housing tenancy. Starter Tenancies allow Hightown to terminate a tenancy during the first year where a resident has been causing ASB and is unwilling to change their behaviour. Residents are given extra support through the year and there is a separate procedure outlining the conditions in which a tenancy would be ended.

4.3 Estate Management and Property Services

Hightown will aim to adopt the highest possible standards of estate management and repairs services, including regular estate inspections to deal with issues such as vandalism and graffiti. Estate management will be aimed at preventing ASB. Estate services contracts provided by contractors will be closely monitored to give a clear message that Hightown looks after its properties.

4.4 New Residents

We will help establish new communities through social events and Good Neighbour Agreements on larger estates. We will clearly explain tenant responsibilities under the terms of the tenancy agreement to new residents, and make them aware of Hightown's ASB policies and procedures.

4.5 New Developments

We will use feedback from staff and residents to consider how the design of new developments can be further improved to minimise the risk of ASB occurring.

4.6 Community Development and Multi-Agency Working

We will promote a sense of community on estates, through active involvement in a range of multi-agency partnerships, aimed at challenging unacceptable behaviour and/or to divert young people most likely to cause ASB towards more positive activities.

4.7 Publicity

Hightown will publicise legal enforcement action, such as evictions, to make residents aware that ASB will not be tolerated, and that Hightown works closely with partners to tackle it.

5. Partnership Working

- 5.1 Working with other agencies is a key part of preventing and tackling ASB. Hightown will ensure that staff play an active part in local community safety partnerships in the main areas of operation, and build good relationships with Local Authority partners, other Registered Providers (on shared estates), police, social services and support agencies. Staff will attend partnership meetings and

refer cases to ensure a multi-agency approach is taken.

- 5.2 Hightown has signed information sharing agreements with local agencies including the police, and has systems in place with partners that facilitate ease of information exchange, including the use of a shared database, where available. Any information sharing will be carried out in accordance with Data Protection legislation.
- 5.3 Where appropriate Hightown staff attend local parish and ward meetings, carry out joint visits with police, social workers and Local Authority officers, and maintain good relationships with support agencies.
- 5.4 Staff work with the police and Local Authority Community Safety Teams to make use of appropriate remedies available, which includes Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABAs), Closure Orders and Injunctions, and to facilitate surveillance or additional patrols.
- 5.5 Hightown will take part in partnership initiatives and pilot projects, where appropriate, to tackle ASB.

6. Support for Vulnerable Residents

- 6.1 We will provide support for vulnerable residents, and ensure that staff have knowledge of local support services to help prevent ASB where possible. This includes regular internal meetings to discuss safeguarding of vulnerable adults who may be involved in ongoing cases of ASB (either as victims or perpetrators). We will also work in partnership with external support agencies and make new referrals where appropriate, and attend external partnership meetings, where available, to support vulnerable residents.

7. Case Management

7.1 Procedure

We will publish a clear procedure to support officers to deal with cases efficiently, effectively and consistently. The procedure and a summary will be available to residents on request, and publicised on the Hightown website. The procedure is regularly reviewed to take account of legislative changes, case law, and best practice.

7.2 Responding to Reports of ASB

- 7.2.1 We will provide a variety of ways for people experiencing ASB to report it. The response to each report will depend upon the issue reported. ASB reports are categorised as Type 1 or 2, depending on severity (Type 2 ASB being higher level, including violence and hate crime). Staff receiving reports of ASB will respond within the timescales set out in the published procedure to each reported incident. In all cases reports will be taken seriously and will be logged on the database. Action plans will be agreed with residents reporting ASB which will clearly outline how the matter will be dealt with and the agreed arrangements for communication and updates regarding the case.
- 7.2.2 Officers will use appropriate methods in order to gather evidence, including diary logs, interviews, witness statements, and information sharing with other agencies, such as the Police, Local Authority Community Safety Teams, and Environmental Health.
- 7.2.3 If Hightown cannot intervene or take any action, the Officer will explain why this is and offer advice to the person reporting the issue.

7.3 Mediation

Hightown is fully committed to the use of independent mediation as a way of preventing the escalation of low-level cases, where all parties agree to take part. Conflict coaching is also available where not all parties wish to take part. Hightown has a Service Level Agreement in place with a local mediation provider to provide these services.

7.4 Recording and Monitoring of Cases

To ensure each case is being dealt with appropriately, accurate records will be maintained. Information will be used to monitor progress, ensure follow-up, target 'hot spots' and formulate strategies.

7.5 Witness and Victim Support

Victims and witnesses of ASB will be given support and will be kept informed of progress. If they are thought to be at risk we will take reasonable steps to ensure their safety. This may include extra security or a referral to the relevant Local Authority regarding housing. Hightown will support witnesses through any legal action taken; this may include supporting the witness through the court process, and referrals to victim support and/or other agencies.

7.6 Support for Perpetrators

Where it is identified that a perpetrator of ASB has support needs, Hightown will make referrals to support agencies as appropriate, where consent to do so is obtained, and encourage perpetrators to engage in support to amend their behaviour.

7.7 Surveillance and Professional Witnesses

The use of CCTV or the employment of professional witnesses will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Hightown may ask the Local Authority's Environmental Health Team for help with noise monitoring equipment where appropriate.

8. Remedies for Anti-Social Behaviour

- 8.1 Hightown has the option to use a range of different remedies to deal with ASB. These options include warnings, Acceptable Behaviour Agreements, referrals to mediation or support and legal action such as Injunctions, demotion of tenancy or seeking possession of the property. In the case of serious, proven ASB, particularly cases involving actual violence or threats of violence, Hightown will consider possession action even if other, less severe approaches have not been tried.

9. Monitoring and Reporting

- 9.1 The Head of Housing and Head of C&SH Support will report on monthly ASB activity.
- 9.2 The Operations Committee receive quarterly reports on ASB which includes:
Updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of ASB reports
Reviews of issues and trends arising from ASB reports.
- 9.3 **Resident Satisfaction** – Hightown will conduct surveys of residents who have reported ASB to gauge satisfaction in this area.

- 9.4 **Performance Indicators** – Hightown will record and monitor the number of cases being dealt with by staff, types of problems recorded, and satisfaction with the service provided.
- 9.5 In order to tackle and deter hate crime, data will also be monitored through the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.
- 9.6 Monitoring information will be used to review and revise policies and procedures.

10. Legal/Regulatory Background

The Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community standard requires registered providers to publish a policy on how they work with relevant partners to prevent and tackle ASB in areas where they own properties.

- The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018;
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003;
- Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE);
- Mental Health Act 1983 (amended 2007);
- Environmental Protection Act 1990;
- Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001;
- Housing Act 1996;
- The Noise Act 1996 as amended by the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environmental Act 2005;
- Children's Act 2004;
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997;
 - Human rights Act 1998; 5
 - Homeless Reduction Act 2017;
 - Domestic Abuse Act 2021;
 - Social Housing Regulation Act 2023.

11. Role and Responsibilities/Authority

- 11.1 Frontline staff will receive training and support to ensure that they fully understand Hightown's policies and procedures and can effectively deal with ASB.
- 11.2 Casework is discussed at monthly housing team meetings to share best practice and lessons learned in case management.
- 11.3 The Housing Team Area Managers will ensure that frontline staff are kept up to date on legislation changes and best practice relating to ASB case management.
- 11.4 The ASB Officer will lead on ASB best practice and manage serious ASB cases across Hightown areas of operation. The Housing Officers will manage low level ASB on their patch.

12. Policy/document References:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Anti Social Behaviour Procedure, and the following policies and strategies:

- Domestic Abuse
- Equality & Diversity

- Data Protection
- Allocations and Lettings
- Sustainability and Community Cohesion Strategy
- Tenure and Tenancy Management
- Starter Tenancy procedure

These will be regularly reviewed and updated, in consultation with residents and staff where appropriate, and with regard to best practice, changes in guidance and legislation.