

# ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) POLICY

Three Rivers Housing Group (TRHG) aims to provide all of its residents with the right to quiet enjoyment of their home and to live peacefully within their community, without harassment or fear, using preventative measures and taking effective action where it occurs.

In particular, TRHG aims to:

**1. Adopt a preventative strategy to minimise the incidence of anti-social behaviour occurring within TRHG communities.**

**• How do we do this?**

- Assess all customers before they are allocated accommodation. This will include an interview and check on references including police checks where appropriate and possible.
- Adopt a Balanced Community Policy when allocating accommodation to ensure reasonable child densities, a balance in sex and age profiles and benefit dependency.
- Use introductory tenancies in those schemes where there are long standing issues with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), which cannot be resolved by any other means.
- Give a high priority to deal with issues of vandalism, graffiti, litter and fly dumping in order to maintain the environment of its estates to a high standard.
- Clearly set out in our tenancy agreements and explain to all tenants the rights and responsibilities expected of a tenant in not inflicting nuisance, harassment or any other form of ASB upon any individual or community.
- Establish a 24-hour witness response to acts of ASB to deter the activity and provide independent evidence where it occurs.
- Emphasise the seriousness of ASB through press releases and articles in newspapers, periodicals and newsletters and establish a reputation of dealing with ASB seriously and effectively.

**2. To engage with communities to identify and resolve issues or threats through effective communication, consultation and personal delivery of service.**

**• How do we do this?**

- Maximise the number of front line officers dealing with community

issues and ensure that they have sufficient capacity to effectively deal with ASB issues.

- Visit customers in their own home who are experiencing ASB problems at a convenient time.
- TRHG officers will be proactive in listening to and consulting with customers to identify issues or threats of ASB within the community.
- Support activities amongst young people to divert their attention away from ASB activity.
- Actively involve customers in setting its ASB strategy through tenant consultation.

**3. To instigate an approach of negotiation and reasoning to resolve ASB issues and encourage customers to independently resolve their differences and difficulties with one another.**

- **How do we do this?**

- Officers will at all times attempt to resolve ASB issues through negotiation and reasoning with the individuals concerned.
- Officers will not intervene in trivial differences of opinion or where there is no evidence to substantiate the allegation. These issues will be monitored and intervention will only occur where the situation deteriorates.
- Offer perpetrators of ASB the opportunity to sign up to an Acceptable Behaviour Contract to voluntarily curb their inappropriate behaviour.
- Offer mediation services supplied by an agency to resolve disputes where individuals from both sides are willing to participate.

**4. To adopt a range of flexible 'tools' to deal with incidences of ASB and implement them on a basis of reasonableness dependent upon the individual issue.**

- **How do we do this?**

- TRHG will use a range of flexible 'tools' to alleviate the problems and threats of ASB. These include:
  - Visits
  - Warning letters
  - Acceptable behaviour contracts
  - Notice of seeking possession
  - Mediation services

- Professional Witnesses
  - Sponsoring local activities in the community
  - Joint working with police, Local Authorities, Social services, Probation agencies Support workers and other agencies
  - Access to criminal records
  - Police information on specific incidents
  - Solicitors' advice and intervention
  - Injunctions
  - Possession proceedings
- Each case will be assessed on an individual basis to determine the use of ASB 'tool(s)'. A test of reasonableness will be used to determine the appropriateness of use.
  - Have a procedure in place to deal with ASB, which it will review on an annual basis.
  - Print a leaflet that will be available to all its customers to set out its approach to dealing with ASB.
- 5. To use punitive measures including eviction, injunctions and ASB orders only where other 'tools' have been exhausted or where the nature of the ASB is serious.**
- **How do we do this?**
  - The use of Injunctions, Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO's) and Possession will only be used in the most serious of cases and where all other reasonable means have been exhausted.
  - The use of Injunctions, ASBO's and possession will only be implemented with the consent of the Operations Director.
  - Where ASB is of a criminal nature, such as drug dealing, violence, or threatening behaviour, then TRHG will report the matter to the police with whom they will seek to work with to achieve a solution.
- 6. To work with and build relationships with other agencies to help minimise the threat and affect of ASB in TRHG communities.**
- **How do we do this?**
  - TRHG will work with the police to deal with and prevent problems of ASB. This will include:
    - Safer Estate Initiatives and Protocols
    - Formal exchanges of Information

- Developing effective relationships between TRHG officers and police officers
- Work with Local Authorities to deal with and prevent problems of ASB. This will include:
  - Formal ASB initiatives and agreements
  - Formal exchange of information
  - Developing effective relationships between TRHG Officers and LA employees and councillors.
- Develop relationships with other agencies with links into communities and individuals who are involved in anti-social activity.
- Work with our Supported Housing operation to provide assistance in dealing with welfare and support issues associated with anti social activity.
- Work with our Supported Housing operation to help deal with and reduce instances of domestic violence.
- Work with agencies to tackle social exclusion and to address perceived lack of local facilities and/or services.

**7. To aid individuals and communities to live peaceably and without fear through the design, construction and upgrading of its properties and local environment.**

- **How do we do this?**
  - Adopt design concepts and guidance on the design and construction of properties and schemes to minimise the likelihood of crime and ASB.
  - Adopt design concepts and guidance on preventing crime and ASB when upgrading its properties and schemes.
  - Seek to maximise security within the home and community in terms of locks, security alarms, lighting, landscaping, doors and windows, controlled entry systems, and fencing.
  - Seek to minimise the impact of noise nuisance in the home by adopting high levels of sound insulation, especially in flats

**8. To effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy upon communities, service provision and performance.**

- **How do we do this?**

- Monitor the incidence of ASB through the IT Event Monitoring system.
- Evaluate the impact of ASB through the measurement of turnover of accommodation and link this to TRHG's Asset Management Strategy.
- Evaluate the incidence of ASB through the major tenants survey every 2 years.
- Evaluate and monitor impact via TRHG's complaints policy
- Use anecdotal evidence from TRHG officers to identify ASB issues and address them via the Asset Management Strategy
- Seek to benchmark its performance in dealing with ASB against other similar housing organisations
- Ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act and respect individuals right to privacy in not divulging sources of complaint unless specifically allowed or if necessary to pursue legal action.

**9. To seek to ensure equality of opportunity for all customers to live peaceably in their home and community, without fear or harassment irrespective of ethnic origin, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability.**

- **How do we do this?**

- Address incidences of racial harassment urgently and effectively through a policy of zero tolerance.

Provide appropriate support to people from ethnic minority backgrounds from the time they move into TRHG accommodation.

- Monitor and evaluate the impact of anti-social behaviour upon BME groups and individuals through the event monitoring, surveys and anecdotal evidence.

**10. To promote, encourage and support initiatives to deal with ASB issues, ensuring sufficient resources, training, finance and expertise to support the work undertaken.**

- **How do we do this?**

- Provide sufficient finance and resources to effectively deal with ASB Within TRHG communities including legal, staffing, evidence gathering, community activity and mediation services.

- Ensure that all housing staff have appropriate training on ASB to be able to implement the strategy and use the 'tools' available.
- Ensure that all housing staff have the appropriate training and skills in negotiation and communication to be able to reason and deal with difficult situations and customers.