

Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

1.0 Introduction

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 became law on 20 October 2014. The aim of the Act is to streamline the toolkit professionals have at their disposal to deal with antisocial behaviour into a unified framework of 6 powers, down from 19 created in various legislation including the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

Anti-social behaviour is a broad term used to describe the day-to-day incidents of crime, nuisance and disorder that make many people's lives a misery – from litter and vandalism, to public drunkenness or aggressive dogs, to noisy or abusive neighbours. Such a wide range of behaviours means that responsibility for dealing with anti-social behaviour is shared between a number of agencies, particularly the police, councils and social landlords.

The Anti-social behaviour Police and Crime Act 2014 reforms are designed to put victims at the heart of the response to anti-social behaviour, and give professionals the flexibility they need to deal with any given situation.

Coastline recognises that anti-social behaviour has a detrimental effect on the quality of life enjoyed by our residents and is committed to preventing and tackling the problems caused by anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Coastline achieved the Housemark ASB Accreditation in January 2015 for delivering excellent services to our customers and we are the first Registered Provider in Devon and Cornwall to receive this accolade.

1.1 Through consultation with the Neighbourhood and Communities Sounding Board and in conjunction with a customer Action Team, Coastline has developed this policy and procedure to tackle ASB.

1.2 We are committed to improving the quality of life for everyone living and working within our communities and in providing a safe and secure environment, free from the negative impact of anti-social behaviour.

1.3 All reports of anti-social behaviour will be investigated, and where appropriate, Coastline will involve external partner agencies. Coastline adopts a 'zero tolerance' stance in terms of all forms of anti-social behaviour.

1.4 Action taken against those responsible will be proportionate to the seriousness of the activity in which they are engaged and appropriate to the circumstances. Intervention action will be selected, based on what is most likely to produce an effective solution, in partnership with the complainant. In very serious or persistent cases of anti-social behaviour,

rapid enforcement action will be taken to resolve the problem. This may include court action where appropriate.

2.0 What is anti-social behaviour?

The Home Office guidance for professionals on the Anti-social behaviour Police and Crime Act 2014 states “In terms of the behaviour itself, what is seen as ‘anti-social’ will vary from victim to victim, and community to community. This is one reason why we changed the way in which incidents of anti-social behaviour are reported, no longer focusing on the behaviour, but on the impact it has on the victim”.

The 2014 Act gives the following definition of anti-social behaviour:

- 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.

Coastline’s definition of anti-social behaviour is based on a range of definitions contained in various acts of parliament and in summary includes:

- Being convicted of an indictable offence in the locality
- Being convicted of using a property for illegal or immoral uses
- Acting in a manner that is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to others
- Acting in a manner which causes nuisance or annoyance to others

For the purposes of seeking a housing injunction or a tenancy demotion order, the Housing Act 1996 defines behaviour, which can result in an injunction (under the Housing Act 1996) or a demotion order (under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003) as:

“conduct which is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person AND directly or indirectly relates to or affects the housing management functions of a relevant landlord; OR

consists of, or involves using or threatening to use, housing accommodation owned or managed by a relevant landlord for an unlawful purpose”.

For the purposes of repossessing a tenant’s home, the Housing Act 1996 defines the ground for repossession on the grounds of nuisance or annoyance as:

Ground 7a – Mandatory Ground for Possession

Any of the following conditions is met.

Condition 1 is that—

- (a) the tenant, or a person residing in or visiting the dwelling-house, has been convicted of a serious offence, and
- (b) the serious offence—
 - (i) was committed (wholly or partly) in, or in the locality of, the dwelling-house,
 - (ii) was committed elsewhere against a person with a right (of whatever description) to reside in, or occupy housing accommodation in the locality of, the dwelling-house, or
 - (iii) was committed elsewhere against the landlord of the dwelling-house, or a person employed (whether or not by the landlord) in connection with the exercise of the landlord's housing management functions, and directly or indirectly related to or affected those functions.

Condition 2 is that a court has found in relevant proceedings that the tenant, or a person residing in or visiting the dwelling-house, has breached a provision of an injunction under section 1 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, other than a provision requiring a person to participate in a particular activity, and—

- (a) the breach occurred in, or in the locality of, the dwelling-house, or
- (b) the breach occurred elsewhere and the provision breached was a provision intended to prevent—
 - (i) conduct that is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person with a right (of whatever description) to reside in, or occupy housing accommodation in the locality of, the dwelling-house, or
 - (ii) conduct that is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to the landlord of the dwelling-house, or a person employed (whether or not by the landlord) in connection with the exercise of the landlord's housing management functions, and that is directly or indirectly related to or affects those functions.

Condition 3 is that the tenant, or a person residing in or visiting the dwelling-house, has been convicted of an offence under section 30 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 consisting of a breach of a provision of a criminal behaviour order prohibiting a person from doing anything described in the order, and the offence involved—

- (a) a breach that occurred in, or in the locality of, the dwelling-house, or
- (b) a breach that occurred elsewhere of a provision intended to prevent—
 - (i) behaviour that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to a person with a right (of whatever description) to reside in, or occupy housing accommodation in the locality of, the dwelling-house, or
 - (ii) behaviour that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to the landlord of the dwelling-house, or a person employed (whether or not by the landlord) in connection with the exercise of the landlord's housing management functions, and that is directly or indirectly related to or affects those functions.

Condition 4 is that—

- (a) the dwelling-house is or has been subject to a closure order under section 80 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, and
- (b) access to the dwelling-house has been prohibited (under the closure order or under a closure notice issued under section 76 of that Act) for a continuous period of more than 48 hours.

Condition 5 is that—

- (a) the tenant, or a person residing in or visiting the dwelling-house, has been convicted of an offence under—
 - (i) section 80(4) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (breach of abatement notice in relation to statutory nuisance), or
 - (ii) section 82(8) of that Act (breach of court order to abate statutory nuisance etc.), and
- (b) the nuisance concerned was noise emitted from the dwelling-house which was a statutory nuisance for the purposes of Part 3 of that Act by virtue of section 79(1)(g) of that Act (noise emitted from premises so as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance).

Condition 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 is not met if—

- (a) there is an appeal against the conviction, finding or order concerned which has not been finally determined, abandoned or withdrawn, or
- (b) the final determination of the appeal results in the conviction, finding or order being overturned.

In this ground—

“relevant proceedings” means proceedings for contempt of court or proceedings under

Schedule 2 to the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014;

“serious offence” means an offence which—

- (a) was committed on or after the day on which this ground comes into force,
- (b) is specified, or falls within a description specified, in Schedule 2A to the Housing Act 1985 at the time the offence was committed and at the time the court is considering the matter, and
- (c) is not an offence that is triable only summarily by virtue of section 22 of the Magistrates’ Courts Act 1980 (either-way offences where value involved is small).”

Ground 14

The tenant or a person residing in or visiting the dwelling-house-

- a) has been guilty of conduct causing or likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to a person residing, visiting or otherwise engaging in a lawful activity in the locality,
- b) has been guilty of conduct causing or likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to the landlord of the dwelling-house, or a person employed (whether or not by the landlord) in connection with the exercise of the landlord's housing management functions, and that is directly or indirectly related to or affects those functions, or
- c) has been convicted of-
 - a. using the dwelling-house or allowing it to be used for immoral or illegal purposes, or
 - b. an arrestable offence committed in, or in the locality of, the dwelling-house.”

Ground 14A

The tenant or an adult residing in the dwelling-house has been convicted of an indictable offence which took place during, and at the scene of, a riot in the United Kingdom.

3.0 Categories of ASB

This is represented by three distinct types of ASB (which are defined by the National Standards in Incident Reporting used by the Police):

ASB “Personal” identifies an ASB incident that the complainant, officer dealing or any other person perceives as either deliberately targeted at an individual or group or having an impact on an individual or group rather than the community at large. It includes incidents that cause concern, stress, disquiet and/or irritation through to incidents which have a serious adverse impact on people's quality of life. At one extreme of the spectrum it includes minor annoyance; at the other end it could result in risk of harm, deterioration of health and disruption of mental or emotional well-being, resulting in an inability to carry out normal day to day activities through fear and intimidation.

ASB “Nuisance” captures those incidents where an act, condition thing or person causes trouble, annoyance, inconvenience, offence or suffering to the local community in general rather than to individual victims. It includes incidents where behaviour goes beyond the conventional bounds of acceptability and interferes with public interest including health, safety and quality of life. Just as individual will have differing expectations and levels of tolerance so will communities have different ideas about what goes beyond tolerable or acceptable behaviour.

ASB “Environmental” deals with incidents where individuals and groups have an impact on their surroundings including natural, built and social environments. This category is about encouraging reasonable behaviour whilst managing and protecting the various environments so that people can enjoy their own private spaces as well as shared or public spaces. People's physical settings and surroundings are known to impact positively or negatively on mood and sense of well-being and a perception that nobody cares about the quality of a particular environment can cause those effected by that environment to feel undervalued or ignored. Public spaces change over time as a result of physical effects caused, for example, by buildings, but the environment can also change as a result of the people using or misusing that space.

Coastline recognises the tools and powers available to us. Legal enforcement powers will be used as necessary, appropriate and proportionate.

4.0 Respect – ASB Charter for Housing

Coastline has signed up to and is committed to the new Respect – ASB Charter for Housing which aims to be outcome-focused so that we can provide a high quality ASB service. The Charter consists of seven core commitments.

We are committed to:

- demonstrating leadership and strategic commitment
- providing an accessible and accountable service
- taking swift action to protect communities
- adopting a supportive approach to working with victims and witnesses
- encouraging individual and community responsibility
- having a clear focus on prevention and early intervention
- ensuring that a value for money approach is embedded in our service

5.0 Our aim

We adopt a ‘zero tolerance’ approach to anti-social behaviour, and our aim is to protect people from harm and to contribute to communities that can live without fear of:

- Aggressive or threatening language or behaviour
- Violence, including Domestic Abuse, which is outlined fully in our Domestic Abuse Policy
- Unreasonable amounts of noise
- Harassment, particularly harassment because of someone’s individual characteristic, such as age, disability, gender re-assignment, race religion, sex or sexual orientation which is outlined fully in Coastline’s Hate Crime Policy.
- Behaviour which unacceptably interferes with residents’ quality of life

We will take a victim focussed approach, identifying those vulnerable individuals, communities and environments most at risk and will work closely with our partner agencies to reduce the possibility of the problems escalating.

We will ensure that we adhere to our published response timescales set by our customers which are as follows:

High Priority	1 working day	eg: violence
Medium Priority	5 working days	eg: noise or abusive behaviour
Low Priority	10 working days	eg: neighbour disputes

We will ensure that we provide an excellent service to our customers and monitor levels of satisfaction closely and benchmark these results with other national organisations.

6.0 What we will do to alleviate ASB

- Continue with the use of Probationary Tenancies
- Provide mediation services
- Encourage (where it is appropriate) people to talk to each other to see whether any problems can be resolved informally
- Provide an out of hours ASB reporting telephone line
- Use a range of sanctions and available tools to reduce ASB such as (but not limited to):
 - The use of Notices to start the legal possession process
 - The review process for Affordable Rent and Fixed Term tenancies
 - The use of injunctions where there is violence or threats of violence or where it is evident this would stop the anti-social behaviour
 - Possession orders and demoted tenancy orders in cases of serious or persistent breaches of tenancy, violence or threats of violence or criminal behaviour in the locality
 - Closure orders
- Use the available sanctions appropriately and proportionately
- Work in multi-agency partnerships to refer or signpost residents to other agencies, who may be able to assist or to support projects such as 'Family Intervention Projects'
- Work with other agencies and share information about both complainants and perpetrators in support of local strategies to reduce crime and disorder
- Co-operate with public protection arrangements under the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and so will work within Multi- Agency Public Protection Arrangements. Our commitment to safeguarding vulnerable people is a further element of our service and our Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children policies will also be applied when appropriate to ensure that vulnerable people within our communities are protected.
- Regularly review live and on-going cases to assess the changing risk as cases progress, and ensure Safeguarding issues have not presented themselves throughout the ongoing investigations
- Regularly review our Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Cornwall Crime and Disorder Reduction Team (CCDRT)
- Work with Housing Law Specialists to ensure that we can act swiftly, professionally and ensure that we get results
- Refer for support where appropriate and available
- Undertake quarterly "Respect Walkabouts" and involve our key partners
- Train our staff to deal with ASB to provide an excellent service and deliver our target response times.
- Benchmark our performance with other organisations nationally via Housemark benchmarking club with emphasis on customer satisfaction
- Report our monthly performance through the in-house performance Corvu system

6.1 We will take the following into account, when dealing with cases of ASB

- An assessment of victim & witness vulnerability, risk and harm and complete a Disability Assessment Form (Justification Prior to Legal Action Equality Act 2010) which will be signed off by the Tenancy Manager before serving Notices to perpetrators
- Use or threatened use of violence
- Housing tenure
- Frequency of incidents
- Safeguarding considerations
- Hate Crime
- Whether the anti-social behaviour is Personal, Nuisance or Environmental

7.0 Tenancy agreements and Leases

Our tenancy agreements and leases contain clauses relating to anti-social behaviour. By signing the tenancy agreement or lease our tenants agree not to commit acts of anti-social behaviour and to be responsible for the behaviour of their household and visitors.

Not all tenancy agreements are exactly the same, but the principle that the lives of other residents should not be adversely affected by another's behaviour is a constant throughout.

8.0 Prevention

To prevent anti-social behaviour from occurring Coastline employs a variety of actions and initiatives. These include but are not limited to:

- The use of Probationary Tenancies
- A robust pre-tenancy interview, which includes a full risk assessment, to ascertain the suitability of the applicant and that appropriate support is in place before the tenancy commences
- Actively participating in community initiatives aimed at addressing issues relating to the causes and effects of anti-social behaviour. This involves working with local schools, the police, community agencies and other external agencies
- Actively involving communities in the management of their neighbourhood, encouraging the formation of resident groups and promoting minimal tolerance of anti-social behaviour
- Developing Local Lettings Strategies which can respond to the needs of communities where anti-social behaviour has been problematic
- Developing Local Offers and Coastline Offers with our customers
- Encourage reporting of ASB by ensuring that our Policy and Procedures are clear, accessible and pro-active
- Following a clearly defined process, including a relevant action plan agreed with to the person(s) experiencing the anti-social behaviour
- Taking prompt, appropriate and decisive action to deal with ASB before it escalates. In doing so, we adopt a problem solving approach and have regard to the full range of tools and legal powers available
- Support victims and witnesses of anti-social behaviour.

9.0 Training

To ensure that officers are equipped with the key skills to deliver this Policy and our Procedures effectively we will:

- Incorporate anti-social behaviour as a specific subject area in the induction programme of new staff members
- Facilitate regular One-to-Ones, Team Meetings and Appraisals for staff.
- Provide frequent training courses for all staff involved in dealing with incidents of anti-social behaviour to ensure that officers are aware of the available range of anti-social behaviour remedies and are trained in their use.

10.0 Supporting Staff

We take threats against staff and contractors extremely seriously and will use a number of tools available against the person using or threatening violence.

This may result in a tenancy being terminated. In the event of the perpetrator remaining within our homes, a 2 person visit warning flag will highlighted on our system for all future home visits.

Operational Procedures

11.0 What we will do when we receive complaints of anti-social behaviour

We will:

- Record all reports of antisocial behaviour within 24 hours, appoint a named officer to each case
- Respond within our published timescales
- Develop an action plan with the victim/witness to deal with the particular circumstances of the complaint.
- Keep the complainant informed of the progress of the action plan and notify and explain our decisions
- Review and close each case if there have been no further complaints for 28 days
- We will close off cases as soon as they have been resolved with the complainant's agreement

12.0 Providing support to those involved

We will:

- Agree an action plan with the complainant and tailor the plan to their individual circumstances and case.
- Work with our partners to provide assistance and support to suit the needs of the complainant/victim/witness
- We will have regard to what assistance and support may be available to perpetrators to encourage them to change their behaviour to prevent re-offending

- Maintain contact throughout the course of the investigation and keep those involved informed of progress (subject to duties of confidentiality) from the date the first complaint is received, throughout the investigation process and/or any legal action
- Use measures to prevent and reduce anti-social behaviour, and use appropriate legal and non-legal solutions to tackle it.
- Ensure that a Disability Assessment Form (Justification Prior to Legal Action Equality Act 2010) is completed before Notices are served.
- We will provide feedback and reports to residents relating to our performance.

13.0 Monitoring and reporting

We will:

- record the number of incidents of ASB reported to us and the type of anti-social behaviour
- record the number of Notice Seeking Possessions served
- monitor the number of anti-social behaviour cases resolved through early intervention
- monitor the number of tenancies brought to an end through legal proceedings for anti-social behaviour
- monitor and report customer satisfaction

14.0 Complaints

Where anti-social behaviour complainants feel that we have not carried out our duties under this Policy they have the right to make a complaint to us under our Complaints Policy.

15.0 Equality and Diversity

Throughout the operation of our Policy on anti-social behaviour and through our dealings with those involved in cases we will have regard to our diversity policies at all times.

All customers (and their advocates) will have access to this document upon request or from our websites.

This document and accompanying leaflets can be translated or provided in alternative formats (e.g. Braille, large print, and audio) upon request.

16.0 Policy review

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years' time, unless there are any changes in legislation before this date.

17.0 Publicising our approach to anti-social behaviour

Our approach to anti-social behaviour will be publicised to residents, potential residents and staff in a number of ways:

- Customer Handbook
- Leaflets

- Pre-tenancy interview and sign up documents
- Customer Newsletters
- CHL Website
- Intranet
- Policy documents
- Training
- Social Media

The following legislation, guidance, policies and documents are associated with this Policy:

- Respect – ASB Charter for Housing
- Lettings Policy
- Probationary Policy
- Hate Crime Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Mutual Exchange Policy
- Safeguarding Adults and Children policies
- Complaints Policy
- Tenancy Agreements
- Equality Act 2010
- Housing Act 1996
- Housing Act 1988
- Anti-social Behaviour Act (2003)
- Criminal Justice Act 2003
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014