



Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy

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1. Purpose

North Devon Homes aims to support communities to be places where people want to live. Having a clear policy on how we will engage to deal with Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) and what customers can expect from us is important to understand what we are able to do in often in what can be complex and challenging situations. We have a duty to investigate and will take action based on evidence and agreed facts.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for ensuring a considered and risk-based approach to dealing with ASB.

Through the assessment process residents should form a clear understanding about how and when NDH will respond to reports of ASB as well as an appreciation of the individual responsibilities of both the resident(s); NDH and other agencies.

The triage approach will enable NDH to manage reports of ASB more effectively and ensure that resources are directed to more serious cases, whilst still addressing lower-level issues effectively.

The triage process will also seek to identify cases of vulnerability and potentially safeguarding issues. This is set out in appendix A

This policy sets out how NDH will respond to reports of anti-social behaviour and how it will prioritise different cases.

Antisocial behaviour is defined as '**behaviour by a person which causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to persons not of the same household as the person**' (Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 and Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011)

North Devon Homes acknowledges the impact of anti-social behaviour on victims over a prolonged period can be very detrimental to mental health and general wellbeing.

Using a triage approach, we aim to identify serious cases of ASB and vulnerability at an initial stage and direct resources appropriately.

We will also provide residents self-help remedies in cases of neighbour disagreement.

'Anti-Social Behaviour' is a term used to cover a whole wide range of issues and can include any of the following behaviour:

- Noise
- Verbal abuse / harassment / intimidation / threatening behaviour

- Hate related incidents (based on race, sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion, age, etc)
- Vandalism and damage to property
- Pets and animal nuisance
- Nuisance from vehicles
- Drugs / substance misuse / drug dealing
- Alcohol related
- Domestic violence / abuse
- Physical violence
- Litter / rubbish / fly-tipping / abandoned vehicles
- Garden nuisance
- Misuse of communal areas / public space or loitering
- Prostitution / sexual acts / kerb crawling
- Other criminal behaviour / crime

2. Principles

The following principles will apply to this policy:

It will reflect the current standards of operation and will be reviewed whenever industry standards, legislation or guidelines change.

It will be realistic, targeting resources at the more serious cases whilst providing self-help solutions to customers in disagreement with their neighbours.

3. Review

We will review this policy at least once every two years to ensure that it continues to operate within best practice, achieve measurable results, and achieve continuous service improvement.

Alternatively, the policy and all associated procedures will be reviewed immediately following any relevant change to government policy, regulation or legislation.

The Community Services Manager will be responsible for ensuring that policy reviews are undertaken, that appropriate consultation takes place and that revisions are reported to the Executive Team for approval.

4. Responsibilities

North Devon Homes' Executive Team will approve this policy and delegate responsibility to the Community Services Manager for ensuring that this policy is communicated and implemented.

The Community Services Manager will provide training for staff to ensure that they fully understand the wider issues surrounding this policy and the procedure.

5. Scope

This policy applies to how NDH will manage reports of ASB relating to NDH Customers in General Needs and Supported Housing properties.

6. Policy Statement

The Community Services team and Customer Care Team (CCT) have developed clear procedures to deal with reports of ASB.

Through the triage process, undertaken by the CCT, cases are prioritised. The types of cases considered as a priority for action include:

- Risk to person
- Risk to property
- Other hate crime / harassment
- Serious disruption to community
- Breaches of injunctions/ASBO/Suspended Possession Orders
- Organised ASB / crime
- Where action is necessary to support partner agencies

The risk assessment will result in one of the following outcomes:

- High Risk identification
- Medium Risk
- Low Risk
- Stage Zero
- Neighbour Dispute

The procedures for dealing with the complaint will flow on from the level of priority awarded to the complaint.

We will record and monitor reports of ASB through our CX databases and dashboard to ensure their task list is completed.

The Community Services Manager will be responsible for overseeing the ASB standards and report on performance quarterly.

The majority of ASB cases will be dealt with more effectively through multi agency working, whether this is dealing with the perpetrators, the victims or proactively making changes to estates to prevent ASB.

North Devon Homes will work with other agencies (such as the council, police, social services, mental health services) where victims of persistent anti-social behaviour report the right to request a multi-agency case review (also known as the Community Trigger) where a local threshold is met.

As NDH is a member of the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership this enables information to be formally shared between different agencies; action plans agreed between the parties to address difficult cases and mechanisms and a timetable for case reviews.

As well as considering appropriate enforcement action the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership also enable multi agency support plans to be agreed to assist victims and perpetrators to moderate their behaviour and therefore maintain their tenancy. Eviction will be considered and used as the last resort when other options have been exhausted.

Customers who report ASB will be provided with suitable support through the process, this may include referrals to specialist support. We recognise the importance of involving local residents when addressing anti-social behaviour and the difference that their nuisance reports and witness statements make in ensuring that action can be taken. We also understand when giving evidence residents may fear possible intimidation or reprisal.

The Community Services Manager will ensure the teams, dealing with ASB are provided with training on how to deal with both risk assessments for staff safety, training in how to deal with ASB in terms of process and legal actions and training in referring customers to other agencies.

Staff safety will be maintained by ensuring that customers, who are considered to pose a threat to staff, have a warning marker logged against them on the CX database and there will be suitable risk assessments carried out on working practices.

Where there are potential Safeguarding concerns identified these will be addressed using the NDH Safeguarding protocol.

7. Consultation

Date	Consultation Method	Challenge / Impact
12 October 2022	Fresh Ideas – Customer Meeting	Recommendations from customers to reduce the review period, clarify and simplify some of the jargon.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

8.1 Identify potential impact on each of the diversity “groups”.

Strand	No impact	Negative impact	Positive impact	Comments / evidence
Race			X	The policy identifies and prioritises acts of hate and / or discrimination.
Disability			X	
Gender			X	
Gender Reassignment			X	
Sexual orientation			X	
Religion or belief			X	
Age			X	
Rural issues	X			
Social Inclusion issues	X			
Pregnancy and maternity			X	
Marriage and civil partnership			X	

8.2 Does the Policy promote equality of opportunity?
N/A

8.3 If “adverse impact” identified in the table above, please state how this policy addresses this.
N/A

A full EIA is not required for this policy.

8.4 If suggestions for improvement have been suggested, what should the positive outcome be for North Devon Homes’ customers and stakeholders?

Next review date – every two years:	Responsible Officer
October 2025	Head of Customer and Housing Services
	Related Documents
	Appendix A: - ASB triage procedure

Triage ASB / Neighbour Complaint Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is:

- to enable NDH staff to prioritise our response to complaints received better and so to ensure that resources are directed to more serious cases, whilst still addressing lower level issues effectively
- to enable us to draw to a distinction between ASB / nuisance incidents and neighbour disputes in order to manage both more effectively
- to ensure that all complaints are risk assessed and logged at initial contact

1. Complaint Received – Risk Assessed.

When the initial complaint is received, whichever member of staff receives the complaint can explain to the complainant that, in order to respond appropriately to the issue, we ask them to complete a short risk assessment. The majority of complaints are received via the telephone and this should be straightforward. The risk assessment should take about 5 minutes to complete.

Other routes by which we receive complaints are:

- Email
- Website
- Letter
- 3rd party (neighbour, friends or family)
- Partner agency
- Face to face

In each of these cases it should be possible to conduct an initial risk assessment based on the detail of the complaint. Based on the initial risk assessment, the complaint can be taken down by CCT staff or escalated to a Tenancy Co-ordinator or Neighbourhood Officer. The complainant should then be contacted comfortably within the timescales suggested by the outcome of the initial assessment, (unless there is a specific request not to take further action).

When completing the risk assessment with the complainant, don't be afraid to probe for further details or clarification – the more accurate the information we receive at this point, the more appropriate our response should be.

TIP – Ensure that the alleged perpetrator is an NDH customer. If they are not, the complainant should be advised to consider referring their complaint either to Environmental Health, the police, or to speak to the perpetrator.

Neighbour Disputes

A good number of neighbourhood complaints turn out to be the product of neighbour disputes. It is not unusual in such cases for the complainant to be at least as much at fault as the alleged perpetrator. Bringing a complaint to NDH can be a good way of escalating or prolonging a neighbour dispute. The most effective way of resolving neighbour disputes is through mediation.

To enable us to reach this point more swiftly and efficiently, we intend to create a separate procedure for handling neighbour disputes, based on mediation and encouraging customers to take ownership of their neighbourly relations.

For this reason, we ask the question in the risk assessment – “Do you have a history of problems with this person / people? Is this a neighbour dispute?” It is perfectly appropriate to explain to the complainant at this point why we ask this question.

2. Triage

Based on the completed risk assessment, a judgement should be made on the level of priority to be awarded to the complaint. This is in effect categorising the complaint based on the nature of the issue, the frequency and timing of

occurrences, and the level of threat to the complainant. This part of the process should take place once the initial contact with the complainant has concluded. The table of ASB Categories is the first and main point of reference. The procedures for dealing with the complaint will flow on from the level of priority awarded to the complaint. This is the triage process in action.

3. ASB case on CX

Either during the initial risk assessment or immediately after, a new case should be opened up. A short procedure will be available for this and training is available if required.

Any case opened on CX can be linked to an ASB case at a later stage if appropriate.

There are 3 possible outcomes of the risk assessment, a case is logged as one of the below:

- Tenancy Breach
- ASB
- Low level ASB

4. High Risk

Where the complaint is assessed as High Risk (Red), the issue should be passed immediately to the relevant Neighbourhood Officer. If this person is not available, the case should be passed to another Neighbourhood Officer or the tenancy coordinator if appropriate, if this isn't possible it should be passed to the Neighbourhood Team Leader.

The Neighbourhood Officer should confirm the priority and then attempt to make contact with the complainant the same day where possible to let them know the outcome of the triage assessment and to agree a method of handling the complaint. This contact can consist of a telephone conversation, email, text message, or home visit.

The expectation is that the perpetrator will be visited in High Risk complaints.

5. Medium Risk

Where the complaint is assessed to be Medium Risk (Amber), the issue should be passed to the relevant neighbourhood officer, but with a lower level of priority. The neighbourhood officer will have 5 days to contact the complainant and will be likely to handle the issue initially through the issuing of standard letters to complainant and perpetrator.

A home visit to the perpetrator is optional in Medium Risk cases. It may be appropriate to make first contact with written notification of the complaint.

6. Low Risk

Where the complaint is assessed as Low Risk (Green), whoever conducts the initial assessment will process the complaint through the use of standard letters to the perpetrator and complainant in the first instance. There will be a 5 day time limit on this action.

The complainant will be issued a standard letter reassuring them that we have logged the issue and that the complaint will be open for 28 days. Unless we receive further contact from the complainant within this time, the case will then be closed, but will remain on record.

The perpetrator will be issued a standard letter notifying them of the allegation. This letter will also make it clear that the complaint will be closed if no further contacts are received.

The case will be set up and then closed on CX. This complaint can be re-opened should there be further incidents.

TIP – For Low Risk complaints, please offer to send Nuisance Diaries to the complainant with the acknowledgement letter.

7. Stage Zero

If the complaint received is the first incident in a low level issue and there is no recent history of previous issues, the outcome of the risk assessment should usually be a 'stage zero' case.

In this instance, the complainant will be issued a standard letter reassuring them that we have logged the issue and that the complaint will be open for 28 days. Unless we receive further contact from the complainant within this time, the case will then be closed, but will remain on record.

TIP – The main difference between a Stage Zero and a Low Risk complaint is likely to be the number of incidents. Where the issue is a first occasion or potentially a one-off, we should use the stage zero. If the issue is low level but has happened more than once in the last few weeks, we should use the Low Risk category.

8. Neighbour Dispute

Where the complaint is identified as a neighbour dispute, where there is no evidence of a tenancy breach mediation details to all parties involved, information on the mediation service is included in the leaflet. NDH fund this service.

8. Reclassification

An issue or case can be reclassified at any time, either escalated up or de-escalated to a lower priority depending on either changes in the nature of issues occurring or new information on possible vulnerabilities of those involved.

TIP – It will not normally be necessary to complete a new risk assessment based on additional complaints / incidents. Unless there are changes in personal circumstances which affect potential vulnerabilities, it should be possible to reclassify, if necessary, using the Table of ASB Categories.