



Places to live. Space to grow.

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**Community Safety Policy**

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## **1 Introduction and policy purpose**

- 1.1 We're committed to creating safe, inclusive, and resilient communities where residents feel secure and supported. We recognise that community safety is fundamental to resident wellbeing, satisfaction, and quality of life.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to outline our approach to preventing, responding to and managing anti-social behaviour (ASB), safeguarding of vulnerable individuals, and fostering positive neighbourhood relationships.
- 1.3 This policy applies to customers of all tenures living in a home owned or managed by West Kent, this includes (but not limited to), general needs, supported schemes, older person accommodation, shared owners, and leaseholders. It is our vision to provide homes and build communities that residents are proud to live in, with better support to sustain a successful tenancy.
- 1.4 Reports of domestic abuse and hate-based ASB will be managed under their relevant standalone policies
- 1.5 Responsibility for this policy lies with the Community Safety Manager, supported by the Head of Housing Services.
- 1.6 We will provide this policy and reporting routes in accessible formats on request (e.g., large print, audio, Easy Read). We will record *preferred communication methods* at case creation and use them throughout. Please contact us on [help@wkha.org.uk](mailto:help@wkha.org.uk) or 01732 749400 if you need this policy in another format.

## **2 Policy statement**

- 2.1 We're committed to ensuring that all residents live in safe, secure, and successful communities. We believe that everyone has the right to enjoy their home free from ASB, harassment, or fear. Through this policy, we state our responsibility to take a proactive, victim-centred, and partnership-led approach to tackling ASB and promoting community wellbeing.

We will:

- Respond promptly and effectively to reports of ASB, prioritising the safety and wellbeing of victims.
- Respond to reports of ASB where it affects our residents or communities, including cases where the alleged perpetrator is not a West Kent tenant.
- Work collaboratively with residents, local authorities, police, and support agencies to prevent and resolve ASB.
- Use data, feedback, and resident insight to continuously improve our services and ensure they reflect the needs of our communities.

- Take a proactive approach to preventing antisocial behaviour on all new developments, including the early use of Local Lettings Plans, Good Neighbour Agreements, and other measures designed to build positive community behaviours from the outset.
- Uphold fairness, transparency, and accountability in all our actions, ensuring that our approach is consistent with our values and strategic priorities.

### **3 Definition of anti-social behaviour (ASB)**

3.1 West Kent adopts the definition set out in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, which defines ASB as:

*“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.”*

Examples of ASB may include (but are not limited to):

- Verbal abuse, threats, or intimidation
- Noise nuisance (like loud music or shouting)
- Vandalism or property damage
- Drug use or dealing
- Harassment, including hate incidents
- Aggressive or violent behaviour
- Cuckooing and mate crime
- Persistent fly-tipping.

We recognise that ASB can have a serious and lasting impact on victims and communities.

We’re committed to responding proportionately, sensitively, and effectively to all reports, taking into account the nature, frequency, and impact of the behaviour.

#### **What is not considered as ASB?**

3.2 Not every allegation reported to us will be investigated as ASB.

Reports due to different lifestyles or every-day living situations which are not intended to cause nuisance or annoyance are not generally considered as ASB.

This can include but is not limited to:

- children playing and babies crying
- household noise due to every-day living (like proportionate TV, music or radio noise)
- noise from electrical items such as washing machines or vacuum cleaners
- DIY during reasonable hours as defined by local authorities (usually between 8am and 9pm weekdays, 8am to 7pm on Saturdays and 10am to 5pm on Sundays)
- noise created by someone due to a disability, vulnerability or mobility aid
- one-off parties
- BBQs and celebrations
- cooking odours and reasonable household smells (like smoke or minor car maintenance)
- a one-off argument
- minor disputes or personal differences between neighbours, this includes the use of private CCTV or trespassing.

We will manage residents' expectations when receiving reports of this nature and will provide suitable advice on how residents can resolve this difference themselves.

Some types of behaviour may be classed as breaches of tenancy/ lease, and these will be dealt with outside of this policy and managed under other policies, such as Tenancy Management, Safeguarding Adults/Children's policy

We reserve the right to not investigate historical reports (over six months old) if there have not been any recent acts of ASB.

If we decide that there is no reasonable action that can be taken to deal with the issue reported, then we will inform the complainant or witness of this decision and provide an explanation as to why.

#### **4 Aims and objectives**

- 4.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure that we deliver a consistent, effective, and resident-focused approach to community safety and ASB. It supports our strategic ambition to build successful communities, put residents first, and deliver excellent services.

This policy aims to:

- Create safe, inclusive, and respectful neighbourhoods where residents feel secure and supported.
- Ensure that all residents are listened to, treated with respect, and supported throughout the ASB process, in line with our trauma-informed approach.
- Prevent and reduce the occurrence and impact of antisocial behaviour through early intervention, education, and partnership working.
- Ensure that victims of ASB receive timely, empathetic, and effective support.
- Promote fairness, transparency, and accountability in how ASB is managed across all tenures.

## **5 Resident responsibilities**

5.1 We expect our residents to show consideration to their neighbours and community, and not to commit, or allow their family or visitors to commit acts of ASB. This includes harassment, noise nuisance, annoyance or disturbance, to other residents, their visitors or other people in the area, including colleagues and contractors.

5.2 In addition to the contractual responsibilities set out in their tenancy agreement or lease, we will encourage residents to:

- Speak to the other party when it is safe to do so - to resolve issues at an early stage.
- Be realistic about what we can do as your landlord
- Report all crimes, including threats or acts of violence, to the police
- Report all incidents of ASB, harassment and domestic abuse to us and the relevant statutory agencies such as the police or your local council
- Take responsibility for minor personal disputes with their neighbours and to try to resolve such problems themselves in a reasonable manner
- Keep in regular contact with us
- Respect other peoples' right to their chosen lifestyle and everyday reasonable level of disturbance
- Work with us to resolve ASB issues, for example by reporting incidents, providing witness statements or attending court where necessary.

## **6 Reporting of anti-social behaviour (ASB)**

6.1 We encourage all residents to report ASB promptly so that appropriate action can be taken to protect individuals and communities. We are committed to making the reporting process accessible, straightforward, and supportive.

### **How to report ASB**

6.2 Residents can report ASB through the following channels:

- Online: Via the West Kent website [westkent.org](http://westkent.org), using the [ASB reporting form](#).
- Telephone: By calling our Customer Services team on 01732 749400 during office hours.
- Email: Directly to Customer Services via [help@wkha.org.uk](mailto:help@wkha.org.uk)
- In person: At our offices – via appointment only, during estate visits at our schemes or at community engagement events.
- Third party referral: Reports may also be made by partner agencies, neighbours, or support workers with the resident's consent.
- In an emergency where there is threat to life or a crime in progress then the police should be contacted on either 999 (emergency) or 101 (non-emergency).

### What to expect when reporting

6.3 Here's what to expect when reporting ASB to us:

- Acknowledgement: All reports will be acknowledged within a set timeframe (within five working days).
- Initial assessment: A Community Safety Officer, Neighbourhood Housing Officer or Scheme Manager will assess the nature and severity of the report and determine the appropriate response.
- Support and advice: Victims will be offered support, including safety planning, signposting to specialist services, and regular updates.
- Confidentiality: Reports will be handled sensitively and confidentially, in line with data protection legislation and safeguarding protocols.
- Anonymous reports: While anonymous reports are accepted, they may limit the scope of investigation and action.

### Timeframes for initial response

6.4 Depending on the risk level of the report we will aim to contact the reporting person within the following timeframe.

Level	Type of ASB	Owner	Initial Response times
Standard	Drug and substance misuse, dogs barking, vehicle nuisance, vandalism	Neighbourhood Housing Team/ Scheme Managers	Five working days

	and damage to property.		
Medium	Drug dealing, alcohol related, criminal behaviour, cuckooing, harassment and intimidation, noise and verbal abuse.	Community Safety Team/ Scheme Mangers	Three working days
High	Hate crime, domestic abuse (managed under our <a href="#">Domestic Abuse Policy</a> ) and physical violence.	Community Safety Team	One working day

## 7 Confidentiality

- 7.1 We will make every attempt to keep the identity of those making reports of ASB confidential to the alleged perpetrator, if the complainant wishes. However, due to the nature of the incident it may be clear as to where the source of the report has come from. We will discuss this with you and talk about the process.
- 7.2 Where risk to life or serious harm is identified, we may share information without consent under lawful bases.
- 7.3 We will keep you updated with the progress of your report, however we may not be able to disclose all the action that is being taken due to confidentiality of others involved.

## 8 General data protection regulation (GDPR) and partnership working

- 8.1 Effective community safety relies on strong partnership working. West Kent collaborates with a range of agencies including:

- Local authorities
- Kent Police and community safety units
- Health and social care providers
- Support services and charities
- Other housing providers.

Information may be shared with these partners to:

- Prevent and address ASB
- Safeguard vulnerable individuals

- Support enforcement or legal action
- Coordinate multi-agency responses.

8.2 For more information on how we manage personal data, please refer to our [Privacy Policy](#).

## **9 Early intervention and non-legal tools**

9.1 We're committed to resolving ASB at the earliest opportunity, using proportionate and preventative approaches wherever possible. Early intervention helps to de-escalate issues before they worsen, reduces harm to victims, and promotes long-term community cohesion.

We aim to:

- Identify ASB concerns early through proactive estate management, tenant engagement, and data monitoring.
- Respond swiftly to initial reports with informal resolution methods where appropriate.
- Work with tenants to understand the root causes of behaviour and offer support to change it.
- Use trauma-informed and restorative approaches to promote understanding and accountability.

9.2 We may use a range of non-legal tools to address ASB, including:

- Verbal and written warnings: Issued to individuals whose behaviour breaches tenancy conditions, setting clear expectations for improvement.
- Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABAs): Voluntary agreements outlining expected conduct and consequences if behaviour continues.
- Mediation: Facilitated discussions between parties to resolve disputes and rebuild relationships.
- Support referrals: Signposting or referring individuals to support services (e.g. mental health, substance misuse, family support).
- Good neighbour agreements: Community-based agreements promoting shared values and respectful behaviour.

## **10 Enforcement**

10.1 While we prioritise early intervention and informal resolution, we recognise that enforcement action may be necessary where ASB is persistent, serious, or poses a risk to individuals or the wider community. Enforcement is used proportionately and in line with legal frameworks, our tenancy agreements, and our commitment to fairness and accountability.

- Enforcement actions will be appropriate to the severity and impact of the behaviour.
- Decisions will be based on clear, documented evidence and case history.
- The safety and wellbeing of victims will be prioritised throughout the enforcement process.

10.2 West Kent may use the following legal remedies where informal approaches have failed or are not appropriate:

- Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP): Issued under the Housing Act 1988 for breaches of tenancy due to ASB.
- Injunctions: Civil court orders to prevent further ASB, including under Part 1 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- Closure Orders: Used in partnership with the police or local authority to close premises linked to serious nuisance or disorder.
- Community Protection Notices (CPNs): Issued in collaboration with local authorities or Kent Police to address persistent ASB.
- Possession Proceedings: In extreme cases, West Kent may seek possession of a property where ASB is severe and ongoing.

10.3 Before the commencement of our own legal actions, we will complete an Equality Impact Assessment and consider our Public Sector Equality Duty to ensure that our action is proportionate and justified.

10.4 Joint enforcement actions may be taken where appropriate, supported by formal information-sharing agreements and multi-agency protocols.

## **11 Closing of a case**

11.1 We're committed to managing ASB cases thoroughly, fairly, and with clear communication. We aim to keep residents and any other necessary parties informed throughout the process and provide a clear explanation when a case is closed.

### **Resident contact before closure**

Before closing a case, West Kent will make every reasonable effort to contact the reporting party to discuss the outcome. We will use the resident's preferred method of communication. If we are unable to make contact after multiple attempts, we will send written confirmation explaining the reasons for closure and any relevant findings or actions taken.

11.2 Before closing a case, we will attempt three contacts via preferred method over 10 working days before issuing written closure.

## **Reasons for case closure**

11.3 ASB cases may be closed under the following circumstances:

- No ASB identified: Our investigation concludes that ASB has not occurred, has ceased, or the behaviour reported is not considered unreasonable.
- Actions completed: All appropriate actions have been taken, and no further intervention is required.
- Referral to another agency: The case has been passed to a more appropriate agency (e.g. police, local authority), and West Kent has no further role.
- Lack of engagement: The reporting party, victims, or witnesses do not engage with the process, or our assessment indicates that no further action is necessary.

11.4 We may also close cases where:

- The complainant fails to provide essential information needed to progress the case.
- There have been no further incidents for over 28 days
- There is insufficient evidence to support further action.
- No further action is possible due to legal or practical limitations.
- There is reasonable suspicion that the complaint is malicious or made in bad faith. This will only be concluded following a documented investigation and managerial review.

11.6 We will provide a plain-English closure summary covering findings, actions, and signposting (including information on the ASB Case Review).

### **Post-closure support**

11.4 Before closing a case we may, where appropriate, offer follow-up advice, signpost residents to support services, and explain how to report any further incidents, including where this may lead to a previously closed case being reopened.

## **12 ASB case review**

12.1 The ASB Case Review, was introduced under the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 as a measure to ensure victims of persistent antisocial behaviour receive a satisfactory response. It provides a formal route for individuals to request a multi-agency review of their case if they believe their concerns have not been adequately addressed.

- 12.2 We will publish links to each Kent local authority ASB Case Review page and confirm the current threshold (no higher than three qualifying complaints in six months) on our website. We will assist residents to collate incident logs for the review request.
- 12.3 Whilst West Kent does not have the statutory duty to undertake this process, we are committed to working with those agencies and will take part in any ASB Case Review that impacts our residents.
- 12.4 Each local authority in Kent is responsible for setting the threshold for what is considered a qualifying complaint of ASB. However, the threshold must be no higher than three qualifying complaints of ASB in a six-month period.
- 12.5 If you feel you have not had a satisfactory case outcome, we can signpost you to your local authority.

### **13 Staff training and awareness**

- 13.1 We recognise that effective management of ASB and community safety relies on knowledgeable, confident, and well-supported staff. We're committed to ensuring that all relevant staff receive appropriate training and guidance to deliver a consistent, trauma-informed, and legally compliant service.

We will:

- Provide core ASB training for all frontline housing and community safety staff, covering legislation, tenancy enforcement, case management, and safeguarding.
- Deliver specialist training on trauma-informed practice, domestic abuse, hate crime, mental health awareness, and working with vulnerable tenants.
- Ensure staff are familiar with internal policies and procedures, including reporting pathways, escalation protocols, and data protection requirements.
- Offer refresher training and updates in response to changes in legislation, best practice, or emerging trends in ASB.

### **14 Compliance and monitoring**

- 14.1 We will ensure that ASB cases are managed in line with our policy, regulatory obligations, and best practice standards. We regularly monitor casework, performance, and resident feedback to drive continuous improvement and accountability.

#### **Case monitoring**

- 14.2 All active ASB cases are monitored to ensure timely progress and appropriate action.

14.3 Residents will be kept informed throughout the case, with regular updates provided via their preferred communication method.

14.4 Case reviews are undertaken by the Tenancy Services Manager or Community Safety Manager to ensure consistency and quality of response.

#### **Audit and oversight**

14.5 The Community Safety Manager will carry out regular audits of ASB case files to assess compliance with this policy and identify areas for improvement.

14.6 Findings from audits may inform staff training, procedural updates, and service enhancements.

### **15 Performance reporting**

15.1 Where required, we will review and report on ASB and hate crime, concerns to our Executive team, Board members and the Regulator of Social Housing.

15.2 This includes analysis of case outcomes, response times, tenant satisfaction, and trends in ASB reporting.

15.3 We will report to our Executive Team and board the following KPI's on a quarterly basis:

- First contact within target (% by risk band)
- Average days to first action and case resolution
- % cases with vulnerability assessment completed
- Enforcement actions by type (and % with EIA)
- Resident satisfaction with ASB service (post closure)
- Repeat incidents within 90 days (rate).

#### **Resident feedback**

15.4 We will seek feedback from residents who have used our ASB service to understand their experience and identify opportunities to improve. This feedback will be:

- Collected through surveys
- Analysed and reported internally
- Used to shape future service delivery and policy development.

### **16 Regulation**

16.1 This policy supports West Kent's compliance with national legislation and regulatory standards relating to hate crime, ASB, and community safety. This policy also supports

West Kent's compliance with the Neighbourhood and Community Standard set out by the Regulator of Social Housing, which requires registered providers to:

- Work with partners to promote safe and sustainable neighbourhoods
- Respond effectively to ASB and hate incidents
- Engage with residents and use their feedback to improve services.

16.2 This policy also supports delivery of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) relating to ASB and neighbourhood management

16.3 Our approach is also informed by key legislation including the Equality Act 2010, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

## **17 Consultation**

17.1 We're committed to ensuring that residents' voices shape our approach to community safety. During the review of this policy, we engaged residents through focus groups and feedback sessions to understand their experiences and priorities regarding ASB.

17.2 We will continue to invite resident involvement through policy reviews, consultation activities, and ongoing feedback opportunities. This input will inform future revisions, improve how the policy is applied in practice, and help us better meet the needs of the communities we serve.

### **How resident feedback influenced this policy**

17.3 After consulting with residents, we:

- Clarified what is and is not considered ASB to manage expectations and reduce unnecessary escalation.
- Emphasised early intervention and trauma-informed practice, reflecting residents' desire for supportive, preventative measures.
- Strengthened our commitment to multi-agency working and victim-centred responses, ensuring that enforcement is proportionate and safeguarding remains a priority.
- Set out clear communication standards and timelines for case updates.

## **18 Review**

18.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Community Safety Manager and Head of Housing, unless legislation, business or sector developments require otherwise, to ensure that it continues to meet the stated objectives and takes account of good practice developments.