

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STATEMENT OF POLICY

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DOCUMENT CONTENTS	Page
Statement of Policy update	1
Introduction	2
Respect Standard for Housing Management	2
Statement of Approach:	
▪ To be proactive in preventing anti-social behaviour	3
▪ To support victims and witnesses	4
▪ To adopt a multi-agency approach to tackling & preventing anti-social behaviour	6
▪ To work in partnership with other agencies where anti-social is carried out by children/young people	7
▪ To support vulnerable perpetrators	7
Disability Discrimination Act	8
Confidentiality	8
Data Protection and Information Exchange	8
Statement of Policy:	
▪ Anti-Social Behaviour Policy – main Points	10
▪ Hate Incidents Policy - main points	13
▪ Domestic Abuse Policy – main points	15
▪ Equality & Diversity Framework – main points	17
Anti-Social Behaviour Service Standards	20
Range of Anti-Social Behaviour Services	21
Anti-Social Behaviour Good Practice Guides	23
Policy Statement Feedback Form	

TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Statement of Policy Update

This Statement complies with the requirements of the Housing Corporation Statutory Guidance: 'Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure', August 2004.

The Policy Statement has been updated to take account of The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Respect Standard for Housing Management, August 2006.

The Policy Statement also recognises the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 in relation to incidents of anti-social behaviour, which may arise from a person's disability.

We want to ensure that our Statements of Policy and Procedure remain current and that our customers have an ongoing opportunity to contribute to development.

This is the second review of our Anti-Social Behaviour Statements of Policy and Procedure.

- In 2006 we consulted, through our Service Review Group, on aspects of policy and procedure.
- In 2008 we consulted, through our Service Review Group, on the support that we provide to victims and witnesses.
- In 2008, we consulted with victims of anti-social behaviour on Service Standards.

We have introduced the following initiatives since the initial development of our Statements of Policy and Procedure:

- 24 hour ASB Report Line
- Mobile Noise Monitoring Equipment
- Mobile CCTV Equipment
- Hand held voice recording equipment for complainant evidence collection
- Mobile hearing loops
- Officers are now trained to prepare and present Injunctions in court
- Signing up to the Respect Standard
- Partner organisation in the Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership (HCSDP) Information Sharing Protocol
- RSL representative on the county wide Multi-Agency Tasking Group (which reports to HCSDP)
- Membership of the House Mark Anti-Social Behaviour Benchmarking Club
- Carbonised ASB Complainant Action Plan Template

TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

1. Introduction

This Statement is for our residents and for others in the communities in which we work. It sets out our commitment to tackling anti-social behaviour, the ways in which we will do this and our policy objectives.

We have also published an Anti-Social Behaviour Procedure Statement, which provides information on the action we will take when receiving a report of anti-social behaviour.

Summary documents outlining the key points of the Procedure Statement and the Policy Statement are also available.

We have separate but linked documents covering the following:

- Hate Incidents Policy and Procedure
- Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure
- Equality and Diversity Framework 2008-2011

2. Respect Standard for Housing Management

The basic aim of the Government's RESPECT agenda is to ensure that local agencies tackle unacceptable behaviour and its causes to improve the quality of life for residents.

The Respect Standard for Housing Management forms part of this wider agenda. It is a voluntary standard aimed at social landlords such as Herefordshire Housing. The Standard is built around six core commitments:

1. Accountability, leadership and commitment
2. Empowering and reassuring residents
3. Prevention and early intervention
4. Tailored services for residents and provision of support for victims and witnesses
5. Protecting communities through swift enforcement action
6. Support to tackle the causes of anti-social behaviour

Taken together, and through working in partnership with others, these commitments promote an effective response to anti-social behaviour and help to create a culture of respect.

To demonstrate our intention to do everything that is reasonably possible to tackle anti-social behaviour and deliver a high quality service, we have signed up to the Government's Respect Standard.

TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - STATEMENT OF APPROACH

Introduction

We are committed to tackling and reducing anti-social behaviour in the communities and neighbourhoods in which we operate and will take every opportunity to work in partnership with other agencies to achieve this.

We aim to achieve a balance between enforcement, prevention and rehabilitation.

Our response to anti-social behaviour will be appropriate and proportionate. We will use the legal and contractual powers available to us to take action where our residents are either the victims or perpetrators of anti-social behaviour.

Our approach to nuisance and anti-social behaviour is:

1. To be proactive in preventing anti-social behaviour
2. To support our residents who are experiencing anti-social behaviour, their families and any witnesses
3. To access appropriate support services where there may be vulnerabilities or underlying factors contributing to the anti-social behaviour
4. To adopt a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour

1. To be proactive in preventing anti-social behaviour

We have two specialist Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and dedicated software – ReACT - for the recording and monitoring of ASB activity.

- We will take early action to prevent a problem of anti-social behaviour from escalating.
- We will work in partnership with others to engage young people in diversionary activities aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour, for example:
 - 'Crucial Crew.' This is an annual event organised by the Police, which is attended by every 'Year 6' child in the county. It aims to raise children's awareness around issues such as drugs, bullying and anti-social behaviour.
 - 'ASBO' CD. HHL are currently working with the police and a local school to produce an ASBO CD. The students have written a song discouraging anti-social behaviour. This will be recorded, together with another song on this theme, written and performed by a local young rock band. The CD will be promoted using local media, community based offices and 'Crucial Crew.'

- We will undertake pre-allocation visits to prospective tenants to ensure that, where there may be vulnerabilities, which may contribute to anti-social behaviour, support mechanisms are put in place aimed at managing this risk and thereby promoting successful tenancy sustainment.
- We will ensure that, at sign-up, new tenants are made aware of clauses in their Tenancy Agreement relating to nuisance, discrimination and other harassment.
- We will ensure that, at sign-up, new tenants receive Summary Anti-Social Behaviour Statements in their tenancy packs.
- We will visit new HHL tenants within 28 days of the commencement of their tenancy so that we can respond swiftly to any potential problems.
- We have an arrangement with Herefordshire Mediation and will use their services as a means of dispute resolution, where this is appropriate and we will pay the costs of this service. Mediation can be an effective preventative tool that can prevent problems escalating and thereby become more difficult to resolve. It has the potential to provide a solution much more quickly than legal action, which can be a lengthy and expensive process, with no guarantee of an end result that will satisfy the people concerned.
- We will work with other agencies, RSLs and residents groups to find solutions to anti-social behaviour, where it is appropriate to do so.
- We will use Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) as a means of engaging an individual in acknowledging his / her anti-social behaviour and its effects on others, with the aim of stopping that behaviour.
- We have a Lettings Policy, which enables us to exclude those applicants who have been evicted from a social housing tenancy for anti-social behaviour, or against whom a civil or criminal court has made a judgement in relation to serious anti-social behaviour.
- We have implemented a Local Lettings Policy as a specific lettings initiative. The Local Lettings Policy is intended to help to create a more balanced and sustainable community and at reducing the high incidents of anti-social behaviour and neighbour disputes on the estate.

2. Support for our residents experiencing anti-social behaviour, their families and any witnesses

We are aware that some people will have concerns about coming forward and reporting anti-social behaviour, particularly if they fear that this could result in intimidation if their identity is revealed. Others may have concerns about acting as witnesses in any legal action, which might arise as a consequence of their complaints.

We will do all that we can to support our residents who are experiencing anti-social behaviour, their families and any witnesses. To achieve this:

- We will provide a service where complainants can contact us 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to report an anti-social behaviour incident.
- We will fully support victims, their families and any witnesses by taking a complainant centred approach.
- We will advise victims of the support services that we and other agencies such as the Police, mediation services and Victim Support can provide.
- We will make referrals to Victim Support, as appropriate to the wishes of the victim.
- We will work in partnership with any other specialist organisations or agencies, as appropriate to an individual's needs.
- We will ensure that we have access to interpreters and signers and use appropriate formats of communication for anyone who has difficulty reading or writing English.
- We will discuss all action to be taken with the complainant, give an explanation of the options available to us, including likely outcomes, set this down in an agreed Action Plan and provide a copy.
- We will maintain appropriate confidentiality and will seek the victim's permission before contacting the alleged perpetrator.
- We will provide regular updates on progress from the onset of the case to case closure and beyond, if appropriate.
- We will always try to minimise the burden on complainants in collecting evidence through:
 - The short focussed use of log sheets, rather than their prolonged use with no clear outcomes.
 - The use of hand-held voice recording and noise monitoring equipment and CCTV, where appropriate.
- We will enable the provision of increased security, where this is considered necessary by applying, on the tenant's behalf, for a police Home Security Check. We will take all reasonable steps to comply with any resulting recommendations. For occupants of HHL leasehold properties we will provide advice and support and, where appropriate, liaise with other agencies in this respect.

- Where court action is taken:
 - We will provide transport to court for witnesses, pay expenses for refreshments and child care and any other reasonable costs, where these are needed to facilitate the attendance at Court of the witness
 - We will arrange for an accompanied visit to court, prior to attendance, to familiarise witnesses with the court environment and proceedings
- We will aim to create a climate where people feel confident in coming forward with information, but should complainants wish to remain anonymous we will still investigate the complaint. However, we also have a responsibility to ensure that complainants are aware that, if they wish to remain anonymous, this may limit the types of action that we are able to take.
- We will not move complainants or perpetrators as a means of resolving an anti-social behaviour case; we will deal with the anti-social behaviour. The only exception to this is in very extreme situations where there are fears for the tenant's safety. The recommendations of statutory agencies such as the Police will be required in considering such a move. For occupants of HHL leasehold properties we will offer support and provide information about the potential options available to them.

3. To adopt a multi-agency approach to tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour

- We represent RSLs in the county on the Multi Agency Tasking Group. This is a 'problem solving' group, led by the Police, where agencies work together to deliver a co-ordinated response to specific problems of anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.
- We work in partnership with the Police, Herefordshire Council and the other signatories to the Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership Information Sharing Protocol.
- We will work with the Police and other agencies, as appropriate, to tackle specific 'hot spots' of anti-social behaviour and criminal activity. For example, in partnership with the Herefordshire Community Policing Board we provided 'SmartWater' kits to residents on an estate, which had been targeted by burglars.
- We will, where relevant legal powers are not available to HHL, work in partnership with those statutory agencies with whom such power resides in order to meet the aims and principles set by this policy.

4. To work in partnership with other agencies where anti-social is carried out by children/young people

Where the anti-social behaviour is carried out by a child of a tenant, checks will be made with the Youth Offending Team and Social Services to find out if the person is known to them. Liaison will always take place with any allocated caseworker and where practicable the parent, guardian or other appropriate adult. Interviews with the young person will also be conducted in the presence of one, or a number of these adults, as appropriate.

We will use Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) as an agreed means of controlling the anti-social behaviour of children, except in situations in which this is unlikely to be the most effect option.

We recognise that in some cases where an ABC is being drawn up, it may also be appropriate to consider a Parenting Contract, which reflects the ABCs requirements.

5. To access appropriate support services where there may be vulnerabilities or underlying factors contributing to the anti-social behaviour

We will work with support agencies when a complaint of anti-social behaviour is made against an alleged perpetrator who is vulnerable, with the intention of encouraging a positive change in their behaviour. We will make it clear, however, that if they refuse to engage with this support, we may take legal action to enforce the conditions of tenancy.

a) We recognise the positive impact that support can have on reducing anti-social behaviour, particularly where this may be a consequence of:

- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Mental health
- Disability
- Learning difficulties
- Lack of experience in independent living / underdeveloped life skills

Where any of the above may be an issue we will call a case conference of all relevant specialist agencies to enable the provision of a suitable support package.

We will also ensure that, where accusations of anti-social behaviour are made against those who may be vulnerable or there are underlying factors contributing to the anti-social behaviour, fair and equitable treatment is received and that full account of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act is taken.

Disability Discrimination Act 2005

If there is reason to believe that a perpetrator of anti-social behaviour may be suffering from a disability, which can include mental illness, we have to ensure that our actions comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

In making a decision on whether or not to proceed with any legal action we must consider whether the perpetrator is suffering from a disability.

The questions that need to be considered before taking further legal action relate to the following:

- Is the anti-social behaviour symptomatic of the disability?
- Can the perpetrator control their behaviour?
- Is the health and safety of the complainant or their neighbours at risk?

In responding to these questions it may be necessary for us to involve specialist professionals to establish whether the anti-social behaviour is the result of a disability and to recommend, or potentially enable multi-agency support and intervention to bring about a solution.

Confidentiality

Our policy is to ensure that complainant's are made fully aware of the issues around confidentiality. We will maintain appropriate confidentiality and will seek the victim's permission before contacting the alleged perpetrator.

If the complainant does not wish their name to be divulged to the alleged perpetrator we will respect this. However, we also have a responsibility to ensure that complainant's are aware:

- That this may limit the potential remedial action that they are able to take, in particular, serious action such as legal proceedings are unlikely to be possible without witness statements.
- That if specific allegations are to be put to the alleged perpetrator the source may be readily identifiable.

Data Protection and Information Exchange

We will ensure that all information is processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Company's Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy and Procedure.

Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act enables all relevant authorities (the Partners) to disclose information between them for the purposes of the Act, which is to tackle crime and disorder and create safer communities.

We are a partner organisation in the Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership Information Sharing Protocol. Information may, from time to time, be exchanged between the signatory partners. Any information exchanged will always be kept confidential by the agencies concerned and will only be used for the purposes that it was supplied.

POLICY STATEMENT
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY – MAIN POINTS

1. Introduction

HHL condemns all nuisance and anti-social behaviour and will not tolerate any such behaviour, whether perpetrated by residents, its employees, or anyone contracted to work on its behalf.

HHL's Tenancy Agreement includes a specific clause, which clearly states that the tenant, anyone living with, or visiting the tenant, must not cause, or enter into any activity likely to cause a nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to any person living in, or otherwise engaging in lawful activity in the locality of the tenant's home. All Leases issued by HHL also contain similar clauses.

2. Definitions

Anti-Social behaviour is defined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as:

- i. *'Acting in a manner that caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as himself.'*
- ii. Anti-social behaviour is defined in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 as conduct which:
 - *conduct, which is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person; and directly or indirectly relates to, or affects the housing management function of a relevant landlord; or*
 - *conduct, which consists of, or involves using or threatening to use housing accommodation owned or managed by a relevant landlord for any unlawful purposes*

This behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

- Any drug related offences from a property or within the locality.
- Violence or threats of violence.
- Damage to property, including graffiti and vandalism.
- Verbal abuse.
- Excessive noise nuisance.
- Littering, fly-tipping, rubbish dumping and misuse of communal areas.
- Nuisance from vehicles.

- Nuisance from animals.

Individual perceptions of anti-social behaviour can include a wide variety of activities. The following are examples of the types of every day living noise that would not, under normal circumstances, be considered to constitute anti-social behaviour and will not, therefore, be investigated under the terms of this policy.

- Mowing of lawns.
- Vacuuming or noise from domestic appliances, such as washing machines.
- Children playing.
- Walking across a wooden floor.

3. Our Responsibilities

We will do the following:

- We will respond quickly to reports of anti-social behaviour, recognising that this can help to prevent situations from escalating.
- We will take action that is reasonable and proportionate to the type of anti-social behaviour that has been reported and appropriate to the available evidence.
- We will deal with all reported incidents sensitively, fairly and impartially.

4. Complainants Responsibilities

We have the following expectations of complainants in working with us to help resolve the anti-social behaviour they have reported to us:

- To respond to our telephone calls and/or letters without undue delay.
- To be available for agreed pre-arranged meetings or home visits.
- To provide and/or collect information about the nuisance so that we can take appropriate action.

5. Obligations of Tenants and Occupants of HHL Leasehold Properties

HHL leaseholders are responsible for abiding by the terms of their lease and must not cause nuisance or annoyance to their neighbours, visitors, or anyone conducting lawful activity in the vicinity of their property. HHL leaseholders are also responsible for ensuring that any occupants of sub-let leasehold properties also abide by these conditions.

Herefordshire Housing's tenancy agreement sets out the following obligations on its tenants:

Nuisance, Discrimination and Other Harassment

You (or anyone living with you or visiting your home or locality, including children) must not:

- i. Cause, or enter into any activity likely to cause, a nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to any person living in, visiting or otherwise engaging in a lawful activity in the locality of your home.
- ii. Commit any form of harassment on the grounds of race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation or disability, which may interfere with the peace and comfort of, or cause offence to, a person residing, visiting or otherwise engaging in a lawful activity in their home or in the locality.
- iii. Inflict violence or threaten violence against any other person living with you or living elsewhere.
- iv. Harass or carry out mental or sexual abuse that makes anyone who lives with you leave the home.
- v. Use or threaten to use violence or abusive or insulting words or behaviour towards any other person, including our employees, agents or contractors or anyone on official business at any place or at any time.
- vi. Play or allow to be played any radio, television, record, tape recording or musical instrument or operate any other equipment so loudly that it causes a nuisance, disturbance or annoyance to neighbours or can be heard outside your home.

Full details of our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy can be found in our separate policy document

TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR HATE INCIDENTS POLICY - MAIN POINTS

1. Introduction

This policy forms part of Herefordshire Housing's equality and diversity agenda as set out in our Equality and Diversity Framework 2008-2011. Its specific purpose is to clearly identify the aims and principles, which will apply in respect to hate incidents and how we will respond to reports of any such occurrences.

Hate incidents refers, in this context, to a range of criminal and/or offensive behaviours motivated by hostility towards someone because of his or her race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

2. Policy Statement

Herefordshire Housing condemns all forms of hate incidents and will not tolerate any such behaviour, whether perpetrated by its tenants, its residents, its employees, or anyone contracted to carry out work on its behalf.

The policy and its associated procedure have been drawn up to comply with the recommendations made in the following:

- Tackling Racial Harassment: Code of Practice for Social Landlords
- Housing Corporation Good Practice Note 8: Equality and Diversity
- CRE Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing (England)
- Housing and Disability Equality Duty
- Home Office Code of Practice on Reporting and Recording Racist Incidents

3. Definitions

A hate incident is where the perpetrator's prejudice against any identifiable group of people is a factor in determining who is victimised.

A hate crime is a crime in which the perpetrator's conduct is motivated, in whole or in part, by hatred, bias or prejudice, based upon the actual or perceived race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief of another individual or group.

For the purposes of this policy and its associated procedure we will adopt the same definitions of hate crime and hate incidents as used in the publication 'Hate Crime: Delivering a Quality Service,' Association of Chief Police Officers.

i. A Hate Incident is defined as:

'Any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate.'

ii. A Hate Crime is defined as:

'Any incident, which constitutes a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate.

The above are broad and inclusive definitions. The emphasis is placed on the perception of the victim or any other person and as such, for the purposes of this policy, they also encompass any actions or series of actions perceived by the victim, or any other person to constitute harassment that is driven by prejudice or hatred.

4. Hate Incidents

Hate incidents can take many forms. The following list constitutes examples only and is not intended to be exhaustive:

- Physical assaults and threats.
- Damaging or threatening to damage property or possessions, the dumping of rubbish or other offensive materials in the victim's home, garden or surrounding area.
- Verbal abuse, derogatory or unwelcome remarks, including the use of negative stereotypes of particular groups, inappropriate language and 'jokes.'
- Threatening or abusive letters, telephone calls, texts or e-mails.
- Racist or hate related graffiti, defacing notices or posters, the display and/or circulation of offensive written or printed literature/material.

5. Implementation

In order to meet the aims and principles that the Harassment and Hate Crime/Hate Incidents Policy sets out HHL will:

- Support victims and witnesses.
- Work in a multi-agency environment.
- Undertake preventative activity and widely publicise information relating to our policy on harassment and hate crime/hate incidents.
- Take enforcement action against perpetrators.
- Ensure that all HHL colleagues dealing with harassment and hate crime/hate incidents are fully trained.
- Set performance targets and undertake performance monitoring.

Full details of our Hate Incidents Policy can be found in our separate policy document

TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY - MAIN POINTS

1. Introduction

Herefordshire Housing believes that none of its tenants should live in fear of domestic abuse and will take steps to assist and support any tenant in this situation.

Domestic abuse is defined as violent behaviour, actual or threatened, within a family or relationship context. It includes not only physical and sexual abuse but also behaviour which is threatening to a person's mental or emotional health. The perpetrator may or may not reside at the tenant's home.

The Company's aim is to ensure that Herefordshire Housing tenants experiencing domestic abuse receive a fair, sympathetic and supportive service and, within the constraints of the law and the resources available to it, are provided with all reasonable assistance in helping to resolve their situation.

2. Implementation

In order to meet the aims and principles of this policy, Herefordshire Housing will:

- Adopt a victim-centred approach whereby all actions are directed to providing the necessary support and protection to the victim
- Ensure that tenants experiencing domestic abuse have access to appropriate advice about their housing options and about their legal rights and responsibilities
- Ensure that, through liaison with specialist agencies such as Women's Aid, victims of domestic abuse have access to appropriate support.
- Make referrals, as appropriate, to West Mercia Constabulary Domestic Violence Unit and to Herefordshire Women's Aid Outreach Support Project.
- Be guided by the wishes of the victim in determining the most appropriate course of action in responding to reported incidents
- Take firm action against perpetrators of domestic abuse, as appropriate to individual circumstances and within the legal framework available to the Company. This may include possession proceedings where other members of the household have left the home as a consequence of the domestic abuse.
- Respect confidentiality and ensure that all information obtained is treated in accordance with the Company's Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy.
- Where the tenant wishes to remain in occupation of their current home, enable the provision of increased security by applying, on their behalf, for a police Home Security Check and take reasonable steps to comply with these recommendations.

Where more substantial works are required, and as appropriate, we will make a referral to the Local Authority Homelessness Prevention Team's 'Sanctuary' Project.

- To make those at risk of domestic abuse aware of the services of the Careline Emergency Alarm service and to make this available as required.
- Abide by the principles of multi-agency collaborative working.

Full details of our Domestic Abuse Policy can be found in our separate policy document.

TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR EQUALITY & DIVERSITY FRAMEWORK 2008-2011 - MAIN POINTS

1. Introduction

The Equality & Diversity Framework is an overarching document that incorporates our Equality & Diversity Action Plan, Equal Opportunities Policies for Service Delivery and Employment, as well as our approach to discrimination, harassment and domestic abuse.

Our Equalities Framework will be reviewed every three years and performance against our targets will be reported to our Board regularly. The Action Plan will be reviewed quarterly by the Diversity Working Group and progress communicated via our intranet, website and tenant newsletter.

We recognise that different communities and neighbourhoods have different needs and our aim is to treat everyone fairly. We are committed to providing equality of opportunity in all areas of our business – service delivery, customer consultation, employment and governance. By setting out our future plans in this open and transparent way, we hope to make Herefordshire an even better place to live and work.

Our values - the things we hold dear - which are based on teamwork, customer focus, continuous improvement and being passionate about diversity. These will be central to our approach in delivering this plan and reviewing it in the future.

The Framework has been prepared by the Diversity Working Group in consultation with Herefordshire Council's Equality & Diversity Team, the Rainbow Forum, Herefordshire Carers' Support, Age Concern, ABLE, Mencap, Mind and Women's' Aid.

2. Our definitions of Equality and Diversity

Whilst there are no universally agreed definitions of Equality or Diversity, the two terms are used frequently and we need to ensure that we have a shared understanding of what they mean.

Equality is about breaking down the barriers that block opportunities for certain groups of people. Equality policies aim to identify and minimize the barriers that exclude people and take action to ensure equal access to services and employment opportunities.

Elimination of discrimination is also important in achieving equality since it is not just the physical environment or poor policies that prevents equality from being achieved but also ways of working, and the attitudes towards and stereotypes about different groups of people.

Herefordshire Housing has adopted the definition of equality as being:

Equality – everyone being able to enjoy the same opportunities whilst free from discrimination

Diversity is about recognising the differences between different groups of people, celebrating these differences and managing different needs appropriately. Managing diversity effectively means that every individual has a better chance of being able to live and work in the way that works best for them. This reduces the risk of indirect discrimination against groups of people and allows better access to opportunities for all.

Herefordshire Housing has adopted the definition of diversity as being:

Diversity – understanding, respecting and celebrating the differences between people

3. Our Commitment in Service Delivery Equality and Diversity Policy

This policy relates to Herefordshire Housing's activities as a provider of housing and other services. It also applies to services provided on its behalf by contractors and consultants.

At the heart of our Equality and Diversity Policy is a commitment to valuing diversity, treating people with dignity and respect, eliminating discrimination and promoting social cohesion.

In addition to legislative requirements, we expect all colleagues employed at Herefordshire Housing to promote the spirit of our Equality and Diversity Policy and to recognise that they have a duty not to discriminate against anyone in carrying out their duties.

We will not tolerate acts that breach this duty and all cases of such behaviour, or alleged behaviour, will be taken seriously, be fully investigated and, if proven, may be subject to our disciplinary procedures.

4. Our Aims

- We will actively contribute to achieving the vision of the Herefordshire Equality Partnership
- We will promote equality of opportunity in all that we do and promote good relations between people in our diverse communities
- We will ensure that the needs of our diverse communities are identified and taken into account in the planning and delivery of our services.
- We will work towards the elimination of harassment on our estates, supporting victims and taking action against perpetrators.
- We will work towards increasing the representation of residents from hard to reach groups in our customer involvement activities.
- We will ensure that membership of the Board and its committees adequately reflects the local community.

- We will ensure that the information we provide is accessible to service users, in languages and/or formats that they can understand.
- We will provide an accessible service by removing or altering any physical barriers to access.

Full details of our Equality & Diversity Framework can be found in our separate strategy document

TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – SERVICE STANDARDS

The following Customer Service Standards have been adopted following consultation with residents who had been victims of anti-social behaviour.

1. Our commitments are that:

- We will provide a service where you can contact us 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to report an incident.
- We will make contact with you to follow up on your complaint within 3 working days of your initial report, and in the case of hate incidents, domestic abuse, violence or threats of violence within 1 working day, and at a minimum of weekly thereafter.
- We will inform you of the available options to resolve your complaint, agree an action plan with you and provide you with a copy.
- We will discuss with you any support needs that you may have and provide you with information on available support agencies.
- We will remove racist or hate-related graffiti from HHL property within 2 working days of a report to us.
- We will, when we close a case, confirm this with you and explain the reasons.

2. Monitoring these Service Standards

We will send you a satisfaction survey when a case has been closed so that we can monitor satisfaction with the services we provide. In addition we will monitor performance against these service standards using the following:

- Mystery Shopping
- Reports taken from our databases

We will report the results of our performance monitoring against these standards annually to our Board and publish the results in the Tenant Newsletter 'In Vision' and on our website www.hhl.org.uk

TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – RANGE OF SERVICES

More detailed operational information is contained in our Anti-Social Behaviour Statement of Procedure.

All Officers who respond to reported incidents of anti-social behaviour are located in the Tenancy Services Team.

1. Specialist Anti-Social Behaviour Officers

In order to provide the most effective service that we can, we have two specialist Anti-Social Behaviour Officers, who take on the more serious anti-social behaviour cases.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Officers are fully trained in dealing with all aspects of anti-social behaviour. They work closely with Housing Officers, the police and other relevant agencies; taking preventative and legal action to ensure that we give out a strong message that anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated.

2. Housing Officers

There are also seven full time equivalent Housing Officers who each have responsibility for a specific geographical area or 'patch.' Housing Officers deal with less serious cases of anti-social behaviour. There is regular liaison between Housing Officers and ASB Officers in relation to case management.

3. Out of Hours ASB Line

We recognise that anti-social behaviour is not limited to 9:00-5:00, so we have set up the above service. The service is available from 5:15 pm to 8:45 am, Monday to Friday and all weekend. Tel: (01432) 384 186.

The service enables complainants to speak to one of our Operators, who will take the details and provide advice. The conversation will be recorded, which could in some circumstances potentially provide evidence relating to the complaint.

4. Multi-Agency Working and Partnerships

Multi-agency working is vital to a successful response to anti-social behaviour. We represent the RSLs operating in Herefordshire on the Multi-Agency Tasking Group, which reports to the Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership (HCSDP).

Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and Housing Officers also work in partnership with other agencies to promote successful solutions to specific anti-social behaviour cases. As appropriate, this may involve joint working with the police, local authorities, youth offending teams, schools, community mental health services, social services and probation services.

5. Cross-Tenure Issues

Anyone can be a victim or perpetrator of anti-social behaviour, regardless of whether they live in owner-occupied accommodation, private-rented or social housing. We will work with partner organisations to find effective solutions where anti-social behaviour is a cross-tenure issue and our residents are either the victims or perpetrators of such activity.

In appropriate circumstances we will take specific cross-tenure anti-social behaviour cases to the Tasking Group. This will enable the group membership to agree a joint plan of action and deliver a multi-agency response to tackle the problem.

6. Officer Training

Officer training needs are fully evaluated on an on-going basis. This is achieved through one-to-one meetings between the Tenancy Services Manager and Officers dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour and through the Colleague Support Scheme (CSS) and the Colleague Development Scheme (CDS).

TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE

	Title	Published by	Description
1.	Evidence: A Step by Step Guide www.respect.gov.uk	Home Office, April 2006	Provides practical & detailed information & advice on evidence collection; includes standards of proof and legal jargon
2.	Anti-Social Behaviour Tools & Powers www.respect.gov.uk	Home Office, Youth Justice Board, Association of Chief Police Officers, May 2008	The Table of Tools & Powers in Section 1 provides a summary of the available interventions, the legislative & the supportive measure that can be implemented alongside enforcement tools. This is followed by detailed descriptions of the measures available for tackling anti-social behaviour.
3.	How best to support witnesses, A Guide www.respect.gov.uk	Home Office, November 2006	Basic, but useful guide.
4.	Supporting Victims & Witnesses in ASB Court Cases: A Comprehensive Guide to the Civil Courts www.respect.gov.uk	Home Office, May 2008	The guidance is intended for a universal readership, but contains more detailed information for expert practitioners.
5.	Anti-Social Behaviour: Good Practice Guide www.housingcorp.gov.uk	Housing Corporation, March 2007	Very comprehensive document (142 pages) It is designed to be used as a 'toolkit' rather than a text book to be read from cover to cover. The toolkit is divided primarily into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 'problem pages' e.g. those relating to nuisance from noise, pets and animals, gardens etc. through to verbal abuse, threatening behaviour & violence, drugs, alcohol & substance misuse etc. ii. Practical pages e.g. working with residents, effective interviewing, collecting evidence, legal tools & remedies, victim & witness support etc.
6.	Behind closed doors: Providing services to those at risk of domestic violence www.housingcorp.gov.uk	Housing Corporation, September 2008	The guidance provides a range of practical suggestions. Appendix 1 provides useful information on supportive national organisations & Appendix 2 provides information on domestic abuse and the law.

**TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR
POLICY STATEMENT - YOUR VIEWS**

We are always seeking to improve our public information and would welcome your opinions on the presentation and content of this document.

Please let us know what you think, including your views on any additional information that you would like to see included. We will take your comments into account at the next Anti-Social Behaviour Review.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

Name/s: _____

Address: _____

_____ Tel: _____

Your Comments: _____

Would you like to be involved in any future consultation about anti-social behaviour?

Yes No

Please return your completed form to:

Tenancy Services Manager
Herefordshire Housing Ltd
FREEPOST NAT18521
Hereford, HR1 1BR