

Processing the Complaint

If the complaint is in writing then Yarlington Housing Group will acknowledge it within 3 days with details of who is dealing with the case and initial arrangements for investigating the matter. If the complaint was reported on the telephone or in person to the Neighbourhood Officer, then this would have been confirmed at the time of the discussion. The Neighbourhood Officer will keep the tenant informed of progress relating to the complaint.

The complainant's view will be taken into account in deciding what action will be taken. All complaints will be documented and monitored.

Supporting the Complainant and Witnesses

Those making complaints about anti-social behaviour will be supported by Yarlington Housing Group and support will be provided in a number of ways appropriate to the situation and the needs of the complainant. These could include access to counselling services and other agencies that are able to give additional practical, specialist or emotional support and advice. Protection measures such as alarms and new locks will also be considered. In serious cases, the offer of temporary or even permanent re-housing can be considered.

Racial and Other Harassment and Domestic Violence

Harassment for reasons of race, age, gender or other reasons would be considered anti-social behaviour. Yarlington Housing Group has a specific Racial Harassment Policy and Procedure.

Domestic violence committed by a tenant or family member or visitors, which falls within the definition of ASB will be treated seriously in terms of support to victims as well as action against perpetrators.

Confidentiality

Yarlington Housing Group has a confidentiality policy and will treat all information provided by complainants with care and full regard to those individuals.



Tenant information

Tackling Anti-social Behaviour Together

Help with this leaflet

If you would like any of our leaflets in large print, Braille or Audio CD, please contact us on 01935 404623.

Yarlington Housing Group is a member of Language Line.

Language Line Services is a global interpreting and translation company, it enables organisations to communicate effectively with people of all nationalities.



Tackling Anti-social Behaviour Together

At Yarlington Housing Group, we are committed to working within communities to create safe and attractive environments for people to live in. This leaflet explains what we are doing to prevent anti-social behaviour and the options available if you are experiencing problems due to anti-social behaviour.

Introduction

Yarlington Housing Groups' tenants have told their landlord that dealing with nuisance and anti-social behaviour is an important issue for them. This is reflected in the policy and methods that Yarlington Housing Group will adopt in tackling anti-social behaviour.

What is Anti-social Behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour is defined 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 Yarlington Housing Group; or
- Consists of or involves using or threatening to use housing accommodation owned or managed by Yarlington Housing Group for an unlawful purpose.

A list of examples of anti-social behaviour includes:

- Noise nuisance.
- Intimidation and harassment.
- The fouling of public areas.
- Aggressive and threatening language and behaviour.
- Actual violence against people.
- Writing graffiti and in particular graffiti which is abusive, threatening or insulting.

- Damage or threat of damage to property.
- Hate behaviour that targets members of identified groups because of perceived differences.
- Using housing accommodation to sell drugs, or for other unlawful purposes.

Preventing Anti-social Behaviour

Yarlington Housing Group is a signatory to the Government's Respect Standard for Housing Management and is committed to investing in the communities of South Somerset and working with other agencies in initiatives that help prevent ASB.

Such initiatives include:

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts

Yarlington Housing Group has been very successful in using Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) in dealing with anti-social behaviour involving young people. Yarlington Housing Group has set up over 132 ABCs and this has seen dramatic improvements in ASB on some estates. All members of the family attend the interview together with the local Neighbourhood Officer and Police Officer. As well as exploring the reasons for the behaviour, discussing the complaints and getting everyone to sign up for acceptable behaviour in the future, the needs of the family are also identified and support, advice and details of positive activities for young people are given to the family.

Yarlington Housing Group contributes towards the costs of Police Community Support Officers in Yeovil as part of our commitment to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.

Multi Agency Working

Yarlington Housing Group worked closely with the Police, local authority (particularly the Community Safety Officer) as part of crime reduction and community safety partnerships. In the St John's Road area of Yeovil a crime reduction initiative centred on a large sheltered housing scheme and was developed by Yarlington Housing Group in conjunction with the Police, and local authority. The project won a national award for its partnership approach and contribution to reducing crime.

Taking Action Against Anti-social Behaviour

The action that Yarlington Housing Group will take depends on the severity and the type of anti-social behaviour. We will start by talking to people who are causing problems.

Restorative Justice works to resolve conflict and repair harm. It encourages those who have caused harm to acknowledge the impact

of what they have done and gives them an opportunity to make reparation. It offers those who have suffered harm the opportunity to have their harm or loss acknowledged and amends made.

If talking through the problem does not help, or is not appropriate, then Yarlington Housing Group will issue warnings to perpetrators or enter into more formal contractual arrangements such as Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs), which as described above, have proved very effective for young people.

Finally, Yarlington Housing Group will use legal actions and has successfully achieved injunctions and repossession (as a last resort).

In conjunction with other agencies, Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) have been obtained.

An injunction is a court order compelling a person to do something or not to do something. If the injunction is ignored, the person subject to the order can be imprisoned, fined or reprimanded by the District Judge.

Injunctions are used to control behaviour and can be used when there is violence or threat of violence, harassment and noise nuisance.



Possession proceedings leading to eviction would be sought as a last resort after we have considered other means of resolving the problem. However, in cases of serious anti-social behaviour where a tenant, a member of their family, visitor or lodger has behaved in an anti-social way in the property or nearby, Yarlington Housing Group may apply to court for possession of the property. If the Company is not successful in an outright possession order then the court may propose a demoted tenancy whereby a less secure tenancy is provided which would enable the Company to seek possession should the tenant continue with anti-social behaviour. In the last year, 8 families have been evicted by Yarlington Housing Group for anti-social behaviour.

Anti-social Behaviour Orders are legally enforceable orders issued by the Magistrates' Court and prevent the perpetrator of anti-social behaviour from entering particular locations or behaving in a particular way. If the person subject to an order breaks its terms and conditions, then they may be fined and/or imprisoned.

Examples where an ASBO may be sought include abusive and threatening language, harassment and drink and drug related nuisance.

Reporting Anti-social Behaviour

A tenant who is experiencing nuisance or ASB should in the first instance contact their Neighbourhood Officer. If tenants do not know the name of their (Neighbourhood Officer), then they should contact the office for further information.

Reports of anti-social behaviour can be made over the telephone, in person or in writing (including email).

Besides reporting ASB to Yarlington Housing Group, the complainant may need to notify other agencies. For example incidents involving violence and other criminal offences need to be reported to the Police. In cases of noise nuisance it may be helpful to report the nuisance to the Council (Environmental Health Department).