

Anti-social behaviour & enforcement policy

1. Introduction

Bolton at Home Group (BAH and Arcon Housing Group(AHG)) are committed to tackling anti-social behaviour and responding to tenancy breaches and has a specialist Neighbourhood Safety & Enforcement Service.

Bolton at Home Group is a core member of Bolton Councils 'Be Safe' partnership and is committed to working with all local Community Safety Partnerships, the Police and other statutory agencies in all our areas to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour.

2. Purpose

This policy document outlines how BAH and AHG intends to fulfil the requirements of section 218A of the Housing Act 1996 (as inserted by section 12 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003) with regard to the publication of the policies and procedures in relation to anti-social behaviour and tenancy enforcement.

3. Scope

This policy outlines what we mean by 'anti-social behaviour' (ASB) and tenancy breach setting out the guiding principles for officers who deal with ASB and tenancy enforcement. The policy says what we want our services to achieve for people experiencing ASB and sets out the principles on the kind of service level and quality we aim to provide. This document does not say how we will deal with ASB or tenancy enforcement on a day-to-day basis.

3.1 Definition of Anti-Social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is defined under section 2 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Bolton at Home will consider the following to be examples of anti-social behaviour and tenancy breaches (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Noise nuisance (above and beyond what is reasonable household noise)
- Physical assault and violent behaviour
- Harassing and intimidating people
- Verbal abuse and aggressive behaviour
- Threats of violence
- Damage or misuse of property creating risk e.g. meter tampering, hoarding
- Alterations to property without permission creating a risk.

- Property condition failing to meet the minimum standard
- Criminal damage and vandalism
- Access refusal to conduct a property inspection or to carry out essential works to ensure the safety of others
- Hate behaviour
- Domestic Abuse (refer to separate Bolton at Home policy)
- Problems caused by pet/animals (fouling, uncontrolled behaviour or persistent barking)
- Untidy gardens and environmental hazards.
- Tenancy fraud including Right-to-Buy fraud.

BAH and AHG will **NOT** consider the following as anti-social behaviour

Examples (not an exhaustive list) include - a dog barking intermittently, cooking smells, a one-off party e.g. a birthday, children playing, a baby crying or people undertaking DIY at a reasonable time, noise from 'medical' equipment.

For environmental issues (see below) BAH and AHG will share information and work in partnership with the Police and the Local Authority to tackle and if appropriate recharge tenants for the removal of items that present a risk to others.

- Fly tipping or creating fire risks, blocking communal areas and fire exits
- Abandoned vehicles and other vehicle nuisance
- Parking disputes

3.2 Drug Crime

We will work in partnership with the Police who lead on drug crime and we will work with our 'Be Safe' partners to tackle drug crime. Bolton at Home Group will not lead on and investigate reports of 'drug crime' either at a property we manage or in the locality.

On receiving reports of drug crime we will share that information with the Police. Officers will encourage reporters to report drug dealing via Crime stoppers.

We will open an ASB case should evidence of drug crime linked to a property we own be confirmed by the Police and/or Court.

4. Policy

Our policy is based upon 4 'key' principles:

4.1 No one should have to put up with anti-social behaviour, so we will:

- make people aware what anti-social behaviour is;
- publicise and promote our various services to combat ASB
- encourage people to report ASB and provide a range of reporting channels;
- seek to respond to ASB reports as quickly as possible within our target times
- support victims of ASB to the extent that the seriousness of the case requires.

4.2 Anti-social behaviour reports will be treated seriously and dealt with professionally, so we will:

- treat all reports as confidential, sharing information only with other organisations that can help with the problem (for example, the police) and observing data protection laws, GDPR and information sharing agreements;
- assess (and periodically reassess) the seriousness of anti-social behaviour reported to us, and take action according to our target times and service standards;
- ensure that any criminal ASB reported to us is quickly passed on to the police;
- register each report of ASB we receive and give it a unique reference number;
- appoint a named officer to lead on each case;
- fully investigate the complaint;
- continue to treat any reports or case received as 'live' until the case can be resolved or closed
- notify the reporter when a case is closed and the reasons for closing the case.

Customer dissatisfied with the service can contact the Customer Care Team or Arcon Customer Hub for advice on the formal complaints process.

Email: customer.care@boltonathome.org.uk / customerservice@arcon.org.uk

Website: www.boltonathome.org.uk www.arcon.org.uk

4.3 Anti-social behaviour will be dealt with firmly, fairly and with an evenly balanced response, so we will:

- use appropriate early intervention and prevention strategies e.g. Polite Letters before opening an ASB case and carrying out an investigation.
- Offer Mediation & other Conflict Management options as early as possible following reports if assessed as being appropriate
- use "recharges" and charge customers for the removal of rubbish/items in gardens or communal areas that present a 'risk' to others
- deal with the most serious cases (example) of ASB as a matter of urgency, especially where vulnerable people are involved, either as the reporter or the subject
- use all available and appropriate legal powers to address and resolve ASB and tenancy breach;
- we will work with partners under the Be Safe partnership (Police, Fire Service, Bolton Council, Safeguarding, Probation, Health) and with partnerships in all areas we own stock in order to deliver an effective value for money service across the community.

4.4 We will provide a high quality service which meets people's identified needs, so we will:

- ensure that staff dealing with ASB and tenancy enforcement have received the appropriate level of training to manage casework
- carry out customer satisfaction surveys
- review our ASB policy every 3 years
- seek the views of service users and partner organisations on review
- seek to ensure that all our activities are prioritised and undertaken with regard to clear evidence of need, sound consideration of how effective the work undertaken is likely to be, and a clear understanding of the outcomes sought.

4.5 Hate Crime

Bolton at Home Group is committed to supporting customers who are suffering from hate crimes or hate incidents. Bolton at Home Group condemns all forms of

hate crime and aims to help ensure customers can enjoy their homes free from victimisation and abuse.

There are six 'strands' of hate crime officially monitored in Greater Manchester, Cheshire East and High Peak that Bolton at Home Group also recognise - Race, Religion and belief, Disability, Sexual orientation, Gender identity and Alternative Sub-culture (lifestyle or dress code)

Bolton at Home Group will make sure any reported hate crime or hate incidents are sensitively investigated and victims are provided with appropriate support and signposted to the Police and partner services.

Bolton at Home Group will work in partnership to help promote community cohesion and good relations between people of different backgrounds and racial groups.

5. Equality and Diversity

An Equality analysis was reviewed and completed for the service in June 2021. Service delivery procedures for Bolton at Home Group include a Vulnerability Check and Risk Assessment using the RAM (Risk Assessment Matrix).

6. Consultation

This policy and procedure documents were shared with Bolton at Home Customer Scrutiny Panel and a consultation meeting took place 10th May 2021 to allow customers to ask questions on the policy and provided an opportunity for customers to comment and feedback on each element within the policy. It was also shared with Arcon Scrutiny Group for feedback

7. Legal / regulatory requirements

- ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Housing Act 1885, 1988, 1996
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Anti-terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- Children's Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Data Protection Act 2018

8. Related policy and strategies

- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Neighbourhood Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Permissions Policy

9. Confidentiality

Due to the nature of the service ALL information will be treated as confidential and highly sensitive and in line with GDPR and Data Protection legislation.

10. Responsibility, monitoring, review and evaluation

The Head of Neighbourhood Safety (Bolton at Home) and Housing Manager (Arcon Housing) will ensure this policy is successful, with staff within the service having individual and collective responsibility to implement and adhere to this policy.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored via a set of key performance indicators, internal and external case audits and quality checks as well as independently carried out Customer Satisfaction Surveys. This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Date approved	BH Operations Committee 6 September 2021 Arcon Board 14 September 2021
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