

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND HATE CRIME POLICY

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Version: 4.0

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1. Introduction

This policy outlines Citizen's approach to preventing and addressing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and hate incidents in the neighbourhoods where we provide social housing.

We recognise the significant impact that ASB and hate incidents can have on individuals, families, and communities. We are committed to taking appropriate and proportionate action where reports meet our definition of ASB and where we are the most appropriate agency to act.

This policy applies to all forms of occupancy that we own and/or manage, including tenancies, shared ownership, leasehold, and licence agreements.

Hate Incidents

We recognise that being targeted because of a personal characteristic can have a devastating impact on victims and the wider community. Hate incidents are treated as a serious form of ASB and, in some cases, as criminal behaviour.

We apply our ASB case management processes when responding to hate incidents, making reasonable adjustments to reflect the severity and sensitivity of each case.

Our approach and response to hate crime is embedded within this policy. Further detail is provided outlining the additional considerations and actions we take when managing reports of hate incidents, in conjunction with our standard ASB procedures.

2. Scope

Within the scope of this policy, we include anyone who may be affected by ASB or Hate Crime in our communities or on our estates. We will work with our partners to provide the best outcomes and within the Regulator for Social Housing Neighbourhood and Communities Standards.

3. Policy detail

3.1 Defining our approach

Citizen's approach to tackling ASB and hate incidents is guided by the following core principles:

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- **Transparency and Fairness:** We clearly explain decisions to build trust and manage expectations.
- **Accessibility and Inclusion:** Services are adapted to meet diverse needs and ensure equal access.
- **Harm-Centred Decision Making:** We assess both the behaviour and its impact to guide proportionate action.
- **Clarity on ASB Criteria:** If a report doesn't meet ASB definitions, we explain why and offer guidance.
- **Partnership Working:** We collaborate with other agencies to deliver effective, joined-up responses.
- **Risk and Vulnerability Awareness:** We identify and respond to risks affecting all parties involved.
- **Proportionate Action:** We use the most appropriate tools—legal or informal—based on the situation.
- **Empowerment and Involvement:** We involve those affected in resolving issues where appropriate and arrange mediation between parties.
- **Cooperation Expectations:** We expect reasonable cooperation from all parties to progress cases. If customers do not engage with us, then we can be limited in what action we can take.
- **Victim Support:** We prioritise safety and wellbeing, especially in high-risk or hate-related cases.
- **Zero Tolerance for Abuse:** We do not tolerate threats or abuse toward staff, partners, or customers.
- **Accessible Communication:** We ensure reporting is easy and keep customers informed throughout.

3.2 Defining Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

We are responsible for determining whether a report meets the threshold to be considered ASB. We apply a two-stage test:

1. Does the behaviour meet the statutory definition of ASB? Defined as;
 - (a) conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person,
 - (b) conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or

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(c) conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person

2. Is the behaviour unreasonable?

We use the statutory definition of housing-related ASB from Part 1 of the *ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014*: “Conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.” We recognise that perceptions of behaviour vary. Therefore, we apply a reasonableness test, considering:

- The intention behind the behaviour
- The root cause
- Frequency and duration
- Time of day the behaviour occurs

3.3 Examples of ASB

The following are examples of behaviour that may be considered ASB. This list is not exhaustive:

- Violence or threats of violence
- Harassment, intimidation, or abuse
- Damage to property
- Selling, supplying, storing, growing, or possessing illegal drugs, or misuse of prescription drugs
- Excessive noise (e.g. loud music audible outside the home) *Note: Environmental Health is the lead agency for statutory noise nuisance investigations.*
- Making false or malicious complaints about others, including customers, staff, contractors, or agents.

3.4 Reporting ASB

Customers can report anti-social behaviour (ASB) through the following channels:

- Call Centre: 0300 790 6555 (available 9am – 5pm)
- Respect Line: 0800 756 699 (available 5pm – 9am)
- Online Portal: Via the customer’s online account
- If in immediate danger, call the Police using 999

3.5 Initial Response and Assessment

Upon receiving a report, **we will**:

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- Assess whether the behaviour meets our definition of ASB
- Conduct initial investigations if needed to make an informed decision
- Categorise the report based on risk and harm
- Respond within 5 working days or sooner, depending on the severity of the issue

We also assess risk and vulnerability using a Vulnerability Assessment Matrix (VAM), which is reviewed throughout the life of the case to ensure appropriate support and action.

3.6 Support

3.6.1 Support for Victims of ASB

In addition to identifying risk and vulnerability, we are committed to supporting those who report ASB in the following ways:

- **Clear and Transparent Communication**

We maintain regular contact with reporters, providing updates on case progress where possible. However, we must comply with data protection laws and may not be able to share details relating to third parties.

- **Support Options**

Depending on the circumstances, we may offer or coordinate the following support:

- Referrals to internal services (e.g. tenancy sustainment)
- Referrals to external agencies (e.g. charities or voluntary organisations)
- Referrals to safeguarding or public health teams
- Liaison with partners to explore target hardening measures e.g. additional security and improved surveillance and monitoring
- We will advise them on housing options using Choice Based Lettings and Mutual Exchanges.

- **Support During Legal Proceedings**

Where legal action is taken, we will require evidence from residents, including court appearances. We understand this can be daunting and will offer appropriate support, which may include:

- Signposting to guidance on being a witness
- Arranging pre-court visits - when available
- Assistance with transport
- Providing separate court entrances or waiting areas – where available

- Accompanying witnesses in the court building
- Ensuring access to legal representatives for questions or concerns

3.6.2 Support for Those Causing Harm

We recognise that individuals responsible for ASB may also have support needs or vulnerabilities. While this does not excuse harmful behaviour, addressing these needs can help resolve the ASB and improve outcomes for all parties.

- **Identifying Needs**

Through our case management process and Perpetrator Vulnerability Assessment Matrix, we aim to:

- Understand the root causes of behaviour
- Identify when a perpetrator may also be a victim (e.g. of exploitation)
- Use internal systems and partner information to assess needs
- Engage directly with the individual to explore support options

- **Support Options**

Where appropriate, we may offer:

- Referrals to internal support services
- Referrals to external agencies
- Referrals to safeguarding or public health teams

- **Twin-Track Approach**

We balance support with enforcement. If support is unavailable, declined, or not meaningfully engaged with (e.g. disguised compliance), we may continue enforcement action to protect those experiencing harm.

- **Equality Act Compliance**

We are mindful of our duties under the Equality Act and **we will**:

- Assess whether a perpetrator has a disability contributing to the ASB
- Consider whether enforcement is a proportionate means to a legitimate aim
- Complete an Equality Act assessment before legal action to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty

- **Proportionality Assessment**

In all cases where legal action is considered, we will complete a proportionality assessment to ensure our response is necessary and appropriate.

3.7 Partnership Working

Most ASB cases cannot be resolved by a single agency. We work with a range of statutory and non-statutory partners. In some situations, Citizen may not be the most appropriate lead agency. For example:

- The person alleged to be causing harm is a tenant of another landlord (social or private)
- The Police or local authority are already actively investigating the matter

In such cases, **we will:**

- Identify the most appropriate lead agency without unnecessary delay
- Engage with that agency to agree a coordinated action plan
- Continue to support the case where appropriate as part of a partnership response

Where a report involves a potential criminal offence, **we will:**

- Encourage the reporter to contact the Police
- Liaise with the Police to determine whether to conduct a parallel investigation or await their findings

Where a report may constitute a statutory nuisance, **we will:**

- Advise the reporter to contact the Environmental Health Team (EHT)
- Work with EHT to determine whether parallel action is appropriate (e.g. where tenancy conditions are also breached)

We are committed to identifying and notifying relevant agencies promptly and working collaboratively to determine the most effective lead and response.

3.8 Information Sharing

Effective partnership working relies on appropriate information sharing. **We will:**

- Share information where there is a clear lawful basis and legitimate purpose
- Comply with all relevant data protection legislation
- Follow local information sharing protocols, including how we store, use, and retain shared data

3.9 Customer Responsibilities

We expect all customers to show consideration for their neighbours and communities, and to avoid engaging in, or allowing others to engage in, anti-social behaviour.

We may take action in cross-tenure cases, where the person causing harm is not a Citizen tenant, but their behaviour affects our tenants, communities, staff, or contractors. In addition to the responsibilities outlined in tenancy, licence, or lease agreements, customers are expected to:

- Report incidents of ASB, harassment, domestic abuse, and hate crime to us
- Report noise nuisance to the appropriate statutory body, such as Environmental Health
- Cooperate with investigations, including providing incident diaries, witness statements, or attending mediation or court where appropriate
- Report criminal behaviour to the Police
- Take reasonable steps to resolve minor personal disputes with neighbours where appropriate
- Respect others' rights to a chosen lifestyle and a reasonable level of everyday noise and activity

We will not intervene in matters where self-resolution is the most appropriate course of action.

3.10 What Is Not Considered ASB

We aim to be realistic with customers about what we can and cannot address. Some behaviours, while potentially frustrating, are not considered ASB or tenancy breaches. These include:

- Everyday household noise (e.g. footsteps, talking, toilet flushing, babies crying, children playing)
- Lifestyle differences or personal habits
- Parking disputes

3.11 When a Report Does Not Meet the ASB Definition

If a report does not meet our ASB criteria, it will not be managed under this policy. In such cases, **we will:**

- Clearly communicate our decision and reasoning
- Offer advice, guidance, or signposting

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- Respond to the matter under our Good Neighbour Policy where appropriate

Neighbour Disputes

Neighbour disputes often involve mutual behaviours or differences without a clear victim or perpetrator. These are not usually managed under this policy. Examples include:

- Boundary or property disagreements
- Lifestyle or personal differences
- Social media-related disputes
- Reciprocal reporting to external agencies

In such cases, **we will:**

- Communicate our decision and rationale
- Provide advice or signposting
- Refer the matter to be managed under Good Neighbour and or Tenancy Management policies

Domestic Abuse

We do not classify domestic abuse as ASB. However, its consequences (e.g. shouting or disturbances) may be reported as nuisance behaviour.

Responding to domestic abuse through ASB procedures is often inappropriate and may increase risk. Our officers are trained to:

- Identify signs of domestic abuse
- Respond with sensitivity and prioritise safety
- Work with specialist partners

In rare cases, ASB tools may be used, but only after a thorough risk assessment and in consultation with relevant agencies.

For more information, refer to our Domestic Abuse Policy, which outlines our approach to safeguarding and support.

3.12 Tools and Powers

3.12.1 General Principles

We can only take action in ASB cases where we have sufficient evidence to meet the required legal standard. This often includes:

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- Evidence from the person directly experiencing the issue for the duration of the case
- Supporting evidence from witnesses, CCTV, photographs, or partner agencies (e.g. Police)

We rely on those experiencing ASB to provide evidence such as:

- Completed Evidence diaries
- CCTV or video doorbell footage
- Reports to other agencies
- Signed witness statements

Without this, our ability to take action is limited. Even with strong evidence, legal outcomes depend on the court's decision.

We do not follow a rigid incremental approach. Instead, we assess each case individually and take the most proportionate action based on:

- Severity and frequency of the behaviour
- Risk and harm caused
- Needs and vulnerabilities of those involved

In most cases, non-legal interventions are the most appropriate first step.

3.12.2 Prevention

We aim to prevent ASB before it occurs through:

- Sensitive allocations and lettings
- Clear communication of responsibilities at sign-up
- Use of introductory tenancies
- Providing advice and guidance to residents
- Hosting community events and estate inspections
- Environmental improvements (e.g. lighting, estate layout)

3.12.3 Self-Help and Empowerment

We encourage those affected by ASB to be part of the solution, where appropriate. Sometimes, agency involvement can escalate issues that could otherwise be resolved informally. We may ask parties to:

- Speak directly to the person causing concern
- Consider reasonable changes in behaviour or routine

- Engage in mediation

If a party refuses to cooperate without good reason, we may be unable to take further action.

3.12.4 Informal Actions

Where appropriate, we may use informal tools to resolve ASB, including:

- Warning letters
- Informal meetings
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs)
- Mediation

3.12.5 Legal Actions

Where informal methods are ineffective or inappropriate, and we have sufficient evidence, we may pursue legal action. Legal tools include:

Tool	Purpose
Tenancy Action	For tenancy breaches, we may extend probationary periods (starter tenancies), seek possession orders (assured tenancies), or vary existing orders. Legal notices are required, and tenants have a right to appeal in certain cases.
Injunctions (ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014)	Injunctions can prohibit or require specific behaviours. Available for individuals aged 10+, breaches may result in fines, imprisonment, or tenancy enforcement.

We may also support the use of partner agency tools, such as:

- Criminal Behaviour Orders (Police-led)
- Community Protection Warnings and Notices (Police or Local authority led)
- Closure Orders (Police and Local authority led)

Where these are more appropriate, we will work with the relevant agency and support their case as needed.

3.13 Feedback and Complaints

We welcome all feedback, including complaints, about our ASB service. Information on how to provide feedback can be found on our website or by contacting our customer service centre.

3.14 Managing Unreasonable or Persistent Complainants

While we encourage the reporting of ASB, there are occasions where reporting may become inappropriate. This includes situations where:

- Reports are malicious, false, or deliberately exaggerated
- Reports relate to matters already investigated and closed, with no new evidence
- The volume or persistence of contact places an unreasonable demand on our time and resources

In such cases, **we will:**

- Seek to understand the underlying reasons for the behaviour (e.g. unmet support needs, missed intervention opportunities, or dissatisfaction with previous decisions)
- Take appropriate action in line with our Managing Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.

3.15 Publicising ASB Actions

Publicising the actions we take in ASB cases can:

- Reassure communities
- Encourage further reporting
- Deter those engaging in ASB
- Support compliance with legal orders by raising awareness

Some legal actions require community support to monitor compliance. In such cases, publicity can be an important tool.

We make decisions about whether and how to publicise ASB actions on a case-by-case basis, considering:

- The age and personal circumstances of the person causing harm
- The objectives of the publicity
- The necessity and proportionality of sharing information

3.16 The ASB Case Review

The ASB Case Review (previously known as the Community Trigger) is a legal process that every local authority must have in place with its partners. It allows residents to request a formal review of their ASB case if they are dissatisfied with the progress or outcome. This process can lead to recommendations for further action.

Citizen operates across multiple local authority areas, each with its own ASB Case Review process. A directory is available to help identify the correct process for each area.

3.17 Training and Development

Managing ASB cases requires a broad range of skills, knowledge, and experience. We are committed to supporting our case officers through:

- Regular supervision to identify training and development needs
- Access to relevant training courses, materials, and resources
- Ongoing updates on changes in legislation, regulation, and best practice through training sessions, webinars, and briefings
- Regular case supervision sessions to provide advice, support, and reflective learning opportunities

3.18 Performance Management

We continuously monitor and evaluate our ASB service to ensure high standards and drive improvement. Our performance management activities include:

- Case file audits to ensure compliance with policy and procedures
- Reviewing customer feedback to identify areas for service development
- Learning from complaints, Ombudsman enquiries, and ASB case reviews to inform continuous improvement

3.19 Managing Reports of Hate Incidents

We consider hate incidents to be a serious form of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and, in some cases, criminal behaviour. While we follow the general principles outlined in our ASB policy, the following additional considerations apply when dealing with hate incidents.

3.19.1 Definitions

A hate incident is any incident—criminal or non-criminal—perceived by the victim or any third party to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on:

- Disability
- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender identity

A person does not need to belong to the targeted group to be a victim. For example, someone may experience homophobic abuse without being homosexual.

We recognise that individuals may experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, which can intensify the impact of hate incidents. Hate incidents can take many forms, including:

- Verbal or online abuse (including offensive jokes)
- Threats or violence
- Harassment or intimidation
- Property damage or arson
- “Mate crime” (exploitation of vulnerable individuals)

While individual incidents may not constitute a crime, repeated incidents can amount to harassment and significantly affect a person’s wellbeing. We take all reports seriously and encourage customers to report every incident.

3.19.2 Prevention and Deterrence

We aim to prevent hate incidents through:

- having a trained, empathetic and responsive workforce that understand the issues
- Understanding the demographics and diverse needs of our customers
- Providing education and information at tenancy sign-up, in newsletters, forums, and online
- Participating in partnership initiatives to raise awareness and deter hate
- Using data to identify trends and tailor responses with partners

3.19.3 Reporting Hate Incidents

- **Accessibility** – We ensure that hate incidents can be reported in a variety of ways, tailored to the diverse needs of our customers and promoted appropriately.
- **Third-Party Reporting** – We accept reports from third parties. However, to respond effectively, we may need to speak directly with the person affected. We will do so sensitively and make reasonable adjustments where needed.

3.19.4 Our role with Hate

While hate incidents may be criminal, we recognise our role in prevention and response.

Where a report may constitute a hate crime, we will:

- Encourage and support the reporter to contact the Police
- Provide guidance on how to do so
- Report the incident on behalf of the customer to the national reporting mechanisms such as the police and third party specialist organisations

If the Police are involved, we will decide whether to:

- Conduct a parallel investigation, or
- Await the outcome of the criminal investigation

If Police involvement does not result in a criminal sanction, we will:

- Review the reasons
- Consider tenancy or ASB action if the behaviour meets our definitions and action is proportionate

If Police involvement does result in a criminal sanction, we will:

- Assess whether further tenancy or ASB action is appropriate and proportionate

3.19.5 Support for Victims of Hate

We understand the significant impact hate incidents can have on individuals, families, and communities. Our support includes:

- Using our vulnerability assessment tools to identify hate-related risks and other compounding factors (e.g. repeat victimisation, isolation)

- Referring to external support services and providing relevant information
- Referring to internal support services where appropriate
- Taking protective actions such as:
 - Target hardening
 - Increased officer or partner presence
 - In serious cases, considering rehousing to reduce harm

3.19.6 Taking Action

Hate incidents are treated as high-priority cases due to their severity and impact.

Where we have sufficient evidence, we will take proportionate action, considering:

- Severity and impact
- Likelihood of preventing further incidents
- Actions already taken by partner agencies

Tackling hate incidents often requires a multi-agency response. We will:

- Engage with Police, local authorities, and support services
- Use existing forums or convene case-specific meetings to coordinate a joint action plan

4. Engagement

We are committed to engaging with our customers and colleagues about the services we provide. We actively encourage feedback and use it to continuously improve our delivery.

As part of the review of this policy we have undertaken focus groups and surveys with customers and colleagues.

5. Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Board to seek assurance that this Policy is successfully implemented. The Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this Policy and that all staff understand the importance of this Policy, the related procedures and that they comply with them.

We will provide appropriate training, capacity building, and support across all levels of the organisation—including staff, Board members, and partners. The level and type of training will be proportionate to the individual's role, the clients they work with, and the level of risk they may encounter.

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Any changes to this Policy must be made in line with the requirements set out in Citizens Standing Orders and our Policy framework.

- The Board is responsible for seeking assurance that this policy is effectively implemented.
- The Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Service are accountable for ensuring that the policy is embedded across the organisation and that staff understand and comply with it.
- Managers are responsible for ensuring their teams complete relevant policy training, including eLearning and any role-specific development.
- Any changes to this policy must be made in accordance with Citizen's Standing Orders and Policy Framework.

6. Monitoring and review

All reports of ASB and Hate Crime will be consistently recorded to enable year-on-year monitoring of incidents, responses, and outcomes.

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or earlier if:

- There are significant changes to legislation or regulation
- Complaints, case reviews, or findings from independent bodies highlight deficiencies in the policy
- In response to recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman Service

7. Equality impact assessment

This policy has been subject to an Equality Analysis. Colleagues across Citizen have considered its impact on the diverse communities we serve. In developing and applying this policy, we are committed to:

- Avoiding adverse discrimination against any group
- Respecting and valuing the diversity of our customers and communities
- Ensuring our approach is inclusive, fair, and compliant with the Equality Act 2010

8. Version control

EVERY change made must be logged in the version control and ALL boxes completed.

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V 1.0	Sept 2019	Policy updated to reflect Citizen and reviewed for compliance	Board 30 th Sept 2019	Sept 2022
V2.0	Sept 2022	3 year review	Director of Housing, Care and Support & ELT	Sept 2025
3.0	Jan 2025	Edit to policy format. No content changes	Policy Analyst	Sept 2025
V4.0	November 2025	Enhanced following comprehensive review of the ASB offer including; refined definition of ASB, Clearer decision-making criteria and cross-referencing with the new Good Neighbour Policy. Removal of outdated references and clarification of roles between Citizen and external agencies, enhanced focus on vulnerability	Board	Nov 2028

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