

GOOD NEIGHBOUR POLICY

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1. Introduction

This policy outlines Citizens approach to managing neighbourhood relations and preventing anti-social behaviour (ASB) within our communities. This policy builds on recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman's October 2022 Spotlight reports: *Time to Be Heard* and *Noise Complaints*.

At Citizen we are committed to encouraging safe, clean, and inclusive communities. While every customer has the right to a lawful lifestyle, this must not negatively impact others' quality of life. This policy sets out how we will respond to neighbourhood concerns that fall below the ASB threshold, offering guidance, support, and tools to help residents resolve issues collaboratively.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote positive relationships between customers

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- Improve outcomes for customers by following best practices
- Provide a clear framework for managing neighbourhood issues that do not meet the ASB threshold.

2. Scope (internal application)

This policy applies to all customers living within our communities and estates. It covers:

- Neighbourhood behaviours that are disruptive but not classified as ASB.
- Citizen's responsibilities in maintaining safe communal areas and reflects the Neighbourhoods and Communities Standards
- Support mechanisms for customers to resolve disputes independently, by encouraging conversations and offering mediation

2.1 Relationship to ASB Policy

Our response to reports that are considered ASB is outlined in our ASB Policy. When applying this test, behaviours that are not considered ASB due to differing lifestyles or everyday living situations not intended to cause nuisance or annoyance will be managed under this Good Neighbour Policy.

Citizen will only progress reports under this policy where we are satisfied that our intervention is appropriate, may help resolve the issue, and no other agency is better placed to respond. To ensure this, all ASB and neighbour-related reports will be assessed to determine the nature and cause of the behaviour, and to identify early-stage cases of neighbour nuisance or disagreements that, while not classified as ASB, may still impact customers' lives.

We will be open and honest about likely outcomes with customers to help manage their expectations.

This policy excludes hate crime and domestic abuse, which are addressed under separate policies. Behaviour towards colleagues and contractors is managed through our Unacceptable Behaviour Policy. Complaints about our response to ASB or neighbourhood issues are handled through our Complaints Policy.

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3. Policy detail

3.1 Good Neighbourhood Commitment

Citizen recognises that some behaviours, while not classified as anti-social behaviour (ASB), can still cause significant frustration or distress to others. These behaviours may escalate into ASB or de-escalate while continuing to cause tension. Generally, such matters arise from circumstances rather than a deliberate intent to cause harm.

We believe that our customers have the right to live in a safe and secure environment, but they also have the responsibility to behave in a considerate way toward their neighbours.

All new customers will be asked to sign a **Good Neighbour Agreement**, in which they agree to treat their neighbours and the communities in which they live with respect. A copy of this Agreement can be found in **Appendix 1** to this policy.

Being a good neighbour is all about showing consideration and respect for those around you. By working together, we can make our homes and neighbourhoods even better places to live.

Citizen will not label individuals as perpetrators or victims in these cases. As the behaviour is not classified as ASB, it is unlikely to constitute a breach of tenancy, and legal tools typically used in ASB cases will not apply.

Like ASB reports, Citizen will consider the source, cause, intention, impact, harm, and frequency of the behaviour.

Examples of behaviours typically managed under this policy include:

- Noise levels not meeting the statutory standard (e.g., appliances, children playing or crying, dogs barking, door slamming, toilets flushing, sexualised noises)
- Keeping the area around the home safe and tidy (e.g., untidy gardens, keeping communal areas clear, disposing of rubbish correctly)
- Misuse of shared areas that affects the safety and pleasantness of the living environment
- Parking disputes
- Pets
- Neighbour disputes (including dirty looks, staring, non-abusive comments)
- Lifestyle clashes

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- Complaints about CCTV or Ring Doorbells, permission for which we do not routinely give to customers.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list.

3.2 Preventing Neighbourhood Issues

Citizen will take proactive steps to prevent neighbourhood issues through:

- Use of Starter Tenancies to ensure new customers understand their responsibilities.
- Pre tenancy assessments to identify support needs before tenancy sign-up.
- Comprehensive sign-ups that explain tenancy obligations and record support needs.
- Settling-in visits to reinforce obligations and follow up on support.
- Careful allocation decisions to minimise impact on existing communities.
- Distribution of a Good Neighbourhood Agreement so that everyone is aware of their responsibilities
- Adherence to our Empty Homes Standard: carpets will only be removed if in poor condition; laminate flooring will be removed.
- Promotion of neighbour communication
- Regular grounds maintenance programme.
- Routine cleaning and block inspections
- Estate Inspections to give greater visibility in our communities

3.3 Reporting Neighbourhood Issues

Before making a formal report, Citizen encourages customers experiencing a problem with a neighbour to attempt to resolve the matter directly as soon as possible. Neighbours may be unaware that they are causing a problem, and often a friendly word can be sufficient.

The most effective approach is to calmly discuss the situation and, if necessary, be willing to compromise. However, we also recognise that this may not be possible for all customers in some cases.

Should the communication with the neighbour not resolve the matter, a report can be submitted to us. The most effective way to do this is via our online platform, My Account or through our website. Reports can also be made via, telephone, email, in person, or by letter.

Citizen will aim to respond to all suspected neighbourhood management issues within five working days. Full response timescales are outlined in internal procedures. Mediation will be offered as a first course of action to resolve the dispute.

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When assessing reports, Citizen will inform customers whether the matter is likely to be managed under this policy or our anti-social behaviour (ASB) policy. This helps manage expectations and ensures the issue is addressed at the appropriate level.

3.4 Responding to Reports and Remedies

Encouraging neighbours to communicate directly is often the most effective way to prevent escalation. Citizen will:

- Review concerns and advise on effective communication strategies.
- Encourage residents to approach neighbours directly, including using tools like the “Hello Neighbour” letter. Customers can download a template letter from our website.
- Support residents who request confidentiality, while explaining the limitations of anonymous reporting.
- Promote mutual understanding and respectful dialogue.
- Work with external agencies where appropriate to identify practical solutions.

We may also:

- Provide advice on managing the situation and improving communication.
- Refer cases to mediation, which can be face-to-face or shuttle-based (mediator going back and forth), helping neighbours reach shared agreements.
- Conduct property inspections to identify outstanding repairs or causes of noise transference.
- Advise on noise-reducing measures, such as carpet use or removal of hard flooring.
- Inspect gardens
- Identify vulnerabilities and support needs and make appropriate referrals.
- Complete pet agreements and offer guidance on responsible pet ownership.
- Facilitate Good Neighbourhood Agreements between neighbours.
- Assist with housing options such as mutual exchange.
- Review cases to ensure they are being handled under the correct policy, especially if previous interventions have failed.
- In cases previously addressed within the last 12 months, request customers to maintain incident diaries or revisit earlier solutions before reopening the report.

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3.5 Support

Citizen recognises that some customers may need additional help to manage neighbourhood issues effectively. We are committed to identifying vulnerabilities and offering tailored support to ensure customers feel safe and empowered in their homes. Support may include:

- Referrals to internal teams such as Tenancy Sustainment or Money Advice Teams.
- Referrals to external agencies including social services, mental health teams, or safeguarding bodies.
- Assistance with effective communication or mediation.
- Help accessing housing options, including mutual exchanges.
- Guidance on managing pets, noise, or garden maintenance.
- Signposting to community groups or local services that promote wellbeing and inclusion.

Mediation can be a helpful way to sort out neighbour issues. It gives everyone a chance to talk things through with an independent mediator and agree on a way forward. Where it's suitable, we may refer customers to mediation, as it often helps resolve problems before they escalate.

Citizen will always seek consent before making referrals, unless there is a safeguarding concern that requires immediate action.

3.6 Partnership Working

Citizen understands that effective neighbourhood management often requires collaboration with external partners. We will work closely with:

- Local Authorities: for environmental health concerns, housing allocations, and safeguarding.
- Police: for criminal behaviour, harassment, or public safety issues.
- Health Services: to support residents with mental health or wellbeing needs.
- Mediation Services: to facilitate constructive dialogue between neighbours.
- Community Organisations: to promote social cohesion and provide local support.
- Other registered providers who may also manage homes within our communities

We aim to build strong relationships with these partners to ensure timely, coordinated responses to neighbourhood issues. Where appropriate, we will share information in line with data protection regulations and safeguarding protocols.

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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. The insights gained have guided changes to help ensure all customers enjoy peace, quiet, and security in their homes.

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.

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 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

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- 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.

VERSION	DATE	AMENDMENTS	APPROVED AT/BY	REVIEW
V1.0	November 2025	New policy creation following the review of our ASB service	Board	November 2028
V2.0	December 2025	Additional detail on mediation added in the support section.	Policy owner (immaterial changes only)	November 2028

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