



Acis put an end to family's reign of terror

A peaceful cul-de-sac in the town of Gainsborough was turned into a nightmare place to live after a family with seven children moved in. Lincolnshire based housing association Acis Group were forced to take action against the parents of the family after they moved into an Acis property in the Park Springs area.

Acis, who own and manage over 5,000 homes across Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire, were alerted to the problem family in the spring of 2010 after a prospective tenant refused a property on the grounds that it was too near to the home of the family's father following an alleged assault. The Acis ASB Unit liaised with the police and a warning letter was sent to the father.

Soon after, it was reported to the Acis ASB Unit that the family's 17 year old daughter had assaulted the 12 year old daughter of an Acis tenant. A subsequent interview revealed that the victims had been targeted by family members for several months, which included a 'stink bomb' being put through their letter box and threats of violence. The mother and father of the family were interviewed and warned about their behaviour. Despite the warnings things didn't improve over the next few months, culminating in a petrol bomb being thrown at the rear of the victim's property.

As a result, Acis applied to Lincoln County Court for an Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction on the family's father. This was granted, however the victims continued to suffer anti-social behaviour and damage to their property. Acis, Lincolnshire Police and West Lindsey District Council approached neighbours to see if they had witnessed any of the incidents. Although initially reluctant to be named due to fear of reprisals, eventually the Acis ASB Unit managed to secure their trust.

Five independent witnesses eventually gave statements which revealed that the family had not only been intimidating and abusive, but they had been having late night drinking parties most weekends, disturbing the entire road until the early hours of the morning.

The family's behaviour was so intimidating that the witnesses stopped relatives from visiting and were frightened to leave their homes for fear of them being vandalised. One witness was too frightened to even use her front room as she was fearful of a brick coming through.

At the time of the injunction, a Notice Seeking Possession was served on the family and the court case was due to be heard at the end of January. A week before the case was due to be heard, the family handed in their keys and moved out voluntarily due to the overwhelming evidence against them.

Speaking after the case, one of the witnesses said:

"If people stand together you can stamp out anti-social behaviour, but you must stand together. I would do it again if needs be. We have had great support from Acis, the police and West Lindsey District Council."

Claire Glasby, Community Safety Manager for Acis, commented:

"This is an example where tenants uniting together against anti-social behaviour and working with their housing provider can make a difference. Although the process can take some time, gathering the evidence is vital in this type of case to secure the right outcome for the community. I would like to thank the witnesses and also our partner agencies, the police and West Lindsey District Council who helped to achieve this positive outcome. I would say to anyone suffering from anti-social behaviour - don't suffer in silence make sure you report it."

Michelle McIlroy, Police Inspector for Gainsborough and Market Rasen Sector, added:

"We are committed to stop anti-social behaviour being carried out and will take positive and robust action against any perpetrators, using all the weight of the criminal and civil court system. This would not have been possible without the conviction and tenacity of the witnesses involved who were prepared to stand up and be heard by the courts, as the voice of the law abiding and reasonable person should always be listened to. We are delighted with this result."

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