

Good Neighbour Management Procedure

Definition

Customers will sometimes report behaviours which they perceive as causing a nuisance but where it would not be appropriate to describe them as Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) as they do not meet the required threshold for ASB. However these can still cause a great deal of disturbance and frustration leading to tension between neighbours and wider communities.

Where behaviour is not ASB and, therefore, unlikely to be a tenancy breach, it requires a different response. We will endeavour to foster good relations between residents in neighbourhoods and the following approach is aimed at achieving that wherever possible.

Reports of ASB will be assessed and triaged using a range of factors including:

- Severity of behaviour
- Frequency
- Duration
- Time of Day
- Intention
- Impact

This assessment allows us to decide whether the report will be an ASB or Good Neighbour Management issue.

We recognise that these behaviours can change over time and we will reassess each case at appropriate intervals to ensure correct intervention action is being taken.

Each customer will have different tolerances, expectations, and perceptions around appropriate behaviours of their neighbours. This means some people will see behaviour as anti-social when in fact it is not unreasonable and would not be classed as ASB. Examples of these types of behaviour include but are not limited to:

- Issues with parking spaces, where there is no designated spaces or contravention of legislation
- Positioning of wheelie bins that one or more person/s takes exception to
- Boundary disputes
- Cooking smells
- A baby crying
- DIY that is occurring during reasonable hours
- The use of white goods during reasonable hours

In addition, there may be other factors which amplify the normal behaviour of one customer having a detrimental effect on their neighbour for reasons they may not be aware of e.g. walls with poor sound insulation or defects increasing sound transference.

Actions

Our focus in these cases is to help raise awareness, understanding and compromise between residents with the overall aim of improving relationships. The first response is usually to ask the residents to speak to each other to discuss their concerns and find a mutual agreement. That way the matter could be resolved amicably without potentially frustrating a situation with us getting involved immediately.

We will assess the case and advise the resident on how best to approach the situation and what they may wish to discuss with their neighbour.

Other types of responses we may provide are:

- Carrying out internal mediation
- Referring the customers to an external mediation company
- Carrying out a property inspection to identify property improvements that may assist
- Asking customers to make reasonable changes to activities as part of being a good neighbour. This could include asking people to wear headphones if they are playing music late at night
- Provision of pads to prevent kitchen unit doors banging
- Provision of anti vibration mats for washing machines
- Property surveys to establish sound transference issues

This list is not meant to be exhaustive. Focus will always be on practical and pragmatic solutions. When we have attempted all practical options appropriate to the situation we will inform the residents involved that there is nothing further we are able to do.

Co-operation of all customers involved in a “good neighbourhood management” issue is required in order to follow through any actions. Where any customers refuse a reasonable request we may not be able to assist and will communicate this clearly to all concerned.

We recognise that sometimes personal circumstances may affect a person’s tolerance, perception or ability to cope with certain situations. When we recognise that this could be contributory factor, we will work to identify suitable referrals and support. Where needed we will work with other agencies or make referrals to assist with any particular health or wellbeing need.

Good Neighbourhood Management is not intended to find fault or blame but to look for mutual solutions to the particular issues. On that basis we would not consider legal action in most cases under this section of the policy.

Requests for confidentiality

As the purpose of this policy is to build relationships between customers, it is very unlikely that we will be able to assist if the person making the report wishes to remain anonymous and we will inform them accordingly.

There may be times we cannot guarantee confidentiality where there are safeguarding concerns or a criminal offence has taken place.

Repeat complaints

Where a customer makes repeated complaints or reports which are unreasonable we will deal with them under the terms of our customer feedback policy for unreasonable complaints.