



Bristol City Council Housing and Landlord Services

Hate Crime Policy

Version 2

Approved by: DMT

Author: Policy and Practice Team

Date approved: 9/9/26

Date for Review: 9/9/29

Service Area: Housing and Landlord Services

Classification: Operational

History of most recent policy changes			
Date	Page	Change	Origin of change (e.g. legislation)
September 2026	Whole Document	Many minor changes to format and wording.	Cyclical Review

If you would like this information in another language, Braille, audio format, large print, Easy Read, BSL video or plain text, please call 0117 3521 444 (select option 2, then option 3).

Contents

Definitions	2
1. Purpose	3
2. Scope	3
3. Aims and objectives	3
4. Roles and Responsibilities and Authority	4
5. The Policy	4
5.1 Legal Context and Consumer Standards	4
5.2 Residents' Rights	5
5.3 Understanding Hate Crime and Hate Incidents	5
5.4 Reporting and Responding	5
5.5 Partnership Working	6
5.6 Managing Harm and Taking Action	6
5.7 Safeguarding and Rehousing	7
5.8 Equality and Diversity	7
5.9 Complaints	8
6. Quality Assurance	8
6.1 Publishing	8
6.2 Review	8
6.3 Monitoring and Reporting Requirements	8
7. Appendices	8
Appendix A – Roles and Responsibilities	8
Appendix B – Legal and Policy Context	10

Definitions

Hate Crime	A criminal offence perceived as motivated by hostility or prejudice towards a protected characteristic.
Hate Incident	Any behaviour perceived as motivated by hostility or prejudice but not necessarily criminal.
Housing Case Oversight Group (HCOG)	A multi-disciplinary case oversight forum used to review complex, high-risk, persistent or escalated housing management and anti-social behaviour cases. The group supports information sharing, coordinated decision-making and consideration of appropriate interventions, support and enforcement options.
Mate Crime	Exploitation of a vulnerable person by someone posing as a friend for harm, abuse, or personal gain.
Non-Crime Hate Incident	An incident perceived as motivated by hostility or prejudice but below the threshold of a criminal offence.
Safeguarding	Actions to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, abuse, or neglect, including during hate-related incidents.
Victim-Centred Approach	A working method that prioritises the individual's experience, needs, and safety when they have been subjected to hate-motivated behaviour, ensuring they are treated with dignity, respect, and compassion, and supported in a way that recognises their agency and wellbeing.

1. Purpose

Bristol City Council is committed to preventing and responding to hate crime and hate incidents affecting residents of council-managed homes and neighbourhoods. We recognise the significant impact that hate-related behaviour can have on individuals, families and communities, and are committed to creating safe, inclusive and respectful places to live.

This policy sets out how Housing and Landlord Services will respond to reports of hate crime and hate incidents, support affected residents, and work with partners to prevent harm and tackle unacceptable behaviour. We will take a victim-centred approach, recognising the different experiences and needs of residents and seeking to reduce the risk of repeat incidents wherever possible.

The policy supports our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and outlines the principles that guide our approach to preventing, identifying and responding to hate-related harm within council housing and associated services.

2. Scope

This policy applies to Housing and Landlord Services and sets out how Bristol City Council will respond to hate crime and hate incidents affecting residents of council-managed homes and neighbourhoods.

The policy applies to:

- Council tenants
- Leaseholders
- Applicants for council housing
- Household members
- Visitors
- Members of the public affected by housing-related hate incidents

This policy covers hate crime and hate incidents connected to council housing, housing services, communal areas, estates and wider neighbourhoods where there is a housing management interest.

The policy should be read alongside the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy, Safeguarding Policies, Complaints Policy and other relevant Housing and Landlord Services policies and procedures.

This policy provides the framework for responding to hate-related harm. Detailed operational processes, reporting arrangements and case management procedures are set out in supporting guidance and procedures.

3. Aims and objectives

The aims of this policy are to:

- Encourage residents to report hate crime and hate incidents and ensure reports are taken seriously
- Provide a fair, timely and victim-centred response to reports of hate-related harm
- Support and safeguard residents affected by hate crime and hate incidents
- Work with partner organisations to prevent harm, reduce repeat incidents and improve outcomes for residents
- Challenge and address hate-related behaviour using appropriate support, intervention and enforcement measures
- Promote equality, inclusion and respect within council-managed homes and neighbourhoods
- Learn from cases, resident feedback and complaints to improve services and strengthen community confidence

4. Roles and Responsibilities and Authority

Bristol City Council is committed to preventing and responding to hate crime and hate incidents through a coordinated and victim-centred approach. Effective delivery of this policy relies on collaboration between Housing and Landlord Services, residents and partner organisations.

Employees, contractors and partner organisations working on behalf of the Council are expected to act in accordance with this policy and any associated procedures, guidance or legal requirements relevant to their role.

Housing and Landlord Services will work with relevant teams and external agencies to support affected residents, assess and manage risk, share information appropriately and take proportionate action to address hate-related harm.

Details of specific roles and responsibilities are provided in Appendix A.

5. The Policy

5.1 Legal Context and Consumer Standards

Bristol City Council will implement this policy in accordance with relevant legislation, regulatory requirements, statutory guidance and good practice relating to hate crime, hate incidents, safeguarding, equality and housing management.

Hate crime is a criminal offence that is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a protected characteristic or perceived protected characteristic. Housing and Landlord Services will work with relevant partners, including Avon and Somerset Police and specialist support agencies, to respond appropriately to reports of hate-related harm.

When responding to reports of hate crime and hate incidents, the Council will have regard to its duties under equality, housing, safeguarding, human rights and data protection legislation. Decisions will be informed by the needs of victims, the circumstances of each case and the need to take proportionate and lawful action.

Housing and Landlord Services will also have regard to relevant regulatory and Ombudsman expectations, including requirements relating to neighbourhood management, resident safety, service delivery, complaints handling and equality.

A summary of the key legislation, regulatory standards and guidance relevant to this policy is provided in Appendix B.

5.2 Residents' Rights

Residents have the right to live in council-managed homes and neighbourhoods free from hate crime and hate incidents.

Bristol City Council will take reports of hate-related harm seriously and will respond in a fair, timely and victim-centred manner. Residents can expect to be treated with dignity and respect, kept informed about their case, and offered appropriate support where needed.

Residents have the right to report hate crime or hate incidents, access support services where appropriate, and make a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the service they have received.

5.3 Understanding Hate Crime and Hate Incidents

Bristol City Council recognises that hate crime and hate incidents can have a significant impact on individuals, families and communities. We are committed to creating safe, inclusive and respectful neighbourhoods and to taking appropriate action where hate-related harm occurs.

Hate crime and hate incidents involve behaviour that is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards a person's actual or perceived disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

Hate-related behaviour can take many forms, including verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation, threats, criminal damage, online abuse, violence and other conduct intended to target, exclude or cause harm to an individual or group.

Bristol City Council also recognises that some residents may experience harassment, intimidation, abuse, exploitation or other harmful behaviour because of their age or other personal circumstances. While such behaviour may not meet the definition of a hate crime or hate incident, it can still cause significant harm and may require a housing management, safeguarding or partnership response.

Reports of hate crime and hate incidents will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the impact on those affected, the seriousness of the behaviour, any identified risks, and the need for appropriate support, intervention or enforcement action.

5.4 Reporting and Responding

Bristol City Council encourages residents to report hate crime and hate incidents and is committed to ensuring reports are taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

When a report is received, the Council will assess the circumstances of the case, the impact on those affected, and any risks to individuals or the wider community. We will work with residents to understand their concerns, identify appropriate support and agree proportionate actions.

The Council will take a victim-centred approach, recognising that people may experience hate-related harm in different ways and may require different levels of support. We will seek to understand the impact of the behaviour on those affected and take account of individual circumstances, vulnerabilities and support needs when determining an appropriate response. Where appropriate, residents will be kept informed of progress, advised of available support services and provided with reasonable adjustments to help them access our services.

The action taken will depend on the circumstances of each case and may include support, early intervention, tenancy management action, safeguarding referrals, partnership working, or enforcement action where appropriate.

5.5 Partnership Working

Bristol City Council recognises that effective responses to hate crime and hate incidents often require coordinated action across services and organisations.

Housing and Landlord Services will work with relevant internal teams, partner agencies and specialist support organisations to help prevent harm, support affected residents and address hate-related behaviour. This may include working with the Police, safeguarding services, support providers and other agencies where appropriate.

Information will be shared in accordance with relevant legislation, data protection requirements and information sharing agreements, where this is necessary to protect individuals, manage risk, prevent harm or support effective case management.

Where appropriate, the Council may participate in multi-agency meetings, the Housing Case Oversight Group (HCOG) and other partnership arrangements to support information sharing, coordinated decision-making and positive outcomes for residents and communities.

Partnership working will be proportionate to the circumstances of each case and will seek to balance support, prevention and enforcement to achieve sustainable resolutions wherever possible.

5.6 Managing Harm and Taking Action

Bristol City Council is committed to preventing and reducing the harm caused by hate crime and hate incidents. We will take a proportionate approach to addressing hate-related behaviour and reducing the harm it causes.

Our response will be guided by the principles of prevention, early intervention, support and enforcement. Where appropriate, we will work with residents, partner agencies and support services to address the causes of harmful behaviour and reduce the likelihood of repeat incidents.

Where there is evidence of hate-related behaviour, the Council may take action in accordance with relevant legislation, tenancy conditions and housing management powers.

This may include warning letters, acceptable behaviour agreements, mediation, tenancy enforcement action, legal remedies or other measures considered appropriate to the circumstances.

In serious cases, or where there is a continuing risk of harm, the Council may work with partner agencies to coordinate interventions, safeguard those affected and pursue appropriate enforcement action.

Any action taken will be fair, proportionate and consistent with the Council's legal and regulatory responsibilities.

5.7 Safeguarding and Rehousing

Bristol City Council recognises that hate crime and hate incidents can have a significant impact on a person's safety, wellbeing and ability to live peacefully in their home. Where there are concerns about the safety or welfare of a resident, the Council will consider whether safeguarding action is required and may make referrals to the appropriate services.

Housing and Landlord Services will work with safeguarding teams, partner agencies and support organisations where appropriate to help protect residents at risk of harm and to coordinate support.

In some cases, residents affected by hate crime or hate incidents may require additional housing support. The Council will consider all available options to help reduce risk and support residents to remain safely in their homes wherever possible.

Rehousing may be considered where there is an identified housing need and where this is consistent with the Council's allocations policy and relevant procedures. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the circumstances of the resident, the risks identified and the availability of suitable accommodation.

Rehousing will not normally be the first response to reports of hate crime or hate incidents, and consideration will be given to whether other support, intervention, safeguarding or enforcement measures may be more appropriate.

5.8 Equality and Diversity

This policy supports Bristol City Council's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. It aims to prevent and address hate crime, hate incidents, and related forms of harassment, abuse, and exploitation, thereby helping to create safer and more inclusive communities for all residents.

The policy aims to promote fairness, safety, and inclusion for people with protected characteristics by improving awareness, reporting, support, and response arrangements, while recognising that some groups may be disproportionately affected by hate-motivated behaviour and exploitation.

An updated Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and agreed by the Equalities Team.

5.9 Complaints

Bristol City Council is committed to providing a fair, accessible and responsive service. Residents who are dissatisfied with the way their report of hate crime or hate incidents has been handled may make a complaint in accordance with the Council's **Housing Complaints Policy**.

Making a complaint will not affect a resident's right to report further incidents, access support services or request assistance from other agencies.

The Council will use complaints, resident feedback and learning from casework to identify opportunities to improve services, strengthen our response to hate-related harm and promote good practice across Housing and Landlord Services.

6. Quality Assurance

6.1 Publishing

This policy will be published on the BCC website and communicated to relevant operational teams via policy briefings and other appropriate communications.

6.2 Review

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years or sooner if there is a change to legal or regulatory requirements, in accordance with our procedures.

6.3 Monitoring and Reporting Requirements

Bristol City Council will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy to ensure hate crime and hate incidents are managed consistently, fairly and in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements.

Information relating to hate crime and hate incidents may be used to identify trends, monitor performance, understand resident experiences and inform service improvements.

Housing and Landlord Services will use performance information, case audits, resident feedback, complaints, Housing Ombudsman findings and learning from complex cases to review practice and drive continuous improvement.

Themes and learning identified through monitoring activities will be used to strengthen service delivery, support staff development and improve outcomes for residents and communities.

7. Appendices

Appendix A – Roles and Responsibilities

This section explains who is responsible for dealing with hate crime reports within the Council.

Job/Team Name	Description of responsibilities
Head of Service (Tenancy Management and Estates)	• Provides strategic leadership and accountability for the Hate Crime Policy. • Ensures the service has the governance, resources, and structures required to meet statutory duties relating to hate crime, safeguarding, equality, and regulatory standards. • Champions a zero-tolerance approach to hate-motivated behaviour and promotes culture, systems, and practices that support safe, inclusive neighbourhoods. • Approves high-level policy updates and oversees compliance with corporate and legal requirements.
Service Manager	• Provides operational oversight and ensures the service complies with legal, regulatory, and corporate requirements. • Holds operational responsibility for implementing the Hate Crime Policy across their service area. • Oversees complex, high-risk, or politically sensitive hate-crime cases, providing guidance to Team Managers and case officers. • Sets service expectations and ensures consistent implementation of the Hate Crime Policy across teams. • Oversees strategic performance, identifying risks or trends and commissioning improvements where needed. • Maintains senior relationships with key external partners to support effective multi-agency working. • Provides senior sign-off or guidance for high-risk or sensitive cases requiring escalation.
Team Manager	• Provides day-to-day oversight of hate-related casework within their team. • Ensures Housing Officers and other frontline staff follow the Hate Crime Policy, apply consistent standards, and complete accurate case recording. • Reviews risk assessments, supports decision-making on case escalation, and ensures timely referrals to safeguarding or multi-agency panels. • Quality-checks case notes, communication with residents, and adherence to victim-centred, trauma-informed practice. • Manages workloads and identifies training needs relating to hate crime, equality, or safeguarding.
Housing Officer	• Acts as the primary point of contact for residents reporting hate crime or hate incidents. • Responds promptly, sensitively, and in a victim-centred manner, completing initial risk assessments and ensuring accurate case recording. • Identifies safeguarding risks and makes timely referrals to adult or children's services where required. • Works directly with victims to agree support measures, safety planning, and tenancy-related actions. • Gathers evidence, documents case progression, and liaises with ASB Officers, Police, SARI, and other partners as appropriate.

	• Undertakes proportionate tenancy management or enforcement actions where hate-motivated behaviour breaches tenancy conditions. • Keeps residents updated throughout the case, ensuring clear communication and closure once resolved.
ASB Team	• Provide specialist ASB oversight and advice in hate crime cases where behaviour overlaps with anti-social behaviour, including escalation and enforcement options. • Lead on formal ASB interventions arising from hate-motivated behaviour, such as tenancy enforcement, injunctions, or other proportionate legal actions. • Represent ASB at case conferences and multi-agency meetings, contributing risk, history, and recommended actions relating to perpetrators. • Coordinate and manage ASB case conference processes where required, including preparation, documentation, and follow-up actions. • Work jointly with Housing Officers, police, and partners to manage and reduce repeat hate-motivated ASB, ensuring a victim-centred and risk-based response.
Customer Service Operatives	• Acts as the first point of contact for residents reporting hate crime or hate incidents. • Records and forwards reports promptly and accurately to Housing and Landlord Services for triage and allocation. • Treats all disclosures sensitively and respectfully, ensuring victims feel heard and supported at first contact. • Identifies immediate risk indicators and follows agreed escalation routes where urgent safeguarding or safety concerns are present.
All Tenancy Management Staff	• Remain alert to signs of hate-motivated behaviour during day-to-day work and report concerns promptly. • Support residents to disclose and report hate crime or hate incidents, ensuring barriers to reporting are reduced. • Accurately record relevant information and pass cases to the appropriate teams for assessment and action. • Work collaboratively across service areas to support vulnerable tenants, prevent harm, and uphold equality and safeguarding responsibilities. • Contribute to safety planning, support arrangements, and tenancy-related actions within their remit. • Foster an environment where discrimination, harassment, and hate-motivated behaviour are consistently challenged.

Appendix B – Legal and Policy Context

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Housing Act 1996
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR)
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Regulator of Social Housing – Consumer Standards

Internal Policies

- Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy
- Tenancy Sustainment Policy
- BCC Anti Social Behaviour Policy