Bristol City Council Housing and Landlord Services

Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Policy

Version 2

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OFFICIAL

Definitions

Action Plan	A written record of what Bristol City Council and the resident have agreed to do to resolve an ASB case. It sets out the actions to be taken, who is responsible and when progress will be reviewed.
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, distress, nuisance or annoyance to other people.
Hate Crime	A criminal offence that is motivated by hostility or prejudice towards a person's race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, transgender identity or another protected characteristic.
Hate Incident	Behaviour that is motivated by hostility or prejudice towards a person's race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, transgender identity or another protected characteristic but does not amount to a criminal offence.
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.
Neighbour Dispute	A disagreement between neighbours that may cause upset, annoyance or frustration but does not necessarily meet the definition of anti-social behaviour.
Resident	For the purposes of this policy, a resident includes council tenants, leaseholders, licensees, members of their household and other people living in or using council-managed homes.
Risk Assessment	A process used to understand the impact of ASB on those involved, identify vulnerabilities and support needs, and determine the most appropriate response.
Safeguarding	Actions taken to protect children, young people and adults who may be at risk of abuse, neglect, harm or exploitation.
Trauma-Informed Practice	An approach that recognises that people's experiences may affect how they respond to situations and services. It aims to deliver services in ways that promote safety, trust, respect and support.
Vulnerability	A vulnerability is any circumstance or condition that may make a person more susceptible to harm, increase the impact of anti-social behaviour on them, or affect their ability to access services, engage with support or sustain their tenancy. Vulnerabilities may be temporary or permanent.
Victim-Centred Approach	An approach that takes account of the needs, safety and wellbeing of people affected by ASB when making decisions and providing support.

1. Purpose

Bristol City Council is committed to creating safe, inclusive and sustainable communities where residents can enjoy their homes free from anti-social behaviour (ASB).

The purpose of this policy is to set out how Bristol City Council, as a social landlord, will prevent, respond to and manage reports of ASB affecting residents of council-managed homes and neighbourhoods.

We recognise that ASB can have a significant impact on individuals, families and communities and can affect people's wellbeing, safety and ability to enjoy their home. We will take a proactive, victim-centred and trauma-informed approach to tackling ASB, balancing prevention, support and enforcement to achieve sustainable outcomes.

This policy explains:

- how we define ASB;
- the principles that guide our response;
- what residents can expect from us;
- how we will work with residents, partner agencies and communities to address ASB; and
- how we will ensure that vulnerability, risk and support needs are considered throughout the management of ASB cases.

This policy supports Bristol City Council's obligations under relevant legislation, the Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community Standard, and reflects the Housing Ombudsman's expectations for effective ASB case management.

This policy should be read alongside Bristol City Council's Corporate Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to anti-social behaviour that affects residents of Bristol City Council managed homes and neighbourhoods, or where the alleged perpetrator is a Bristol City Council tenant, leaseholder, licensee, member of their household or visitor.

This policy applies to:

- Council tenants, including secure, introductory and demoted tenants;
- leaseholders;
- licensees and people occupying council-managed accommodation;
- members of a resident's household;
- Bristol City Council employees responsible for delivering housing management and anti-social behaviour services.

We will work with partner agencies where ASB affects residents living in council-managed homes, regardless of housing tenure. However, our ability to take direct action may be limited where those involved are not Bristol City Council tenants or where another organisation has primary responsibility for investigating or resolving the issue.

This policy does not replace Bristol City Council's policies and procedures relating to:

- Domestic Abuse;
- Safeguarding Children and Adults;
- Hate Crime
- Complaints handling;
- Corporate anti-social behaviour functions delivered outside Housing and Landlord Services.

Reports involving domestic abuse, safeguarding concerns or criminal offences may be managed alongside this policy and will be referred to the appropriate teams or partner agencies where required.

This policy should be read alongside Bristol City Council's Corporate Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. Where this policy applies to council-managed homes and tenancies, it provides the more specific requirements for Housing and Landlord Services.

3. Aims and objectives

This policy aims to:

- provide a fair, consistent and accessible approach to managing reports of anti-social behaviour;
- identify and respond appropriately to risk, harm, vulnerability and support needs;
- support residents and communities by using prevention, early intervention, partnership working and enforcement where appropriate;
- support tenancy sustainment and promote safe, inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods; and
- drive continuous service improvement through performance monitoring, resident feedback, complaints learning and Housing Ombudsman recommendations

4. Roles and Responsibilities and Authority

The Director of Housing and Landlord Services and the Head of Housing Management and Estates are responsible for the implementation of this policy.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that employees understand and apply this policy consistently and that appropriate arrangements are in place to support its delivery.

Employees responsible for managing reports of anti-social behaviour are responsible for:

- applying the policy fairly and consistently;
- assessing risk, vulnerability and support needs;
- working with residents and partner agencies to prevent and address anti-social behaviour; and
- maintaining accurate records and case management arrangements.

Residents are expected to:

- comply with the terms of their tenancy, lease or occupancy agreement;

- treat neighbours, visitors, employees and contractors with respect;
- report anti-social behaviour promptly where appropriate; and
- engage with reasonable requests made as part of investigations and agreed action plans.

Detailed operational responsibilities are set out in Appendix A.

5. The Policy

5.1 Legal Context and Consumer Standards

Bristol City Council will manage anti-social behaviour in accordance with relevant legislation, regulatory requirements and good practice.

This policy is informed by:

- the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, which provides the legal framework and powers used to prevent and address anti-social behaviour;
- the Housing Act 1985 and tenancy conditions, which set out the rights and responsibilities of tenants and the Council as a social landlord;
- the Equality Act 2010, which requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations;
- the Human Rights Act 1998, which requires the Council to act lawfully, fairly and proportionately when making decisions;
- the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community Standard; and
- the Housing Ombudsman's expectations for effective anti-social behaviour case management.

As a social landlord, Bristol City Council is required to publish a policy setting out how it prevents and tackles anti-social behaviour, works with partner agencies, supports residents and fulfils its statutory and regulatory responsibilities.

5.2 Tenants Rights

Residents have the right to live in their home without being subjected to anti-social behaviour, harassment, discrimination, abuse or intimidation. Where anti-social behaviour is reported, residents have the right to have their concerns taken seriously and considered in a fair, consistent and proportionate manner.

Residents have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, to have any identified risks, vulnerabilities and support needs taken into account, and to receive clear information about what action Bristol City Council can reasonably take to address their concerns. Residents also have the right to be kept informed about the progress of their case and to understand the reasons for any decisions that are made.

Where appropriate, residents have the right to access support services and make a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the service they have received.

Bristol City Council will handle personal information in accordance with data protection legislation, consider requests for reasonable adjustments, and have regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998 when delivering services and making decisions.

5.3 What is ASB?

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, distress, nuisance or annoyance to other people.

Bristol City Council adopts the definitions of anti-social behaviour set out in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Anti-social behaviour can include behaviour directed at an individual, behaviour that affects a neighbourhood or community, or behaviour that has a negative impact on a person's ability to enjoy their home safely and peacefully.

ASB can take many forms and may include harassment, intimidation, threats, hate incidents, violence, criminal behaviour, drug-related activity, persistent noise nuisance, damage to property, misuse of communal areas and other behaviour that causes significant or persistent harm to individuals or communities. This list is not exhaustive, and each report will be assessed on its individual circumstances.

Anti-social behaviour may also constitute a breach of a tenancy, lease or occupancy agreement. Where appropriate, Bristol City Council may take informal action, supportive interventions, tenancy enforcement action or legal action to prevent and address anti-social behaviour. Any action taken will be reasonable, proportionate and based on the circumstances of the case.

5.4 What is not ASB?

Not all neighbour disputes or differences in lifestyle will be considered anti-social behaviour. Everyone has different lifestyles, routines and living arrangements, and some level of everyday household noise and activity is an unavoidable part of community living. Bristol City Council will assess each report on its individual circumstances, taking account of the nature of the behaviour, its frequency, duration, impact and any available evidence before deciding how the matter should be managed.

Where an issue does not meet the threshold for anti-social behaviour, Bristol City Council may still provide advice, support, signposting, mediation or other neighbourhood management interventions where appropriate.

Examples of issues that would not normally be considered anti-social behaviour include:

- everyday household noise, such as people moving around their home, doors closing or the use of domestic appliances;
- babies crying or children playing;
- reasonable DIY and household activities carried out at appropriate times;
- cooking smells and other ordinary household odours;
- one-off social events where there is no evidence of persistent nuisance; and
- differences in lifestyle, culture, working patterns or personal preferences;
- parking disputes, unless there is evidence of associated anti-social behaviour, harassment, intimidation, threats or criminal activity

This list is not exhaustive and there may be circumstances where behaviour that would not normally be considered anti-social behaviour requires further assessment due to its frequency, severity or impact.

5.5 Our Principles

The following principles guide Bristol City Council's response to anti-social behaviour.

Victim-centred	We will seek to understand the impact that anti-social behaviour is having on residents and will take account of their experiences, views and desired outcomes when deciding how cases are managed.
Proactive	We will take reports of anti-social behaviour seriously and will seek to intervene at the earliest appropriate opportunity to prevent problems from escalating and causing further harm.
Risk and Harm Focused	We will assess the impact that anti-social behaviour is having on individuals, families and communities and will consider risk, vulnerability and support needs when deciding how to respond. Risk assessments will be reviewed throughout the life of a case to ensure our response remains appropriate.
Partnership-led	We recognise that anti-social behaviour is often most effectively addressed through partnership working. We will work collaboratively with residents, communities and partner agencies to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour and improve community safety.
Trauma-informed	We recognise that people's experiences and circumstances may influence both their behaviour and how they experience anti-social behaviour. We will seek to deliver services in ways that promote safety, trust, respect and support, whilst avoiding unnecessary re-traumatisation.

5.6 Our Approach

Bristol City Council recognises that anti-social behaviour affects people in different ways and that no two cases are the same. Our response will be tailored to the circumstances of each case and will take account of the nature of the behaviour, the impact on those affected, the available evidence, any identified risks and the support needs of those involved.

Prevention	Where possible, we will seek to prevent anti-social behaviour from occurring or escalating. This may include providing advice and guidance, promoting positive neighbourhood relationships, supporting tenancy sustainment, addressing environmental factors and working with residents, communities and partner agencies to identify and respond to emerging issues at an early stage. We will use information from ASB reports, neighbourhood intelligence, tenancy management activity and partnership work to identify emerging issues, repeat locations and neighbourhood safety concerns, allowing preventative action to be taken wherever possible.
Early Intervention	We aim to intervene at the earliest appropriate opportunity to prevent problems from becoming more serious. Depending on the circumstances of the case, this may include early engagement with

	those involved, mediation, warnings, support referrals, action plans or other interventions designed to change behaviour and reduce harm.
Support	We recognise that both those affected by anti-social behaviour and those responsible for it may require support. We will seek to identify vulnerability, safeguarding concerns and other support needs, and will work with residents and partner agencies to access appropriate services where required. Providing support does not prevent enforcement action from being taken where this is necessary and proportionate.
Enforcement	Where anti-social behaviour persists, presents a serious risk of harm, or where preventative and supportive interventions have not been successful, we will consider appropriate enforcement action. Any action taken will be reasonable, proportionate and based on the circumstances of the case, taking account of the impact on victims, the available evidence and any relevant legal, equality and human rights considerations. Enforcement action may include written warnings, acceptable behaviour agreements, injunctions, possession proceedings, closure powers and other legal remedies where appropriate.

5.7 Managing Reports of ASB

Residents can report anti-social behaviour through a range of channels. All reports will be assessed on their individual circumstances and Bristol City Council will determine the most appropriate response based on the nature of the behaviour, the level of risk and harm, any identified vulnerabilities and the available evidence.

Where appropriate, Bristol City Council will carry out a risk assessment to understand the impact that the reported behaviour is having on those affected and to identify any vulnerabilities, safeguarding concerns or support needs. Risk assessments will be reviewed throughout the life of a case where circumstances change or new information becomes available.

Where an ASB case is opened, Bristol City Council will agree an action plan with the resident. The action plan will set out the actions Bristol City Council intends to take, any actions expected of the resident and the arrangements for reviewing progress. Action plans may be updated throughout the life of the case as circumstances change.

Bristol City Council recognises that some incidents of anti-social behaviour may affect multiple residents, communal areas, estates or neighbourhoods. When assessing reports, we will consider both the impact on individual residents and the wider impact on the community when determining priorities, interventions and partnership responses.

We recognise the importance of clear and regular communication. We will agree communication arrangements with residents at the outset of a case and will provide updates appropriate to the nature and seriousness of the issues being reported. We will explain what action can reasonably be taken, manage expectations, provide reasons for decisions and keep residents informed of significant developments throughout the life of a case.

Investigations may include gathering information from residents, witnesses, council records, partner agencies and other relevant sources. Bristol City Council will take a fair and impartial

approach to investigations and will consider the views and information provided by all parties involved.

Cases will be reviewed regularly to ensure that actions remain appropriate, risks are understood and progress is being made. Where necessary, additional interventions, support or enforcement action may be considered.

A case may be closed where the anti-social behaviour has stopped, where no further proportionate action is available, or where Bristol City Council is satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken. Wherever possible, residents will be informed before a case is closed and the reasons for closure will be explained.

5.7.1 Service Standards

Bristol City Council will ensure that reports of anti-social behaviour are responded to in line with published service standards. We will:

- acknowledge emergency ASB reports within 1 working day and non-urgent reports within 10 working days;
- complete an initial risk assessment and agree an action plan within the same timescales;
- agree communication arrangements with residents, including preferred methods of contact and update frequency;
- provide written confirmation of actions and next steps following initial assessment;
- review cases regularly and keep residents informed of progress;
- explain the reasons for any decision to close a case and advise residents of any further options available to them.

Service standards are published on the Bristol City Council website: https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council/policies-plans-and-strategies/housing/council-housing-service-standards

5.8 Supporting Residents

Bristol City Council recognises that anti-social behaviour can have a significant impact on people's wellbeing, safety and quality of life. We are committed to identifying and responding to vulnerability, safeguarding concerns and support needs throughout the management of ASB cases.

We will seek to understand the impact that anti-social behaviour is having on those affected and will consider whether additional support, adjustments or referrals are required. This may include working with internal services and external partner agencies to help residents access appropriate support.

Where concerns are identified relating to the safety or wellbeing of a child, young person or adult at risk, Bristol City Council will take appropriate safeguarding action in accordance with relevant legislation, policies and procedures.

We recognise that people responsible for anti-social behaviour may also have vulnerabilities or unmet support needs. Where appropriate, we will seek to identify and address these needs through support, signposting and partnership working. Providing support does not

prevent Bristol City Council from taking enforcement action where this is necessary and proportionate.

Our approach is informed by trauma-informed practice. We recognise that people's experiences and circumstances may influence how they engage with services and how they experience anti-social behaviour. We will seek to deliver services in ways that promote safety, trust, respect and support.

5.9 Partnership Working

Bristol City Council recognises that anti-social behaviour is often complex and cannot always be resolved by a single organisation acting alone. Effective partnership working is essential to preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour, supporting residents and building safer communities.

We will work collaboratively with partner agencies where appropriate to:

- prevent and reduce anti-social behaviour;
- share relevant information lawfully and proportionately;
- identify and manage risk;
- support victims, witnesses and vulnerable residents;
- address the underlying causes of anti-social behaviour; and
- coordinate interventions and enforcement activity where a multi-agency response is required.

Depending on the circumstances of a case, this may include working with organisations such as Avon and Somerset Police, social care services, safeguarding teams, health services, support providers, probation services, youth services, other housing providers and community safety partners.

Where another organisation has statutory responsibility or is better placed to take action, Bristol City Council will work alongside that organisation and support residents to access the most appropriate service. We will be clear with residents about our role, the role of partner agencies and any limitations on the action we can take.

Information will be shared in accordance with relevant legislation, information sharing agreements and data protection requirements. We will only share information where it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to do so.

Where appropriate, Bristol City Council may participate in multi-agency meetings, the Housing Case Oversight Group (HCOG) and other partnership arrangements to support coordinated decision-making, safeguard individuals and achieve the best possible outcomes for residents and communities.

5.10 Housing Case Oversight Group (HCOG)

Bristol City Council recognises that some anti-social behaviour cases are particularly complex, high-risk, persistent or require a coordinated multi-agency response.

The Housing Case Oversight Group (HCOG) provides a forum for the review and oversight of such cases. Cases may be referred to HCOG where additional oversight, specialist input or multi-agency coordination is required.

The purpose of HCOG is to:

- review complex, high-risk or escalating cases;
- support information sharing and joint working;
- consider whether appropriate interventions, support and enforcement options have been explored;
- identify barriers to resolution and agree actions; and
- promote effective, proportionate and consistent decision-making.

HCOG does not replace day-to-day case management responsibilities. Responsibility for managing cases remains with the relevant service teams, who are expected to implement agreed actions and monitor progress.

5.11 Equality and Diversity

Bristol City Council is committed to treating all residents with dignity, fairness and respect. We recognise that anti-social behaviour can have a disproportionate impact on some individuals and communities and that people may experience or report anti-social behaviour differently depending on their circumstances.

When delivering this policy, we will have regard to our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. We will consider protected characteristics, vulnerabilities, support needs and any reasonable adjustments that may be required to enable residents to access our services and participate in the management of their case.

An Equality Impact Assessment for this policy has been carried out and agreed by the Equalities Team.

5.12 Complaints and Learning

Residents who are dissatisfied with the service they have received, or the way their anti-social behaviour case has been managed, may make a complaint through Bristol City Council's complaints process. Complaints will be managed in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy and, where applicable, the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

Complaints can be made online: https://www.bristol.gov.uk/contact/complaints-and-feedback or by contacting Bristol City Council, and we will provide assistance where required to help residents access the complaints process.

Making a complaint does not prevent a resident from reporting further incidents of anti-social behaviour or accessing any other available support or statutory remedies.

Bristol City Council will use resident feedback, scrutiny recommendations, service reviews, complaints and Housing Ombudsman decisions to inform service improvements and shape future approaches to preventing and addressing anti-social behaviour.

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

We will monitor the effectiveness of this policy using performance information, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), resident feedback, complaints and case management data. This information will help us understand how effectively we are responding to reports of anti-social behaviour and identify opportunities for service improvement. In relation to this Policy BCC will monitor:

- Performance against ASB service measures
- Resident satisfaction with the handling of ASB cases
- ASB-related complaints and learning outcomes
- Compliance with relevant legal, regulatory and policy requirements
- Themes arising from resident engagement, HCOG discussions, complaints and Ombudsman decisions

7. Appendices

Appendix A – Roles and Responsibilities

Job/Team Name	Description of responsibilities
Head of Service (Tenancy Management and Estates)	• Provide overall strategic leadership and accountability for the Council's approach to preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour • Ensure the Council meets its legal, regulatory and corporate responsibilities in relation to anti-social behaviour • Promote a resident-focused approach that supports safe and sustainable communities • Ensure appropriate governance, assurance and performance arrangements are in place for the delivery of the ASB service
Service Manager	• Provide strategic oversight of the ASB service and ensure effective implementation of this policy • Monitor service performance and ensure appropriate action is taken to address identified risks, issues and service improvements • Ensure adequate resources, partnerships and operational arrangements are in place to deliver the policy

	• Promote continuous improvement and compliance with legal, regulatory and organisational requirements
Team Manager	• Provide leadership, oversight and quality assurance for anti-social behaviour case management and enforcement activity • Support decision-making in complex, high-risk or sensitive cases • Ensure compliance with policy, procedures, service standards and legal requirements • Monitor service performance and promote continuous improvement and learning
Housing Officer	• Manage reports of anti-social behaviour and take appropriate action in line with the policy • Assess risk, vulnerability, support needs and safeguarding concerns to inform case management • Work with residents, support services and partner agencies to resolve anti-social behaviour and improve outcomes for those affected • Maintain communication with residents and ensure they are kept informed throughout case management • Identify cases requiring escalation to specialist intervention, enforcement action or legal remedies where appropriate
ASB Officer	• Lead the investigation and management of complex and formal anti-social behaviour cases • Coordinate enforcement activity and ensure actions are proportionate, evidence-based and compliant with legal requirements • Assess and manage risk, vulnerability, safeguarding, equality and human rights considerations throughout case management and enforcement processes • Support victims and witnesses and work collaboratively with partner agencies to reduce harm and tackle anti-social behaviour • Progress and monitor legal remedies, including injunctions, possession action and breach proceedings where appropriate
Legal Services	• Provide legal advice on anti-social behaviour enforcement and legal remedies • Support decision-making on legal action and ensure compliance with statutory requirements • Prepare and progress legal proceedings on behalf of the Council where appropriate • Represent the Council in court and provide advice on the implementation and enforcement of court outcomes

Appendix B – Legal and Policy Context

- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Housing Act 1985
- Housing Act 1988
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998

- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Serious Crime Act 2015 (including coercive and controlling behaviour offences)
- Policing and Crime Act 2017 (information sharing and safeguarding provisions)
- Children Act 1989
- Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005

Internal Policies

- Corporate ASB Policy
- Hate Crime Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Tenancy Sustainment Policy
- Tenancy Changes Policy
- Housing Complaints Policy

Appendix C – Associated Documents

- BCC Tenancy Agreement
- BCC Tenant Handbook