

Service Standards – Neighbour Nuisance & Anti Social Behaviour

A Summary of Dover District Council Housing Section Approach to Anti Social Behaviour

1.0 Area

Neighbour Nuisance & Antisocial behaviour

Description

These standards describe the Council's responsibilities and standards in relation to Neighbour Nuisance & Antisocial behaviour.

Section 218A of the Housing 1996, inserted by Section 12 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003, requires all social landlords¹ to publish a statement of their policy procedures and a summary in relation to anti-social behaviour by 30th December 2004. The statement must be made available to the public and kept under review

2.0 Statement of Policy / Service Objectives

The Council aims to create an environment where its tenants and leaseholders can live peacefully alongside each other. Sometimes, people can behave in a way that causes a nuisance to others and the Council aims to deal with these instances, fairly and in a way that will ensure that all tenants and leaseholders can enjoy their homes.

The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003² defines anti social behaviour as:

"capable of causing a nuisance or annoyance to any person, and which directly or indirectly relates to or affects the Housing Management functions of a relevant landlord³"

The Act also defines anti social behaviour as:

"using or threatening to use housing accommodation owned or managed by a relevant landlord for an unlawful purpose."

The Council's definition of anti social behaviour is consistent with the legislation. The definition is widely drawn to reflect residents concerns. The Council's definition of anti social behaviour includes:

- Violence against people which includes
 - Assaults
 - Domestic Violence
 - Threatening or using violence
 - Verbal Abuse

- Drug/Alcohol Abuse and drug dealing including

¹ Including Local authorities, RSL's and Housing Action Trusts

² Sections 153A and 153B, Housing Act 1996 (inserted by Section 13 of the Anti social Behaviour Act 2003).

³ Section 153E (7), Housing Act 1996. Relevant landlords are Housing Action Trusts, Local Authorities and RSL's.

- Underage drinking
- Selling to underage
- Licensing issues
- Drunkenness
- Alcohol/drug related misbehaviour/disorder
- Drug litter
- Using homes to sell illegal drugs or to underage

- Sexual Offences including
 - Underage sex
 - Prostitution

- Harassment

- Criminal Damage and Vandalism including
 - Graffiti
 - Damage to Council property
 - Other damage impacting on the Community

- Vehicle Problems including
 - Abandoned vehicles
 - Joyriding
 - Off roading
 - Untaxed vehicles
 - Carrying out repairs in inappropriate places
 - Inconsiderate parking

- Hate Crime including
 - Racial
 - Homophobic
 - Faith hatred

- Litter including
 - Rubbish accumulating on landing and entrance ways, throwing rubbish out of windows
 - Fly-tipping

- Neighbour Disputes including
 - Noise nuisance, loud music late at night

- Dogs, uncontrolled pets and other animals including
 - Fouling
 - Noise

- Youth Problems including
 - Intimidating groups
 - Playing in unsuitable areas (eg football near windows, skateboarding in lobby areas)

This Service Standard refers to all instances of Neighbour Nuisance and Anti Social Behaviour with the exception of reports of Racial Harassment, which is covered by a separate Service Standard

3.0 Our Commitments

Prevention

We will review the Council's Conditions of Tenancy from time to time and ensure that our capacity to address the problem of Nuisance and Anti Social Behaviour is not adversely affected by our Tenancy Agreement.

We will clearly explain the Council's conditions of tenancy to prospective tenants as part of the process of commencing the tenancy.

We will aim to ensure that the physical environment on estates does not encourage nuisance or anti social behaviour (for example we will quickly repair communal lighting and carry out repairs to insecure garages to discourage loitering etc)

We will regulate and manage the open spaces on our estates to prevent unauthorised car parking and other activity such as animal fouling, so that these activities do not become nuisances.

We will work with other agencies – such as the Police, Social Services and Schools, to develop strategies to reduce the levels of nuisance and anti social behaviour and as a Council we take full account of these issues in the Community Safety Strategy.

We will investigate and keep under review the Council's capacity to grant Introductory Tenancies and will seek to adopt such arrangements where, in consultation with tenants, it is felt that this would be beneficial as a means of managing Neighbour Nuisance and Anti Social Behaviour.

Investigation

We will record and investigate all allegations of neighbour nuisance and anti social behaviour

We will acknowledge each complaint in writing and allocate a named member of staff to deal with the complaint.

We will ensure that staff have received training on the Council's powers and duties in relation to Breach of Tenancy, Nuisance and Anti social behaviour so that they are able to effectively deal with complaints of this nature.

Complaints can be made verbally or in writing although our ability to deal with some cases will be limited without written details of complaints

We will treat all information received as confidential and will only share it with other agencies (such as the Police) when it is necessary to do so and we have permission.

We will monitor the number of instances of neighbour nuisance and anti social behaviour, each month and staff dealing with such cases will report progress to their managers on a monthly basis.

Case Management

We will make sure that those suffering from nuisance or anti social behaviour are kept informed of our actions and progress in resolving the problem.

We will provide information and advice regarding the support available to those experiencing neighbour nuisance. This will include information on mediation services and additional home and personal security for victims.

We will subscribe to the Shepway Mediation service and make use of this when dealing with appropriate Neighbour Nuisance cases.

We will, in exceptional circumstances offer alternative permanent accommodation to victims of severe anti social behaviour as a way of alleviating the distress that this can cause.

Where a tenant is in breach of their tenancy agreement we will in the first instance, seek to resolve the problem by negotiation. Where this fails, we will consider the use of enforcement action including the use of injunctions, Anti Social Behaviour Orders and ultimately, Possession Proceedings

We will support the Police in addressing behaviour of a criminal nature and the Environmental Health department where enforcement is more appropriate through the Council's Public Health powers.

We will ensure that all staff dealing with Nuisance and Anti Social Behaviour are made aware of the Health & Safety risks associated with some severe cases and we will take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of our staff in such instances.

4.0 Our Targets

A complaint of Anti Social Behaviour can be made via the anti social behaviour reporting line on 01304 872220 selecting option 3 for Housing or directly to your area housing officer a list of whose contact details is regularly printed in the tenants newsletter or available on www.dover.gov.uk/housing.

We will acknowledge all complaints of anti social behaviour according to their degree of urgency in the following way:

Priority One

Serious threat to people or property. Within one working day allocating a named member of staff to investigate the matter.

Priority Two

Regular nuisance. Responsible officer to speak to complainant within 5 working days

Priority three

Irregular nuisance e.g. one off loud party. Responsible officer to speak to the complainant within 10 working days

We will monitor the number of instances of anti social behaviour on a monthly basis and aim to reduce the number of cases

We will publish this Summary of policy on our web site and issue it to all new tenants. It will be published in our quarterly newsletter following the regular procedure review. The review is subject to a timetable agreed by our District Tenants Group.

5.0 If we don't meet our Commitments or Targets

If you feel that the Council is not meeting its Service Standards, by failing to follow its policy or meeting its targets, you can:

Contact the person responsible for this Standard to ask for an explanation. The person responsible for the Neighbour Nuisance & Antisocial behaviour Service Standard is Jeff Matthews, Housing Services Manager who can be contacted in the following ways:

<u>Letter</u> – Please write to	Mr Jeff Matthews Housing Services Manager Dover District Council Housing Services White Cliffs Business Park Dover Kent CT16 3PJ
<u>Telephone</u>	01304 872200
<u>e-mail</u>	jeffmatthews@dover.gov.uk
<u>In Person</u>	By appointment

If you are dissatisfied with their explanation, you have the right to make a complaint via the Council's Complaints Procedure. Please ask for copy of our Service Standards for Complaints and Compliments and a Leaflet explaining how Complaints are dealt with