



Anti-social behaviour

policy statement 2023



NORWICH
City Council

Version	Date	
Draft 1	03/10/23	Chris Hancock
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Scope and purpose of this policy document

This policy statement supports Norwich City Council's 2040 City Vision and Corporate plan and intends to meet our requirements as a local housing authority (Housing Act 1996) regarding Anti-social behaviour (ASB).

The policy will explain what ASB is and the standards we have set officers in the Council to deal with ASB. A procedures document will be produced that sets out our procedural approach to how we tackle ASB and can be read in conjunction with this document.

Introduction

Our responsibilities

Norwich City Council has a wide range of responsibilities, which arise from three distinct roles in dealing with ASB:

1. Our role as a social landlord

As a landlord we have a duty under the ASB Act 2003 to respond to ASB affecting the homes we manage. Our landlord powers and duties are different from and can sometimes be used in addition to the other duties and powers we hold to deal with ASB in the wider community in Norwich.

2. Environmental protection

We have a range of powers to deal with ASB related to environmental issues for example: littering, noise, fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles. The main legislation that this type of nuisance refers to is the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

3. Our role in Norfolk County Community Safety Partnership (NCCSP)

We have a duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to work with the Police and other key agencies to reduce crime and disorder in Norwich. We do this through the NCCSP structure of boards and groups tasked with making Norfolk a safer place for everyone. We also lead a local Safer Norwich Board that is tasked with looking at Norwich specific community safety issues.

4. What this policy is for

This policy concerns specifically our role as a social housing landlord and Community Safety team. Environmental ASB is tackled by other teams within the Council and where they may be crossover this will be clearly set out in any policy or subsequent procedure document.

Our five guiding principles to approaching anti-social behaviour are:

- We will continually use customer feedback to provide a high-quality service.
- We will encourage victims to report ASB and expect to be taken seriously treating them with professional courtesy and respect. We will work in a trauma- sensitive way, to ensure that, whilst we may need to ask difficult questions or decide a course of action that one of the parties may not agree with, we will limit the possibility of our processes unintentionally being re-traumatizing or stress inducing to the people involved as far as possible.
- We will signpost victims to help and support them to recover.
- We will provide clear processes to ensure that when victims report ASB concerns they will be given clear instructions of how the matter will be investigated and how they will be kept informed of progress once a report is made.
- We will work with our partners to deliver an effective ASB service to protect individuals and communities from harm using tools and powers that are specific, proportionate, and appropriate to the behaviour.

Our ASB service standards

Your report of antisocial behaviour will be assessed according to the National Risk Assessment Matrix. Our triage team will then be in touch within 2 days for cases rated as high risk, or 5 days for standard or medium risk.

Our Triage officers will take further details of your report and may ask you to download an App or keep records regarding the ASB you are experiencing before passing your case to a response officer. Priority will continue to be given to high-risk cases.

We will contact you prior to closing your case to explain the reasons why. This may be due to resolving the situation, insufficient evidence or referral to another team within Norwich City Council.

If you have reported three or more separate incidents of ASB in the past six months to any of the main responsible agencies, within one month of each incident happening, you can apply for an ASB Case Review*. You can apply for an ASB Case Review by visiting the online portal: <https://online.norfolk.gov.uk/anti-socialcasereview/>

What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour includes a range of nuisance and criminal behaviours which are causing distress to others. Whether someone's actions can be classed as anti-social behaviour relies heavily on the impact it has on other people. Behaviour that is more frequent or persistent is more likely to be considered as anti-social behaviour.

The type and intensity of the behaviour also matters. Landlords, the police, and local authorities consider all these factors when deciding how best to deal with reports of anti-social behaviour.

Every report made to Norwich City Council is looked at individually considering the suffering of the victims and the impact on the wider community. We have separate policies for dealing with domestic abuse, for which there are separate legal protections, for any noise that is reported and we later find domestic abuse is a factor we will deal with this according to our domestic abuse policies¹. You can read our domestic abuse policy [here](#). Examples of anti-social behaviour can include:

- noisy and/or abusive behaviour
- vandalism,
- graffiti,
- intimidation,
- public drunkenness,
- littering,
- fly tipping,
- illegal drug use
- excessively barking dogs

Some behaviour, even though it may cause nuisance to individuals, is not regarded as ASB. For example, this can include:

- one-off parties and barbecues
- infrequent and occasional noise or disturbances
- children's play
- occasional dog barking
- excessive noise from domestic appliances (eg washing machines, vacuum cleaners)
- minor vehicle repairs
- gossip
- escalated disputes.²

¹ See Norwich City Council website: DA Policy.

Good neighbourhood management policy³

As part of our commitment to good neighbourhood management we will be developing a policy in 2024 with a clear suite of options for maintaining good neighbourhood relationships and a matrix for assessing which option is the most appropriate. The suite of options could include:

- Mediation.
- Information sharing and community building events.
- Targeted resources in areas requiring further specific interventions.

The development of the policy will ensure that low levels of neighbourhood friction are dealt with at the appropriate levels and not inappropriately handled as potential ASB. We will clearly communicate with residents where complaints are being dealt with either within our Neighbourhood management or ASB policy.

Vulnerability and Safeguarding

Whilst being a victim of ASB is distressing for anyone who is affected, the Council recognises that for some people the impact may be far worse because of an identified vulnerability.

Vulnerable victims are likely to be disproportionately affected by ASB and vulnerabilities can be caused by a wide range of factors, such as isolation, a mental health condition, physical disability, age, or substance misuse.

Sometimes it will be necessary to make a safeguarding referral and cases that require this course of action will be additionally recorded as part of safeguarding procedures. Concerns about ASB and safeguarding often overlap which reinforces the necessity for strong partnership working. You can read our safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policies here: [Safeguarding policy | Norwich City Council](#)

² Adapted from Department of levelling up, homes and communities: [Help with anti-social behaviour for social housing tenants - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), (Accessed on 22/09/23).

³ Time to be heard, Spotlight on noise complaints, (Housing Ombudsman, October 2022).

Policy statement sections

1. Our approach to ASB covers 5 specific areas⁴:
 - Opening a case.
 - Early intervention.
 - Enforcement/ use of preventative tools.
 - Legal considerations.
 - Closing a case.

Opening a case

2. The Council may take the lead in investigating reports of ASB in the following circumstances:
 - When the person experiencing and/or perpetrating ASB is a Council tenant, or if the ASB is perpetrated by another person when visiting a Council tenant,
 - When the person experiencing and/or perpetrating ASB is a leaseholder, or if the ASB is perpetrated by another person when visiting a leaseholder,
 - When the person experiencing and/ or perpetrating ASB in a Norwich City Council estate neighbourhood,
 - Where we have a statutory duty to investigate domestic noise nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act, regardless of tenure of the properties involved

We will:

3. Provide the complainant with contact details of the named officer who has been assigned the case and who will be responsible for actions and updates. Make sure the time and date of all contact with the complainant is always recorded.
4. Maintain witness confidentiality.
5. Manage complainants' expectations from the outset and be realistic and open with them. Explain the process and minimum standards of service to the complainant so they know what to expect.
6. Develop an action plan with the complainant that is agreed and understood by them. This will include timescales and agreed actions.
7. Adherence to ASB casework timescales will be measured as part of governance reporting.

⁴ Adapted from Home Office Effective ASB Case Management Principles

8. Ask the complainant for permission before contact with the perpetrator is made (unless there are safeguarding concerns). Where permission has not been given, we will work closely with the complainant to gain their trust, provide reassurance of support available to encourage permission.
9. Ensure support should be tailored to the needs of the individual. Establish an understanding of the complainants' support needs and other partner agencies involved.
10. Ensure a risk assessment is updated regularly at all key stages. For example, following each substantive contact with the victim, alleged perpetrator, partners and when actions are planned and/or taken.
11. Keep in regular communication with the complainant and involved partners to update them on progress.
12. Where diaries are used, should be issued with advice on how to complete and the type of information required.

Early intervention

Wherever possible we will attempt to intervene early to prevent ASB from happening in the first place. However, we recognise that this is not possible in all cases.

We will:

13. Use the full range of ASB tools and powers available where appropriate.
14. Share action, activity, and data with partners safely and appropriately.
15. Maintain an awareness of support available locally and how to refer into/access and ensure good communication with local community groups.
16. Select interventions that are appropriate, reasonable and proportionate to the behaviour and most likely to produce an effective solution. Be ready to take follow up action if early interventions fail to resolve the problem.
17. Make every effort to ensure that home visits to alleged perpetrators are impactful working with and conducting visits where appropriate with local partner agencies.
18. Maintain witness and complainant confidentiality.
19. Use any meetings with alleged perpetrators to challenge their behaviour setting out the complaint (taking account of complainants' anonymity) referring to existing actions taken such as warning letters and provide an opportunity for the alleged perpetrator to respond.

If the complaint is about a young person, we will:

20. Identify any agencies involved (if any) and make relevant referrals.
21. Meet with child and responsible parent/guardian and explain impact of behaviour and clearly set out expectations and consequences.
22. Consider use of appropriate, reasonable, and proportionate interventions, for example, ABC or warning notice.
23. If the young person is connected to a tenant of a Norwich City Council home, we will advise them and the tenant of the potential impact on their tenancy if the behaviour continues.

If the complaint is about an adult, we will:

24. Attempt to find out if the perpetrator is known to local probation, housing, and mental health/adult services/ drug & alcohol services.
25. Consider what the complainant wants and build this into any realistic agreed solutions.
26. Risk assess the situation and ensure that we have considered the likelihood of reprisals against the complainant.
27. Maintain regular communication with the witness/complainant and partner agencies to reassure of progress being made against objectives set at any communications made with witnesses/complainants.

Enforcement / use of preventative tools

Our driving principles is to protect individuals and communities from harm using tools and powers that are specific, proportionate, and appropriate to the behaviour.

We will:

28. Only use tools and powers when there is sufficient evidence to do so.
29. Consider all available resources, powers and tools including preventative measures with the aim of stopping occurrences of ASB to protect complainants, witnesses, and the community from harm.
30. Identify the most appropriate enforcement tools if early resolution attempts are unsuccessful. We will consider these actions taking the following into account:
 - Assessment of victim and witness vulnerability, risk and harm.
 - Use or threat of violence.

- Housing tenure.
 - Frequency.
 - Safeguarding and hate crime aspects including people with protected characteristics.
 - Was the victim intentionally targeted or situational?
31. Use preventative tools that are appropriate and proportionate to stopping the behaviours, supported with sufficient evidence.
 32. Engage the community using impact statements (where appropriate) within overall evidence gathering including any community driven responses and attempts to resolve matters locally.
 33. Be clear about what is achievable to manage expectations of both complainant and perpetrator, in accordance with our ASB service standard.
 34. Consider next steps if action is not successful in stopping the behaviour and/or order is not obtained or granted.
 35. Pay due regard to Norwich City Council Corporate Enforcement Policy ([Corporate Enforcement Policy | Norwich City Council](#))

After the case

We will:

36. Engage and build public confidence – communicate successful outcomes back to the community through communications, leaflets and information to local networks.
37. Signpost and provide support to the complainant after the case until it is no longer required working with local support agencies including victim support.

Evidence and court requirements

We will:

38. Prepare cases for court thoroughly with an intention to detail seeking legal advice where appropriate.
39. Where it is appropriate seek legal advice on using ASB reports in a casefile or tenancy file into statements or evidence for use in court.
40. Discuss with victims and witnesses the evidence options and explain the difference between direct evidence and hearsay.

41. Explain the court processes and possible outcomes clearly to the victim or witness.
42. If the perpetrator has a history of mental ill-health engage with local mental health services using methods of escalation where there are any apparent blockages.
43. Where an order is being considered ensure that the prohibitions being sought are appropriate, specific, practical, and enforceable to the circumstances it will be applied.
44. Actively challenge legal advice that fails to protect communities.
45. Engage local communities and work with any local community groups at the earliest opportunity.

Going to court, getting the order, and managing breaches

We will:

46. Keep victims / complainants / community leaders informed of hearings and court dates and work collaboratively with them to monitor community tensions.
47. Maintain communication with police and housing about protection measures at court and in the community.

Case closure

We will:

48. Ensure that cases should be consistently maintained and closed in accordance with:
 - Policies and procedures, protocols and data protection principles, and,
 - The case action plan is agreed with the complainant / victim and the named caseworker at the outset and updated throughout the duration of the case.
49. Ensure that cases should be closed with the agreement of the complainant / witness and followed up with written confirmation of case closure within our ASB case standard timescales.
50. Maintain accurate case records – record the reason for case closure and notify relevant partners of case closure and reason.
51. Make every attempt to ensure that case closure does not come as a surprise to the victim by ensuring that there has been regular communication with the complainant throughout the duration of the case management.

Long term support

We will:

52. Make clear where support to a vulnerable person continues after an ASB case has been closed as to which agency will be providing support with a named contact where appropriate.
53. Carry out customer satisfaction questionnaires with a sample of closed cases picked at random and will be prepared to reopen cases where it is clear that the victim has seen a reoccurrence of issues. We will engage with local police teams to maintain joint responsibility after case closure.

Anti-social behaviour by unknown persons

54. Not all anti-social behaviour reported to Norwich City Council is by persons who can be readily identified. We refer to this as 'locational' ASB.
55. The principles of our response to locational ASB are similar to above but the responses will vary.

Management of locational ASB

We will:

56. Provide well publicised and accessible methods of reporting.
57. Contact all complainants/victims to understand the nature, extent and impact of the issues.
58. Work with police and other partners to establish a full understanding of the issues.
59. Provide advice and guidance to victims and sign-post them to support.
60. Analyse and assess the problem and prioritise our responses to ensure resources are targeted at those issues causing most harm.
61. Attempt to identify the perpetrators and take action.
62. Regardless of priority we will always take any quick and simple measures we can to alleviate the ASB problem.

Customer experience and governance of this policy

We will:

63. Use customer satisfaction surveys/ adherence to ASB casework timescales to measure, report and benchmark customers' experiences.
64. Keep this policy under review to ensure that it is reasonable and practicable. Residents will be engaged in any review of this policy, including residents who have recently raised a formal complaint with us as landlord.

Data, record keeping and information sharing

65. We will only record and share your data in accordance with Norwich City Council Data Protection Policy [Data Protection Policy | Data Protection Policy | Norwich City Council](#)

Glossary of terms – Alphabetical order

ASB: *Anti-social Behaviour*

Author: *Chris Hancock, Karen Smith:* Individuals responsible for drafting specific versions of the policy.

City Vision: The 2040 City Vision aims to build on the successes and address the challenges, Norwich needs a long-term vision of what we want the city to be like in 2040 and what we need to do to make this happen.

Corporate Plan: Our Corporate Plan is the council's most strategic document which sets out our vision for the council and the city over the next four years. It includes our five aims and a number of linked activities.

Complainant Support: Providing contact details, maintaining confidentiality, managing expectations, and developing action plans.

Customer Feedback: Continuous use of feedback to enhance service quality.

Data Handling: Recording and sharing data in line with Norwich City Council Data Protection Policy.

Engagement with Victims/Witnesses: Discussing evidence options and court processes with victims/witnesses.

Exclusions from ASB: Instances like one-off parties, occasional noise, and children's play not classified as ASB.

Identified Vulnerability: Acknowledging that some individuals may be more affected by ASB due to factors like isolation, mental health, or age.

Intervention: The action or process of intervening

Investigative Circumstances: Conditions under which the Council may lead ASB investigations.

Locational ASB investigations: ASB committed in communal spaces where the perpetrator details are unknown.

Local Housing Authority (Housing Act 1996): Norwich City Council's responsibilities as a housing authority regarding ASB according to an act of parliament.

National Risk Assessment Matrix: Best practice criteria for assessing the risk level of reported ASB.

Neighbourhood Friction: Plans to develop a policy in 2024 addressing low-level neighbourhood issues and maintaining good relationships.

Nuisance and Criminal Behaviours: Actions causing distress, including examples such as noisy behaviour, vandalism, and public drunkenness.

Perpetrator: Person who carries out a harmful, illegal, or immoral act

Policy Review: Periodic review of the policy to ensure reasonability and practicality, with resident engagement.

Public Engagement: Communicating successful outcomes to the community.

Quick Measures: Taking immediate measures to alleviate ASB problems.

Reporting and Analysis: Providing accessible reporting methods, analysing issues, and prioritising responses.

Risk Assess: A systematic process of identifying hazards and evaluating any associated risks, then implementing reasonable control measures to remove or reduce them.

Safeguarding Referral: Making referrals when necessary, overlapping with ASB concerns.

Social Landlord: Social landlords provide lower cost rented housing and are regulated by the regulator for social housing.

Support and Signposting: Providing assistance to victims and directing them to relevant support services.

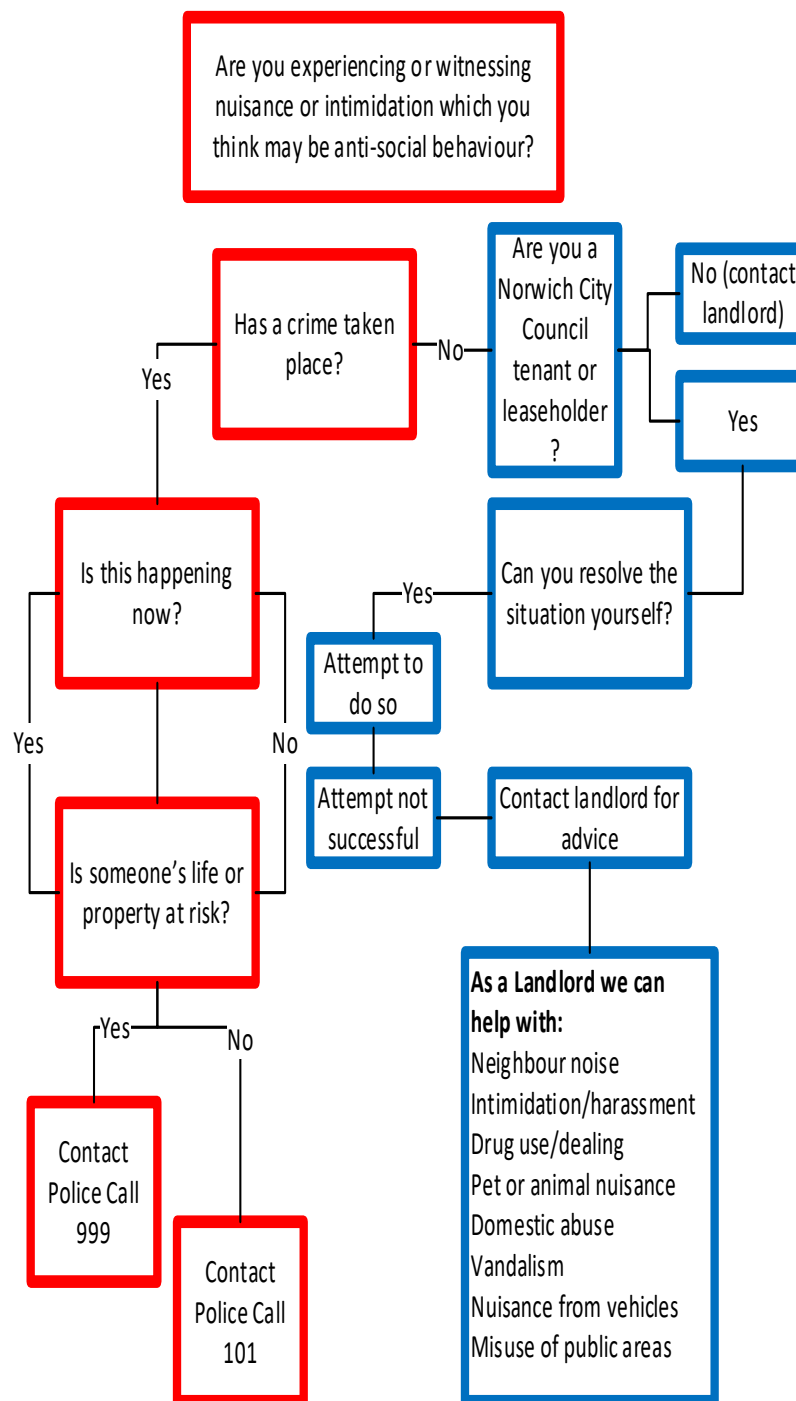
Support to Complainant: Providing post-case support, including engagement with local support agencies.

Tenure: The conditions under which land or buildings are held or occupied.

Triage Team: Team responsible for initial contact and assessment of reported cases.

Trauma-Sensitive Approach: Handling cases with consideration for potential trauma.

Version: *Draft 1, Draft 2:* Different iterations or revisions of the policy statement.





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