Broadacres

Good Neighbourhood Management Policy

www.broadacres.org.uk

Registered provider of social housing **registration number LH4014**
Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, **society number 27656R**.

Good Neighbourhood Management Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Broadacres Housing Association believes that everyone is entitled to quiet enjoyment of their home, without undue disruption and disturbance from others. We are committed to tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and nuisance as and when it arises, but we need our customers support to do this.

1.2 Our customers have a responsibility to ensure that they are not acting in a way that is likely to annoy or disturb their neighbours. They are also responsible for the behaviour of their pets, children, and visitors.

1.3 Broadacres are asking all our customers to treat their neighbours with respect and look out for them in times of need. We should be especially vigilant in the care of the vulnerable and elderly in our community.

1.4 ASB is a term that relates to a wide range of behaviour types. Legislation describes housing related ASB as being behaviour that is causing or likely to cause nuisance or annoyance.

2. Policy Purpose

2.1 This policy covers behaviours that are causing someone a nuisance but that would not be reasonable or appropriate to categorise as ASB. However, these are behaviours that can still cause a great deal of upset and frustration to neighbours and residents, creating tensions between neighbours and the wider communities.

2.2 Where the behaviour is not ASB, and therefore, unlikely to be a tenancy breach, it requires a different response from Broadacres. We will not seek to label someone as a perpetrator, nor will we be likely to consider any of our legal tools which are available to use in ASB cases. We do however wish to create good relations between our residents. Whilst we may be limited in our responses, this policy is designed to set out how we may be able to assist.

3. Policy Principles

3.1 We will triage and assess all reports of unacceptable behaviour that

are made to us using a range of factors. These factors may include the severity of the behaviour, its frequency, duration, times it is occurring, intention and impact. Assessing these factors allows us to decide whether the report meets our definition of ASB. Where it does not, we will make clear to the reporter at the earliest possible opportunity why this decision has been made. We will advise them if their complaint will be managed under our ASB policy or our Good Neighbourhood Management Policy.

3.2 We recognise that reported behaviour can change in terms of severity and that something initially assessed as being a 'good neighbourhood management' issue can evolve into ASB. We will continue to reassess our decision on any case each time a report is received, making sure we do not miss an opportunity to intervene.

3.3 As the purpose of this policy is to develop and strengthen relationships between people who live near to each other, we need the cooperation and support from the parties involved to improve situations. Where parties refuse to a reasonable request i.e. mediation, we may not be able to assist any further. Where this is the case, it will be clearly communicated to the party concerned.

3.4 The purpose of this policy is not to find fault or blame. We are therefore extremely unlikely to consider legal actions as a response to our involvement in matters dealt with under this policy.

3.5 At all stages we will consider the support needs of the parties involved in a matter dealt with under this policy. 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 a contributory factor, we will work to identify suitable support.

3.6 We may not always be able to assist with a situation that is dealt with under this policy as a single agency. There will be times where we may work with our partner agencies to share information and identify the best possible support and guidance we can offer to all involved.

4. Definitions

4.1 The purpose of this policy is to build good relationships between neighbours and residents. We do not work to identify who the 'perpetrator' is and who the 'victim' is in each situation. Matters dealt

with under this policy will likely involve situations that have arisen because of circumstance, rather than a genuine intention to cause someone else harm.

4.2 Because of this, we refer to the parties involved in the case as follows:
- Resident 1 – the person who contacts us in the 1st instance.
- Resident 2 – the other person concerned.

4.3 There may be variances to these definitions. For example, we may refer to Household 1 and Household 2, where more than 1 person is involved from an individual property. If there are more than 2 parties or households involved, we will continue to use the same approach, referring to them as Resident 3 (and so on) or Household 3 (and so on).

5. Behaviour Types

5.1 What is ASB?

5.1.1 The Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 defines ASB as:
- conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person;
- conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises; or
- conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

5.1.2 The definition of ASB is subjective based on how it makes someone feel. We recognise however, that every individual person has different tolerances, expectations and perceptions when deciding whether behaviour is appropriate.

5.1.3 Examples of ASB includes, but is not limited to:
- Verbal abuse, harassment, threatening behaviour and intimidation.
- Domestic abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Hate related incidents.
- Criminal activity.
- Vandalism and damage to property.
- Intimidating gatherings of people in public places.
- Misuse of communal areas including rubbish dumping.
- Fly tipping.
- Damage to property including graffiti and vandalism.

- Prostitution.
- Using and selling drugs.

5.1.4 The behaviour above would be dealt with under our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

5.2 What is not ASB?

5.2.1 Some people will see certain behaviour as 'anti-social', however, it may not be unreasonable. For example, we do not consider these types of behaviour to be ASB:

- Issues with parking spaces, where there is no designated spaces or contravention of legislation.
- Positioning of wheelie bins that one person 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.
- Household noise such as opening and closing doors.
- Noise from children playing.
- One-off parties or celebrations.
- Minor personal differences, such as fall outs between children or family disputes.

5.2.2 In addition, there may be behaviour that is clearly having an impact on Resident 1, but there is no intention by Resident 2 to cause harm and/or the behaviour causing the harm is not unreasonable. An example of this could be where Resident 2 is using their home in a reasonable manner, but the walls between the properties are thin and the sound is travelling and affecting Resident 1.

6. Triaging

6.1 To help us decide whether a report should be dealt with under this policy, we will consider the following factors:

- What is the intention of the behaviour?
- What is causing the behaviour that Resident A is reporting? Is it unreasonable activity?
- How often is it occurring?
- How long does it last?
- What times of day is it happening?
- What impact is it having on Resident A?

6.2 Whilst we will always consider the impact on Resident A, and the harm that is being caused, this factor alone does not mean that we will always consider Resident B to be at fault. For example, if noise is transferring between properties due to poor sound installation and thin walls, this could be having a high impact on Resident A. However, if Resident B is undertaking only reasonable activities, it would not be fair for us to consider Resident B at fault, even though the harm being caused is high.

6.3 In this type of situation, we are likely to focus on how we can make improvements to the sound transfer, how we can support Resident A and how we can work with Resident B to see what options are available to reduce the noise.

7. Support

7.1 Sometimes the health and well-being of someone can affect how they perceive certain things and the impact that it has upon them. When we receive reports that are assessed to fall under this policy, we will be mindful of whether residents have any health and well-being needs that we can assist with, either directly or through making referrals to other agencies. We may refer to other agencies or may offer internal support services.

7.2 There may be times where it would be helpful for us to receive information about Resident A or Resident B's health, for us to best assess our response and how we can most effectively help. We may require either resident to provide this information for us or to sign a consent form to allow us to do so on their behalf. Where this consent is not provided, it may limit our ability to assist any further in the matter.

8. Possible Actions

8.1 Our focus in these matters is to help to raise awareness, understanding and compromise between residents, with the overall aim of improving relationships.

8.2 Our first response in most of these cases is likely to be asking Resident A whether they can speak to Resident B to raise their concerns. It may be a situation where Resident B is not aware that their activity is c ausing concern to Resident A. The parties can discuss the matter and reach an agreement together, without Broadacres getting involved

and potentially frustrating a situation that could be dealt with amicably.

8.3 We will assess whether this is appropriate to do before providing this advice. We will also give Resident A practical advice on how best to approach Resident B and the types of things they may wish to discuss.

8.4 The other types of responses we may consider are:

- Issuing 'Good Neighbour' cards, these can be posted through a neighbour's door to make them aware of the behaviour(s) and/or action (s) and how it is impacting on you.
- Carrying out internal mediation.
- Referring the residents to an external mediation company.
- Carrying out a property inspection to identify property improvements that may assist.
- Asking parties to make reasonable changes to activities as part of being a good neighbour. For example, this could include asking people to wear headphones if they are playing music late at night.
- Asking residents to sign Broadacres 'Good Neighbour Agreement' this is a commitment to refrain from behaviour that is causing nuisance to neighbours.

8.5 This is not an exhaustive list. The focus will always be on practical and pragmatic solutions. Not all these solutions will be appropriate to all cases, and we will not try all of them in all situations.

8.6 When we have exhausted the options that are appropriate to each situation, we will inform the people involved in the matter that there is nothing further that we are able to do.

8.7 Because these situations are very unlikely to involve people breaching their tenancy agreement and/or causing ASB, our response is very unlikely to include taking legal action.

9. Good Neighbour Agreement

9.1 Our Good Neighbour Agreement sets out how a good neighbour should behave, it is a commitment from customers to respect their neighbours, take responsibility for their own behaviour and agree to be a good neighbour.

9.2 Every new customer, and every customer involved in reports of

anti-social or nuisance behaviour, will be asked to sign this document, which is not legally binding. Any serious incidents will be dealt with under the terms of their tenancy agreement.

9.3 A copy of Broadacres Good Neighbour Agreement can be found at Appendix 1.

10. Neighbourhood Presence and Inspections

10.1 Housing Officers are regularly on estates ensuring that communal areas and neighbourhoods are kept clean and safe. Formal estate inspections will be carried out at least annually or more frequently based on customer feedback or if we feel there is a particular risk. Estate inspections will be advertised via our website and social media channels. We will also inform customers directly about when estate inspections will take place.

10.2 Housing Officers are responsible for logging and reporting any issues that arise during an estate inspection to the relevant departments to ensure issues are dealt with. This could include issues such as graffiti, fly tipping or abandoned vehicles. Where an estate inspection is attended by customers and/or partners the Housing Officer will agree what feedback is required, the format the feedback will take and the timescale it will be received within.

10.3 In addition to estate inspections, Broadacres will also have a regular presence on our estates, identifying, reporting and where possible resolving neighbourhood issues as quickly as possible. Housing Officers will undertake an action-based approach, ensuring that their eyes are wide open to any issues and reporting and resolving them at the earliest opportunity.

10.4 Where reports are received of untidy gardens, the Housing Officer will visit to inspect the garden within 5 working days.

11. Partnership Working and Information Sharing

11.1 There may be times where we feel that we cannot resolve the situation on our own and will need to work with partner agencies such as Environmental Health, the Police, Local Authority, Mediation Services, or local community groups.

11.2 We will always share, store, and dispose of information in line with legislation and local information sharing arrangements.

12. Request for Confidentiality

12.1 Because the central purpose of this policy is to build relationships between parties, it is very unlikely that we will be able to assist if the person making the report wishes to remain anonymous.

12.2 There will be times where we cannot guarantee confidentiality, even where the resident requests it. This could include situations where we identify a safeguarding concern or where a criminal offence has taken place. When reported for inappropriate behaviour, most neighbours immediately assume it is their closest neighbours who have reported them.

13. Right to Appeal Policy Decision

13.1 As previously mentioned in this policy, ASB and nuisance are often subjective. If your case has been deemed to be managed under our Good Neighbourhood Management Policy and you believe it is ASB, then you can request a review of this decision. Your case will be reviewed by the Housing Services Manager or Head of Customer Experience, Housing and Support. Your appeal must be in writing, stating why you feel the original decision was incorrect.

14. Persistent and Unreasonable Complainants

14.1 We understand that when someone is experiencing something that they genuinely believe to be unreasonable behaviour it can be difficult to consider matters objectively. We will always explain to the person why we cannot take certain action, but they may not agree with all decisions that we make in these cases.

14.2 Whilst everyone has a right to make a complaint if they believe they have not received an appropriate service, we cannot keep taking complaints or reports about matters already decided, unless circumstances have changed. Doing so creates an unreasonable demand on our time.

14.3 We will always consider why someone is making repeated complaints/reports. If we feel it is appropriate, we may refer them to a support/well-being service.

14.4 If we feel someone is raising the same issues over and over or persistently raising something inappropriate making unreasonable demands on our colleagues, we may limit the routes available to them to contact the organisation. Any restrictions placed on a customer's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be appropriate to their needs and should demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. This decision will be taken by a Head of Service. Further information can be found in our Complaints Policy on our website www.broadacres.org.uk.

15. Vulnerable Customers Statement

15.1 We are committed to developing an equal and diverse culture where people are valued from all sections of society. We therefore oppose any form of discrimination in service delivery and employment practice. We aim to treat all customers fairly and we will look to tailor our policies, procedures, and services to meet the needs of all our customers.

15.2 Where we identify a customer who is vulnerable by reason of age, disability or illness, we will look to make reasonable adjustments to our services accordingly to meet the needs of these individuals. This may include altering the way we communicate with a customer or adjusting the service we offer to that person. Each case will be judged on its individual merit to avoid a one size fits all approach. We will monitor our services regularly to ensure we are meeting all our customers' needs and make any adjustments required to improve and enhance the service we deliver.

16. Consultation and Review

16.1 We will consult our key stakeholders, partners and customers on this policy. We will undertake a review of this policy whenever there are any relevant changes to legislation, regulatory requirements, case law or good practice that would impact on this policy.

17. Publicity

17.1 We will publicise this policy in several ways including on our website. We will make this policy available in different formats to suit the needs of our customers.

18. Confidentiality and Data Protection

18.1 We will follow all relevant data protection legislation particularly in relation to requests for information from third parties.

18.2 We are committed to protecting and respecting our tenants and customers privacy. Our privacy policy will inform tenants/customers how we look after their personal data, tell them about their privacy rights and how the law protects them. A full copy of our privacy statement is available on our website www.broadacres.org.uk.

19. Responsibility

19.1 Overall responsibility for this policy sits with our Senior Leadership Team. The Head of Customer Experience Housing and Support has operational responsibility for this policy.

20. Equality and Diversity

20.1 To comply with the Equality Act 2010, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was completed as part of the policy review. Upon completing the EIA, it was found that the implementation of this policy would support and encourage the aims of the public sector duty.

21. Related Documents

21.1 The relevant documents are primarily:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Procedure
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Neighbourhood Offer

Appendix 1

Good Neighbour Agreement

Introduction

Broadacres Housing Association believes that everyone is entitled to quiet enjoyment of their home, without undue disruption and disturbance from others. We are committed to tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) as and when it arises, but we need your support to do this.

You have a responsibility to ensure that you are not acting in a way that is likely to annoy or disturb your neighbours. You are also responsible for the behaviour of other people living with you, your pets and visitors to your home.

Broadacres are asking all our customers to treat their neighbours with respect and look out for them in times of need. We should be especially vigilant in the care of the vulnerable and elderly in our community. Every new customer will be asked to sign this document, this is not legally binding. Any serious incidents will be dealt with under the terms of your tenancy agreement.

There are many things you can do to help prevent nuisance and ASB, some examples are listed below.

As a good neighbour you will:

- Treat all neighbours in a respectful manner. Accept that everyone is different and be tolerant of the lifestyle of others.
- Respect the rights of children and young people to play and meet in a happy and safe environment.
- Be responsible for the behaviour of your children and anyone visiting your home. Ensure that they are not causing undue noise or nuisance to neighbours.
- Always keep all pets under control and try to minimise the amount of barking - dogs should be kept on a lead and not allowed to foul in common areas or on other people's property.
- Ensure that you park considerately; do not block drives and use designated parking spaces where available.

- Be aware that sound travels do not make loud, persistent noise, particularly in the evening or early morning (examples of this would be shouting, playing loud music, or using power tools).
- If your children wish to play in the street, please be mindful of the time, people's belongings, and property. Remember roads are for cars and are a dangerous playground.
- Report any acts of vandalism or criminal activity to Broadacres and the Police at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensure you are not using Social Media sites in a manner that may cause nuisance to others.
- Arrange to have any old furniture, bulky waste, or appliances collected as quickly as possible.
- If you have a garden, ensure it is maintained on a regular basis.
- If your home has a shared communal area, please keep these areas clear and do not store any items in communal areas.

What Broadacres will do:

Everyone can play their part in making their home and the surrounding area a better place to live, by considering the impact their lifestyle may have on their neighbours and the environment.

Being a good neighbour is about common sense, having consideration for other people and respect for different lifestyles and cultures. Broadacres aim is to resolve neighbour disputes amicably. However, where this fails, we will consider legal action to restrict unreasonable behaviour, or as a last resort seek to gain possession of your home.

Agreement

I agree that whilst I am a tenant of Broadacres Housing Association, I will do everything I can to be 'a good neighbour' and will not behave in any way which may be considered `Anti-Social'.

Signed	
Signed (joint tenant)	
Address	
Date	

Broadacres Housing Association
Broadacres House
Mount View
Standard Way
NORTHALLERTON
North Yorkshire
DL6 2YD

TEL: 01609 767900 EMAIL: info@broadacres.org.uk

www.broadacres.org.uk