



**BABERGH AND MIDSUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR  
POLICY  
2026**

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## 1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This policy sets out the commitment of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils (B&MSDC) to prevent and tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the districts. We believe that everyone has a right to live in a safe environment that allows them to enjoy their home and community. This policy ensures that preventing and tackling ASB is embedded across our services, and partnership working between departments and key agencies is effective and consistent.

For council tenants, this policy also follows the Housing Ombudsman's expectations and the latest government guidance. The policy is aimed at meeting the required outcomes of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). Consumer Standards.

- 1.2 This policy outlines what we mean by ASB, describes how we aim to deter it, and sets out guiding principles for our Officers who respond to reports of ASB. We recognise that ASB is often a symptom of unmet needs and that in many cases a person-centred, holistic and supportive approach is essential to resolve the behaviour.

We expect our tenants, and those who are not tenants, to show consideration and toleration for their neighbours, and the wider community. This includes family members, children and visitors to their home. We encourage tenants to take responsibility for their own lives and communities, and to resolve their own problems in a reasonable manner.

Where we are unable to mitigate the risks or impact of ASB by informal means, we will swiftly utilise the legal powers provided to us to protect residents and communities. This Policy has been developed alongside the BMSDC Good Neighbourhood Management Policy (relevant to Council Tenants)

- 1.3 The procedures for dealing with ASB in different service areas is set out in supporting procedures and information for our customers on our website.

## 2. Our responsibilities.

- 2.1 We work in partnership with other agencies and will use all available tools and powers to address ASB. The policy sets out our approach to fulfilling our duties as:

**A Social Landlord** - Our Housing department works in partnership with the police and other relevant organisations to deter and tackle ASB and hate incidents in the neighbourhoods where we provide social housing. This policy and associated procedure meet the requirements of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and Consumer Standards of the Regulator of Social Housing.

## **A statutory member of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership**

The housing and communities' teams, along with our community safety partners is committed to working together to build safer and stronger communities. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires BMSDC to collaborate with the Police and other relevant agencies to develop and implement strategies to reduce crime, disorder, and ASB including hate crime.

### **• Investigating nuisance and protecting the environment**

We hold a duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to investigate complaints that could be termed as a 'statutory nuisance' and to act where there is corroborated evidence to do so. This is undertaken by the Environmental Health team. The procedures relating to the working of environmental health are referred to as 'Administration and Investigation of Noise Complaints'.

### **3. What is Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)**

3.1 We adopt the definition as outlined in the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014:

- a. Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, or distress to any person.
- b. Conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises or,
- c. Conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

3.2 There are three main categories of ASB: -

- **Personal** ASB is when a person targets a specific individual or group.
- **Nuisance** ASB is when a person causes nuisance or annoyance.
- **Environmental** ASB is when a person's actions affect the wider environment, such as public spaces or buildings.

3.3 ASB includes a wide variety of unacceptable behaviours that may include criminal activity. The type of conduct that may amount to ASB includes but are not limited to:

- Using or threatening to use violence.
- Hate Crime-see section 4
- A public order offence within the locality
- Use of premises for other unlawful purposes
- Intimidation, harassment and threatening behaviour
- Violence against people or property
- Offences relating to the Dangerous Dogs Act (Council Tenants)
- Drug related Incidents\*\*\*
- Regular and persistent noise nuisance which is having a significant impact on the lives of neighbouring residents

\*\*\* Where reports relating to the smell of cannabis are received, the lead agency for the criminal element, will be the Police. If they confirm an illegal activity has taken place, we will consider enforcement action. BMSDC will assess/take appropriate and proportionate action with the nuisance element of the report.

3.4 Individuals have a right to enjoy their homes and are entitled to go about their daily lives without having concerns that complaints will be made against them. We encourage our residents to be as self-reliant as possible in managing their relationships with neighbours, we will intervene only where this has failed, and in our opinion ASB is being perpetrated.

3.5 We provide guidance on our website about what is, and what is not ASB in order to manage expectations. It is important that we are realistic when advising complainants what we can and cannot do in relation to a report of ASB. We will not treat as ASB, matters relating to residents going about their normal everyday activities-(unless this constitutes a breach of their tenancy for council tenants). If an incident is considered a breach of tenancy, any resulting action will be taken in line with our Good Neighbourhood Policy. Behaviour that is not generally considered as unreasonable or is a result of lifestyle differences are not considered ASB and will not be dealt with under our ASB policy. More information can be found on [the Councils website](#).

3.6 Below are examples of issues which may upset or disturb people, but will not be dealt with under the ASB policy

- Babies crying;
- Children playing (including balls games);
- Cooking smells;
- Doors and drawers being shut;
- Everyday behaviour occurring at unusual times due to work patterns, i.e., Dishwashers, hoovers, tumble dryers, washing machines and or other household appliances;

- Nuisance arising from pets
- Footfalls (people walking on floors or upstairs);
- Flushing toilets and running water;
- Light switches being turned on and off
- Loud talking or laughing
- Noise transference due to poor sound insulation
- One-off or isolated incidents e.g. a party or an argument or altercation;
- People carrying out DIY activities (at appropriate times)
- Parking issues (including parking across driveways)
- Civil disputes such as boundary issues

BMSDC recognise that not all reports relating to behaviour that impacts on an individual, can be deemed anti-social behaviour. It is important to show tolerance and be respectful of differing lifestyles and circumstances.

If you have a report that we do not consider to be anti-social, we will encourage communication with the other party and self-help via our Neighbourhood Toolkit. If this isn't appropriate, we may signpost you to an external agency e.g. mediation services who will assist you to resolve the matter

- 3.7 Occasionally a small number of complaints are recognised as coming from unreasonably persistent complainants, this can be damaging for other residents and impactful on our ability to respond. Where customer demands are unrealistic or unreasonable, and/or where we have concerns about vexatious or malicious nature of ASB reports, we will explain this to complainants and respond in accordance with the [unreasonable and persistent complaints policy](#)

### 3.8 Our approach to antisocial behaviour

We are committed to promoting behavioural change and encourage and empower tenants, where appropriate, to resolve their own differences. Best practice has shown that the most effective way of dealing with ASB is by adopting a balanced approach of early intervention, and mixing the three interventions. This is not an exhaustive list:

1. Prevention
2. Education
3. Enforcement

## Prevention

For Babergh and Mid Suffolk District council tenants, we will ensure new tenants are made aware of their responsibilities in relation to ASB, this includes through

- The Sign-Up Process
- Introductory Tenancies
- New Tenant Visits
  - Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (tenure neutral)
  - Good neighbour agreements (tenure neutral)
  - Parenting contracts (tenure neutral)
- Tenancy Warnings
- Tenancy Audits
- Mediation (tenure neutral)
- Early referrals to Tenancy Sustainment Team (tenure neutral)

## **Education**

- Advising and empowering communities to act for themselves
- Working with Support Agencies
- Referral/signposting to Appropriate Specialist Agencies
- Work with schools, provide guidance and run awareness sessions

## **Enforcement**

- Civil Injunctions
- Community Protection Warnings/Community Protection Notice's
- Notice of Seeking Possession/Notice of Possession Proceedings
- Where appropriate, work with other agencies to access other remedies not available to BMSDC.
- Discretionary and Mandatory possession (Council tenants)
- Exclusion from home in extreme cases of violence or fear of harm
- Closure Orders

BMSDC operates a Choice Based Lettings allocation system and will often have little to no control over where an applicant chooses to live, unless there is a Local Lettings Plan, or Sensitive Let application in place.

The Social Housing Regulator's Tenant Involvement & Empowerment standard requires us to "treat all tenants with fairness and respect" and to "demonstrate that they understand the different needs of tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs" with a specific expectation that providers will "demonstrate how they respond to those needs in the way they provide services and communicate with tenants".

We will consider an individual's protected characteristics in our decisions in respect of tenancy management, particularly where possession or enforcement is considered. Our pre action protocol will consider:

If the resident's behaviour, action, or lack of action is related to their disability or If their behaviour puts others at risk

If alternative sanctions or options could resolve the tenancy breach

If enforcement action is proportionate and justifiable

The need to contribute to the active rehabilitation of those convicted of ASB offences to prevent recurrence is also recognised, and again, we will support and cooperate with appropriate partner agencies to maximise the potential to try and change behaviours.

We maintain that any reports of ASB remain an allegation until proven or legally tested. We will always take a measured, reasonable, and proportionate approach to enforcement based on the available evidence.

#### **4. Hate Crime**

4.1 A hate crime is any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's actual or perceived:

- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Gender identity

4.2 A hate crime can include physical abuse, verbal abuse, intimidation, threats, harassment, and damage to property.

4.3 A hate incident is behaviour which isn't itself criminal but is perceived by the victim, or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice because of their characteristics.

Everyone is responsible for challenging attitudes and behaviours that foster hatred. Hate crime and hate incidents can cause great distress to their victims and the wider community and it is important that both are reported. We work alongside partners through the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership action plan to ensure our community have the confidence to report hate crime. We have a Hate Crime Policy containing further information

5. Reporting anti-social behaviour and/or hate crime
  - 5.1 The Council is not an emergency response service. In an emergency residents must always dial 999.
  - 5.2 Incidents where there is an immediate risk of harm to persons or property must be reported to the police or other appropriate emergency service.
  - 5.3 Incidents of a criminal nature such as drug dealing or hate crime, must be reported to the police. The police are the lead response and investigatory service for criminal offences. We will work closely with the police and will consider any criminal conduct when taking our own interventions.
  - 5.4 When the person experiencing ASB and the alleged perpetrator are tenants of another social landlord, such as a housing association, this can be reported directly to the relevant social landlord.
  - 5.5 We may accept reports of ASB from anonymous persons, however these can often be difficult to substantiate and the options available to us may be limited. We will take a pragmatic and proportionate approach to anonymous complaints.
  - 5.6 Successful resolution of ASB often can occur before the behaviour escalates. We encourage residents and businesses to communicate safely with each other to try and resolve their differences at the earliest opportunity.
  - 5.7 Our response to reports of minor disputes or disturbances that do not constitute ASB will be limited to providing advice, encouraging residents to resolve such matters between themselves, and/or signposting to other agencies if appropriate, such as mediation.
  - 5.8 Officers will exercise their judgment in order to establish an appropriate response to the report of ASB. This will be achieved by considering what has happened, the harm caused or risk of harm, the frequency of incidents, the evidence available, and any known vulnerabilities of the people involved

## 6. **Our anti-social behaviour principles**

- 6.1 We, alongside partners in Suffolk involved in responding to and reducing ASB across Suffolk, have welcomed and adopted a set of principles introduced by the Home Office, which seek to describe a consistent approach to understanding and addressing ASB in local communities.

- 6.2 We will encourage individuals and communities to report ASB and to take a stand against behaviour affecting the enjoyment of their home and community, we will take their concerns seriously.
- 6.3 We will have clear and transparent processes to ensure that victims can report ASB concerns, can understand how the matter will be investigated and are kept well informed of progress once a report is made. We will adopt a person-centred approach to reports of ASB.
- 6.4 We will provide accessible information about our services and produce action plans for open investigations so that residents can understand how their ASB report will be investigated, and what they can do to support our investigation. We will be honest and realistic with residents about what is achievable to manage expectations and provide clear information to witnesses, reporters, perpetrators and alleged perpetrators.
- 6.5 We will work in a multi-agency way, to identify, assess and tackle ASB and its underlying causes. We will maintain strong working relationships with the police and key partners and share information using ECINS, (a multi-agency case management system) or similar to facilitate effective multi-agency approaches to complex cases.
- 6.6 We will assess the risk of harm to victims of ASB and ensure that our response is appropriate.
- 6.7 We will, as a member of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership, consider the public's ASB concerns in strategic needs assessment for community safety and share best practice through a network of ASB experts. We will promote this Policy, raise awareness and publicise successful outcomes
- 6.8 Adults and children who exhibit ASB will be supported and given the opportunity to take responsibility for their behaviour and repair the harm caused by it.
- 6.9 Where appropriate, we will utilise legal powers to stop incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and will act decisively where there is a risk of harm. In all decision-making and when setting actions, we will consider any vulnerabilities and protected characteristics of those involved.
- 6.10 We Encourage tenants to work and cooperate with us fully to resolve disputes/issues

- 6.11 We will also take into account the needs of the wider community when responding to ASB. If incidents cannot be resolved through informal or formal interventions, or where such approaches would be inappropriate, we will consider enforcement action.

Where urgent protection of the complainant or any member of the public is required, legal action may be taken as the first option. We also reserve the right to carry out unannounced visits.

## **7. Safeguarding.**

- 7.1 We recognise our vital role in keeping people safe across our districts and commit to working in partnership with others to safeguard children and young people and adults at risk. The councils safeguarding policy and procedures set out how officers should respond to a report of abuse or neglect to a child, young person, or adult at risk.
- 7.2 It is not uncommon for safeguarding concerns to arise during the initial report stage or during an ASB investigation.
- 7.3 The requirements of the safeguarding policy and procedures may take primacy over this policy, and a collaborative multidisciplinary approach will be taken to all situations where both ASB and safeguarding concerns arise.

## **8. ASB Case Review (Formerly known as Community Trigger)**

- 8.1 Victims of ASB are able to request an ASB case review in the event that they feel we, and/or other agencies have not taken appropriate action in respect of their ASB reports, provided that the case meets the locally defined threshold.
- 8.2 The ASB Case Review can be used if a resident has complained to the Councils, the police and/or your housing provider:
- on three or more occasions about separate incidents of ASB in the past six months, and
  - reported each incident of ASB within one month of it happening, and
  - requested a case review within **six** months of when the incidents were reported

8.3 Information about the ASB case review is available from our website, and we will ensure that residents are aware of their right to a review, or to raise a formal complaint, in correspondence.

## **9. Equality, diversity and inclusion**

9.1 We are committed to promoting equality within the delivery of our services to ensure all residents are treated with respect, dignity, fairness and above all not discriminated against. The Equality Act 2010 provides a framework to ensure Council services are not provided in a discriminatory manner.

9.2 We will make sure this policy is applied fairly and consistently to all our residents and will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people. We will act sensitively towards the needs of individuals and communities and we will take positive action to reduce victimisation, discrimination and harassment.

## **10. Monitoring and continuous improvement**

10.1 We are committed to continually reviewing the service we provide so that we can identify and share best practice and make necessary service improvements.

10.2 This policy will be implemented through our ASB procedure and other associated policies and procedures.

10.3 We may identify Safeguarding concerns during the course of an investigation. We will manage these in line with our Safeguarding policies and procedures.

10.4 Our performance will be monitored in the following ways:

- Tenant Satisfaction measures
- Case volumes
- Complaints analysis
- Case review checks and management monitoring
- Benchmarking with other agencies

10.5 We will regularly report on performance including tenant satisfaction measures, to the Councils Corporate Performance team.

10.6 We will report performance to residents on our website, our annual report and other methods agreed with our residents.

## **11. Complaints**

11.1 We are committed to providing high quality services and support for all our customers. We value all feedback as it allows us to make improvements to our services.

11.2 The Council has a complaints procedure which should be the first point of call for people that are dissatisfied with the service they receive. More information about the Council's complaints procedure can be found on the Council's complaints webpage.

## **12. Policy Review**

12.1 We will undertake periodic reviews of this ASB policy and update or amend as appropriate. This will include taking account of feedback, working with service users and any legislative changes. We aim to undertake a full review of this policy every 5 years.