

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Council Housing Management Service

# Anti-social behaviour handbook



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## Introduction

Everyone should be able to feel safe and secure in and outside of their home. There are some differences between what is considered as anti-social behaviour, and what isn't. This handbook gives you more information about what we mean by anti-social behaviour. We've pulled together a list of behaviours so you have all the information you need to handle an uncomfortable situation. We are here to help so please contact us if you feel unsafe in your community.

**We've pulled together a list of behaviours so you have all the information you need to handle an uncomfortable situation.**

**ALWAYS CALL 999  
IN AN EMERGENCY**





## What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour covers a wide range of unacceptable activity that causes harm to an individual, to their community or to their environment. Here are some examples:

### Noise

- Excessive shouting and banging
- Loud music, especially in the evening or at night

### Threatening behaviour

- Rowdy, aggressive or threatening behaviour or language
- Intimidation, harassment or threats or acts of violence towards others. This includes cyber bullying on social media and mobile phones

### Illegal activities

- Criminal activity which affects the community such as drug dealing
- Using a Cheshire West and Chester home for illegal purposes such as handling stolen goods

## Domestic abuse

This can affect everyone regardless of gender or sexuality. It takes many forms and can be:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional
- Coercive and controlling behaviour

### Examples include:

- Problems with a partner you live with, or with one or more members of your family
- Threats or actual violence such as forced marriage or honour based violence

**See page 22 for advice on domestic abuse**

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## Resolving problems

We will always do our best to resolve any problems. But there are some things that we may be unable to help with. This includes:

- Personal disagreements between family members or friends or neighbours – unless there is a fear of harm
- Isolated or one-off incidents such as disturbances caused by DIY or a party
- Everyday living noise such as babies crying, children playing or people moving about inside their property
- Parking disputes

Of course, if the nuisance is persistent or is happening at an unreasonable time then please report it to us.



## Racial harassment and hate behaviour

If you suffer harassment or hate behaviour because of your racial background, age, religion, sexuality, disability, gender or for belonging to an alternative or subculture for example, emo, goth or punk you can report this to the police or directly to us.

We will look at ways of supporting you if you report this to us.

**See page 24 for more info.**

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## Your obligation

We aim to be the best landlord we can be. In return, we expect you to abide by the terms of your tenancy agreement.

That means you are responsible for making sure anyone living in or visiting your home does not annoy or disturb other people. This includes inside your home, in communal areas and within the local neighbourhood.

## How to be a good neighbour

We want you to enjoy living in your home. We are all different and lead different lifestyles; for example, some people work shifts so may be asleep during the day and carry out daily activities at different times to yours. A little tolerance and consideration can go a long way. Here are some tips for being a good neighbour:

- Respect your environment by keeping the neighbourhood clean, tidy and free from anti-social behaviour
- Recognise that good community spirit benefits us all offering mutual support in dealing with local problems
- Respect your neighbours and their homes, irrespective of religion, race, ability, culture or beliefs
- Look out for older, vulnerable and less fortunate members of your community
- Be responsible for the behaviour of your children and anyone visiting your home
- Respect the rights of children and young people to play and meet in a safe environment

We have a friendly and dedicated team passionate about listening to you to make a difference. Everyone has the right to contact us or any other relevant group to help resolve a problem in a peaceful and amicable way.

## Damage to property

Quality homes matter. We respect the importance of your home and know you do too. If anyone deliberately damages a home we'll take action and if necessary, start legal proceedings. This could include a 'without notice' injunction or possession proceedings.

We care about spending money wisely and in ways that benefit communities the most.

That means we'll recover the cost of any repairs from those responsible in line with our policy. Contact us if you are concerned about anyone deliberately causing damage.

## Protecting colleagues

We expect colleagues, contractors and partner organisation to treat you fairly and expect the same in return. No-one should be subject to threats, intimidation or abuse. We'll take action against anyone who behaves unacceptably towards colleagues or anyone working on our behalf.

## What if those committing anti-social behaviour are not Cheshire West and Chester tenants?

Each day we focus on improving community wellbeing and have the powers and responsibility to protect your quality of life. Where necessary, we will work with the police other providers to take action against anyone committing anti-social behaviour. We also have powers to protect non-Cheshire West and Chester Council tenants from unacceptable behaviour that may occur in the local community.

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## How to report anti-social behaviour

Anyone affected by anti-social behaviour can make a report – you do not have to be a Cheshire West and Chester Council tenant.

You can report concerns in the following ways:

- Online- Visit [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk) and use the online form on our housing pages to report anti-social behaviour
- Reports can also be made through the MyTenancy+App
- Through a representative- A third party, such as your local councillor or someone else acting on your behalf, can submit a report for you
- By telephone 0300 123 7724- We will take the details of your report and contact you as soon as possible. This may be the next working day depending on when the report is received.

## What you can do

Depending on the nature of the behaviour, first of all try having a friendly word with whoever is causing the problem.

They may not be aware of the effect their behaviour is having and you may be able to resolve the matter between yourselves.

## We don't recommend you do this if you feel intimidated or have been abused or threatened.

If you don't want to approach them, you could write to them.

In either case:

- Be polite and calm
- Don't talk or write to them when you feel angry
- Make sure the discussion or letter is relevant to the current problem
- Be clear you are open to ways of resolving the problem – this may mean a compromise from both parties
- Don't get involved in an argument
- If threatened, don't retaliate

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## What we will do when you report a problem

- We will acknowledge and triage your report within two working days. If you are reporting harassment, violence or threats we will action your report in one working day and a member of our team will arrange to discuss the problem with you face-to-face where possible
- If your problem involves harassment, including hate behaviour or domestic abuse we will attempt to meet with you within one working day. Once we have identified the alleged perpetrator we will attempt to interview them within one working day
- If your report does not include harassment, violence or threats we will attempt to contact you within five working days. Once we have identified the alleged perpetrator we will interview them within five working days, where appropriate
- We will keep you updated about what we are doing to resolve your problem
- Before we close the report we will attempt to discuss this with you and explain the reasons why

## We will agree an action plan with you

Firstly, we will investigate the matter and, if possible, talk to those who you say are behaving in an unacceptable way. If we can't resolve the problem quickly and easily then, with your agreement, we may need more evidence. This might include:

- You and other witnesses keeping a diary
- Using a recording device
- Contacting the police and local authority
- Contacting other residents who may be able to provide information

## What else will we do?

- Deal with your report in a positive, sensitive and confidential manner
- Give you the name of a member of staff who will be responsible for investigating your report - we will always let you know if someone else takes responsibility
- Take your concerns seriously and carry out a full investigation
- Only use information with the consent of the person providing it, unless there are good reasons not to do so, such as concerns about a child's welfare or safety
- Always offer to talk about the problem in private
- Where possible, arrange for you to speak to a member of staff who is of the same sex or ethnic origin, if you feel more comfortable with this
- Explain to you what will happen in response to your report, how we will deal with it and what we will do to resolve the problem
- Make sure we provide the support you and any witnesses need
- Where appropriate apply to court for an emergency injunction in cases which involve violence or threats and where our legal advisors recommend this as the best course of action
- Explain the full meaning of any court orders and make sure all witnesses receive a copy of the information they need
- Aim to resolve your case within 13 weeks. If this is not possible, because we need to take legal action, we will refer your case to a specialist community safety coordinator. They will review your case and advise on how to progress including timescales

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### Action we can take

Depending on the problem we will consider some or all of the following:

#### Prevention

If we need to, we may bring in other agencies such as social services. This might be to help deal with the root cause of a problem, for example, mental health difficulties or drug and alcohol abuse. Likewise, we may involve sport and youth projects to provide diversion and other activities to help deal with problems caused by children or young people.

#### Partnership working

Together we achieve more so we work with partner agencies to discuss problems in a certain area as well as about named individuals who might be involved in anti-social behaviour.

### Good neighbour meeting

This is a type of mediation which brings together neighbours who are in conflict or disagreement with each other including some types of anti-social behaviour.

### Restorative justice

Restorative justice brings together those harmed by an incident or conflict and those responsible for the harm. This enables everyone affected to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward.

### Interviews and letters

Where we have evidence of anti-social behaviour, we will explain to those causing the problem that they are legally obliged to let their neighbours live quietly, peacefully and securely.

### Acceptable Behaviour Agreement (ABA)

This is a voluntary written agreement between the person causing a problem, Cheshire West and Chester Council, the police and other agencies such as the Youth Offending Service. It lists how a person is acting and makes them aware of how their behaviour affects others.

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## Legal action we can take

If the problem continues, we can involve the UK courts to help protect your quality of life. Here are just some of the actions we can take.

### Injunctions

We can apply to court for an order which sets out what someone must do, for example, not use threatening behaviour. An injunction can also specify what someone must do to address the underlying reasons for their behaviour. This might include, attending alcohol or drug support sessions. In serious cases we can obtain an order at very short notice.

### Demotion of tenancy

This reduces the rights of a tenant which makes it easier to take further action if the anti-social behaviour continues.

### Possession proceedings

This is where the courts give us the power to evict tenants from a Cheshire West and Chester Council home. We will only do this when all other efforts have failed.



## Promoting the service and successful outcomes

We take every opportunity to promote community safety including at community events and forums. We publicise the outcome of individual cases, including names where appropriate.

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## Support for those affected

We are committed to supporting anyone affected by anti-social behaviour, including witnesses. Find out how on this page.

### Reporting

You can call 0300 123 7724 to report incidents of anti-social behaviour. Staff will take details and come back to you as soon as possible this may be the next working day depending on the time of the report. You can also report ASB using our online form.

### Other support

We can also make a referral to an external support agency such as Victim Support. If legal action is necessary, we will make sure you get all the support you need.

A copy of the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy is available on our website or on request from any member of staff.

### Equality and diversity

We aim to make sure the support we offer is equally accessible to everyone. Staff consider this as a core part of their duties.

Contact us on tel: **0300 123 7724**



## Sharing information, data protection and confidentiality

We will treat any information you report to us about anti-social behaviour in the strictest confidence. We won't use it for any other purpose without your consent unless there are concerns about child protection, vulnerable people or the safety and welfare of the wider community.

**ALWAYS CALL 999  
IN AN EMERGENCY**



## More information about domestic abuse

These are some examples of what domestic abuse can look like:

- Being punched, kicked or bitten
- Constantly put down or humiliated
- Kept without money
- Forced into sex
- Kept away from your family and friends
- Blamed for problems that aren't your fault
- Forced into marriage
- Honour based violence

## What to do next

- Contact us (see back page) or if you feel you can, report it to the police
- Tell someone you trust what's happening to you such as a friend or neighbour
- Take copies of important papers such as your birth certificate, passport, benefit claim information, National Insurance Number, bank details and court orders
- Get copies made of your house and car keys. Try to have these packed or, if your belongings are regularly checked, then leave them with a neighbour
- Keep essential medicines together so you can collect them quickly
- Try to have some money saved and hidden somewhere safe
- Keep your mobile phone charged and topped up with credit
- If you are thinking of leaving, try to plan when will be the safest time to do so

**See page 22 for a list of useful contacts**



## How we can help

- We will always put your safety and confidentiality and that of any family members first. You will be able to speak to a member of staff in a private and safe environment
- We will offer information and advice and put you in contact with specialist support such as the police's domestic violence unit
- We will make sure staff are aware of your needs, including your personal safety
- We will help you find alternative accommodation where appropriate
- We can help you stay in your current home by putting safety improvements in place such as extra security, emergency protection granted by the UK courts and out of hours support
- We may consider evicting individual tenants who are guilty of domestic abuse

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## Domestic abuse – useful contacts

### Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline

[www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk)

0808 2000 247

### Men's Advice Line

[www.mensadvice.org.uk](http://www.mensadvice.org.uk)

0808 801 0327

### Broken Rainbow UK

Support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people experiencing domestic violence

[www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)

0300 999 5428

### Victim Support

[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

0808 168 9111

### ChildLine

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

0800 1111

### Karma Nirvana

Support for people experiencing honour crimes and forced marriages

[www.karmanirvana.org.uk](http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk)

0800 599 9247

## BullyingUK

Part of family lives. Help with cyber bullying

[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

0808 800 2222

## Respect Phonenumber:

Information and advice for domestic violence perpetrators

[www.respectphonenumber.org.uk](http://www.respectphonenumber.org.uk)

0808 802 4040

## Action on Elder Abuse

[www.wearehourglass.org/](http://www.wearehourglass.org/)

0808 808 8141

## Police

Emergencies: 999

Non-emergencies: 101

Domestic violence or forced marriages

[www.endthefear.co.uk](http://www.endthefear.co.uk)

Crimestoppers [www.crimestoppers-uk.org/](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/)

**If you are concerned that someone you are in a relationship with may be abusive you can ask the police to check if they have a record of abuse. You can also ask the police to check if you are worried that someone you know is in an abusive relationship.**

**ALWAYS CALL 999  
IN AN EMERGENCY**



## More information about racial harassment and hate behaviour

### Racial harassment is a crime.

Hate crimes and incidents come in many different forms.

It can be because of hatred on the grounds of:

- Disability
- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief, including non-belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Alternative subculture

### How to report a problem

Hate crime is a criminal offence. If you have experienced hate crime you should report it to the police:

Emergencies: **999**

Non-emergencies: **101**

Report online: [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk)

Alternatively you, or someone on your behalf, can report it directly to us.

### How we can help

- Provide translation and interpretation services if you need them
- Bring in specialist outside support if needed
- Fill in and submit a hate behaviour report form - and with your permission, make a referral to the police
- Remove racist or offensive graffiti within one working day



## How we will monitor standards and communicate performance

Our service standards explain what you can expect from ForHousing. We are passionate about providing high quality services and monitor performance in different ways.

This includes:

- Tenant satisfaction surveys
- Mystery shopping exercises
- Inspections
- Audits of how we deliver services

You can see the latest performance figures on our website and in various publications. We are committed to involving you in shaping the services we provide. That's why we consult you when we review the standards every two years to make sure they continue to meet your needs and expectations.

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## Getting in touch

We're all for keeping things simple. You can contact us by:

Website: [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0300 123 7724

0300 numbers are charged at local rate from both landline and mobile phones and can also be deducted from any inclusive free minutes you may have. This means it should cost you less to call us from a mobile.

### Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services

Council information is also available in audio, Braille, large print or other formats. If you would like information in another format or language, including British Sign Language, please email us at: [equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

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You can also telephone: **0300 123 8 123**  
or textphone: **18001 0300 123 8 123**  
website: [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

