

# RENT UK ASB POLICY

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## **1. Overview**

This policy and the associated procedure sets out Rent UK's approach to tackling Anti-social behaviour (ASB).

## **2. Introduction**

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) can take many forms, ranging from noise nuisance, criminal damage, verbal abuse and other types of criminality. This policy establishes Rent UK's role in tackling ASB. It covers issues of ASB, harassment, domestic abuse and hate crime and unless stated otherwise, it uses the term ASB to incorporate all these acts.

We at Rent UK recognise that ASB can have a very disruptive effect on neighbourhoods and communities and does not just affect those who are directly involved in the situation. We take ASB seriously and aim to prevent it from happening

Rent UK is committed to taking effective action. We recognise the detrimental effect that ASB can have on others, but it is important that complainants and victims of ASB are clear about both the circumstances in which we can intervene. We will not raise expectations that we can take action where we cannot.

We believe that everyone has the right to their chosen lifestyle providing this does not breach the terms and conditions of any tenancy agreement or affect the quality of life of others. This requires a level of respect for the requirements and needs of other people, and we will encourage this to tenants and others when responding to their concerns.

### 3. Policy Objectives

This policy applies to all tenants living in a home managed by Rent UK. If necessary, we may take legal action under the terms of the tenancy agreement.

This policy will not apply to issues involving Rent UK employees or our contractors, even if the allegation made meets the definition of ASB.

All allegations involving employees or contractors will be dealt with via the complaints department. Any complaints must be sent to [complaints@rentukproperty.com](mailto:complaints@rentukproperty.com). We have dedicated trained staff who monitor this mailbox within working hours to ensure all complaints are dealt with in a timely and correct manner

This policy aims to ensure that:

- we are clear on how and when Rent UK can intervene in ASB and when we cannot
- Rent UK tenants can enjoy occupation of their homes regardless of ethnicity, religion, sexuality, age, gender, disability, or any other protected characteristic
- Rent UK take ASB seriously and are committed to tackling it with our tenants and/or people affected
- Tenants understand that the most effective resolution is often for neighbours to resolve disputes locally themselves
- we take positive action, working closely with partner organisations, to encourage them to take the lead in tackling crime and serious ASB in or around our properties, and to ensure a collaborative approach is taken in tackling other forms of ASB
- we use evidence obtained from a range of sources to take enforcement action where appropriate
- victims and witnesses of ASB receive a personal response and appropriate support and advice

## 4. Definitions

### What is ASB?

Anti-social behaviour is defined by Section 2(1) of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 as conduct that:

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

**Domestic Abuse** is defined as behaviour of a person/towards another person if:

- both parties are aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- the behaviour is abusive.

Further definitions of what is considered abusive and what defines personally connected can be found in the **Domestic Abuse Act 2021**.

**Hate Incidents** are any incident perceived by the victim or any other persons to be motivated by prejudice or hate. This includes direct or indirect discrimination against a person's disability, gender, gender, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion/belief, sexual orientation, and age.

Rent UK's involvement in domestic abuse or hate crime will only be looked at if there are breaches of tenancy, investigations of these allegations will be carried out by the police and/or the local authority in line with their responsibilities.

## What is not ASB?

- Reports around ball games, disputes over boundary issues, actions which amount to people being unpleasant (e.g. staring at or ignoring people), parking and other neighbourhood issues are not considered to be ASB. People should report any illegal drug use to the Police, where it does not have any other associated ASB issues.
- Reports due to different lifestyles or every-day living situations which are not intended to cause nuisance or annoyance are not considered as ASB. This includes: children playing and babies crying, household noise due to every-day living, for eg DIY, appliances during reasonable working hours.
- Where the behaviour is deemed not to be ASB, advice will be given to enable self-resolution. If we continue to receive repeated reports of non ASB, we will refer the person back to the original advice given. No further investigation will take place.

## 5. The Policy

To effectively prevent and tackle ASB, harassment and hate crimes, Rent UK will:

- a. demonstrate leadership, accountability and commitment in working with people to tackle ASB so that we all fulfil our responsibilities and give a clear message to everyone that we take ASB seriously.
- b. ensure staff are well-trained, have the knowledge and confidence to identify and investigate incidents/reports of ASB and work collaboratively alongside appropriate people who are leading on such cases.
- c. assess each report of ASB on its own merits and specific circumstances when deciding whether to classify it as ASB.
- d. clearly explain to all new tenants at the sign up of their tenancy the terms of their tenancy that relate to ASB and causing nuisance, so that expectations and consequences are clear.
- e. explain to tenants that it is their responsibility to try and resolve disagreements and neighbour disputes by talking to each other and reach a solution based upon mutual understanding.

- f. log all reports of ASB and any referrals to statutory bodies and monitor the outcomes.
- g. respond sensitively to the victim and adopt high standards of confidentiality when dealing with victims and witnesses.
- h. offer advice for witnesses and victims of ASB.
- i. ensure we consider a range of interventions, e.g. warning letters, to deter or prevent ASB and where appropriate take legal action by way of possession proceedings using mandatory grounds where applicable.
- j. promote the view that individuals have the right to their chosen lifestyle providing it does not impact adversely on the quality of life on others.
- k. take action to evict an ASB offender where it is reasonable to do so and the evidence is sufficient enough for a successful possession action.

Rent UK will categorise ASB complaints and follow a process-

- **Very Serious** – this includes hate related incidents, physical violence, threatening behaviour and drug production or supply. We will acknowledge the incident within 3 working days, taking agreed actions within 10 working days.
- **Serious** – this includes verbal abuse, harassment, alcohol related ASB, noise nuisance and criminal behaviour. We will acknowledge the incident within 3 working days, taking agreed actions within 10 working days.
- **Minor** – this includes vandalism, animal nuisance, garden nuisance, fly tipping and vehicle nuisance. We will acknowledge the incident within 3 working days, taking agreed actions within 10 working days.

Rent UK will:

- respond to ASB reports in line with severity of incident
- be clear about what action we can or cannot take
- involve relevant parties in the action plan to resolve the issue
- communicate with parties in their preferred method and reasonable levels of frequency, and provide up to date information on the progress of the case

Rent UK will encourage all people to:

- take responsibility for minor personal disputes with their neighbours and to try to resolve any problems themselves
- report incidents of ASB to Rent UK
- report domestic abuse, hate crime and all other crimes to the police
- respect other peoples' lifestyles.

Rent UK will only deal with cases which involve at least one of our Tenants and where the conduct either directly or indirectly relates to us. In cases involving a non Rent UK properties, we will liaise with other housing companies and/or local authorities as necessary.

## **6. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

Rent UK will explain to the complainants that it may be necessary to disclose information to other statutory agencies such as the local authority or the police. Information will be shared with other agencies where there is a duty to do so, and/or where information sharing protocols are in place.