

# ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, HARASSMENT AND HATE CRIMES

WE ARE HERE TO HELP



DEVELOPING HOMES AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR PEOPLE WITHIN WEST NORFOLK

**Freebridge**  
COMMUNITY HOUSING

# OUR POLICY STATEMENT

Freebridge Community Housing (FCH) believes that everyone has the right to live the way they want to, providing it does not spoil the quality of life of others.

This means we expect tenants, those who live with them and their visitors to be tolerant, accepting, and respectful of the needs and choices of other people. We will undertake to investigate all allegations of anti-social behaviour, harassment and hate crimes and take early action as appropriate to prevent incidences from deteriorating. We want to make the places where our tenants live peaceful and secure.

This policy applies to all our tenants. It covers anti-social behaviour and all forms of harassment and hate crimes. We have a separate policy covering domestic violence.

## What is Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment and Hate Crime?

### Anti Social Behaviour

Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) has no set definition. FCH uses the wording of the Housing Act 1988 and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to guide them in defining ASB. This means that an incident will be considered to be ASB if it is a criminal activity, causes nuisance and/or annoyance and/or alarm and/or harassment and/or distress to any person living in and/or visiting and/or employed in the area.

Anti-social behaviour in practice can be anything from leaving litter, to physically attacking someone. We will record all incidents of anti-social behaviour.

### Harassment

Harassment is persecution or intimidation by tenants, members of their household or their visitors, of a person or group because of their race, ethnic or national origin, gender, sexuality, HIV status, religious beliefs, and disability, age or family circumstances.

Incidents of harassment can include sexual comments or gestures, offensive graffiti, abusive language and behaviour, violence or threats of violence towards people of all ages, and damage to homes or possessions because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability, age or family circumstances.

### Hate Crimes

Hate crimes are when a victim is targeted because of his or her membership of a certain social group, usually defined by race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age, gender, or political affiliation.

A hate crime generally refers to criminal acts which are seen to have been motivated by hatred of one or more of the listed conditions.

Incidents may involve physical assault, damage to property, bullying, harassment, verbal abuse or insults, offensive graffiti or letter, emails.

We have adopted the following definition of racist incident: -

**‘Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.’**

(Macpherson Report 1999, Recommendation 12)

We will apply the same criteria to hate crimes so that, if anyone – the victim, a witness, the Police or a housing staff – perceives an incident to be a hate crime or racist incident, it will be recorded as such regardless of any other views.

Incidents of racial harassment and hate crimes, for monitoring purposes be recorded separately from anti-social behaviour and other forms of harassment.

We will work closely with other agencies to prevent and deal with racial harassment and hate crimes, including acting as a recognised reporting centre.



# OUR COMMITMENT

## We will work with tenants and other agencies to:

- Introduce preventative measures, enforcement, and rehabilitative action to stop anti-social behaviour and harassment of any kind
- Respond to complaints of anti-social behaviour and harassment quickly and aim to resolve them in an efficient, sensitive and consistent manner
- Offer support to tenants affected and take action against those responsible for anti-social behaviour, harassment and hate crimes
- Ensure all reports of anti-social behaviour harassment and hate crimes are taken seriously, and anonymous complaints are not ignored
- Support and empower witnesses to take a stand.

## We will ensure that we meet our duties under existing legislation including:

- Children Act 1989
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Human Rights Act 1998

# OUR APPROACH

## 1. Preventing Anti-Social Behaviour, Harassment and Hate Crimes

### We will:

- We will use starter tenancies in our properties to help establish good behaviour before converting tenancies to assured status after a year. We may end any tenancies as appropriate anytime after 6 months and before the tenancy becomes assured
- Use the sign-up process and visits during starter tenancies to ensure that all new tenants are aware of their responsibilities and our approach on anti-social behaviour, harassment hate crimes and have adequate support in place to conduct their tenancy in a satisfactory manner
- Make it easy for people to contact us about any problems they are experiencing

- Have published timescales for responding to complaints of anti-social behaviour, harassment and hate crimes and ensure these take into account the seriousness of the situation
- Alert people to complaints of anti-social behaviour as soon as we are aware and clarify what they need to do to stop the situation escalating
- Encourage individuals and communities to communicate with each other directly and develop their own resolutions to disputes
- Offer mediation where appropriate
- Consider how we can prevent anti-social behaviour when we are designing our properties
- Work with other agencies to deliver diversionary activities and promote community cohesion.

## 2. Rehabilitative and Enforcement Action

### We will:

- Have a system in place for categorising how serious the anti-social behaviour or harassment is

### Where the incident is serious and persistent we will:

- Work actively with tenants and involve other agencies who can offer appropriate support
- Work closely with other agencies to ensure we respond consistently and effectively and to take appropriate legal action.

### This will include:

- Explaining to the person complaining what action we can take, the evidence we require, the roles of other agencies
- Asking Environmental Health Officers from local authorities to use their legal powers to deal with environmental crime such as abandoned cars, litter, graffiti, fly tipping, and noise nuisance We will also work with tenants, the police and other statutory agencies to:
- Develop multi agency plans in areas where there are identified issues relating to anti-social behaviour, harassment or hate crimes.
- Use Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, Dispersal Orders, Parenting Orders, Anti-Social Behaviour orders where appropriate
- Manage effective responses in individual cases which ensure a victim-centred approach and excellent communication and support
- Make referrals to Floating Support schemes

### 3. Tenancy Enforcement

As a landlord we will consider taking legal action if other approaches have not worked or to complement other action. **These include:**

- Demotion orders which affect the security of the tenancy
- Injunctions to prevent certain activities or behaviours in our properties
- Possession proceedings which could lead to eviction

We would not normally offer a tenancy or licence to anyone who has been evicted from a previous tenancy for anti social behaviour, harassment or hate crimes.

### 4. Support to the person making the complaint and witnesses

When we are dealing with anti-social behaviour and harassment we will give the wishes of the person making the complaint the highest priority. We will ensure they are kept informed of progress throughout the case, including when we are closing the case. We will ensure witnesses are given appropriate support.

#### **We will also consider:**

- Security improvements
  - Temporary or permanent re-housing
  - Using professional witnesses to gather evidence
- Our staff will receive appropriate training and we will have procedures in place which reflect good practice and ensure that we comply with this policy.

## MONITORING AND REPORT

We will monitor anti-social behaviour by sort of behaviour, area, scheme-type and seriousness, along with the following information about the complainant –

- Gender
- Ethnic origin
- Age
- Disability
- Religion
- Sexual orientation

We will separately monitor all cases of racial harassment and hate crimes.

The information will be presented to the Operations Committee quarterly.

We will review the effectiveness of this policy annually highlighting any disincentives to report incidents.







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**IF ENGLISH IS NOT YOUR FIRST LANGUAGE PLEASE TELL US – WE WILL BE HAPPY TO HELP YOU.  
PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU REQUIRE THIS LEAFLET IN LARGER PRINT OR ON TAPE.**

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8:45am - 4.45pm (Fri)

Bank Holidays, Saturday and Sunday Closed

**Out of Office Hours:**

The main telephone number (03332 404 444)  
will divert to 24 hour emergency service.

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