

Anti-social behaviour

Help available to council residents and leaseholders

www.portsmouth.gov.uk





Steps for dealing with anti-social behaviour

1. Talk to your neighbour about the problem
2. Report the incident
3. Get help from your housing officer
4. Have your complaint assessed
5. Discuss the situation with the anti-social behaviour unit
6. Gather evidence to support your case

Anti-social behaviour

We take anti-social behaviour very seriously. We are committed to helping everyone enjoy a quiet life, with freedom for themselves and their families to grow up in a safe and peaceful environment.

Anti-social behaviour is anything that makes you or a group of people feel intimidated, harmed or dominated.

It includes:

- loud noise from music, animals or people
- intimidation or harassment
- abusive behaviour or language
- graffiti or vandalism
- damage to property

We will do all we can to resolve a situation. Our intention is to stop anti-social behaviour rather than to punish people or decide who is right or wrong.

Reasonable behaviour

We regard this sort of behaviour as reasonable:

- children playing normally
- minor or routine DIY during daytime hours
- usual household noises from washing machines and vacuum cleaners during daytime hours.

Before you take action, remember:

- there are two sides to a problem
- your neighbour may not be aware they are causing a nuisance
- different people can live with different levels or noise or nuisance
- trying to live together in reasonable peace may be better than a long-term feud.

Dealing with anti-social behaviour

We want you and your neighbours to live in a safe, secure and peaceful home and neighbourhood. This depends on you and your neighbours accepting some basic responsibilities outlined in your tenancy agreement. Your tenancy agreement states you must not cause nuisance or harassment to other people, including:

- acting unlawfully or disorderly
- playing loud music
- not keeping pets under control
- causing noise or disturbance to others
- harassing people
- causing distress, annoyance or offence to people on the grounds of their gender, sexual orientation, disability, religious belief or age. Racial harassment is a breach of your agreement and a serious criminal offence.

We will not hesitate to take action against tenants, leaseholders, members of your household or visitors who breach the tenancy agreement.

Step 1: Talk to your neighbour about the problem

If you have been getting on reasonably well with your neighbour until now, a friendly approach to discuss the problem may help.

Step 2: Report the incident

If you feel you are unable to approach your neighbour, we suggest you contact the following:

- in an emergency situation dial 999
- to report non-emergency incidents requiring police attention call 101
- your housing officer at your area office
- the out of hours service on 023 9282 4244
- Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 for anonymous calls





You will need to give them the following information:

- date and time of the incident
- where the incident took place
- what the wrongdoer(s) is doing / done
- the name of the wrongdoer(s) or who it is
- any other witnesses to the incident
- details of the wrongdoer(s) including the number of people involved, their sex, height, build, colour and length of hair, distinguishing marks, ethnicity, clothing and nicknames
- how the incident is affecting you and others



Step 3: Get help from your housing officer

If you report an incident, your housing officer, the police and partner organisations will decide whether urgent action is needed. We can find you emergency accommodation if needed.

If it is not an emergency situation, your housing officer will ask the Portsmouth Assessment Service to contact you and assess your complaint.

The Portsmouth Assessment Service is an impartial organisation that responds quickly to and resolves

complaints of anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood disputes. You will be contacted within two working days of them receiving your referral from your housing officer. They do not deal with domestic abuse or racial harassment and they are peace makers, not enforcers.

Information will be recorded to allow us to keep you informed of progress and answer your concerns. Details are shared when:

- you agree
- another agency, signed to a confidentiality agreement, needs the information
- it is required by law



Step 4: Have your complaint assessed

An assessment of your situation will be carried out by Portsmouth Assessment Service. They will:

- listen to everything you say
- explain the support they can give you and your options
- check if you are happy for them to contact the person(s) you are complaining about to discuss the issues

- check what information you are happy to share
- encourage you and the person(s) you are complaining about to reach a solution that you are both happy with
- let your housing officer know the outcome of discussions

They will remain neutral and not take sides in the dispute. The assessment will normally be completed within three weeks of you first reporting it to your area office.



Step 5: Discuss the situation with the anti-social behaviour unit

If enforcement action is necessary, your housing officer will seek support from the council's anti-social behaviour unit (ASBU). They may also ask for help from other agencies like the police and the Portsmouth Assessment Service. Your housing officer will still control the case and will be your main contact for reports, help, action and re-assurance.



Step 6: Gather evidence to support your case

Legal action may be the answer. Staff will use their knowledge and experience to work out what is needed to stop the anti-social behaviour.

We may need to gather evidence to take the case to court. It may be found from other agencies, such as the police, from CCTV recordings or from things staff have witnessed.

If you can give evidence at court, we will put measures in place to ensure you feel safe. If you do not want to be a witness, your evidence could be given anonymously by someone on your behalf. This is called hearsay evidence.



Our commitment to you

We are committed to do all we can to protect our tenants and leaseholders in Portsmouth and Havant by ensuring we do what we can to stop antisocial behaviour and build stronger communities.



Accountability, leadership and commitment

We are transparent and accountable and make a positive difference by carrying out our promises. We search for solutions to problems rather than make excuses for avoiding action.

We work closely with partner organisations, such as:

- other landlords in the city
- Social Services
- Hampshire Police
- Hampshire Fire and Rescue
- Hampshire County Council
- Havant Borough Council
- Youth Offending team
- Probation Service
- Portsmouth Assessment Service



Empowering and reassuring residents

We work with residents to find out the problems you face and how we can resolve them, including creating new services or agreements. Here are a few examples:

- House Talk magazine is regularly posted to you and provides information about activities to combat anti-social behaviour
- we regularly attend resident meetings to find out your concerns and to up-date you
- we organise community events for you and your neighbours to participate. These include encouraging children in the neighbourhood to brighten a play area by painting a mural, or



organising a crime reduction and environment week (CREW) in which you can help us improve a particular area

Prevention and early intervention

Dealing with unacceptable behaviour is important. Actions include issuing clear warnings such as acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs) to let people know that tough action will follow if they continue to behave inappropriately.

We have a strong presence in the community and housing officers,



community wardens and the police act as a deterrent and to reassure residents that someone is looking out for them.

We are also clear about what is reasonable behaviour so that you know what is expected of you when your tenancy begins.

- Your tenancy agreement states that you are responsible for the actions of people living with you or visiting you. You must ensure they do not cause nuisance or harass other people
- Estate service officers carry out estate patrols on a regular basis.

These are complemented by multi-agency crime reduction and environment weeks (CREW) where we work with the police and community wardens to address community issues and clean up the neighbourhood

- We work with children and young people to educate them about respecting their community and contributing to their neighbourhood
- We work to clear up graffiti and vandalism quickly
- We work with the Portsmouth Assessment Service to resolve issues before they escalate





Tailored services and support for victims and witnesses

We aim to make it as easy as possible for you to report an incident. We will provide you with on-going support to deal with an uncomfortable situation.

- Your area office will be able to take reports of incidents of anti-social behaviour. Your housing officer will act as your main point of contact while the incident is being investigated and resolved. The Portsmouth Assessment Service, anti-social behaviour unit or law enforcement organisation may also help
- If appropriate, we will find out if your evidence can be given anonymously by someone on your behalf
- We can refer you to support services if you require them



Protecting communities through swift enforcement

There are a number of ways we can tackle anti-social behaviour to make sure specific methods are used at the right time to protect communities. We ensure orders and notices are upheld and if they are broken, we follow it up with action.

When required, we will take enforcement action through the law courts. However, in the majority of cases legal action is not always necessary.

Early intervention and using tactics such as warnings and providing support to modify an offender's behaviour has proven to provide a sustained change in those

committing antisocial behaviour. Results show that our approach to enforcement, rehabilitation and diversion is working in Portsmouth.

- Working in partnership with the courts, we use a number of tools including injunctions, notices to seek possession and demoted tenancy notices
- Where orders are breached, we take the appropriate action. This could include prosecuting a person for breaching an injunction or providing an intensive support plan backed up by a court order.



Support to tackle the causes of anti-social behaviour

We provide help to find the root of the problem and help residents play a positive role within the community.

Anti-social behaviour can stem from family breakdown, lack of parenting skills, problems with drugs or alcohol or mental health issues.

Help comes in various forms, including visits by staff and residential schemes.

- Intensive tenancy support, including help to manage money and learn basic living skills is available to those identified as vulnerable or at high risk of anti-social behaviour. More information is available from your housing officer
- We hold case conferences to decide what support needs to be put in place to resolve the issues of a particular individual. It involves representatives who have an interest in the person's wellbeing such as the police, lawyers, housing staff, a school representative, neighbourhood association and other support professionals

- We support a number of rehabilitation and community schemes in the city such as sport competitions and art activities

Let us know how we handled your report of anti-social behaviour

You can comment, compliment or complain:

- By phone on 023 9283 4702
- In person
- By writing to Comments, Compliments and Complaints Portsmouth City Council Civic Offices, Guildhall Square Portsmouth PO1 2ZX
- By emailing ccc@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
- On our website www.portsmouth.gov.uk

Our policy

A copy of the full, detailed policy and procedures for dealing with anti-social behaviour is available at www.portsmouth.gov.uk



We need your help

You can help us tackle anti-social behaviour by joining the resident anti-social behaviour focus group.

If you would like more information, contact the anti-social behaviour unit:
Email: asbu@portsmouthcc.gov.uk or visit www.portsmouth.gov.uk



You could also become a volunteer with organisations such as:

- Victim Support
- Witness Support Service
- Portsmouth Assessment Service

www.portsmouth.gov.uk

You can get this
Portsmouth City
Council information
in large print, Braille,
audio or in another
language by calling
9284 1777.



Corporate member of
Plain English Campaign
Committed to clearer communication

264