

POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT POLICY

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EIA Required?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Revision number:	4
Lead officer:	Liz Smith

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Stockport Homes Group (SHG) is committed to taking positive action in conjunction with partners to deal with all forms of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). The overall strategic direction for tackling ASB in Stockport is agreed and monitored through the Safer Stockport Partnership (SSP). SHG is a key partner within this, helping to deliver some of the overarching priorities set out in the SSP Partnership Plan. SHG actively participates in a number of sub-groups of the SSP which monitor crime and incident patterns and agree partnership approaches to tackling them.
- 1.2 The Positive Engagement Service has been developed to sit within the Anti-Social Behaviour Team to engage with prolific anti-social offenders. The service offers intensive support to assist with drug, alcohol or mental health issues and the associated ASB that is caused as a result. Positive Engagement Officers (PEOs) support these customers (referred to as clients) to sustain tenancies independently by challenging and reducing offending behaviour.
- 1.3 This Policy sets out the ways in which SHG will seek to deliver on this commitment by working with clients, and partner agencies. The overall purpose of the Positive Engagement Policy is to:
- Aim to prevent incidents and the reoccurrence of ASB in neighbourhoods managed by SHG
 - Work with vulnerable clients and support agencies to address and then prevent tenancy breaches occurring which result in legal action and, potentially, homelessness.
 - To encourage and promote partnerships and multi-agency working with both internal colleagues and external agencies in assessing and meeting the support needs of the client.
- 1.4 Key aims of operating an effective Positive Engagement Policy include:
- Minimising unsuccessful tenancies, such as abandonments and evictions
 - Preventing homelessness
 - Promoting stable and sustainable communities
 - minimising void levels and the impact on void rent loss and associated void costs
 - Reducing the need for formal legal action and associated legal costs

2 STRATEGIC LINKS

2.1 The Policy links to the organisational mission and aims, in particular to;

- Engage customers and communities
- Provide comfortable, affordable homes
- Deliver thriving, safe and sustainable neighbourhoods
- Support the Council to meet its aims in Stockport.

2.2 SHG does not operate in isolation and this Policy has been written, taking into account national legislation. In particular:

- Housing Acts 1985 & 1996
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Housing Act 2004
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Equality Act 2010
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

2.3 The Policy also complies with and compliments Stockport Council's strategic objectives, policies and procedures in particular:

- 2015-20 Investing in Stockport Borough Plan
- Stockport Council Plan 2021 - 2022
- Safer Stockport Partnership (SSP) Partnership Plan
- Stockport Safeguarding Children and Adults Shared Strategic Plan 2020 -2023.

2.4 In addition to being linked to the Council's priorities, the Policy has clear links to many of SHG's strategies, policies and action plans, in particular:

- ASB Strategy 2022-25
- ASB Policy
- Service Improvement Plan
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Hate Crimes Policy
- Abusive Customer Policy
- Equality & Diversity Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Allocations Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk Policy.

3 KEY FEATURES OF THE POLICY

3.1 SHG seeks to create sustainable neighbourhoods whereby people from all different backgrounds and groups can live side by side within a

culture of co-operation and respect. By implementing effective support for prolific offenders of ASB, the Positive Engagement Service will combat social exclusion and enable all people to play a full part in society.

- 3.2 SHG will work with other agencies and specialist organisations to ensure that appropriate best practice is employed in the prevention of ASB. Where perpetrators of ASB show a willingness to address any underlying issues which contribute to their behaviour, then the service will offer assistance and support in this where practical to do so.
- 3.3 The Positive Engagement Service will undertake a detailed needs assessment of each client who engages with the service, which will then influence the overall support plan that is put in place. This support plan will be regularly reviewed with the client, and adjusted if required, at agreed intervals.
- 3.4 The Positive Engagement Officer (PEO) will agree and maintain a level of contact with clients and support them to comply with any positive requirement aspect of court orders. The service will work intensively with clients providing one-to-one support, assistance to attend any appointments as necessary, and will liaise with partner, voluntary and private sector agencies to access specialist support services to help with compliance and bring about long-term positive changes to behaviour.
- 3.5 The PEO will be responsible for preparing Positive Requirement Reports for use in injunction proceedings and will assist the client to comply with the orders once made.
- 3.6 A small budget will be made available to provide practical support to clients to stop engaging in ASB. Examples include door stoppers or sound insulation, reasonable transport costs to attend appointments, etc.
- 3.7 Employees from SHG will be given appropriate training that covers service delivered by the PEOs. Staff will be trained to recognise which clients might benefit from a referral to the Positive Engagement Service.
- 3.8 Where it is believed any child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm, the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure will be followed.
- 3.9 SHG will provide a confidential service unless child protection issues are suspected.
- 3.10 Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 information can be shared between agencies to prevent and detect crime and disorder, including ASB and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment. SHG will share information with partners in line the Safer Stockport Partnership information sharing protocol.

4 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment of this policy has been undertaken and no adverse impacts have been identified.

5 OWNERSHIP, MONITORING & REVIEW

- 5.1 The Positive Engagement Policy is owned by the Directorate of Operations and is the responsibility for this Directorate for the implementation of the policy. The policy will be reviewed annually and any enquiries relating to the policy can be directed to the Head of Service.
- 5.2 SHG will set annual targets for key performance indicators for the service which are challenging, and these will be monitored via the Head of ASB and support from the Head of Housing Management, Wider Leadership Forum and Service Excellence Sub Group of the Board.
- 5.3 Performance information relating to the how many cases have been successfully resolved by the service will be publicised on the website and in the customer newsletter Stockport at Home. Indicators that will be monitored include but are not limited to:
- Number of cases supported by the Positive Engagement Service (PES)
 - Number of cases successfully resolved by the PES
 - Number of cases that avoided legal action due to support from the PES.