

Safer Neighbourhoods Policy (Stockport Homes managed and Private Sector Neighbourhoods)

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 One Safer Stockport Partnership (OSSP). Stockport Homes is a key partner within this, helping to deliver some of the overarching priorities set out in the OSSP Partnership Plan. Stockport Homes actively participates in a number of Sub-Groups of the OSSP which monitor crime and incident patterns, agree partnership approaches to tackling them and ensure that vulnerable victims and witnesses are supported.

1.2 Stockport Council has commissioned Stockport Homes to deliver ASB services in the private sector in Stockport. This provision includes responding to, investigating and taking appropriate action in reports of ASB in residential communities across the whole of Stockport. Stockport Homes' Safer Neighbourhoods Service is quality assessed by RESOLVE ASB and is committed to ensuring services for tackling ASB meet and exceed the standard set out in the Accreditation Scheme.

1.3 This policy sets out the ways in which Stockport Homes will deliver this service for the Council by working with residents, other departments and partner agencies. The overall purpose of the Safer Neighbourhoods Policy is to:

- Aim to prevent incidents and the reoccurrence of ASB in Stockport Homes' neighbourhoods
- Ensure that ASB is tackled efficiently and effectively using a variety of approaches
- Work with vulnerable residents, both victims and perpetrators, and support agencies to ensure that ASB is tackled and not tolerated
- Deliver excellent support services for both victims and perpetrators
- Work proactively with partner agencies, seeking support from other agencies and organisations to develop the most effective approach and resolution to ASB.

2 Definition of ASB

2.1 Stockport Homes defines Anti-Social Behaviour as:

- "any act which caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator" (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)
- "anything which causes or is likely to cause a nuisance annoyance or disturbance to any person in the local area" this applies to members of the household, visitors and pets (Stockport Council's Tenancy Agreement 2004)

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- conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person

Or

- conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises

Or

- conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person. (ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014).

2.2 Stockport Homes will not tolerate any action or omission, deliberate or otherwise, which interferes with another person's peace, quiet or security. Stockport Homes expects residents living within its neighbourhoods to be good neighbours.

3 Policy Statement

3.1 Stockport Homes provides a tenure neutral service and seeks to create sustainable neighbourhoods whereby people from all different backgrounds and groups can exist side by side within a culture of co-operation and respect. By responding positively to incidents of ASB, Stockport Homes will develop a culture of zero tolerance to such incidents, thus combating exclusion and enabling all people to play a full part in society.

3.2 Stockport Homes is committed to delivering a range of community and school-based projects to provide positive diversionary activities such as detached youth work, holiday clubs, youth clubs etc, and deliver activities designed to increase self-esteem, confidence and aspirations amongst young people to reduce the chance of them becoming victims of or involved in ASB.

3.3 Stockport Homes will impress upon residents at sign up the rights and responsibilities of tenants and leaseholders and what the implications of causing ASB are.

3.4 Victims can report ASB by visiting Stockport Homes offices in person or by contacting Stockport Homes via telephone, email, or reporting via the website.

3.5 Stockport Homes treats all reported incidents of ASB, hate and domestic abuse very seriously and will take immediate and appropriate action whenever incidents are reported or identified. Stockport Homes operates a tenure neutral service.

3.6 A harm centred approach will be followed ensuring that residents have access to appropriate support services and feel able to work with Stockport Homes staff in the investigation of the incident.

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3.7 When a complaint of ASB is made, Stockport Homes will record the complaint, assess the type of ASB being complained of and apply one of the following categories.

- CAT A – URGENT e.g. race/hate crime/threats or use of violence
- CAT B – PERSISTENT e.g. drug related activity, criminal activity such as cuckooing (where someone's home is taken over for criminal purpose) alcohol related ASB
- CAT C/D CASES NOISE CASES - low level noise transference cases should be referred over to Neighbourhood Resolution Officer (NRO) to initially investigate under the Good Neighbourhoods Management Policy. If the matter is not deemed as day to day living noises or is established as noise that is deliberate and inconsiderate, the case will be escalated over to a Safer Neighbourhoods Officer to look at further action.

3.8 Stockport Homes will complete a Complainant Risk Assessment Matrix (RAM) to establish and identify vulnerable complainants and apply a vulnerability category, which will then determine the level of support that customer may need during the case.

- Level One – High vulnerability. score between 30-60-Red.
- Level Two – Medium vulnerability. score between 16-29- Amber.
- Level Three – Low vulnerability. score between 0-15 – Green.

3.9 All category cases will be dealt with by a named Safer Neighbourhoods Officer taking the approach to tackle ASB using prevention, intervention, support and enforcement action, with the latter being explored only when previous approaches have failed to stop the behaviour. Any action Stockport Homes takes in a case is incremental in nature with the overarching aim of stopping the behaviour, whilst preventing homelessness. Supporting perpetrators to stop causing ASB through support and intervention is always the first stage and the preferred outcome.

3.10 Stockport Homes will work to prevent homelessness and help residents to remain in their home by facilitating the implementation of increased security measures such as sanctuary scheme works, fireproof letterboxes, additional locks etc.

3.11 Where it is believed any child or vulnerable adult is at risk Stockport Homes will follow the Safeguarding children and adults at risk policy and procedure, taking necessary action.

3.12 Stockport Homes will thoroughly investigate all complaints and gather evidence where it exists from complainants, other residents and partner

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agencies including the Police and also through the use of Noise Monitoring Equipment, CCTV and Professional Witnesses¹ as appropriate.

3.13 Stockport Homes will consider all the options available when investigating and taking action in a case of ASB and will use the legislative framework to ensure the protection of victims and to stop the incidents repeating. The tools available, some of which are delivered in partnership with other agencies, include:

- Warnings
- Mediation
- Parenting Contracts
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts
- Noise Abatement Notices (Stockport Homes tenants only)
- Community Protecting Warning/Notices
- Injunctions
- Criminal Behaviour Orders
- Suspension of Right to Buy Orders (for Stockport Homes tenants only)
- Extension of Introductory & Starter Tenancies (Stockport Homes tenants only)
- Demotion Orders (for Stockport Homes tenants only)
- Possession Proceedings (for Stockport Homes tenants only)
- Partial Closure Orders
- Closure Orders
- Family Intervention Tenancies
- Housing Management Policy (Stockport Homes tenants only).

3.14 Stockport Homes will issue new tenants with an introductory/starter tenancy agreement which will become secure or assured after 12 months providing it has been adequately maintained within that time. Secure and Assured tenancies will only remain as such as long as there have been no incidents of ASB which result in a possession order being obtained. Stockport Homes recognises that eviction is a useful tool to tackle ASB and will use the new discretionary and absolute grounds for possession when appropriate. However, in order to promote social inclusion and prevent homelessness, eviction to resolve ASB will only be used as a last resort.

3.15 Stockport Homes will work with other agencies and specialist organisations to ensure that appropriate best practice is employed in the prevention ASB. Where perpetrators of ASB show a willingness to address any underlying issues which cause their behaviour, then Stockport Homes will offer

¹ Noise monitoring/CCTV and professional witnesses applies to cases in Stockport Homes Managed neighbourhoods only

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assistance and support in this. This can include, but is not limited to, referrals to the Complainant Support Specialist and Housing Support Service.

3.16 Stockport Homes will support perpetrators within its own managed neighbourhoods to comply with any positive requirement aspect of court orders by referring residents to the Independent Living Service. The service will work intensively with residents providing one-to-one support, assistance to attend any appointments as necessary and liaison 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.

3.17 Stockport Homes employees will be given appropriate training that covers the impact of, and Stockport Homes' response to, ASB. Staff will be trained to recognise ASB and how to challenge and respond to it. In addition, support and guidance will be given to employees who may be a victim of ASB incidents.

3.18 Stockport Homes will not condone ASB perpetrated by employees under any circumstances or treat such incidents as a purely private matter. Stockport Homes will treat any allegation, disclosure or conviction of an ASB related offence on a case-by-case basis.

3.19 Stockport Homes does not condone ASB perpetrated towards its employees, or those working on its behalf, in any circumstances. Appropriate action under the "Abusive Customer Procedure" will be taken where incidents occur.

3.20 Stockport Homes will provide a confidential service unless child protection or other safeguarding issues are suspected.

3.21 Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 information can be shared between agencies to prevent and detect crime and disorder, including anti-social behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment. Stockport Homes will share information with partners in line the One Safer Stockport Partnership information sharing protocol.

3.22 Stockport Homes will meet any access or cultural needs of any customer accessing the service, for example providing an interpreter or assisting those with low literacy or disabilities.

3.23 Stockport Homes will map and monitor ASB incidents to identify any trends using the SNS Case Management System. Using this information Stockport Homes will undertake targeted campaigns using a project-based approach to tackle issues, raise and increase confidence within the community etc.

3.24 Stockport Homes will publicise any positive action taken to resolve ASB wherever possible. Working with partners, this may include press releases to



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local newspapers, radio or television or other publicity materials such as social media, leaflets and posters in the locality of where legal action has been successful.

3.25 Stockport Homes will work positively with the OSSP when residents access the Case Review process (formerly known as the Community Trigger), working together to try and resolve the complaint of ASB. Stockport Homes will do this by talking about the problem, sharing information and acting in partnership to direct resources to try to resolve the complaint. Residents can access Stockport's Case Review process by telephoning the Council on 0161 474 3143 or accessing online via the Council Website

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4 Internal Controls

1	Version control	Version number will change every three years or at major review	
	Version No.	Date	Change/s and reasons for change
	1	January 2025	Three-year review
		July 2026	Cuckooing is a form of criminal exploitation in which offenders take over a vulnerable person's home to facilitate criminal activity. It is now a standalone criminal offence under the Crime and Policing Act 2026. Therefore, this Policy and Procedure has been updated to reflect the legislative changes.

2	Policy Owner i.e. Executive Director	Director of Customer Services
	Policy Author/s i.e. Head of Service	Head of Safer Neighbourhoods Safer Neighbourhoods Manager
	Approved by/date Directorate Management Meeting	Customer Services Management Meeting – 11 th February 2025 - Decision
	Effective Date - the date of sign-off	11 th February 2025
	Next Full Review Date i.e. 3 years after effective date, with an annual light touch review	10 th February 2028

3	<u>Regulatory Standards</u>	Please list the Consumer, Governance, Viability standards and outcomes this policy meets
	Standard/s / Legislation	Required outcome
	Neighbourhood and Community Standard	<u>1.3 Anti-social behaviour and hate incidents</u> 1.3.1 Registered providers must work in partnership with appropriate local authority departments, the police and other relevant organisations to deter and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) and hate incidents in the neighbourhoods where they provide social housing. Registered providers must have a policy on how they work with relevant organisations to deter and

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	tackle ASB in the neighbourhoods where they provide social housing. • Registered providers must clearly set out their approach for how they deter, and tackle hate incidents in neighbourhoods where they provide social housing. • Registered providers must enable ASB and hate incidents to be reported easily and keep tenants informed about the progress of their case. • Registered providers must provide prompt and appropriate action in response to ASB and hate incidents, having regard to the full range of tools and legal powers available to them. • Registered providers must support tenants who are affected by ASB and hate incidents, including by signposting them to agencies who can give them appropriate support and assistance. <u>1.4 Domestic Abuse</u> • Registered providers must have a policy for how they recognise and effectively respond to cases of domestic abuse.
Legislation	Stockport Homes does not operate in isolation, and this Policy has been written to take account of obligations imposed by National legislation and other strategies. In particular: • Housing Acts 1985 & 1996 • Crime and Disorder Act 1998 • ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 • Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2018 • Serious Violence Strategy 2018 • Offensive Weapons Bill • Housing Act 2004 • Race Relations Act 1976 • Environmental Protection Act 1990 • Equality Act 2010 • The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) EU 2016/679. • Section 65 of the Crime and Policing Act 2026
	Stockport Homes' Safer Neighbourhood Service (SNS) Policy also complies with and compliments Stockport Council's strategic objectives, policies and procedures and the SNS Strategy 2025-28 which to Stockport Homes' missions which is "One team, transforming lives". Underpinning the Group mission are Stockport Homes' aims and the SNS Policy,

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	Procedure and Strategy clearly links to these, specifically: • Engage residents and communities • Provide comfortable, affordable homes • Deliver thriving, safe and sustainable neighbourhoods • Support the Council to meet its aims in Stockport.
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4	Linked policies/strategies	
		In addition to being linked to the Council's priorities, the Safer Neighbourhoods Service Policy has clear links to many of Stockport Homes' strategies, policies and action plans, in particular: • Business Plan 2023-26 • Delivery Plan 2021-26 • Tenancy Breaches Policy • SNS Policy • Domestic Abuse Policy • Hate Crimes Policy • Homelessness Strategy • Allocations Policy • Inclusive Growth Strategy • Greenspace Strategy • Aging Well Strategy • Neighbourhood Action Plans • Asset and Sustainability Strategy 2011-2041 • Value for Money Strategy • Customer Voice and Influence Strategy • Safeguarding children and adults at risk Policy • Eyes Wide Open Statement • Tenancy Contact Policy • Neighbourhood Inspection Policy • Housing Fraud Policy • Good Neighbourhood Management Policy • Lend A Cam Code of Practice • CCTV Code of Practice • ASB Strategy • Hate Policy • Domestic Abuse Policy.

5	Equality, diversity and inclusion	Describe how different experiences, characteristics, and approaches were considered during the
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		formulation of the policy, e.g. neurodiversity, age, religion, sex/gender, financial/digital inclusion.
		There is potential differential impact against BME due to language barriers where a customer's first language may not be English. There is also potential differential impact on disabled customers due to possible vulnerability due to physical or mental health. This could include customers whose disability means they have low literacy skills or are more at risk of ASB having severe negative affect on their wellbeing. The CCTV Code of Practice is linked to the Safer Neighbourhoods Policy which makes provision for interpreter services, by making race and hate crime incidents a priority for investigation and by using a risk assessment matrix to establish vulnerability. All reports of ASB, racial harassment, hate related behaviour and domestic abuse are sensitively investigated. Stockport Homes treats all incidents very seriously and will take prompt and effective action wherever possible. Stockport Homes has developed a dedicated Hate Crime Policy and procedure and a Domestic Abuse Policy and procedure. Support is given to customers to fill incident diaries to capture evidence of ASB and ensure they are robust enough for use in court. Alternatives to diaries for customers with low literacy skills are also provided as required including the use of Dictaphones. Any hate crime is given priority status for investigation. This is positive preferential treatment.

6	Customer/Colleague Voice	Describe how the customer and/or colleague voice shapes and influences the policy and services
		Customer Focus Group was consulted - 19 th November 2024 – to consider any changes or recommendations to the policy and procedure. All recommendations were reviewed and where possible changes which could be made were implemented in the new policies.

7	Risk management	This policy helps to mitigate the following risks identified on the Corporate Risk Register
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Corporate Risk 2	Stockport Homes does not maintain a strong, positive reputation where stakeholders have trust and confidence in Stockport Homes)
Corporate Risk 3	Positive, strategic relationships are not maintained with Stockport Council (at both officer and political level) and other key local partners / third sector organisations across Greater Manchester (GM)
Corporate Risk 6	Stockport Homes does not deliver excellent customer services in the way that customers require them.

8	Performance monitoring	Please list the relevant government TSMs (Tenant Satisfaction Measures)
		TSM Satisfaction: TP12 - Satisfaction with approach to ASB. Stockport Homes will set annual targets for key ASB performance indicators which are challenging, and these will be monitored via the Customer Service Directorate Management Team, Leadership Team and Scrutiny Committee. Performance information relating to the use of legal actions and satisfaction levels and will be publicised on the website and in the customer newsletter. Indicators that will be monitored include but are not limited to: • Number of New cases arising • Percentage of cases successfully resolved • Satisfaction with the outcome of the case • Satisfaction that residents were kept up to date • The time taken to resolve ASB • The use of legal action to resolve ASB cases.