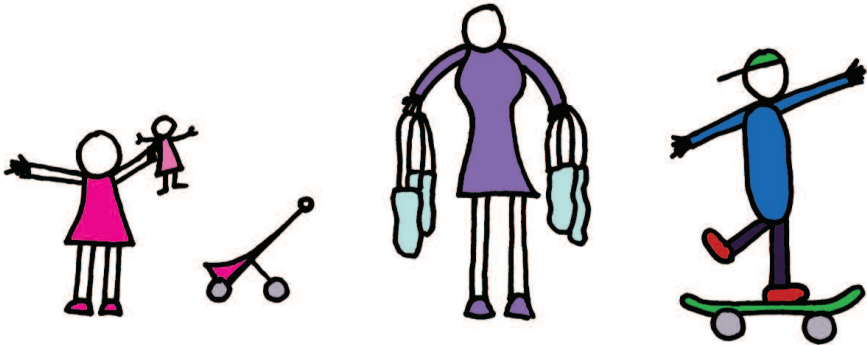


Tackling Antisocial Behaviour

A guide to how we can help
tackle antisocial behaviour



Introduction

We recognise that antisocial behaviour can have an enormous impact upon you, your family and your community. We take all reports of antisocial behaviour seriously and we will not tolerate this type of behaviour. We aim to resolve problems sensitively and promptly. We will work in partnership with you and other organisations like the police to help resolve any antisocial behaviour.

This leaflet tells you about how we will respond to reports of antisocial behaviour and how we can support you and your community. We will always be happy to give you advice about any complaint you make, although there may be times when we are unable to resolve your complaint. This could be where we are unable to prove any nuisance has occurred. We will give you examples later within this leaflet.

What is antisocial behaviour?

We define antisocial behaviour to be any act that causes nuisance, annoyance, alarm or distress to neighbours, the local community, people working for Spire Homes or other agencies. We will also take action against other breaches of tenancy.

What can you do before reporting something to us?

We normally ask if you have spoken to the person causing the problems. If you know who is causing the problem, talking to them and explaining how their behaviour is affecting you may help to resolve the problem at an early stage. You should only do this if you feel safe to do so. We provide advice on how to do this in our

separate leaflets, 'How to be a good neighbour' & "Having problems with your neighbour". If you have already tried this and it has not worked, or you are unsure who is causing the problem please contact us for further advice.

How to report incidents of nuisance or antisocial behaviour

You do not have to live with antisocial behaviour, or suffer in silence, please tell us using one of the following ways:

- Telephoning our one stop shop on 0300 123 66 11
- In person at one of our offices in Rushden or Oakham
- Emailing: spire.homes@longhurst-group.org.uk
- By writing to us.

If the nuisance or antisocial behaviour involves criminal activity or the threat of violence, you should contact the police. You should also report the incident to us as soon as possible. Do not assume that the police will inform us on your behalf.

If the incident takes place outside normal working hours please make a note of the time and date and contact us when we re-open. If the behaviour is causing you serious alarm and concern you should contact the police.

How we deal with reports of antisocial behaviour or nuisance

We will respond to all reports of antisocial behaviour or nuisance to see what help or advice we can give. We will let you know what action we can take.

We aim to respond to all serious incidents within 1 working day, such as:

- Acts of violence
- Domestic Violence
- Hate Crime
- Intimidation.

We aim to respond to all general incidents of antisocial behaviour within 5 working days, such as:

- Verbal or written abuse
- Criminal activity
- Aggressive and threatening language or behaviour
- Dog fouling
- Rubbish
- Nuisance vehicles
- Noise nuisance.

What happens once a case has been reported?

Our Customer Service staff will ask you questions about your complaint and then pass these details to our Housing Services team. They will start their investigations. This could mean calling you back and talking you through the situation. For more serious problems we will ask to visit you at your home or at a suitable venue of your choice.

We will agree an action plan with you on how we intend to proceed and what you need to do. We will explain how to collect evidence by completing our incident diary. We will also agree with you how we will keep you up to date about how the investigations are going. The

length of time taken to complete our investigations will depend on many things, but the availability of evidence will be the most important part of this.

If we have your agreement, we will contact the person causing the problem and we will agree an action plan with them on how they can resolve the complaint. Sometimes reminding someone that their behaviour is upsetting or inappropriate will, be enough to sort out the problem. If you do not want us to speak to the person causing the antisocial behaviour or contact any witnesses we will respect your decision. However this will make it difficult for us to take any action.

We will be honest with you about the possible outcome of the case. We will not promise anything we feel is unachievable.

Why we are sometimes unable to help?

Some things that cause annoyance cannot always be treated as antisocial behaviour. Not everything that annoys is antisocial behaviour. Sometimes, it is not possible for us to act on a complaint or bring an existing case to a satisfactory conclusion, unless the activity is a clear breach of the tenancy agreement.

How we can tackle antisocial behaviour

We tackle antisocial behaviour in many different ways. We will try to work with you, and where necessary, other agencies, to solve the problem. What we do will depend on the type of antisocial behaviour, how serious it is and how much evidence there is.

We will tell you what action we intend to take. Working with the police and local authorities is really important in effective enforcement action and we invest time into developing our relationships with our partner agencies. We usually try and resolve the complaint using one or more of the non-legal remedies listed below. These aim to support the person in changing their behaviour to prevent further nuisance.

- Verbal or written warnings
- Traffic light warning system
- Mediation
- Acceptable Behaviour Contract
- Referral to specialist support agencies.

In most cases this is enough to improve the behaviour. Where the behaviour continues or the situation is very serious we will take prompt legal action.

This may include:

- Injunction
- Application for Demotion of tenancy
- Possession Proceedings
- Antisocial Behaviour Order
- Eviction.

In very serious cases, where the person causing the nuisance has put someone in danger, we may immediately serve a Notice of Seeking Possession, which is the first step in legal action. Please note; we are not able to end a tenancy immediately as this is a legal agreement and only a court of law can do this.

Supporting witnesses

We recognise that being a witness can be a very difficult thing to do. We have a victim centred approach and aim to provide practical support to both victims and witnesses of antisocial behaviour and harassment. To make this as easy as possible we make sure that witnesses are supported and are regularly informed of what is happening.

We can provide additional security measures where appropriate and refer witnesses to other support services. This is achieved by working closely with relevant agencies.

Closing a case

We will normally let you know if we close the case and explain the reasons why. When we close a case we will ask you how well you thought we handled the case and what improvements could be made for the future.

Who else to contact about antisocial behaviour:

- Your local authority environmental health department, to report noise nuisance, rubbish, or bad smells
- Your local authority antisocial behaviour co-ordinator
- The police to report criminal activity, including damage, drug dealing, serious harassment and violence
- Your local social services department to report concerns about children's safety or vulnerable adults.

Please ask us for contact details in your local area by ringing our One Stop Shop on 0300 123 66 11.

This leaflet is available in various formats, i.e. different languages, braille, audio formats etc. Please contact us for further information.



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