

Spotlight on Anti-Social Behaviour

There are many forms of ASB, here is the definition that we use:

Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, or distress to any person. 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'.



Disagreements between neighbours or different lifestyles will not be classified as ASB.

Many neighbour problems can be sorted out simply by talking to each other. Sometimes people genuinely don't know they are creating a nuisance. It is always best to try to talk to your neighbour directly in the first instance, if you can.

What we will do if you report ASB?

- ✓ Agree an Action Plan with you, including what you can expect from us and what we expect from you.
- ✓ Contact you at intervals agreed with you and we will contact you before we close your case.
- ✓ Interview the person you have complained about and tell them what we will do if any ASB continues.
- ✓ Monitor the situation.

Some incidents of ASB are very difficult to prove so it's important that we gather as much evidence as possible. If you are asked to keep a record of the ASB this is because it may be required if we need to take legal action.

We will agree with you what action we intend to take and what you can do to assist. If we do not intend to take further action, we will explain why. Where the report is a lifestyle issue, we will provide advice and support about how you can resolve your differences with your neighbour. This may include the offer of independent mediation.

What if there is no improvement?

We will work to ensure that wherever possible anti-social behaviour is prevented or tackled at an early stage by appropriate intervention and support. If informal action does not work, we may:

- Issue verbal or written warnings
- Require an undertaking to be signed by your neighbour, we call this an Acceptable Behaviour Agreement.

If the ASB is persistent and continues, and informal attempts have not worked then we will consider taking legal action against the perpetrator which could include applying for an injunction. For very serious cases of ASB, and as a last resort we might take action to evict the person causing the ASB. Legal action can be lengthy and requires lots of evidence, so we would require your support. You may also be required to give witness evidence in court.

We will also work in partnership with the Police, and other agencies to prevent and resolve incidents of ASB.

Cannabis

The possession, manufacture and supply of cannabis is a crime under Section 8 of the misuse of drugs act 1971. The use of cannabis is also illegal and is a breach of tenancy.

If you believe someone is using, manufacturing or supplying illegal drugs you firstly should report your concerns directly to the police, obtain a reference number, write it down and let us have it.

What we will do about reports of cannabis use.

- ✓ Speak to the alleged user and ask them to stop.
- ✓ Explain the impact of their actions and remind them of the law and their tenancy agreement.
- ✓ Check that the issue has been reported to the police.

If Cannabis is proven to be being used or kept in the property, we will take reasonable and proportionate legal or non-legal action to address this bearing in mind the risks, vulnerabilities, support needs of those involved, and the impact on the complainant and the community.

We will try to direct Cannabis users to any support available and/or their GP.

Where it is not clear where the cannabis use is – we will ask customers to continue to keep both us and the police informed of any concerns. Where there are multiple reports over time we will attend site to investigate.

Setting expectations

Whilst smoking Cannabis is technically a crime most police forces simply do not have the time or resources to respond to cases of personal cannabis use. Where there is no proceedable evidence of Cannabis being present and this may need to be more than a smell we may not be able to meaningfully or conclusively tackle the issue until such evidence is established. Where drugs are found on the premises or arrests are made robust action will be easier. It is harder to take robust action on reports of 'cannabis smells' for example.

Medicinal Cannabis

In some cases, cannabis can be prescribed to treat certain medical conditions. Where this is the case we will ask for written evidence from a qualified NHS practitioner.

To report ASB or issues with cannabis email info@stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk or call 01782 968566

Spotlight on Fire Safety

The safety of our tenants is a top priority for us and we are committed to going above and beyond when it comes to fire safety in your homes. For our tenants this includes providing smoke alarms as well as checking and servicing your gas central heating systems via an annual safety checks and completing 5 yearly inspections of your electrical system.

E-BIKE FIRE SAFETY

Emergency services are reminding people about the dangers of charging e-bikes and electric scooters following a spate of fires. Lithium battery fires can spread quickly out of control and start a large fire within minutes.



- * Buy from a reputable seller. Bikes bought from online market-places may not meet UK Safety standards. Be particularly wary of a cheap deal that is shipped from abroad This includes buying batteries.
- * Try to store e-bikes or e-scooters outside in a garage or shed. If you have to keep them indoors, make sure you store them away from escape routes
- * Don't overcharge batteries or charge them unattended or while you sleep
- * Damaged batteries can overheat and catch fire without warning. Check your battery regularly for any signs of damage.
- * Don't un-restrict the speed of your e-bike. This will put added stress on the battery
- * Do not overload socket outlets or use inappropriate extension leads

The warning signs your e-bike or e-bike battery is a fire hazard

- ◆ **Heat:** It's normal for batteries to generate some heat when charging or in use. However if your device's battery feels extremely hot to the touch, there's chance it's defective and may start a fire
- ◆ **Bulging:** A battery bulging or swelling out of shape is a common sign of it failing. If your battery looks swollen, you should stop using it immediately. Similar signs include any type of lump or leaking from the device
- ◆ **Noise:** Failing lithium batteries have also been reported to make hissing or cracking sounds
- ◆ **Smell:** If you notice a strong or unusual smell coming from the battery, this could also be a sign of it failing
- ◆ **Performance:** A failure to fully charge or longer charge times can be a sign that your battery is failing
- ◆ **Smoke:** If your battery or device is smoking, a fire has already started

DID YOU KNOW?

Two fires a day are started by candles.

Every six days someone dies from a fire caused by a cigarette

Faulty electrics (appliances, wiring and overloaded sockets) cause around 4,000 fires in the home across the country every year.

Around half of home fires are caused by cooking accidents.

About 3 fires a day are started by heaters

You're around 8 times more likely to die in a fire if you do not have a working smoke alarm in your home.