

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, an annual fire door check, 5 yearly inspections of your electrical system, annual fire risk assessments and regular inspections of the communal areas.

FIRE DOORS

Fire doors perform a vital role by slowing the passage of fire, enabling 60 minutes of resistance to fire. The components of a fire door like the hinges, seals, handles and any glazing are as important as the door itself. This is because if a fire door warps it can move and allow smoke and fire through the opening. The seals and the gaps between the door frame and the wall are also vital as they stop smoke and fire spreading.

Under the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, we need to check all flat fire doors and self-closers every year:

- ✓ We'll contact you to arrange a time that's convenient for you.
- ✓ It won't take long – just a few minutes – so please do make sure you give us access (failure to do so could result in us taking legal action to gain access which would result in court costs charged to you).

Remember, a properly functioning fire door plays a vital role in keeping everyone safe in your building. If at any point your fire door or the closer is damaged or not working properly, please let us know so that it can be repaired.

KEEPING EVERYONE SAFE

- × Let us know of any safety concerns you might have about your home or building.
- × Check the smoke detectors in your home at least every month
- × Keep communal areas clear and report any items left in communal areas by others to us.
- × Don't prop open fire doors in communal areas.
- × Allow access for your fire door to be checked, it only takes a few minutes
- × Report any issues that you spot with fire doors, including your own.
- × Residents who smoke must ensure they do so in a safe place and fully extinguish their cigarettes afterwards
- × If you are concerned about the actions or vulnerability of your neighbours contact us.
- × If you are carrying out DIY works in your home, please let us know so that we can check the work
- × Don't leave or charge any e-bike or e-scooter in the communal area
- × Don't charge them in your home, overnight or when you are out.

If you spot anything that you are unsure about in your home or communal area please give us a call.

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 marketplaces 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.

× Do not 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

× Store your e-bike or scooter away from any escape route in your home

For more information on fire safety go to www.stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk