Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

Thurrock Council

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Aims and Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out Thurrock Council's approach to preventing, investigating and addressing anti-social behaviour (ASB) affecting tenants, leaseholders, residents, homes and neighbourhoods within the Council's housing service.

Thurrock Council is committed to addressing ASB in a fair, reasonable, proportionate and transparent way that places residents at the centre of service delivery. The policy outlines how the Council will work with residents, partner agencies and local communities to prevent and address ASB, support victims and witnesses, sustain tenancies and promote safe, inclusive and well-managed neighbourhoods.

This policy supports the Council's responsibilities as a social landlord and contributes to the delivery of the Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community Standard. The policy reflects the Council's commitment to working proactively with residents and partners to address ASB, improve neighbourhoods and support positive tenancy outcomes.

This policy aims to:

- support residents' right to live peacefully, safely and free from ASB
- promote a victim-centred approach to the prevention, investigation and management of ASB
- encourage the early reporting of ASB and ensure concerns are taken seriously
- work with residents, partner agencies and local communities to prevent ASB and reduce its impact
- ensure ASB is investigated fairly, consistently and proportionately
- support early intervention, prevention and tenancy sustainment wherever possible
- make effective use of the tools and powers available to the Council to address ASB where appropriate
- support victims, witnesses and vulnerable individuals throughout investigations and any subsequent action taken
- ensure consideration is given to vulnerability, safeguarding, equality and diversity when responding to ASB
- support the creation of safe, inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods within the Council's housing communities

Scope

This policy applies to ASB affecting tenants, leaseholders, residents, homes, communal areas and neighbourhoods where Thurrock Council has housing management responsibilities as a social landlord.

The policy applies to:

- council tenants
- leaseholders
- household members and occupants living within Council-managed homes
- visitors whose behaviour affects Council tenants, leaseholders, residents or neighbourhoods
- Council employees, contractors and service providers involved in the management of ASB

This policy covers housing-related anti-social behaviour occurring:

- within Council-owned or managed homes
- within communal areas and shared spaces
- on Council-owned housing estates and neighbourhoods
- where the behaviour affects Thurrock Council tenants, leaseholders, residents or the wider management of the housing stock

This policy should be read alongside relevant legislation and regulatory requirements, tenancy and lease agreements, the Housing Allocations Scheme 2023, safeguarding and community safety arrangements, the Corporate Complaints Policy, and any associated policies or procedures relating to the prevention, investigation and management of anti-social behaviour.

Legislation, Regulation and Best Practice Framework

This policy has been developed with regard to the following legislation, regulation and guidance:

Legislation

- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Housing Act 1985
- Housing Act 1996
- Housing Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

Regulation

- Regulator of Social Housing – Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Regulator of Social Housing – Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard

Best Practice and Guidance

- Statutory Guidance for Frontline Professionals on the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Housing Ombudsman guidance and reports relating to anti-social behaviour
- Relevant guidance issued by the Home Office, Local Government Association and Regulator of Social Housing
- Local Community Safety Partnership arrangements

Corporate Context

This policy supports Thurrock Council's Corporate and Improvement Plan and contributes to the Council's commitment to providing safe homes, safe neighbourhoods and effective services for residents. The policy reflects the Council's values through its focus on accountability, openness, evidence-based decision making, partnership working and continual improvement.

Through this policy, the Council seeks to support safe and sustainable neighbourhoods and promote positive outcomes for tenants, leaseholders and residents.

National Context

ASB can have a significant impact on residents, affecting their wellbeing, sense of safety and enjoyment of their home and neighbourhood. Effective management of ASB is an important part of creating safe, well-managed neighbourhoods and supporting positive outcomes for residents.

In recent years there has been increased national focus on how social landlords respond to ASB and support residents affected by it. The Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community Standard requires landlords to work with relevant organisations to prevent and address ASB and hate incidents, make it easy for residents to report concerns, and take appropriate action where issues are identified.

The Housing Ombudsman has also highlighted the importance of responding to reports promptly, carrying out fair investigations, communicating clearly with residents and learning from complaints and feedback.

This policy reflects those expectations and supports Thurrock Council's commitment to addressing ASB in a fair, reasonable, proportionate and resident-focused way.

Local Context

Thurrock Council manages a diverse housing stock and provides homes and services to tenants, leaseholders and residents across the borough.

The Council receives reports of ASB covering a wide range of issues, from neighbour nuisance and disputes through to more serious incidents involving harassment, intimidation, hate-related behaviour, environmental nuisance and criminal activity. The impact of these issues can be particularly significant for vulnerable residents and those requiring additional support.

Through its Tenancy Management and Housing ASB functions, the Council works with residents, partner agencies and local communities to prevent and address ASB, support victims and witnesses and promote positive neighbourhood environments.

Section 1 – Understanding Anti-Social Behaviour

What is Anti-Social Behaviour?

For the purposes of this policy, anti-social behaviour (ASB) has the meaning set out in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and includes:

- conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to another person
- conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to their occupation of residential premises
- conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person

ASB can have a significant impact on individuals, families and communities. The Council recognises that persistent or serious ASB can affect a person's wellbeing, sense of safety and ability to enjoy their home.

Examples of ASB may include:

- harassment, intimidation or threatening behaviour
- verbal abuse
- hate-related incidents or hate crime
- repeated neighbour nuisance
- criminal activity affecting residents or neighbourhoods
- vandalism and damage to property
- deliberate noise nuisance
- environmental nuisance affecting the wider community
- behaviour that causes fear, distress, nuisance or harm to others

The Council will consider each report on its own circumstances and determine what action, if any, is appropriate.

Hate Crime and Hate Incidents

Thurrock Council is committed to ensuring that all residents are treated with dignity and respect and recognises the serious impact that hate-related behaviour can have on victims, families and communities.

A hate crime is any criminal offence that is motivated by hostility, prejudice or discrimination towards a person's:

- race
- religion or belief
- disability
- sexual orientation
- transgender identity

- other protected characteristic

A hate incident is any incident perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, whether or not it amounts to a criminal offence.

The Council will take reports of hate-related behaviour seriously and will work with residents, partner agencies and the Police, where appropriate, to investigate incidents, support victims and consider appropriate action.

Where hate-related behaviour involves a Council tenant, leaseholder or member of their household, it may also be considered a breach of tenancy or lease obligations and may result in housing management or enforcement action.

What is Not Normally Considered Anti-Social Behaviour?

The Council recognises that not all disagreements, disputes or everyday household activities amount to ASB.

Examples of issues that would not normally be considered ASB include, but are not limited to:

- children playing
- babies crying
- routine household noise
- cooking smells
- people talking at a reasonable volume within their home
- reasonable use of household appliances
- minor lifestyle differences between neighbours
- day-to-day domestic activity
- one-off incidents that do not cause significant nuisance, alarm or distress

The Council understands that these issues can sometimes affect neighbour relationships and may cause frustration. Where concerns do not meet the threshold for ASB, the Council may provide advice, signpost residents to alternative services or encourage residents to resolve issues informally where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Early Resolution and Partnership Working

The Council recognises that not all reports of ASB require formal enforcement action and that many concerns can be resolved through early intervention, communication and support.

Where appropriate, the Council will seek to resolve concerns at the earliest opportunity through engagement with those involved, tenancy management interventions, mediation, support services, partnership working and other proportionate measures.

The Council will work with residents, partner agencies and local communities to identify and address the underlying causes of ASB wherever possible and to support sustainable and positive outcomes.

The Council will encourage residents to work constructively with the support available to resolve issues wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so. Where concerns cannot be resolved through informal intervention, or where the nature of the behaviour is serious, persistent or presents a risk to others, the Council may consider formal enforcement action.

The Council will seek to balance prevention, support, partnership working and enforcement to achieve sustainable outcomes for residents and neighbourhoods.

Section 2 – Roles and Responsibilities

The Council

Thurrock Council is committed to preventing and addressing ASB and will take a fair, reasonable, proportionate and resident-focused approach to the management of reported concerns.

The Council will:

- investigate reports of ASB within the scope of this policy
- support victims and witnesses where appropriate
- work with residents, partner agencies and communities to prevent and address ASB
- consider vulnerability, safeguarding and individual circumstances when responding to reports of ASB
- promote early intervention and sustainable solutions wherever possible
- use the tools and powers available to it to address ASB where appropriate
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy and associated services

Case Ownership and Responsibility

To ensure that reports are managed by the most appropriate service, cases will be assessed and allocated according to the severity, nature and impact of the reported behaviour in accordance with the Council's ASB and Hate Crime Prioritisation Framework (Appendix A).

The ASB Team will investigate and manage all Category 1 and Category 2 ASB cases. The Tenancy Management & Sheltered Housing Teams will investigate and manage Category 3 nuisance cases, including lower-level neighbour disputes and other tenancy-related nuisance issues. Cases will be reviewed throughout their lifecycle and may be transferred between teams where the circumstances warrant a different level of intervention.

Housing ASB Team

The Housing ASB Service is responsible for investigating reports of housing-related ASB and managing cases in accordance with this policy.

Responsibilities include:

- assessing reports of ASB and determining an appropriate response
- carrying out investigations and gathering evidence
- completing risk assessments and action plans where appropriate
- supporting victims and witnesses throughout an investigation
- working with partner agencies to resolve ASB concerns
- identifying opportunities for early intervention, prevention and support
- considering and pursuing appropriate tenancy, legal or enforcement action where necessary
- maintaining accurate case records and management information

Tenancy Management Team and Sheltered Housing Team

The Tenancy Management and Sheltered Housing Teams play an important role in supporting the prevention and resolution of ASB and promoting positive tenancy and neighbourhood outcomes.

Responsibilities may include:

- identifying and reporting ASB concerns
- supporting tenancy sustainment and early intervention activities
- managing neighbour nuisance, estate management and tenancy-related issues where appropriate
- supporting investigations and sharing relevant information
- engaging with tenants, leaseholders and residents to resolve concerns
- considering tenancy and lease management actions where appropriate
- supporting vulnerable residents and making referrals to relevant support services

Tenants, Leaseholders and Residents

Tenants, leaseholders and residents have an important role in helping to create and maintain safe, respectful and inclusive neighbourhoods.

Residents are expected to:

- treat others with respect and consideration
- comply with the conditions of their tenancy or lease
- report incidents of ASB promptly and provide information that may assist an investigation
- cooperate with investigations where appropriate
- allow access where required to investigate concerns relating to ASB
- engage constructively with support, mediation or intervention measures where appropriate

Partner Agencies

The Council recognises that some ASB concerns require a coordinated response from multiple agencies.

Where appropriate, the Council will work with:

- Essex Police
- Community Safety partners
- Adult Social Care
- Children's Services
- health services
- safeguarding services
- support providers
- registered providers and other landlords
- other statutory, voluntary and community organisations

Partnership working may include information sharing, joint investigations, safeguarding activity, victim support and coordinated interventions to address ASB and support positive outcomes for residents and communities.

Section 3 - Reporting and Responding to Anti-Social Behaviour

Reporting ASB

Thurrock Council encourages residents to report ASB as early as possible. Early reporting can help prevent concerns from escalating and enables the Council and its partners to consider appropriate interventions at the earliest opportunity.

Residents can report ASB through the Council's Housing Service using the reporting methods published by Thurrock Council. Reports may be made:

- online - Anti-social behaviour - Thurrock Council
- by telephone – 01375 652652
- in writing – ASB@thurrock.gov.uk
- through a Housing Officer or other relevant housing representative
- through a third party acting on behalf of a resident, such as a Councillor, Member of Parliament, support worker, Social Worker, carer or advocate, where appropriate

Where concerns relate to criminal behaviour, residents may also be advised to report incidents to Essex Police. Where there is an immediate risk to life, serious criminal activity or an emergency situation, residents should contact the emergency services by calling 999.

Responding to Reports

The Council will undertake a risk assessment where appropriate to understand the impact of the reported behaviour, identify any vulnerabilities or safeguarding concerns and determine the most appropriate response.

All reports of ASB will be assessed to determine the nature of the concern, the potential risks involved and the most appropriate response.

As part of this process, the Council will:

- assess the seriousness and impact of the reported behaviour
- consider any known vulnerabilities, safeguarding concerns or support needs
- identify whether another agency is better placed to respond
- determine whether the reported behaviour falls within the definition of ASB
- consider whether immediate action is required

Where concerns fall outside the scope of ASB, the Council will seek to provide advice, signposting or information regarding alternative routes of support where appropriate.

Investigating ASB

Where a report of ASB is accepted for investigation, the Council will take a proportionate and evidence-based approach.

Investigations may include:

- interviewing those affected

- contacting the alleged perpetrator
- gathering information from witnesses
- reviewing available records and evidence
- working with partner agencies including Police, community safety and support services
- considering tenancy, leasehold or housing management information relevant to the case

Residents may be asked to provide additional information to support an investigation, such as incident diaries, photographs, recordings or witness statements where appropriate. The Council will keep residents informed of the progress of an investigation wherever reasonably practicable.

Investigations may include interviews, incident records, witness evidence, diary sheets, photographs, recordings, CCTV and information provided by partner agencies where appropriate.

Supporting Victims and Witnesses

The Council recognises the impact that ASB can have on victims and witnesses and will seek to provide support appropriate to the circumstances of each case.

Support may include:

- regular communication and updates
- risk assessments
- referrals to support services
- partnership working with relevant agencies
- consideration of safeguarding concerns
- arranging support throughout legal or enforcement action where appropriate

The level of support provided will depend on the nature of the ASB and the needs of those affected. Where appropriate, the Council may work with partner agencies to provide additional support to victims and witnesses.

Where appropriate, the Council will complete risk assessments to help determine the level of support, intervention and partnership working required.

Resolving and Preventing ASB

The Council will seek to resolve ASB at the earliest opportunity wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Depending on the circumstances, this may include:

- advice and guidance
- mediation
- tenancy management interventions
- acceptable behaviour agreements
- partnership working
- referrals to support services

The Council will seek to balance prevention, support and enforcement in order to achieve sustainable outcomes for residents and neighbourhoods.

Enforcement Action

Where informal interventions are unsuccessful, or where the seriousness of the behaviour requires it, the Council may consider immediate formal enforcement action.

Depending on the circumstances, this may include:

- warnings
- acceptable behaviour agreements/contracts
- injunctions
- community protection interventions
- tenancy enforcement action
- closure notices and orders
- possession proceedings
- other legal remedies available to the Council

The action taken will be proportionate to the nature, seriousness and impact of the behaviour.

Service Standards

All reports of ASB will be assessed and prioritised according to the nature of the behaviour reported, the level of risk identified and the impact on those affected.

The Council will seek to respond to reports of ASB in accordance with its published service standards. Reports involving serious risk, including violence, threats of violence, hate-related behaviour, safeguarding concerns or other high-risk matters, will be prioritised in accordance with the Council's ASB and Hate Crime Prioritisation Framework (Appendix A).

The Council will seek to:

- acknowledge and assess reports promptly
- keep residents informed throughout the management of their case
- undertake investigations in a fair and proportionate manner
- explain the action being taken and the reasons for any decisions made
- identify and support vulnerable residents where appropriate

The Council recognises that response times and case duration will vary depending on the nature, complexity and severity of the concerns reported. Residents will be kept informed where investigations require ongoing enquiries, partnership working or legal action.

The Council will seek to maintain regular contact with those affected by ASB throughout the management of a case. As a guide, the Council will normally provide updates at least every 5 working days for Category 1 cases, every 14 days for Category 2 cases and every 28 days for Category 3 cases, unless an alternative frequency is agreed with the resident or there is no material update to provide.

Reports will be prioritised according to the level of risk and impact identified, with higher-risk cases receiving a more urgent response.

Confidentiality

The Council takes the confidentiality of residents reporting ASB seriously and will handle information in accordance with relevant data protection legislation and information sharing arrangements.

Whilst the Council will take reasonable steps to protect the identity of complainants, there may be circumstances where information must be shared as part of an investigation, safeguarding process or legal proceedings. Where appropriate, this will be discussed with the resident beforehand.

Monitoring, Measuring and Review

Thurrock Council is committed to monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and ensuring that reports of ASB are managed fairly, consistently and in accordance with relevant legislation, regulatory requirements and good practice.

The Council will periodically review open ASB cases and service outcomes to ensure appropriate action is being taken and identify opportunities for service improvement.

The implementation of this policy will be monitored through:

- reports of ASB and case management information
- resident feedback and satisfaction measures
- complaints, compliments and service requests
- review of enforcement activity and outcomes
- partnership working arrangements and joint interventions
- performance reporting and management review arrangements

The Council will use information gathered through these activities to:

- identify trends and emerging issues
- improve service delivery and resident outcomes
- support learning and continuous improvement
- inform future service planning and policy development
- ensure resources are targeted effectively where ASB has the greatest impact

Performance information relating to ASB will be reviewed through the Council's housing management and governance arrangements to support oversight, service improvement and compliance with regulatory requirements.

Performance information will include:

- the number and type of ASB reports received
- response times and service standards
- case outcomes and interventions used
- repeat reports and repeat victims
- complaints relating to ASB case management
- resident feedback and satisfaction levels

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner where required by:

- changes in legislation, regulation or statutory guidance
- recommendations from the Regulator of Social Housing, Housing Ombudsman or Government
- learning from complaints, audits, reviews or investigations
- significant changes to service delivery arrangements
- emerging sector best practice

Policy Development Principles

Within the Transparency, Influence and Accountability consumer standard, published by the Regulator of Social Housing, it sets out that registered providers' housing and neighbourhood policies must be fair, reasonable, accessible and transparent. Where relevant, policies should set out decision-making criteria and complaints processes.

Fairness

The Council will implement this policy consistently, fairly and proportionately, ensuring that reports of anti-social behaviour are assessed and responded to based on the individual circumstances of each case, the evidence available, and the impact on those affected. Residents will be treated fairly, respectfully and without discrimination throughout the investigation and resolution process. The Council will have due regard to its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty when implementing this policy, including recognising where vulnerabilities, disabilities, protected characteristics or support needs may influence how anti-social behaviour is experienced or addressed.

Reasonable

The Council will take all reasonably practicable steps to prevent and address ASB whilst ensuring decisions and actions taken under this policy are proportionate to the circumstances of each case and the level of risk identified.

Accessibility

The Council will ensure that information relating to ASB is communicated in a clear and accessible manner. Information will be made available in alternative formats where appropriate and reasonable adjustments will be considered to meet the needs of residents.

Transparency

The Council is committed to being open and transparent about its approach to preventing and addressing ASB. Where appropriate, residents will be kept informed of actions taken, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions.

Decision-making criteria

Decisions relating to ASB will be informed by relevant legislation, the circumstances of the case, available evidence, professional judgement, vulnerability considerations and the impact on victims, residents and communities.

Complaints process

The Council values feedback from residents and stakeholders as part of its commitment to continuous improvement. Concerns regarding the implementation of this policy may be raised through the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure. Feedback, complaints and lessons learned will be used to inform future policy reviews and service improvements.

Version Control

Version Details

Author	Samantha Hill - Housing Strategy Officer
Owner	Michael Dineen – Director of Community Protection and Enforcement Services
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Approved by	Martin D'Mello – Executive Director of Landlord Services Councillor Willoughby – Portfolio Holder
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Amendment Record

Version Number	Date	Summary of changes
1.0	September 2026	Original version
2.0	October 2026	Updated following review with Housing ASB Service
3.0	November 2026	Updated following review with Director of Community Protection and Enforcement Services and Head of Housing Operations

Appendix A - Anti-Social Behaviour Prioritisation Framework

ASB and Hate Crime Prioritisation Framework		
Category & Case Ownership	**Criteria**	**Target Response Time**
Category 1 – Housing ASB Service	• Extreme intimidation, aggressive and threatening language and behaviour (this includes where the behaviour is directed at staff) • Actual violence against people and damage to property which, in the opinion of the Council, requires an immediate response • All Hate Crimes • All Domestic Abuse cases • All Sexual Abuse cases • Using homes for drug dealing or other unlawful purposes	Initial contact and risk assessment within 24 hours of receipt of the report (excluding weekends and public holidays).
Category 2 – Housing ASB Service	• Intimidation/harassment which, in the opinion of the Council, requires a priority but not urgent response • Serious or sustained noise nuisance • Verbal abuse (this includes where the behaviour is directed at staff) • Other sustained breaches of tenancies despite warning e.g. undertaking frequent car repairs/ keeping large numbers of pets	Initial contact and risk assessment within 3 working days of receipt of the report.
Category 3 – Tenancy Management Team and Sheltered Housing Team	• Complaints of pet nuisance and breeding pets in the property • One off or minor noise pollution • Neighbour disputes • Litter, untidy gardens, items left in communal areas, leaving communal doors open, graffiti, vandalism to communal areas, fly-tipping /inappropriate refuse storage • Running a business without permission • Frequent car repairs	Initial contact and risk assessment within 5 working days of receipt of the report.

The examples provided within this framework are illustrative and not exhaustive. Thurrock Council will consider the individual circumstances, risk, vulnerability, safeguarding concerns and impact of each case when determining the appropriate category and response. Cases may be reviewed and re-categorised where further information becomes available.