

This booklet has been approved by tenants



Useful telephone numbers

Cannock Chase Council 01543 462621

Cannock Police (non urgent calls) 101

Crime Stoppers 0800 555111

Out of Hours ASB Hotline 01543 464657

Neighbourhood Watch 01543 464218

Wolverhampton Mediation Service 01902 552792

Victim Support Staffordshire 0300 303 1977

This leaflet can be provided in Braille, on audio cassette tape/disk or large print on request to Cannock Chase Council on 01543 462621.

Cannock Chase Council

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Summary of Policy and Procedures on

Anti-Social Behaviour

'Preventing and tackling
it together'



www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk

Anti-social behaviour

‘Preventing and tackling it together’

Introduction

The day to day management and investigation of anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a function undertaken by Cannock Chase Council’s Housing Department, liaising closely with the Police, Partners and Agencies. Investigating cases and establishing preventative measures to deal with racial harassment and anti-social behaviour (ASB) which is a key priority for Cannock Chase Council.

- We will seek to use good neighbourhood agreements with local tenants and leaseholders as a method of promoting positive behaviour.
- Cannock Chase Council has a publicity policy for its ASB cases and will publicise the action it takes in order to combat the problem and deter future ASB.

Cross Tenure

Cannock Chase Council has strong links with its Partners and has a protocol to ensure that cases involving residents from different tenures (e.g. Council tenants and the private rented sector) are responded to correctly.

We are committed to ensuring all residents in the District, irrespective of the tenure, are able to live free from intimidations or harassment.

Data protection and information exchange

Cannock Chase Council is a signatory to the information sharing protocol exchange with the Police and other partners.

This enables us to disclose to and receive information from the Police and our partners concerning the prevention and detection of matters relating to crime and disorder including ASB.

Training

All officers dealing with ASB are trained in line with Policy and Procedures and on any statutory changes.

Joint training is also provided in conjunction with partner agencies.

Prevention of Anti-Social Behaviour - working with our partners

Cannock Chase Council is committed to preventing and deterring anti-social behaviour. The measures we use include:

- We work closely in partnership with the Police. The local P.C.S.O's patrol designated areas to prevent anti-social behaviour. The P.C.S.O's maintain a high profile on our estates in order to deter anti-social behaviour, and they can also act as witnesses to any anti-social acts.
- Complaints of anti-social behaviour will be mapped by type and area in order to develop a profile. The information gathered will be used to determine hotspots and to develop action plans for areas in order to combat anti-social behaviour and use the information to prevent or reduce further activity.
- Diversionary activities for young people can help to prevent and reduce anti-social behaviour. Activities can help ensure that young people make constructive use of their leisure time. We recognise the importance of diversionary activities in the prevention of anti-social behaviour. The County Youth Service provide detached youth workers in certain localities to engage with larger groups of young people on the streets.
- Using the Wolverhampton Mediation Service, which is an independent organisation, to resolve disputes where possible and to help prevent them from escalating. We will with your permission refer all appropriate cases to them to see if they can assist you to resolve the issue. We believe that all suitable cases should have the opportunity of being resolved through mediation at the earliest opportunity.

Anti-social behaviour

We recognise that in order to provide an excellent Housing Service, it must be effective in tackling the problems created by anti-social behaviour. We recognise that Council tenants and other residents should be able to live free from violence, disturbance or nuisance.

Cannock Chase Council, through its actions will demonstrate that anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated, and will make this clear to tenants, leaseholders and anyone who is seeking a tenancy. We will respond to reports of anti-social behaviour promptly and ensure that they are all fully investigated.

Cannock Chase Council defines anti-social behaviour 'which caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons from the same household'. Examples of anti-social behaviour include using or threatening violence, racist or homophobic behaviour, threatening or intimidating behaviour and persistent excessive noise.

Our approach to responding to anti-social behaviour is one of prevention, diversion, enforcement and support. Cannock Chase Council will take a balanced approach recognising the importance of the benefits of prevention and rehabilitation through such things as diversionary activities and engaging with offenders and recognising the need to support vulnerable people (as victims of perpetrators), referring them to partner agencies for support where necessary. We however do consider the need for enforcement, making use of all available legal remedies.

Harassment

The Council has an Anti Racial Harassment Policy. The policy along with accompanying procedures has been adopted to ensure reported cases of harassment (based on race, religion, disability or sexual orientation) are responded to appropriately and to make it clear to residents the seriousness with which the Council views such behaviour and the action it is prepared to take against perpetrators.

For racial harassment the Council adopts the definition that a racist incident is one which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other persons. Racial harassment is an incident or series of incidents intended to intimidate, offend or harm an individual because of their ethnic origin, colour, race, religion or nationality. We view all forms of racially motivated incidents as totally unacceptable and will work with partners to create a climate of non-tolerance to racial harassment.

Domestic Abuse

Cannock Chase Council is committed to offering assistance to any of its tenants or applicants who are suffering from domestic violence either from someone within their home or from someone outside their home.

We define domestic violence as any incident of violence, abuse or threatening behaviour perpetrated in order to exercise power and maintain control over another person. We are committed to responding sensitively, appropriately and effectively to all victims of domestic violence, and we will provide prompt and professional assistance to victims accessing our services.

Other remedies

In addition to the Housing Department, Cannock Chase Council has other departments who can act against anti-social behaviour. Environmental Health have certain powers to deal with noise nuisance such as excessive noise, loud music and barking dogs. We are committed to ensuring that our residents should be able to enjoy the peace and quiet at their home.

We have set out below a brief description of some of the powers at our disposal, for further information contact the Housing Office.

Support for Complainants and witnesses

With assistance from other agencies, we want to ensure that residents feel supported when they report anti-social behaviour, by offering day to day support right through to helping them attend court.

In all cases, we will keep you informed through regular contact either in writing, by telephone or by visiting you. We will support complainants and witnesses:

- Where remaining in your home will pose a threat to the safety of yourself or your family, we will in exceptional circumstances provide emergency temporary accommodation and assist you in moving to permanent accommodation
- Improve the security of your home if needed
- Provide practical support during court cases
- Provide regular assigned officer contacts
- Provide advice on how to record and present evidence
- Use injunctions to address witness intimidation
- With your permission, we can refer you to Victim Support for further help and support

What we will do

We will respond to all reports of anti-social behaviour swiftly and effectively. The action we take will depend on the seriousness of the complaint.

Any action will be agreed with the complainant and we will maintain contact throughout the course of the complaint and advise on the progress that is being made. Our actions however are often dependent upon the quality, quantity and relevance of the evidence we have at our disposal. Severe action will be taken against perpetrators where justified. We will with the assistance of the Councils anti-social behaviour coordinator use the full range of legal and non-legal remedies available to stop anti-social behaviour.

Types of remedies available (non-legal and legal)

Non-legal means of resolving nuisance and anti-social behaviour:

- Warnings
- Mediation
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC's)
- Parental Control Agreements (PCA's)
- Good Neighbourhood Agreements
- Extension of introductory tenancies

Legal means of resolving nuisance and anti-social behaviour:

- Possession Orders
- Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO's)
- Criminal Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (CRASBO's)
- Parenting Orders
- Injunctions
- Notice of Seeking Possession
- Court Undertakings
- Demotion of tenancy

Partnership working

Cannock Chase Council recognises that anti-social behaviour must be tackled in partnership with other agencies.

The causes and effects of anti-social behaviour are wide and varied and our work would not be effective in dealing with these issues without input from our partners. Partner agencies include Staffordshire Police, The Community Safety partnership, Environmental Health, youth Offending Team, Victim Support, Education Welfare and Wolverhampton Mediation Services.

In most cases joint working will be an important part of the approach taken. Other agencies that have specialist skills, resources or powers at their disposal may be able to provide evidence and additional information.

Some cases may be referred to a special meeting of these partner agencies where a way forward is agreed. This may involve agreeing legal action or a plan to provide support to vulnerable individuals.

Responding to your report of anti-social behaviour

When the Housing Department receives a complaint we will respond as follows:

Category A: **Serious**

- Harassment/intimidation: includes threats of violence
- Criminal activity: such as assault, arson or theft
- Domestic Violence
- Racially motivated incidents including hate crime
- Sexual acts: such as indecent exposure or prostitution

We aim to interview you on the same day or within 1 working day

Category B: **Persistent**

- Criminal damage: damage to property or vandalism
- Noise: such as loud music, shouting, domestic noise or vehicle noise
- General nuisance: such as gangs of youths causing problems or car repairs in the street
- Drug related problems: drug related activity such as drug dealing and syringes
- Animal related issues: such as uncontrolled aggressive dogs

We aim to acknowledge within 2 working days by phone or in writing, and via interview within 5 working days.

Category C: **Environmental**

- Environmental issues: such as animal fouling, fly tipping, abandoned vehicles, rubbish, graffiti (unless of a discriminatory or racial nature when it will be Category A)

We aim to acknowledge within 5 working days by phone or in writing, interview within 10 working days.

What you can do

Report incidents of anti-social behaviour to the Housing Department's Estate Management Team and if appropriate to the Police. Your case will be managed by your local Estate Management Officer with the support, if necessary, from the Council's in-house Anti-Social Behaviour Prevention Officer.

Keep a written record of all incidents e.g. when the incident occurred, what happened, how this affected you and your family/partner and who was there.

If possible, tell us the names of those who are behaving in an anti-social manner.

You may wish in the first instance to speak to the person or family of the person responsible, but only if it is safe to do so.

Tell us what you want us to do; we will only act with your consent. We will treat all information received confidentially.

We will not disclose your details to an alleged perpetrator during the course of our investigation (if there is a need to disclose your details we will ask your permission to do so first). If you do not want us to act immediately but just make a note for possible future reference, then we will conform to your wishes.