

Hate Incidents Policy

Audience:	Customers, Stakeholders, Colleagues
Policy Owner:	Executive Director of Customer Experience
Policy Lead:	Tenancy Specialist Manager
Approved by:	Executive Team
Approved date:	July 2025
Next review date:	July 2028

1. Context, purpose and scope of the policy

Context:

Everyone has a right to live safely, free from hatred or prejudice. Hate incidents can cause deep and lasting harm, not just to individuals but also to the communities we support. While we take reports seriously, we recognise that escalation and follow-up with external partners can be inconsistent. We are committed to improving how we identify, respond to, and prevent hate incidents and crimes in partnership with customers, police, local authorities, and community organisations.

Purpose:

This policy sets out our approach to ensure a consistent, fair, and effective response to hate incidents and hate crimes. It aims to improve identification, response, prevention, and partnership working to protect our communities.

Scope:

This policy applies if:

- You are a customer who has experienced or witnessed a hate incident
- You have been affected by a hate incident caused by someone living in one of our homes

Sometimes it will be more appropriate for another agency (i.e. the police) to lead on investigating a report. In these circumstances, we will support customers to ensure they feel listened to and heard, as well as liaise with other agencies on your behalf.

Our internal procedures provide detailed guidance on implementing this policy.

2. Definitions

- **Hate crime:** Any criminal offence that is perceived by the victim, or anyone else, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on:
 - Disability
 - Race or ethnicity
 - Religion or belief
 - Sexual orientation
 - Gender identity.
- **Hate incident:** A broader term than hate crime. This includes any non-criminal incident perceived to be motivated by prejudice or hostility. These may still have a serious impact and may escalate if not addressed. Examples include:
 - Verbal abuse or intimidation
 - Offensive language, slurs or gestures
 - Graffiti or vandalism with hateful content
 - Threatening behaviour
 - Online abuse
 - Exclusion, bullying or harassment based on protected characteristics.

We take all reports of hate incidents seriously, whether they amount to a criminal offence or not.

3. How this policy supports our strategy

This policy helps deliver on the following strategy priorities:

1. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

At its core, this policy is about protecting people from hate and prejudice. It strengthens our approach to preventing discrimination, fostering inclusive communities and ensuring people with protected characteristics feel safe and respected in their homes.

2. People and Culture Strategy

We are building colleague capability through training on hate incidents. This reflects our investment in people and a commitment to living our values of respect and empathy in the day-to-day.

4. Policy principles

- Everyone has the right to feel safe in their homes and communities, free from hate or prejudice.
- We treat hate incidents as serious harm, regardless of legal thresholds or intent.
- We act proportionately, fairly, and in line with the Equality Act 2010 and human rights legislation.
- The experiences and needs of those targeted by hate drive our decision-making.

5. Aims and objectives

Aims:

- Prevent harm caused by hate incidents within our homes and communities.
- Promote safety, dignity and trust for all customers, especially those with protected characteristics.
- Provide a clear and consistent approach to identifying, recording and responding to hate incidents.

Objectives:

- Ensure hate incidents are accurately recorded and responded to in line with agreed standards.
- Build colleague capability and confidence in dealing with hate-related harm.
- Work with customers and partners to reduce hate incidents and repeat victimisation.
- Improve the experience of victims by listening, acting and learning from their feedback.

6. Policy actions

We recognise that there are areas where we can improve our approach to tackling hate incidents. This policy sets out how we'll address those through focused action.

- **Improve joint-working with external partners:** We will build partnerships with local police forces and community safety groups by establishing clear escalation protocols and named leads. This will enable faster, more consistent responses and better information sharing on hate incidents.
- **Equip all relevant colleagues with confidence and tools:** Mandatory training on hate incident identification, recording and response will be integrated into learning for frontline and specialist teams. This will ensure our colleagues understand the impact of hate, recognise subtle signs and feel empowered to act appropriately.
- **Respond to reports in a timely manner:** We will contact the customer within one working day where a hate incident has been reported. This is a key performance indicator and part of our performance management.
- **Increase reporting and visibility through co-designed pathways:** We will work directly with customers, particularly those from minoritised and vulnerable groups, to design accessible hate incident reporting channels and communication materials. This approach aims to reduce barriers, build trust and encourage timely reporting.
- **Strengthen accountability and oversight with audits and transparency:** Regular case quality audits will assess the thoroughness and sensitivity of responses. We will publish annual reports on hate incident trends, response outcomes and customer satisfaction to maintain organisational accountability and drive continuous improvements.

7. Monitoring, reporting and review

We will:

- Monitor compliance with the Neighbourhood and Community Standard through quarterly reviews.
- Set and review performance targets including:
 - 100% of hate incident reports contacted within 1 working day
 - Risk assessments completed for all hate incident reports
 - Offensive hate-related graffiti removed within 24 hours
 - Benchmark against sector best practice (e.g. Housemark, peers).
 - Track number, nature, and outcomes of hate-related reports and complaints.
 - Report on customer satisfaction with hate incident handling.
 - Identify trends or repeat locations and act proactively.
 - Review lessons learned from internal cases, Housing Ombudsman findings, and sector-wide cases.
- Share learning and improvements with our Board and relevant committees.

8. Equality, diversity and inclusion

Hate incidents are rooted in prejudice and discrimination, and we are committed to challenging this.

We will:

- Promote dignity, respect and inclusion for all
- Ensure accessibility of services, including interpreters and reasonable adjustments
- Provide our colleagues with training to understand protected characteristics, microaggressions and intersectionality.
- Use inclusive, respectful language and recognise that some customers may have difficulties with communication – tailor support and adapt our services to ensure everyone feels heard.

This policy will be delivered in line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the policy development.

9. Data protection

This policy will be delivered in line with our Data Protection Policy. A Data Protection Impact Assessment was completed and considered as part of the approval process.

10. Related legislation and regulations

Legislation

- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Care Act 2004
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
- Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Equality Act 2010
- Housing Act 1985 & 1996
- Licensing Act 2003
- Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Noise Act 1996
- Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993
- Offensive Weapons Bill
- Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2018
- Serious Violence Strategy 2018
- The Clear Air Act 1993
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Regulatory Framework

- Regulator of Social Housing – Consumer Standards: Neighbourhood and Community Standard

11. Related policies and procedures

- Hate Incident Procedure (internal)
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Procedure (internal)
- Good Neighbour Policy (forthcoming)
- Good Neighbour Procedure (Internal / forthcoming)
- Complaints, Safeguarding, Neighbourhood Management, Repairs and Vulnerability Policies.

12. Customer engagement

This policy was shaped in consultation with our Customer Advocates. Their feedback helped ensure our approach is inclusive, including the removal of terms like 'low literacy' in favour of 'difficulties with communication' to reflect the importance of accessible and respectful language.

Document revision history		
Date	Changes approved by	Details of changes made
01/10/2025	Victoria Asimaki, Head of Strategy & Policy	Minor wording amendments and corrections made to improve clarity and accuracy. Some terminology has been refined and examples adjusted to better reflect best practice. These changes do not alter the overall meaning or intent of the policy.