

Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence





Contents

Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Domestic Violence and Harassment

Nuisance and anti social behaviour

Domestic violence

Harassment



Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence

Neighbourhood Disputes and Anti Social Behaviour

To make sure that your home and environment is a pleasant place to live, the tenancy conditions say that you, your family members or visitors must behave reasonably and should not cause a nuisance or annoyance to other people.

The Society is committed to trying to resolve problems of anti social behaviour arising in neighbourhoods. The Society will treat very seriously and use its full legal powers, including seeking eviction, if harassment or neighbourhood nuisance occurs or is suspected from any of its tenants, people living in their homes or people visiting their homes. In cases where nuisance or harassment occurs from other parties, such as private owners or people coming onto estates, the Society will work with you and other agencies to identify quick and appropriate solutions.



Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence

What you should do

Where you are concerned about nuisance or anti social behaviour, you should, if you are able, try and talk to those causing it and try and sort the problem out

Where the problem is severe or you feel intimidated or scared you should contact the Society immediately, any complaints or concerns will be responded to and treated in a confidential manner

You can complain anonymously if you so wish and we will still pursue the complaint.

What we will do

Once a complaint is received, staff will assess the complaint. On occasions complaints arise out of differences of opinion about how people should lead their lives but as long as there is no breach of tenancy, the Society will not step in. However we will provide information and assistance to you on other options, such as bringing in independent mediation services.



Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence

Where a breach of tenancy is suspected the Society will contact the tenant being complained about (but we will not tell them who has complained). Where the complaint is of a minor nature such as a one off party being held, we will explain the terms of the tenancy agreement. Often this resolves the matter, with the person genuinely not realising that nuisance has occurred.

Where the breach is more severe or persistent the Society will take a much more robust approach. We will of course investigate all the facts from each party before determining any course of action. However there is no one remedy and circumstances will dictate how the Society will manage each problem. Nevertheless we will:

- Keep in regular contact with the complainant/s, if they are not anonymous and identify ways in which they may be able to provide further assistance and what help we can give to them
- Keep in regular contact with any other agencies involved
- Undertake regular reviews to ensure progress is being made



Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence

The Society will make strenuous attempts to prevent Anti Social Behaviour occurring in the first place or to limit the effects of Anti Social Behaviour. This will include the provision of both in-house and independent mediation services, the use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and where appropriate supporting the implementation of diversionary activities for those at risk of causing such behaviour. In order to support our policy we will use New Starter Tenancies for all our new tenants and consider the use of Demoting Tenancies where considered necessary, as well as injunctions.

The following is used as a guide by the Society to determine whether allegations are either severe or minor. This guide is not exhaustive or exclusive:

Minor

- One off noise incidents
- Low level noise nuisance
- First instance parking problems
- Untidy/messy/gardens/driveways
- Minor problems with individual children
- Minor car repair problems
- Pet fouling

Severe

- Prostitution
- Stolen goods storage
- Persistent noise nuisance
- Persistent Car Repairs
- Running an unauthorised business
- Severe child/youth problems
- Alcohol abuse causing ASB
- Harassment
- Threats or acts of violence



Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence

Domestic violence

The Society believes that none of its tenants should live in fear of violence from a spouse or partner, former spouse or partner or other member of their household and will take steps to assist and support any person suffering from or threatened with violence. The Society will protect both men and women who have suffered domestic violence and regardless of whether heterosexual partners/former partners or lesbian and gay partners/former partners have perpetrated such violence.

Domestic violence usually involves a pattern of physical, sexual, economic and/or emotional abuse that often becomes more frequent and serious over time. You can look at it as the misuse of power and the exercise of control of one person over another in an intimate relationship.



Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence

It can also include:

- Harassing and stalking
- Threats, coercion and intimidation
- Isolation and acting jealously
- Denying, lying and blaming
- Using children to continue the abuse
- Economic abuse like holding and misusing money

The Society will at all times adopt a victim centred approach and will take action to evict perpetrators of domestic violence by using the powers available to it under the Housing Act 1996 and subject to the wishes of the victim. If you require any support, please contact the office directly.

We will also where requested install on an emergency basis (in 24hrs) additional security measures to allow you to remain safely in your home. If you are unable to remain in your home we will provide support to enable you to get to a place of refuge.

(See further on for additional support information.)



Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence

Harassment

The Society considers all acts of harassment as severe forms of anti social behaviour. It will not tolerate harassment in any form and in particular harassment arising from a person's race, gender, disability or sexual orientation. This is a clause in your tenancy agreement.

Harassment can constitute:

- violence or threats to you, members of your family or friends
- abusive or insulting words or behaviour
- damage or threats to property
- writing threatening letters, email or graffiti
- verbal abuse, either face to face over the phone
- intimidation such as talking about you to other people, knowing that you will hear
- dumping rubbish in your garden, outside your door or putting things through the letter box



Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence

Many people can feel nervous about reporting incidents of harassment arising because of their race, disability, gender or sexual orientation, however, if this has happened to you, members of your family or friends, we will try and help you and also help you get in touch with independent specialist agencies as well.

The Society also believes it is the responsibility of all the community to make sure that all people can live free from harassment. If you see any graffiti that you judge to be offensive on any of the Society's properties or garages, you should phone the office and we will arrange for its removal within 24hours.



Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence

What you should do

If you are being harassed at home, your home is damaged, or graffiti appears, you should contact the office immediately. If it is at the weekend please phone for an emergency repair. Where possible we would want to take photos of any damage to use as evidence.

If you are attacked, assaulted, harassed, bullied or abused you should contact the police by dialling **999** if you consider it an emergency. In either an emergency situation or a non-emergency you should try and record the following:

- The date and time of incident
- Where the incident took place
- Brief details of what happened
- Description of those responsible
- Details of any witnesses
- Details of any vehicles involved



Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence

If it is a non emergency, please ring the police on these numbers:

Avon and Somerset – including
South Gloucestershire **0845 456 7000**
Devon and Cornwall **08705 777 444**
Dorset **01929 462727**
Wiltshire **01380 735735**

Please note that the police now regard harassment as hate crime and take the issue very seriously. Some forces, including Avon and Somerset are looking at ways to make it easier to report crimes if you are afraid of reporting the incident to the local police station, for example, by allowing you to post in your complaint.

If you do not feel confident in doing this on your own, or you need further support and advice we will help you but you can also contact the following agencies as detailed overleaf.



Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence

For support regarding racist incidents/harassment

Bristol & South Gloucestershire Race Equality Service	0117 9222663
Devon and Exeter Racial Equality Council	01392 422566
Dorset Racial Equality Council	01202 553 003
Somerset Racial Equality Council	01935 414 911
Wiltshire Racial Equality Council	1225 766 439
Support Against Racist Incidents	0117 952 5652

All the above can be contacted during normal working hours Monday – Friday and can also provide support, information and advice on other issues.

The Monitoring Group, a black-led independent voluntary organisation, run a 24-hour emergency helpline providing advice and support services to those experiencing racist attacks, racial domestic violence
FREEPHONE **0800 374 618**.



Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence

For support regarding harassment based on gender

Often harassment against women is coupled with violence against women the following agencies can provide information in respect of domestic violence and also signpost to other help agencies.

National:

Women's Aid National Domestic Violence Helpline (24hrs)
08457 023468, website **www.womensaid.org.uk**

Women with Learning Difficulties Helpline . . .**0208 522 0675**

South West:

Dorset Women's Outreach Project

(Weymouth)**0800 587 7480**

Bridgwater Women's Aid**01278 456351**

Exeter Women's Aid**01392 667145**

Mendip Refuge**01458 840594**

Taunton Women's Aid**01823 279991**

West Wiltshire Women Refuge**01225 766 955**



Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence

For support regarding harassment based on being lesbian, gay or bisexual

National:

Stonewall **0207 881 9440**
London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard . . . **0207 837 7324**
(24hrs)

South West:

Devon L and G Switchboard **01771 321111**
Gloucester L and G Switchboard **01452 306 800**
Wiltshire L and G Switchboard **01722 415051**

These helplines will also provide other forms of support, information and advice to lesbian, gay or bisexual people.

For support regarding harassment based on disability

Disability Rights Commission telephone **08457 622 633**
or text phone **08457 622 644** who will help you.

These helplines will also provide other forms of support, information and advice to people with disabilities or learning difficulties.



Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence

What we will do

In all cases of harassment the Society will work with any victims to support you and to try and locate the most appropriate support agency if you wish. (The numbers above are correct at the time this handbook was printed, however they do fall out of date, therefore please ring us if you find the number is no longer available and we will endeavour to provide you with the right number.)

All cases will be dealt with confidentially.

If the person causing harassment is one of our tenants we will contact them.

If the person causing harassment is not one of our tenants we will support you in dealing with other agencies that can help.

We will make sure your home is secure and will install extra security features within 24 hours.



Nuisance, Anti Social Behaviour, Harassment & Domestic Violence

We will take legal action against perpetrators including applying to the court for an injunction or for possession of our property.

We may ask you to keep a record of the times and types of harassment that is being caused, we will help you with this by for example providing cameras, recording equipment.

At all stages we will keep you informed of what we are doing and what is happening.