



BABERGH AND MIDSUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR
POLICY
2025

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1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This policy sets out the commitment of Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils (B&MSDC) to prevent and tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the districts. We believe that everyone has a right to live in a safe environment that allows them to enjoy their home and community. This policy ensures that preventing and tackling ASB is embedded across our services and partnership working between departments and key agencies is effective and consistent.
- 1.2 This policy outlines what we mean by ASB, describes how we aim to deter it, and sets out guiding principles for our Officers who respond to reports of ASB. We recognise that ASB is often a symptom of unmet needs and that in many cases a person-centred, holistic and supportive approach is essential to resolve the behaviour. Where we are unable to mitigate the risks or impact of ASB by informal means we will swiftly utilise the legal powers provided to us to protect residents and communities.
- 1.3 The procedures for dealing with ASB in different service areas is set out in supporting procedures and information for our customers on our website.

2. Our responsibilities.

- 2.1 We work in partnership with other agencies and will use all available tools and powers to address ASB. The policy sets out our approach to fulfilling our duties as:

- **A social landlord**

Our Housing department works in partnership with the police and other relevant organisations to deter and tackle ASB and hate incidents in the neighbourhoods where we provide social housing. This policy and associated procedure meet the requirements of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and Neighbourhood and Community Standard of the Regulator of Social Housing.

- **A statutory member of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership**

The housing and communities' teams along with our community safety partners is committed to working together to build safer and stronger communities. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires BMSDC to collaborate with the Police and other agencies to develop and implement strategies to reduce crime, disorder, and ASB including hate crime.

- **Investigating nuisance and protecting the environment**

We hold a duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to investigate complaints that could be termed as a 'statutory nuisance' and to act where there is corroborated evidence to do so. This is undertaken by the Environmental Health team. The procedures relating

to the working of environmental health are referred to as 'Administration and Investigation of Noise Complaints'.

3. **What is Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)**

3.1 We adopt the definition as outlined in the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014:

- a. Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, or distress to any person.
- b. Conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises or,
- c. Conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

3.2 There are three main categories of ASB: -

- **Personal** ASB is when a person targets a specific individual or group.
- **Nuisance** ASB is when a person causes nuisance or annoyance.
- **Environmental** ASB is when a person's actions affect the wider environment, such as public spaces or buildings.

3.3 ASB includes a wide variety of unacceptable behaviours that may include criminal activity. The type of conduct that may amount to ASB includes but are not limited to:

- Using or threatening to use violence.
- Intimidation, harassment, and threatening behaviour
- Criminal activity including damage to property.
- Noisy and rowdy behaviour
- Writing threatening, abusive, or insulting graffiti
- Fly-tipping/rubbish dumping
- Uncontrolled pets
- Using and selling illicit substances
- Vandalism
- ASB as a result of alcohol or drug misuse, including street drinking
- Nuisance neighbours
- Inconsiderate or inappropriate use of vehicles e.g. off-road motorbikes.

3.4 Individuals have a right to enjoy their homes and are entitled to go about their daily lives without having concerns that complaints will be made against them. We encourage our residents to be as self-reliant as possible in managing their relationships with neighbours, we will intervene only

where this has failed and in our opinion ASB is being perpetrated.

- 3.5 We provide guidance on our website about what is, and what is not ASB in order to manage expectations. Behaviour that is not generally considered as unreasonable or is a result of lifestyle differences are not considered ASB and will not be dealt with as ASB. More information can be found on [the Councils website](#).
- 3.6 Occasionally a small number of complaints are recognised as coming from unreasonably persistent complainants, this can be damaging for other residents and impactful on our ability to respond. Where customer demands are unrealistic or unreasonable, and/or where we have concerns about vexatious or malicious nature of ASB reports, we will explain this to complainants and respond in accordance with the [unreasonable and persistent complaints policy](#).

4. Hate Crime

- 4.1 A hate crime is any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's actual or perceived:
- Race or ethnicity
 - Religion or belief
 - Sexual orientation
 - Disability
 - Gender identity
- 4.2 A hate crime can include physical abuse, verbal abuse, intimidation, threats, harassment, and damage to property.
- 4.3 A hate incident is behaviour which isn't itself criminal but is perceived by the victim, or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice because of their characteristics.
- 4.4 Everyone is responsible for challenging attitudes and behaviours that foster hatred. Hate crime and hate incidents can cause great distress to their victims and the wider community and it is important that both are reported. We work alongside partners through the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership action plan to ensure our community have the confidence to report hate crime.

5. Reporting anti-social behaviour and/or hate crime

- 5.1 The Council is not an emergency response service. In an emergency residents must always dial 999.

- 5.2 Incidents where there is an immediate risk of harm to persons or property must be reported to the police or other appropriate emergency service.
- 5.3 Incidents of a criminal nature such as drug dealing or hate crime, must be reported to the police. The police are the lead response and investigatory service for criminal offences. We will work closely with the police and will consider any criminal conduct when taking our own interventions.
- 5.4 When the person experiencing ASB and the alleged perpetrator are tenants of another social landlord, such as a housing association, this can be reported directly to the relevant social landlord.
- 5.5 We may accept reports of ASB from anonymous persons, however these can often be difficult to substantiate and the options available to us may be limited. We will take a pragmatic and proportionate approach to anonymous complaints.
- 5.6 Successful resolution of ASB often can occur before the behaviour escalates. We encourage residents and businesses to communicate safely with each other to try and resolve their differences at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.7 Our response to reports of minor disputes or disturbances that do not constitute ASB will be limited to providing advice, encouraging residents to resolve such matters between themselves, and/or signposting to other agencies if appropriate, such as mediation.

6. Our anti-social behaviour principles

- 6.1 We, alongside partners in Suffolk involved in responding to and reducing ASB across Suffolk have welcomed and adopted a set of principles introduced by the Home Office, which seek to describe a consistent approach to understanding and addressing ASB in local communities.
- 6.2 We will encourage individuals and communities to report ASB and to take a stand against behaviour affecting the enjoyment of their home and community, we will take their concerns seriously.
- 6.3 We will adopt a person-centred approach to reports of ASB, working with both victim and alleged perpetrator to understand needs and prevent further ASB. This will include restorative approaches where appropriate.
- 6.4 We will provide accessible information about our services and produce action plans for open investigations so that residents can understand how their ASB report will be investigated, and what they can do to support our investigation. We will be honest and realistic with residents about what is achievable to manage expectations.

- 6.5 We will work in a multi-agency way, to identify, assess and tackle ASB and its underlying causes. We will maintain strong working relationships with the police and key partners and share information using ECINS, (a multi-agency case management system) or similar to facilitate effective multi-agency approaches to complex cases.
- 6.6 We will assess the risk of harm to victims of ASB and ensure that our response is appropriate.
- 6.7 We will as a member of the Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership consider the public's ASB concerns in strategic needs assessment for community safety and share best practice through a network of ASB experts.
- 6.8 Adults and children who exhibit ASB will be supported and given the opportunity to take responsibility for their behaviour and repair the harm caused by it.
- 6.9 Where appropriate we will utilise legal powers to put a stop to ASB, we will be decisive where there is a risk of harm. We will take into account any vulnerabilities and protected characteristics in our decision making and action setting.

7. Safeguarding.

- 7.1 We recognise our vital role in keeping people safe across our districts and commit to working in partnership with others to safeguard children and young people and adults at risk. The councils safeguarding policy and procedures set out how officers should respond to a report of abuse or neglect to a child, young person, or adult at risk.
- 7.2 It is not uncommon for safeguarding concerns to arise during the initial report stage or during an ASB investigation.
- 7.3 The requirements of the safeguarding policy and procedures may take primacy over this policy, and a collaborative multidisciplinary approach will be taken to all situations where both ASB and safeguarding concerns arise.

8. ASB Case Review (Formerly known as Community Trigger)

- 8.1 Victims of ASB are able to request an ASB case review in the event that they feel we, and/or other agencies have not taken appropriate action in respect of their ASB reports, provided that the case meets the locally defined threshold.

- 8.2 The ASB Case Review can be used if a resident has complained to the Councils, the police and/or your housing provider:
- on three or more occasions about separate incidents of ASB in the past six months, and
 - reported each incident of ASB within one month of it happening, and
 - requested a case review within **six** months of when the incidents were reported
- 8.3 Information about the ASB case review is available from our website, and we will ensure that residents are aware of their right to a review, or to raise a formal complaint, in correspondence.

9. Equality, diversity and inclusion

- 9.1 We are committed to promoting equality within the delivery of our services to ensure all residents are treated with respect, dignity, fairness and above all not discriminated against. The Equality Act 2010 provides a framework to ensure Council services are not provided in a discriminatory manner.
- 9.2 We will make sure this policy is applied fairly and consistently to all our residents and will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people. We will act sensitively towards the needs of individuals and communities and we will take positive action to reduce victimisation, discrimination and harassment.

10. Monitoring and continuous improvement

- 10.1 We are committed to continually reviewing the service we provide so that we can identify and share best practice and make necessary service improvements.
- 10.2 This policy will be implemented through our ASB procedure and other associated policies and procedures.
- 10.3 We may identify Safeguarding concerns during the course of an investigation. We will manage these in line with our Safeguarding policies and procedures.
- 10.4 Our performance will be monitored in the following ways:
- Tenant Satisfaction measures
 - Case volumes
 - Complaints analysis
 - Case review checks and management monitoring
 - Benchmarking with other agencies

- 10.5 We will regularly report on performance including tenant satisfaction measures, to the Councils Corporate Performance team.
- 10.6 We will report performance to residents on our website, our annual report and other methods agreed with our residents.

11. Complaints

- 11.1 We are committed to providing high quality services and support for all our customers. We value all feedback as it allows us to make improvements to our services.
- 11.2 The Council has a complaints procedure which should be the first point of call for people that are dissatisfied with the service they receive. More information about the Council's complaints procedure can be found on the Council's complaints webpage.

12. Policy Review

- 12.1 We will undertake periodic reviews of this ASB policy and update or amend as appropriate. This will include taking account of feedback, working with service users and any legislative changes. We aim to undertake a full review of this policy every 5 years.