WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Wokingham Borough Council

Housing Service – How We Respond to Antisocial Behaviour & Hate Incidents

October 2026



This is the approach to ASB & Hate Incidents for Wokingham Borough Council's Housing Service.

If you need a copy of this publication in another format, please contact the number below.

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Colleague Consultation

This document has been subject to consultation, proof-reading, ease of reading and agreed with the following:

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Housing Service- How we Respond to Antisocial Behaviour & Hate Incidents

1. Overview

Wokingham Borough Council is undertaking work to standardise the approach we take to tackling Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) and Hate Incidents across the organisation. Whilst this work is being undertaken, the Housing Service has produced this document to ensure residents know what to expect from us when they report ASB or Hate Incidents to us, which relate to:

- Council housing stock and shared areas
- Council managed temporary accommodation
- Properties that we manage for others

It also explains how we work in partnership with other agencies who may need to lead on reports that we receive.

2. What is antisocial behaviour

The below is a plain English summary of the definition used in the Wokingham Borough Council corporate policy:

Antisocial behaviour is behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to a person outside of the same household. It can affect someone's home, communal / shared spaces, or neighbourhood. This can include behaviour that harms people directly, damages communities, or makes public spaces feel unsafe.

ASB can be a one-off serious incident or a pattern of repeated behaviour. Below are some examples of behaviour that could be considered ASB depending on the impact, frequency and context:

Behaviour that harms or frightens people

- Harassment, including repeated unwanted contact or abuse
- Hate incidents or behaviour linked to protected characteristics
- Verbal abuse or threatening language
- Using CCTV or recording equipment to harass or invade someone's privacy

Behaviour that disrupts neighbourhoods or public spaces

- Persistent or excessive noise (for example loud music, shouting, or parties)
- Rowdy or aggressive behaviour linked to alcohol or substance misuse
- Groups causing repeated disturbance in a way that makes others feel unsafe

Environmental antisocial behaviour

- Fly-tipping or illegal dumping of waste
- Graffiti or vandalism
- Damage to property, vehicles or communal areas

- Abandoned vehicles

Serious or criminal related behaviour

- Drug dealing or drug related activity
- Dangerous or uncontrolled dogs
- Behaviour linked to criminal activity that is impacting the wider community

Consideration will always be given to who is affected, how often the behaviour happens and how serious the impact is.
In some of the examples provided, Housing Services will not necessarily be the lead agency, however, we will work in conjunction with partners to support resolutions.

3. What are hate incidents

A hate incident is any incident perceived to be motivated by hostility or prejudice linked to a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

We will take hate incidents seriously and prioritise them by level of risk and impact which can change throughout the process, the following factors are considered:

- Impact on the person reporting
- Frequency and pattern
- Seriousness of the behaviour
- Vulnerability and safeguarding concerns
- Context and escalation risk

4. When Housing Services can help

We can investigate reports linked to Council housing, Council temporary accommodation, related communal areas, or properties we manage for others. If the complaints do not relate to these types of accommodation but do meet the definition of ASB we will direct you to the most appropriate team or organisation that will be able to offer you assistance.

5. When ASB or hate incidents are a Police matter

Where an incident may constitute a criminal offence, we will advise residents to report it to the Police. Where there is immediate danger, a crime in progress or serious risk of harm, call 999; for non-emergency criminal matters contact the Police on 101. Housing Services will not investigate criminal offences in place of the Police but may consider any related tenancy, safeguarding, support or housing action.

Call **999** for emergencies and **101** for non-emergency criminal matters.

Police matters include assault, threats, criminal damage, drug dealing, stalking, hate crime, domestic abuse, weapons, or serious intimidation.

Housing Services may still consider tenancy, support, safeguarding, or housing action where the issue is linked to Council housing.

6. What is usually not antisocial behaviour

Some issues are not usually ASB unless they are persistent, targeted, threatening, discriminatory, criminal, or cause serious harm.

Issue	Examples
Normal household noise	Footsteps, doors closing, washing machines, vacuuming, or children playing during reasonable hours.
Everyday family noise	Children crying, babies waking, children running around, or general family activity.
Lifestyle differences	Someone leaving early for work, coming home late, different routines, or different household patterns.
Cooking smells	Smells from normal cooking in someone's own home.
Civil neighbour disputes	Parking disagreements, boundary questions, or personal disagreements where there is no harassment, threat, intimidation, or tenancy breach.
Cats roaming or fouling	Cats entering gardens, roaming outdoors, or fouling, unless there are wider tenancy or welfare concerns.
People gathering in public or communal areas	Young people or adults standing, talking, or socialising, unless there is threatening behaviour, damage, noise nuisance, harassment, or other antisocial activity.
One-off social media comments	Infrequent online comments or disagreements, unless they form part of a wider pattern of harassment, abuse, or threatening behaviour.

7. Who may be involved

Who	What they do
Resident reporting ASB	Tell us what has happened, provide as much detail as possible, and keep a record of further incidents if asked to do so.
Housing Officer	Usually deals with lower-risk housing-related ASB cases and keeps in contact with you about agreed actions.
Housing ASB Officer	Deals with higher-risk or more complex ASB cases and may work with other agencies to help resolve the issue.
Manager	Reviews more complex cases, supports decisions about next steps, and checks that cases are being managed properly.
Other agencies	May include the Police, Environmental Services, Community Safety, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, or support organisations, depending on the issue.

8. What we will do throughout the process

We recognise that some people will be more affected by behaviour such as older people; people with disabilities or long-term health conditions; people who have previously experience trauma, abuse or harassment and children.

Step 1: When you report ASB to us

1. We will record your report, ask about impact and risk, and explain what happens next.
2. We will assess whether Housing Services can investigate the complaint (refer to section 1 of this document).
3. If another service is better placed, we will explain why and signpost you.
4. We will tell you if the matter should be reported to the Police first.

Step 2: We will decide whether the issue is ASB

1. We will decide whether the reported behaviour is housing-related ASB by considering impact, frequency, seriousness, vulnerability, safeguarding, and evidence.
2. If it is not housing-related ASB, we will explain why and advise on other options where possible.
3. If the incidents are housing related ASB we will meet the complainant within **five working** days to complete a risk assessment.
4. We will write to the complainant within **5 working days** of the meeting confirming the complaint and initial interview outcome.

Step 3: We will assess risk and decide who should manage the case

1. We will assess risk, vulnerability, safeguarding concerns, repeat incidents, and harm.
2. Medium to high risk or complex cases will be escalated or allocated to a Housing ASB Officer.
3. If the case is not closed within **two months** of the complaint being reported to WBC Housing Service another risk assessment will be completed with the complainant.

Step 4: We will agree an action plan with you

1. We will agree what we will do, what we may ask you to do, and how we will keep in touch. The action plan will be agreed and signed by the complainant and the officer investigating the complaint.
2. We will consider support needs, reasonable adjustments, interpretation, or information in another format.
3. We will discuss possible solutions.

Step 5: We will gather and review evidence

1. We may ask for incident diaries, photos, videos, witness details, Police references, or agency information.
2. We will review evidence and act only where action is possible, proportionate, and lawful.
3. We will keep in contact with the complainant to provide updates. This will be at least every **ten working days** and the contact recorded on the file.

Step 6: We may speak to the person accused of ASB

1. Where safe and appropriate, we may contact the person accused of ASB and give them an opportunity to respond.
2. We will consider safety, confidentiality, safeguarding, support needs, and any Police investigation before doing so.

3. If we meet with the alleged perpetrator, we will write to them within **5 working days** of the meeting and outline the complaint and any actions from the meeting.

Step 7: We will decide what action is appropriate

1. We will choose a proportionate response based on risk, evidence, impact, tenancy responsibilities, and likely resolution.
2. Options may include advice, warnings, visits, agreements, mediation, referrals, partnership work, enforcement, or legal action where thresholds are met.

Step 8: We will consider safeguarding and support needs

1. We will follow safeguarding procedures if a child or adult may be at risk.
2. We may refer victims, witnesses, or the person accused of ASB to appropriate support services.

Step 9: We will review the case and respond to changes

1. We will review risk, evidence, incidents, actions, and partner information.
2. We may escalate, de-escalate, or continue monitoring as circumstances change.

Step 10: We will explain when and why the case is closed

1. We may close a case when it is resolved, no further incidents are reported for an agreed period and the assessed risk supports closure, evidence is insufficient for further Housing action, Housing has no appropriate action available, or there is no engagement despite reasonable attempts to make contact.
2. We will explain the closure reason and how to report further concerns.

9. Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with how we have responded to your ASB reports, you can tell us about your experience with the Housing Service by raising a complaint. More information about the Housing Complaints process is available on our website here: Housing complaints and compliments

10. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Information will be shared where there is an appropriate lawful basis and in accordance with the Council's information-sharing arrangements.

11. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Managers will monitor case handling and use learning from complaints, reviews, feedback, and partnership work to improve the service.

12. ASB Case Review / Community Trigger

If you believe that you are a victim of persistent ASB you can request an antisocial behaviour case review formally known as the community trigger. This process is managed by the Community Safety Partnership and means that your case will be reviewed by a multi-agency panel, providing that the threshold is met. You can find more information about what the threshold is and how to raise a case review on our website here: Anti-social behaviour help

12. Appendices

Please see the web page where this document is located for the links to the below documents.

7.1 ASB recording diary sheets

7.2 ASB action plan

7.3 ASB risk assessment matrix



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