

Managing Anti-Social Behaviour: A Practical Guide for Landlords and Agents

Treat all incidents of ASB (Anti-social behaviour) seriously

- Explore and investigate the complaint fully; identify the frequency of ASB issues linked to your property; assess the potential risks and likelihood of escalations - this will help you determine what action you take
- Establish the facts and what evidence is available to you; keep a record of evidence – it will help you in the long run
- Offer guidance and options to your tenants and complainants, inform them how you intend to do to address the matter
- Communicate with your problematic tenant, notify them that concerns have been raised about their behaviour, and that this is a breach of the tenancy agreement you issued
 - Have an honest and open discussion with them and give practical advice about preventing further issues but firmly impress upon them the risk of them losing their tenancy if they do not heed your warnings

Tenancy management

- When signing up a new tenant, make sure they understand the consequences of being involved in ASB or having visitors engaging in ASB. This will set boundaries, expectations and a mechanism to deal with issues that arise as well as grounds for eviction if there is ASB.
- Obtain references - it doesn't matter which agency referred the new tenant. References highlight whether there is a cause for concern and prepares you to act promptly if you decide to offer a tenancy.
- Publish and distribute your ASB Policy so that all residents understand your expectations and the repercussions of engaging or enabling ASB through their visitors.
- Ensure that staff or personnel connected with the property are aware and capable of identifying forms of ASB, criminality, exploitation and safeguarding. Encourage development through training schemes, seminars and courses that are widely available.
- Consider the use of mediation services when you have tenants who are not getting along with each other.
- Seek and provide support to all your tenants when appropriate – for example when they are at risk or are vulnerable. This could be linked to substance misuse issues, mental health issues, exploitation concerns and safeguarding.

Follow your ASB procedures

- This should be in line with your license conditions. The license holder is responsible for effectively addressing problems of ASB resulting from the conduct on the part of occupiers and visitors. You must not fail to take action each time you receive a complaint.
- You must contact the alleged perpetrator within 14 days of receiving a complaint and inform them of the nature of allegations and the consequences of its continuation. This must be in writing. Meeting with them to discuss your concerns in person may be more conducive to mitigating further issues.
- Encourage your tenants to be mindful of residents - whether through verbal communication, signage or in writing. Be clear in communicating that criminal activities and use of the property for immoral or illegal purposes is not condoned and will not be tolerated.
- Investigate further by visiting the property and speaking with your other tenants to identify further issues. Keep detailed records of your inspections, contact with complainants and correspondence with problematic tenants - you may need to rely on them in court later.
- Whilst you are monitoring the situation, if further complaints of ASB are received within a 28-day period you must issue the problematic occupier with a second warning letter advising them of the possibility of eviction. Follow this up with a meeting to reinforce the final warning and try to find ways to mitigate or deter the problematic behaviours or activities.
- If after 14 days of issuing a warning letter, the ASB continues, take formal steps based on the tenancy agreement; this includes promptly taking any legal proceedings to address the ASB.
- If the ASB continues during legal proceedings, establish a way to de-escalate the problematic behaviours, implement additional prevention and safeguarding measures, apply to accelerate possession proceedings.

Property management

- Conduct regular inspections, not just the minimum number. This will help you identify any problems relating to the condition and management of the property.
- Act on these problems. If there is damage to property, investigate who was involved and how this happened. Deal with the person according to the terms of the tenancy agreement. If you cannot identify the source of the damage or ASB, consider:
 - installing CCTV in communal areas so long as this doesn't breach any privacy laws
 - Implementing increased inspections and security patrols
 - Keep detailed records of issues identified during inspections
- Maintain the property internally and externally – you are duty bound under management regulations; security provisions including but not limited to locks, latches and entry systems must be always maintained in good working

order. If the property is visibly abandoned and poorly managed, this will make it vulnerable to further ASB and the broken window effect.

- Mitigate noise nuisance via suitable insulation and noise reducing techniques.
- Have clear signage and policy around the use of drugs inside and outside of the premises.

Reach out if you need assistance

- The council recognises that it can be extremely challenging to deal with ASB. There can be several complicating factors and not every resolution is quick however there are interim measures or a multi-agency approach that can be applied to deal with certain individuals or situations that are escalating out of control.
- You can contact the council to seek advice or information. For ASB issues, you can contact the safer communities team on 020 8825 5994 or safercommunities@ealing.gov.uk
- All staff should remain vigilant and report any violence or suspicious activity and drug dealing to the Police. You should call 999 in an emergency or 101 otherwise report to the council.
- Signpost or refer tenants to local services appropriate to their needs and conditions. This can include:
 - West London mental health team for concerns that someone's mental health is deteriorating or is in crisis
 - Social services for safeguarding matters, particularly for vulnerable people
 - RISE for substance misuse issues
 - Victim support for victims of crime who could benefit from emotional support, information and practical advice
 - Private Tenants Advice Service
 - West London Equality Centre
 - Shelter for housing advice