

Good Behaviour

Service Standard

What is good behaviour?

We have consulted with our residents and they have told us that good behaviour is:

- Keeping your home and garden clean and tidy
- Parking considerately and not causing an obstruction
- Cleaning up after your pet
- Acting with consideration and respect for others
- Accepting that everyone is different and be tolerant of the lifestyles of others
- Look out for your neighbours and help those who are less fortunate than you
- Making sure your family and visitors behave with consideration and respect
- Playing your music or TV at a level that does not disturb your neighbours
- Speaking to your neighbour if you have a problem-they may not realise that their behaviour is affecting you
- Reporting anti-social behaviour that you witness to us or the police
- Being courteous, friendly and polite to your neighbours and others in your neighbourhood

Resident and community responsibilities

We believe that all residents have a responsibility to the community in which they live and we expect them to understand that responsibility and show courtesy and respect to their neighbours, setting an example to their families. We also believe they should play their part in supporting their community and helping make it a better place to live.

We expect all tenants, leaseholders, other occupants of our homes and their families and visitors to behave responsibly and not cause anti-social behaviour to other residents. Our conditions of tenancy clearly set out behaviour that is unacceptable. All new tenants sign a Good Neighbour Agreement which explains the behaviour expected of residents.

Starting off on the right foot

Starter Tenancies for all our general needs housing

Starter tenancies encourage tenants to behave responsibly to “prove” themselves in the first year of the tenancy. We will end the tenancy in the first year if the tenant or their family causes serious anti-social behaviour.

Our tenancies and leases spell out clearly that anti-social behaviour is unacceptable

The tenancy and lease agreements set out the terms of the legal contract between the occupier of the property and ourselves.

We will make sure that these are clear and understandable. They will be explained to all new residents.

We will use Good Neighbour Agreements for all new tenants. We require all new tenants to sign up to a Good Neighbour Agreement. They are used to promote positive behaviour and to reinforce the tenancy conditions.

Supporting Residents and Families

We will offer support to help tenants and their families who cause anti-social behaviour to change their behaviour.

There are often underlying problems which contribute to a person's involvement in anti-social behaviour, such as abuse or neglect at home, alcohol or drug misuse or physical or mental health problems.

We will arrange for perpetrators to get help to resolve their problems, leading to a change in behaviour. This normally involves the cooperation of other agencies.

Examples of help including parenting programmes, using Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and encouraging parents to become positive role models for their children.

Tackling Environmental anti-social behaviour

We will take action to deal with environmental anti-social behaviour

We believe that maintaining neighbourhoods that are safe and clean is essential in preventing further anti-social behaviour.

Environmental problems such as litter, graffiti, vandalism and abandoned vehicles can, if left unchecked, result in a downward spiral of physical deterioration. We will work without partners to address these issues.

We will always aim to respond to any report of this nature within one working day of it being reported. We believe that the rapid removal of environmental problems like graffiti will make them less likely to return.

We will also use our Environmental Support Team to clear land that is unsightly and might encourage anti-social behaviour. The team will also take a lead in helping local communities improve their environment.

We will run a “big clean up” event each year

We will identify at least one area each year where there is a particular issue with litter. We will arrange for a team of staff to participate in a clean-up event. We will encourage other agencies and local residents to join us. We will encourage and help any residents who want to run their own “big clean up” event.

Chorus Homes aims to work with tenants and local communities to provide a secure, clean and safe environment for people to live in. We take reports of anti-social behaviour seriously and we will work with you and others to resolve problems and prevent incidents happening again. We recognise that taking legal action may be necessary in some cases.

This leaflet sets out how we are working with our customers and the wider community to tackle anti-social behaviour in our neighbourhoods. It will explain our approach to dealing with the problem and how we can help you if you have concerns about anti-social behaviour, whether this affects you or your family or anyone else in your neighbourhood.

Our approach to anti-social behaviour

Chorus Homes has produced an anti-social behaviour strategy which explains how we will deal with the problem firmly, whilst ensuring that the rights and interests of victims and witnesses are protected. A copy of the full strategy document is available free of charge upon requests.

If you would like a copy please use the contact details at the end of this leaflet. We can also supply the strategy in other formats including large print, audio, braille or in another language.

What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour is “behaviour which causes a nuisance or annoyance to any person living in or visiting a home owned by us or another property, whether rented or owned”.

It also applies to people working in local areas, for example, our staff.

The following list sets out some examples of anti-social behaviour:

- Aggressive and threatening language and behaviour
- Violence against people and property
- Causing nuisance or harassment against another person or group of persons based on race, disability, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation or any other factor
- Using or selling drugs or other illegal substances

- Loud noise, especially late at night
- Allowing pets to make excessive noise, or be a danger to others
- Vandalising property, including graffiti
- Dumping rubbish and litter
- Nuisance from vehicles, including anti-social parking and abandoned vehicles
- Domestic violence
- Being intolerant of other people’s lifestyles
- Being a general nuisance in the community

How will Chorus Homes deal with anti-social behaviour?

We will:

- Work with other organisations including the police, the local authority and local groups to prevent anti-social behaviour and deal with its effects
- Clearly state in tenancy agreements the obligations of tenants
- Provide advice on how to sort out minor neighbour disputes
- Give information to customers on how to report anti-social behaviour and where an investigation is under way, provide regular reports on the progress of cases
- Act quickly in response to complaints of anti-social behaviour
- Support people reporting or witnessing anti-social behaviour
- Explain to customers how other organisations may be able to help
- Deal firmly with perpetrators and take legal action where appropriate
- Respect the confidentiality of individuals when they report an incident and work within the law in relation to data protection issues.

What will Chorus Homes do to prevent anti-social behaviour?

Working with tenants:

We will make sure that all tenants know what is expected of them before they move into their home.

We will do this by clearly explaining the obligations of their tenancy, and asking them to sign a 'Good Neighbour Agreement' setting out how we expect people to behave.

We also use Starter Tenancies, where new tenants will not be allowed a full tenancy until they have lived in our of our homes for a year and kept to their tenancy agreement.

Working with communities:

We will work with communities and groups to deal with local issues such as safety and security, crime, vandalism and drug and alcohol abuse.

We are a member of the local Community Safety Partnership which has been set up to focus on these issues.

We are also involved in the Open Out scheme, which allows people to easily report hate crime. Our Neighbourhood Wardens have a key role in helping to prevent anti-social behaviour by working with people to improve safety in local neighbourhoods.

How will we deal with reports of anti-social behaviour?

This section explains how you can report anti-social behaviour and the different stages in the process for investigating a case.

1. Talking it through

We would recommend that if you feel able to do so and where the situation is not too serious, you approach the other parties involved to discuss the matter.

This allows everyone to understand the different points of view and often leads to the problem being sorted out without any involvement by Chorus Homes.

If you find the other part is being unreasonable, or feel unable to approach the other individual(s), for whatever reason, then you should contact us and we will look at other ways to resolve the problem.

2. Letting us know

- There are a number of ways you or your representative can report anti-social behaviour: Telephone our Neighbourhood Services Team on 0345 266 9760, or write to us at the address on the back of this booklet to speak to someone or arrange a meeting.
- Contact us through our website at www.chorushomesgroup.co.uk

When incidents of a serious nature (i.e. violence, threats of violence, damage to property) occur, contact should be made with the police by dialling 999.

If the incident is of a less serious nature and occurs out of working hours but cannot wait until the next working day, you can contact meeting police by calling 101.

3. The first steps

Many problems are relatively simple to sort out, for example overgrown gardens and abandoned vehicles. In these cases our Neighbourhood Officers or Neighbourhood Wardens will go to the property involved and take action.

Where the perpetrator is not a tenant of Chorus Homes, the Neighbourhood/Anti-social Behaviour Officer will support the complainant in referring to, or contacting the appropriate agencies to address their complaint.

4. What happens next?

Where cases are not as simple, for example those which involve nuisance or harassment, we will talk to you in more detail before starting an investigation.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, one of our Neighbourhood Officers, or a member of the Anti-Social Behaviour Team, will discuss the best course of action with you.

We may send you diary sheets, so you can write down what has happened and so we can carry out a risk assessment or arrange an appointment to discuss the matter in full. The meeting does not need to take place at your home, but can be arranged at a mutually agreeable location.

Where there matter is of a serious nature, this visit will be carried out within 24 hours of reporting it to us.

You will be asked some questions about the problems, and we may need to speak to other people in your household who have been affected. Depending on the circumstances we may decide at this point to write to or contact the person whom it is alleged is causing you the nuisance. Where English is not your main language we will arrange translation services.

5. The Nuisance Action Plan

Together we'll agree a Nuisance Action Plan stating what you should do and what we will do to sort out the problem. From then on, we will be working in partnership with you, keeping to the actions which we have jointly agreed.

6. Meditation

Where the problem is caused by a neighbour dispute and you do not feel comfortable about talking it through with the other party we can arrange mediation, which we will pay for.

This is where expert advisors can help all parties reach a fair conclusion to the problem. Your ASB Officer/Neighbourhood Officer can give you more details.

7. Gathering evidence

Before we can start taking action, we will need evidence from you, or others who have witnessed the behaviour.

Examples may include:

- Information which you or other witnesses tell us
- Diary sheets, completed by you or other witnesses, which provide details of incidents when they happen
- Other evidence including photographs tape recordings. (We will provide more information about this where it is required)

Talking to other agencies, such as the Police, may also be necessary, and can be used as evidence.

8. Taking action

When we have collected evidence we will decide what to do next. We will visit the perpetrator to hear their side of the story, and inform them that the actions they are committing are a breach of their tenancy agreement.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Team will provide a proactive response with a mixture of intervention and enforcement. Where necessary, the Anti-Social Behaviour Team will take the appropriate legal action to ensure the anti-social behaviour is brought to an end.

9. Preventing further incidents of anti-social behaviour

There are a number of steps we can take to prevent further incidents of anti-social behaviour. These may involve taking legal action, and, as a last resort, evicting the perpetrator from their home. Where we need to go to court to take legal action, we may ask you to give evidence.

This is not always necessary, but will strengthen our case. We will talk this over with you first, to make sure you are comfortable doing so.

The following are some examples of the actions we might take:

- Draw up an Acceptable Behaviour Contract. This sets out rules of behaviour for the perpetrator
- Apply to the court for an injunction (this may include the power of arrest). This requires the perpetrator to stop behaving badly
- Apply to the court for a possession order or suspended possession order, which may lead to eviction.

The above list does not include legal remedies available to Chorus Homes. Any legal action taken by Chorus Homes will be tailored to the individual circumstances of the perpetrator and may be taken in partnership with other agencies, such as the local authority, Police and other organisations.

10. Absolute Grounds for Possession

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, has given social landlords a new power of mandatory possession for Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).

The new absolute ground for possession means that the court are able to hear the most serious cases in one hearing, speeding up the decision of the court.

The court must grant possession, if the landlord (Chorus Homes) has followed the correct procedure and at least one of the following five conditions is met:

- The tenant or member of the tenant's household, or a person visiting the property has been convicted of a serious offence which was wholly or partly committed in or around a Chorus property
- The tenant or a member of the tenant's household, or a person visiting the property has been found by a court to have breached a civil injunction
- The tenant, a member of the tenant's household, or a person visiting the property has been convicted for breaching a Criminal Behaviour Order
- The tenant's property has been closed for more than 48 hours under a closure order for Anti-Social Behaviour
- The tenant or a member of the tenant's household, or a person visiting the property has been convicted for breaching a noise abatement notice or order.

This absolute ground for possession will be available to deal with ASB and/or criminality caused either by the tenant, people living with them or their visitors.

It will give faster relief to victims of serious Anti-Social Behaviour as well as encouraging others to behave responsibly in their home and community.

11. Providing support

We know that it may be difficult for you to report an incident and where required, to give evidence. To make things easier we will give you (and other witnesses) as much guidance and support as possible. Where appropriate we may also refer you to other local agencies which specialise in providing support to victims and witnesses.

12. Keeping you informed

We will keep you informed of developments in your case at all times.

Senior managers regularly check the progress of cases with officers by looking through these records to make sure we're getting it right.

13. Closing the complaint

When all parties agree that no further action should be taken the ASB Officer/Neighbourhood Officer will discuss closing the case with you. Closure of the case will be confirmed in writing. When a case has been closed you will be given a contact number in case you experience any further problems.

In all cases we will ask you to complete a satisfaction survey. This asks for your opinion on the way the case was handled and helps us to continually improve service quality.

Confidentiality

Person information will not be given to a third party without your permission either during or after a case has been investigated.

This includes information which we give to the person causing anti-social behaviour, unless you give us your permission before-hand.

When keeping or disclosing information about the case we will at all times comply with the Data Protection Act (1998).

Our Performance

We have set challenging targets for dealing with incidents of antisocial behaviour and we continuously monitor our performance to ensure they are met.

Our performance targets are:

- Customer satisfaction with the way cases are handled
- Response times for dealing with cases.

Response times for dealing with cases

1. **Urgent cases** – investigation begins within 24 hours of being informed about anti-social behaviour
2. **Hate crime** – Investigation begins within 24 hours of being informed Police involvement: Where required, we will contact police within six hours of being informed

3. **Providing diary sheets to victims** – Within 24 hours of being informed
4. **Routine cases** - Investigation begins within 10 working days of receipt of diary sheets

How to find out more

This leaflet summarises our approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour.

For your free copy of the strategy document, please telephone our Anti-social Behaviour Team on 0345 266 9760, use our contact form at:

www.chorushomesgroup.co.uk/contact-us

or write to us at:

Brook House, Ouse Walk,
Huntingdon, PE29 3QW.

Your feedback is important to us

If you feel that Chorus Homes services are not meeting the standard we have set out in this leaflet, please contact our Customer Services Team by either:

- Calling 0345 266 9760
- Calling any other Chorus Homes number, where you will put through to our Customer Services Team
- Coming in person to our offices at Brook House
- Completing an 'Online feedback' form which you can access through our website at www.chorushomesgroup.co.uk/contact-us
- Putting your issue in writing to us at Chorus Homes Group, Brook House, Ouse Walk, Huntingdon, PE29 3QW
- Completing a Comments, Compliments and Complaints form – available to complete online at www.chorushomesgroup.co.uk

More information on how to get in touch with us and make a comment about our services can be found in our 'Customer Services' Service Standard.

We will work with customers to review our Service Standards each year, to ensure we continue to meet them and look at how we can improve services for the future.

If you would like to be involved in reviewing our Service Standards, please call the Communications Office on 01480 428709.

Contact us

Report a repair

Please call our Service Centre on 0345 850 9994

Out of Hours Service

To report an emergency repair outside of normal office hours 0345 850 9994

General Enquiries

For all enquiries other than reporting a repair 0345 266 9760

Office Hours

Brook House offices and our service centre are open at the following times:

Mon – Thurs: 9am – 5pm

Friday: 9am – 4:30pm

www.chorushomesgroup.co.uk

info@chorushomesgroup.co.uk

Chorus Homes Group
Brook House
Ouse Walk
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE29 3QW