



Wrexham County Borough Council

Housing and Public Protection Department

Landlord Services Anti-social Behaviour Policy Summary

Updated Feb. 2007

1.0 **Introduction**

- 1.1 The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 and the Housing Act 1996 require Wrexham County Borough Council's Housing and Public Protection Department to publish an Anti Social Behaviour Policy and a summary version.
- 1.2 This summary outlines the policies and procedures that the Housing and Public Protection Department uses as a landlord, when dealing with incidences of anti social behaviour.
- 1.3 Copies of this summary are available in other formats and languages on request.
- 1.4 A copy of Housing Services' full policy is also available on request.

2.0 **Policy Summary**

2.1 We believe that tenants, and those residents who live near Council tenants or on Council estates have the right to the peaceful occupation of their homes, free from harassment, nuisance, annoyance and any other anti social behaviour.

2.2 Anti social behaviour is defined as:-
“acting in a manner that caused, or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons.” (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

2.3 We also recognise that anti social behaviour affects the ability of the Housing and Public Protection Department to manage its estates and carry out its duties as a landlord.

The following will be used to tackle anti social behaviour:-

- Multi Agency Working
- Non Legal remedies (including Acceptable Behaviour Contracts)
- Legal remedies (including Anti Social Behaviour Orders)
- Local Housing Lettings Policy – Difficult to Manage Properties
- Procedure – Anti Social Behaviour in Retirement Accommodation
- Housing & Public Protection Department staff
- Amenity Wardens

- The Council's Tenancy Support Service

3.0 **Summary of Statement of Procedures**

- 3.1 The aims of the Department are to stop anti social behaviour and to increase the confidence and well being of tenants and residents that live on Council Estates.
- 3.2 We will aim to meet these outcomes by using a wide range of actions including:-
- Listening to complainants and witnesses.
 - Investigating reports and complaints of anti social behaviour.
 - Using non legal remedies such as Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs).
 - Making referrals to the Tenancy Support Service in instances of low level anti social behaviour.
 - Using legal remedies in more serious cases including injunctions and repossession.
- 3.3 The procedures we use will be easy to follow and complainants will be kept informed of the progress of investigations and their outcomes.
- 3.4 Housing Services' responses will depend on the nature of the problem and the circumstances of both the complainant and the perpetrator.

4.0 **Complaints received of anti social behaviour by Wrexham County Borough Council Tenants**

- 4.1 Complaints can be made at any local Housing Office by telephone, letter, in person or by email. The email address is:- tenancyenforcement@wrexham.gov.uk.
- 4.2 Initially, the complaint will be sent to the relevant Estate Office. The complaint will be allocated to a Housing Officer by the Estate Office Manager. Investigations will begin within 3 working days of receiving the complaint. The Housing Officer dealing with the complaint will assess its severity and undertake any necessary investigations. This will include contacting and interviewing all the parties involved.

- 4.3 If the perpetrator is a juvenile, we will contact the parent or guardian and they will attend the interview, as every tenant of Wrexham's Housing and Public Protection Department will be responsible for the behaviour of persons living in or visiting their home. This could ultimately result in action being taken against them due to the anti social behaviour of their son, daughter or other family member.
- 4.4 During investigations, the complainant will be kept informed of progress and given relevant information.
- 4.5 The case will be monitored and after 28 days will be reviewed by the Estate Office Manager.
- 4.6 The review will determine whether all the necessary investigations have been carried out and whether any further action is needed.
- 4.7 After reviewing the case the options are:-
- Closing the case if it has been satisfactorily resolved and informing the parties involved of the outcome.
 - Retaining the case for further action or investigation. When cases are held for further investigation or action the affected parties will be advised. All cases that are being investigated will be reviewed on a regular monthly basis to decide on how to proceed.
 - Referring the case to Landlord Services' Tenancy Enforcement Team for further action. This could include legal action.

5.0 **Referrals to Landlord Services' Tenancy Enforcement Team**

- 5.1 Estate Management staff can refer serious cases of anti social behaviour to Landlord Services' Tenancy Enforcement Team.
- 5.2 The Tenancy Enforcement Team has a range of non legal and legal remedies available to deal with cases of anti social behaviour, including Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs), extending the period of the Introductory Tenancy for Introductory Tenants, issuing Demotion Orders for Secure Tenants and using Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).
- 5.3 All cases received by the Senior Tenancy Enforcement Officer will be reviewed and discussed with the Tenancy Enforcement Team within 3 working days.

- 5.4 When a case has been accepted by the Tenancy Enforcement Team, the Senior Tenancy Enforcement Officer will email the Estate Manager including the name and address of the complainant, the case number, the name of the officer dealing with the case and the proposed action plan.
- 5.5 The nominated Tenancy Enforcement Officer will contact the complainant to advise them of the case officer's name, contact telephone number and that the case is under investigation.
- 5.6 Complainants and witnesses will be kept informed of developments in a case. If a complainant or witness is felt to be vulnerable, or is frail or elderly, the Tenancy Enforcement Team can liaise with the Police and offer support.
- 5.7 If a witness is unable to attend Court because they are vulnerable, elderly or infirm, the Tenancy Enforcement Team can also use signed witness statements in Court or act as professional witnesses.
- 5.8 All necessary investigations will be undertaken to obtain further evidence.
- 5.9 The following methods can be used:-
- Visiting neighbours
 - Identifying possible witnesses
 - Liaising with other bodies
 - Contacting the perpetrator
 - Interviewing the perpetrator
 - Using neighbour nuisance diary sheets
 - Surveillance
- 5.10 Ongoing cases and action taken are reviewed on a weekly basis. The relevant paperwork relating to each case will also be reviewed on a weekly basis in accordance with Landlord Services' Tenancy Enforcement Procedures. Estate Office Managers will be informed of the progress of relevant cases on a monthly basis. All details of these review meetings will be logged in accordance with Landlord Services' Tenancy Enforcement Procedure.
- 5.11 If legal action is deemed necessary to resolve the case, the Housing Solicitor (Enforcement) will be involved.

5.12 They can gather evidence using surveillance and witness statements. Members of the Tenancy Enforcement Team can act as professional witnesses in County Court cases.

6.0 Complaints received from Wrexham County Borough Tenants concerning Owner Occupiers or Tenants of another Registered Social Landlord

6.1 The Department's powers are different in these circumstances but the advice of the Tenancy Enforcement Team will still be sought.

6.2 The Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 now allows Landlord Services to apply for Anti Social Behaviour Injunctions if a person's actions or behaviour affect Landlord Services' ability to manage its housing estates and carry out its role as a landlord.

6.3 This is regardless of whether they are a Council tenant or not. Issues of anti social behaviour involving residents who are not Council tenants can also be addressed as part of the Council's multi agency working

6.4 Appropriate advice and guidance will be given, including contact telephone numbers of other agencies such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau and Registered Social Landlords where appropriate. Addresses and telephone numbers are available in this summary.

7.0 Referrals to Environmental Services

7.1 In cases of noise nuisance (such as loud music and barking dogs) we will refer the matter to Environmental Services for monitoring and investigation.

7.2 Environmental Health Officers have legal powers available under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, to deal with cases of noise nuisance where appropriate. This is regardless of whether the perpetrator is a Council tenant or not.

7.3 Amenity Wardens, whilst not a part of Landlord Services have been granted new powers to deal with minor incidents of anti social behaviour such as abandoned vehicles, fly tipping and dog fouling for example.

8.0 Standard of Service Delivery

- 8.1 If a complainant is unhappy with the standard of service delivery a formal complaint can be made.
- 8.2 Complaints made to Housing and Public Protection's Representations and Complaints Officer will be investigated and replied to within 20 working days.
- 8.3 A copy of the Council's procedure for dealing with complaints is available at Council Offices and on the Council's website (visit:- www.wrexham.gov.uk).

9.0 Multi Agency Partnerships

- 9.1 Wrexham County Borough Council recognises that it does not operate in isolation.
- 9.2 To achieve the best outcomes possible, we will work with external agencies such as North Wales Police, the Probation Service and the Youth Offending Service.
- 9.3 The Council also takes part in the following multi agency partnerships:-
- Community Safety Partnership
 - Joint Action Working Group
 - Anti Social Behaviour Planning and Delivery Group
 - Wrexham Substance Misuse Action Team

10.0 Support for Complainants and Witnesses

- 10.1 Support will be given to all complainants and witnesses. They will be kept informed of developments in a case.
- 10.2 The Tenancy Enforcement Team can also make referrals to North Wales Police if a complainant or witness is felt to be vulnerable, due to ill health or age for example.
- 10.3 The Tenancy Enforcement Team can also act as professional witnesses in Court cases.

11.0 Management of Perpetrators

- 11.1 The main aim of Landlord Services is to stop anti social behaviour and to prevent it from happening again.
We will work with perpetrators in an attempt to remedy the matter and aim to alter behaviour.
- 11.2 In the first instance non legal tools will be used to try to address anti social behaviour. This can range from interviews with the perpetrators to advise them of any problems that are being caused, to more formal measures such as Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs).
- 11.3 In some cases of low level anti social behaviour, it may be appropriate to access support from agencies such as Landlord Services' Tenancy Support Service, which can help to turn problem situations around without the need for any legal action to be taken. All new tenants are offered Tenancy Support when they are signed up for their property.
- 11.4 All new tenants will be issued with an information leaflet when they are signed up for a new property. This will outline tenants' obligations, how we deal with anti social behaviour and how tenants can report incidents.
- 11.5 In cases of anti social behaviour in sheltered housing schemes, Landlord Services has developed a specific procedure for dealing with cases of anti social behaviour in Council owned retirement accommodation, as it recognises that people enter sheltered accommodation later in life, when they may have higher support needs.
- 11.6 When legal action is considered for residents of sheltered schemes, Landlord Services staff will work with other departments, agencies and individuals that supply support and aim to meet the person's needs and resolve the situation.
- 11.7 In cases of juvenile nuisance the work of the Youth Service is also useful in diverting young people from anti social behaviour.
- 11.8 Legal action via the County Courts can be taken against perpetrators when the issues are of a serious nature, or when other attempts to engage with them have failed.

- 11.9 In extreme cases, this can lead to eviction and future exclusion from applying for Council housing.
- 11.10 Where there are acute problems with vandalism, anti social behaviour and low demand for certain Council owned properties; Housing & Public Protection consider applying its Local Lettings Policy for Difficult to Manage Properties and those designated for Older Persons.
- 11.11 Applicants who apply for properties that are subject to the Local Lettings Policy will need to meet certain criteria and prove that they have not been guilty of any serious anti social behaviour in the past to be eligible for an allocation.
- 11.12 Full details of the eligibility criteria and the allocation process for these properties is contained in the policy document.

12.0 **Domestic Violence**

- 12.1 Wrexham County Borough Council has a duty to take reasonable steps to combat domestic abuse.
In partnership with other key agencies the Council is committed to the principle that there is 'No Excuse for Domestic Abuse'.
- 12.2 Wrexham County Borough Council will not tolerate domestic abuse by or against its tenants and will work with the Police and other agencies to use existing legal remedies to deal with this.
- 12.3 The Housing & Public Protection Department's Homelessness Section can give assistance to victims of domestic violence. A victim of domestic abuse has the right to temporary accommodation regardless of whether they own or rent their home.
- 12.4 Any investigations undertaken by the Homelessness Section will take into account the sensitivity of the matter, the personal circumstances of the victim and the need for confidentiality.
- 12.5 Homelessness Officers can contact Women's Aid, or refuges outside of Wrexham County Borough if there is a need for someone to leave the Wrexham area.

13.0 **Consultation**

13.1 The following agencies and members of staff have been consulted in the drafting of the Council's Anti Social Behaviour Policy:-

- The Community Safety Partnership
- Wrexham County Borough Council's Tenants' Assembly (Estate Management Focus Group)
- North Wales Police
- The Youth Offending Service
- Shelter Cymru
- Senior Community Safety Officer (Anti social Behaviour) (WCBC)
- Wrexham County Borough's Tenant Member Partnership
- Environmental Services (WCBC)
- The Tenancy Enforcement Team (WCBC)
- Landlord Services Manager (WCBC)
- Chief Housing and Public Protection Officer (WCBC)
- Housing Estate Managers (WCBC)
- Strategy Support Services Manager (WCBC)
- Principal Housing Services Officer (WCBC)
- Housing Operations Manager (WCBC)
- Housing Manager – Older Persons Services (WCBC)
- Tenancy Support Coordinator (WCBC)

14.0 **USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Wrexham County Borough Council

Main Switchboard – 01978 292000

Housing Services – 01978 315300

Anti Social Behaviour Hotline (24 hours) – 01978 292029

Tenancy Enforcement Team email-
www.tenancyenforcement@wrexham.gov.uk

Local Estate Offices:- Broughton Office - 01978 720193
Caia Office - 01978317040
Gwersyllt Office – 01978 722100
Plas Madoc Office – 01978 813000
Rhos Office – 01978 832900

Wrexham Central Office – 01978 292062

Environmental Services – 01978 292040

Amenity Wardens – 01978 292040

Senior Community Safety Officer (Anti social Behaviour) – 01978 317024

North Wales Police

Wrexham Station – 01978 290222

Minicom – 01978 294680

Emergency Only – 999

Local Housing Associations

Clwyd Alyn Housing Association – 0800 1835757

Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd – 01745 815220

Wales & West Housing Association – 0800 0522526

Other Useful Telephone Numbers

North Wales Victim Support (Wrexham Branch) – 01978 294605

Shelter Cymru (Wrexham Office) – 01978 317900

Wales Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 8010800

Dyn Project (Helpline for male victims of domestic abuse) – 0808 801 0321

Wrexham Women's Aid (24 hr Helpline) – 01978 310203

North Wales Fire Service (Wrexham Station) – 01978 263518

Neighbourhood Watch – 01978 294519

Crimestoppers – 0800 555111

Wrexham Citizens' Advice Bureau – 01978 364639