Good Neighbourhood Management Policy

1. Policy Statement

1.1. The purpose of this policy is to foster good relationships between our residents.

1.2. This policy will provide a clear framework for dealing sensitively and proportionally with behaviours, which are not Antisocial Behaviour (ASB), and therefore unlikely to be a tenancy breach, that require a different response from us as a landlord. ASB is a term that relates to a wide range of behaviours. We use the Antisocial Behaviour Crime & Policing Act (the ASB Act) definition of housing related ASB as behaviour 'that is causing or likely to cause nuisance or annoyance.' However, there will be behaviours which would not be reasonable or appropriate to categorise as ASB.

1.3. Where the behaviour is not ASB, and therefore, unlikely to be a tenancy breach we will not seek to label someone as a perpetrator or a victim, nor will we be likely to consider any of our legal tools which are available to use in ASB cases.

1.4. Although some behaviours are not ASB they can still cause a great deal of upset and frustration to residents, creating tensions between neighbours and wider communities. Whilst we may be limited in our responses, this policy is designed to lead to better outcomes and sets out how we may be able to assist.

1.5. Matters dealt with under this policy will likely involve situations that have arisen as a result of circumstance, rather than a genuine intention to cause someone else harm.

1.6. Our Good Neighbourhood Management toolkit will help us deliver this policy

2. Policy Principles

2.1. The definition of ASB is subjective based on how it makes someone feel. We recognise, however, that every individual person has different tolerances, expectations and perceptions when deciding what behaviour is or is not appropriate. This means that some people will see certain behaviour as 'antisocial' even if the behaviour is reasonable.

2.2. Some behaviours may be clearly impacting a resident but there is no intention by the other resident to cause harm and/or the behaviour causing the harm is not unreasonable. Examples of these types of behaviour which we do not consider to be ASB include but are not limited to:

- Parking disagreements (if the other driver is parking in accordance with all contractual/legal requirements)
- Cigarette and cooking smells
- Minor personal conflict such as ‘dirty looks’, personal dislikes or personal relationship breakdowns.
- Isolated incidents of loud music
- General household or living noise (babies crying, children playing, people talking and walking in their homes, closing doors and windows, vacuuming, and using white goods, DIY, working from home in a computer-based role)
- Isolated incidents of loud shouting and arguing
- Motorbike/car engines starting/running

2.3. We will publish information on ASB and neighbourhood issues. We will ensure that residents have the information they need to manage neighbourhood issues (including their communication with neighbours) and where needed, know how to inform CWL Housing regarding escalation of issues, support needed or any incident of ASB. We will provide additional tools and advice to support residents when needed and encourage and support residents to communicate positively with their neighbours and understand which behaviours are considered reasonable. We will consult with residents to find solutions to behaviours which are impacting a number of residents.

2.4. Because the central purpose of this policy is to build relationships between parties, it is unlikely that we will be able to assist the person making the report to remain anonymous. There may be times when we cannot guarantee confidentiality, even when a resident requests it. This could include situations where we identify a safeguarding concern, or where a criminal offence has taken place.

2.5. We may not always be able to assist with a situation that is dealt with under this policy as a single agency. There will be times when we may work with our partner agencies to share information and identify the best possible support and guidance we can offer to parties. We will always share, store and dispose of information in line with legislation and local information sharing agreements.

2.6. We will keep a record of any properties where an investigation has concluded that the noise is occurring because of the nature of the property and not the person occupying it.

2.7. All allocations will be carefully considered for the impact on the existing community.

2.8. This policy is based on the recommendations made in the Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Report ‘Time to be Heard.’

2. Implementation

2.1. All CWL Housing staff members will be made aware of this policy.

2.2. Staff members will be provided with training every 2 years.

2.3. Changes to this policy and any associated procedures will be communicated to all CWL Housing staff members.

2.4. All CWL Housing staff members will be required to read this policy, and to confirm that they have read and understood it.

3. Other Policies

This policy should be used in conjunction with the following Acts of Law:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- ASB, Crime & Policing Act 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Housing Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following CWL Housing policies (please note this list is not exhaustive):

- Protection from Abuse
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Keeping Pets

4. Responsibility

4.1. The Housing Manager is responsible for ensuring the policy is adhered to and will ensure there is also a Good Neighbourhood Management procedure in place.

4.2. The Housing Manager is responsible for ensuring that any relevant agencies are informed about our Good Neighbourhood Management procedure

4.3. All staff members are responsible for adhering to this policy.

4.4 All Staff members are responsible for promoting the tools provided to support good neighbourly relations.

4.5 All staff members are responsible for feeding back any improvements that could be made to this policy.

4.6 The Housing Manager is responsible for feeding back any improvements that can be made to any associated procedures or problems they have found while implementing it.

5. Policy Detail

5.1. **Making Reports** – We will provide accessible and inclusive methods for residents to report neighbourhood management issues and each stage will be dealt with within our stated timescales. If any timescales are not met, they will be communicated to the complainant including the reasons why.

5.2. **Triaging Reports** – We will triage reports to ensure CWL Housing staff members and residents understand how a decision is reached about whether a matter should be dealt with under the ASB or the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy. This will ensure that low level issues causing neighbourhood friction are dealt with at the appropriate level and not inappropriately handled as ASB.

5.3. **Managing residents' expectations** – At an early stage we will challenge any unreasonable expectations and we will not create unrealistic expectations.

5.4. **Terminology** – Because we do not work to identify who the 'perpetrator' is and who the 'victim' is we refer to the parties as 'Resident 1' – the person who makes contact with us in the 1st instance and 'Resident 2' – the other person involved. Or we may refer to them as 'Household 1' and 'Household 2' if more than 1 person is involved from an individual property. The purpose of our approach is to build relationships so residents' names are used to assist with this.

5.5. **Evidence** – We will provide accessible and inclusive methods for residents to gather evidence.

5.6. **Thorough investigations** – We will agree an action plan with the resident who initially raised the issue and thoroughly investigate without making any assumptions. If it becomes clear during an investigation that a case should be investigated under our ASB policy we will inform both parties in writing and agree to a new action plan.

5.7. **Request case review** – 'Resident 1' may appeal at any stage if they believe that their report is being handled under the incorrect policy. If a complainant disagrees with the review decision, they will be informed about our Complaints Procedure.

5.8. **Resident co-operation** – Because the purpose of this policy is to develop and strengthen relationships between people who live near to each other, we need the co-operation and support from the parties involved to improve situations. Where parties refuse to a reasonable request, we may not be able to assist any further. Where this is the case, it will be clearly communicated to the party concerned.

5.9. **Vulnerabilities and support needs** – At all stages we will consider the support needs of the parties involved. We also recognise that sometimes personal circumstances may affect a person's tolerance, perception or ability to cope with certain situations. When we recognise that this could be a contributory factor, we will work to identify suitable referrals and support.

5.10. **Physical measures to reduce noise transference** – We recognise that noise can transfer between properties due to poor sound insulation and thin walls and this may have a high impact on Resident A, even though Resident B is not undertaking unreasonable activities and is not at fault. In these circumstances we will work with Resident B to consider options for reducing the noise and will consider if any remedial works/improvements are needed to the property.

5.11. **Property inspections** – We will inspect properties to establish whether any outstanding repair issues may be contributing to noise transference. We will consider, subject to affordability, funding measures to reduce noise transference when all other options have been exhausted and the harm being caused is extremely high.

6. Monitoring

6.1. This policy will be reviewed in line with changes in working practices, best practice or regulatory requirements. It will be reviewed at least every 3 years.

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

7.1. For CWL Housing, diversity is about respecting people's individual differences and ensuring that all people that come into contact with us have access to the same high standards of behaviour and service.

7.2. We are committed to ensuring that no resident will be treated less favourably because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.

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