

Anti-Social Behaviour can be a Nightmare

...but you don't have to put up with it!

"Neighbour Nuisance can be a nightmare. Noise, bad language, vandalism, threats and in the worst cases, attacks, can ruin people's lives on ordinary streets and in peaceful neighbourhoods".



Nuisance, Harassment & Anti-Social Behaviour

This booklet tells you about BCHT Group's policy on tackling anti-social behaviour and gives you advice on how you can help resolve your neighbour problems.

TOGETHER
TACKLING
ANTI-SOCIAL
BEHAVIOUR

 business for neighbourhoods


BRADFORD COMMUNITY
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A tenant's responsibility

By signing our tenancy agreement each new tenant will accept full and personal responsibility for acts of anti-social behaviour and crime, committed in and around their home.

The 1996 Housing Act states that all new and existing tenants are legally responsible for their own actions and for the actions of their visitors and any household members.

The "locality" to your home

Our tenancy agreement says that nuisance, harassment or criminal activity is unacceptable not just to immediate neighbours, but to the wider neighbourhood and local community. BCHT Group can and will take action against a tenant even if the anti-social behaviour is occurring on the far side of the neighbourhood. The law says that the tenant is responsible for their behaviour, or the behaviour of people living with them or visiting them, if it happens in their home or in the "locality" of their home.

So if a tenant's son burgles a house a mile away, or if the tenant's children are causing damage at the local shops, then the tenant will be challenged and will be held responsible for these incidents.

You, the complainant

We will note and investigate all complaints concerning our tenants and where necessary, take action to resolve the problems.

If you are being subjected to nuisance or harassment by people who are not BCHT Group tenants we can still and will take legal action to stop their behaviour.

Tolerance & Common Sense

Talking with your neighbour and discussing the problems face-to-face is often the most successful way of resolving disputes and misunderstanding. BCHT Group actively seeks to encourage tolerance and common sense solutions to neighbour problems, such as mediation.

Harassment, violence or intimidation

Acts of serious harassment, violence or intimidation must be reported to and dealt with by the police. However, if the perpetrators of such incidents are tenants, members of their household or visitors, you should also report the incident to us and we will investigate and decide if legal action, by the landlord should be taken.

BCHT Group will not tolerate any of our tenants, their families or visitors causing anti-social behaviour, making threats, acting violently or causing criminal damage in and around your home.

How to resolve your neighbour problem

1 Speak with your neighbour

The first thing you should do in most situations is to talk with your neighbour and explain what it is that is causing you and your family a problem. Seek to resolve differences with your neighbour as early as you can and not let them escalate into more serious problems.

If you are fearful of how your neighbour might respond, or if you have suffered more serious incidents of abuse or threatening behaviour, then it is probably best that you contact your Housing Office first.

2 Speak to Us

If you have tried to reason with your neighbour but have failed, or if the problems are too serious for you to resolve in this way, please get in touch with your local housing office as soon as possible. You can either telephone the office, visit the reception or write in to explain what the problems are.

We guarantee:

- That you will receive a confirmation note of your initial complaint.
- That a Housing Officer will interview you in person within 5 working days of your initial complaint to write down full details of the problem and explain what BCHAT Group can do to resolve it.
- That if you have suffered violence, serious threats or damage to property a member of staff will deal with you within 24 hours.
- That your complaint will be treated seriously and investigated fully by BCHAT Group.
- You will be given support throughout the process.

3 An Action Plan

Within 7 working days of your initial complaint your Housing Officer will have started the investigation and will have sought your views and that of your neighbour. At this stage we will draw up an Action Plan that will describe what you should do and what we will do to get the problem sorted out. You can have a copy of this plan as a reminder.

In most cases the Action Plan will involve interviewing your neighbour and writing a warning letter; asking you to keep a written record of further incidents in an anti-social Behaviour Incident Diary, and interviewing other neighbours who may have witnessed some of the problems you have experienced.

The case is now a partnership, we will work to resolve the problem, but you must help us by keeping to your side of the action plan. The plan will be regularly reviewed with you as the case progresses.

4 Mediation

BCHT Group's Policy on anti-social behaviour is to promote early and sensible resolution of conflict through discussion and conciliation between you and your neighbour. We ask all tenants to be tolerant of others' behaviour, just as we insist that tenants behave in a reasonable and peaceful manner.

If you feel uneasy about approaching your neighbour, or if the relationship has broken down altogether, we can offer you the specialist services of a professional Mediator. Your Housing Officer can provide you and your neighbour with expert advisors who can help find a solution you are both happy with. This mediation service is absolutely free to you.

5 Racial Harassment and Hate Crimes

BCHT Group will not tolerate acts of violence, intimidation or harassment motivated by race, religion, gender or sexual orientation against its residents. The Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy responds swiftly and effectively to the problem, providing support and translation services, where required, throughout the process. The BCHT Group have a specialist officer to co-ordinate matters of this nature.

6 Anti-Social Behaviour Incident Diary

If talking with your neighbour does not sort things out and if despite a visit from the Housing Officer and a letter of warning the problems continue, then we might have to take legal action.

Please remember though that if we are to take action against anybody we will need to have good evidence. The most important evidence we can gather is your Anti-Social Behaviour Incident Diary. If the problems continue your Housing Officer will ask you to use your Diary to write down the details of any further incidents of nuisance or anti-social behaviour.

We may need to collect other evidence too such as photographs, video recordings, statements from other neighbours who have witnessed incidents or statements from any of your visitors who have seen incidents themselves.

Remember: your role in assisting with evidence gathering is crucial and will be a major reason for successfully resolving your nuisance problem. Successful legal action is only possible with good evidence.

7 Taking Legal Action

The vast majority of neighbour nuisance cases are resolved through the actions described above.

But if the problems continue despite a final warning, or if the neighbour has put you in danger or damaged your property, we may start legal action straight away. We will work together with you, the witness, to support you throughout any proceedings.

We will ask the court to give us:

- an injunction - a legal order that instructs the perpetrator to stop acting anti-socially or
- an anti-social behaviour order - banning the perpetrator from acting in a specific way and/or from coming into a specific area
- permission to evict.

How we are tackling anti-social behaviour

BCHT Group believes that everybody has a right to enjoy the peace and quiet of their home, free from serious disturbance and free from intimidation. BCHT Group will not tolerate acts of anti-social behaviour committed by any tenant, members of their household or visitors against any other person or property. We will enforce our tenancy agreement if a tenant fails to stop such behaviour. Legal action will be taken wherever necessary.

Working alongside your local housing office BCHT Group also has specialist tenancy enforcement, mediation and legal teams assisting to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Crime & Disorder

BCHT Group is a member of Bradford Safer Communities we work closely with other agencies including the Police to reduce crime and nuisance in the neighbourhoods where we work. Residents are therefore encouraged to report criminal activity, both to us and the Police, so that we can work together to deal effectively with the problems you experience.



BRADFORD COMMUNITY
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Bradford Community Housing Trust Group

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www.bchtgroup.org.uk

Bradford Community Housing Trust Group is made up of East Bradford Community Housing Trust, South Bradford Community Housing Trust, North Bradford Community Housing Trust, Shipley Community Housing Trust, Bradford West City Community Housing Trust, Aire-Wharfe Community Housing Trust and Bradford Building Services Ltd.