

Policy	Hate crime policy
Date adopted	May 2021
Date of next review	May 2024
Version	2
Responsible board	Homes board
Responsible officer	Head of neighbourhoods

## 1. Policy statement

- 1.1. At Housing Plus Group (HPG) we believe that hate crime is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. We believe that everyone should be free to live their lives without fear of abuse or attack. We aim to ensure that our homes and our communities are great places to live in and we value and cultivate diversity.
- 1.2. HPG is committed to tackling hate crime, by working in partnership, sharing best practice, and ensuring our staff respond to this issue in a co-ordinated and consistent way.

We will treat anything reported confidentially.

This policy relates to HPG customers. There is a separate policy for employees who experience domestic abuse.

## 2. What is hate crime?

- 2.1. A hate incident/crime is any incident which is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be motivated by hostility, prejudice or hate, based upon:
  - ◆ Race, colour, ethnicity or nationality
  - ◆ Religion or belief
  - ◆ Disability
  - ◆ Age
  - ◆ Sex
  - ◆ Sexual Orientation
  - ◆ Gender reassignment or transgender identity
  - ◆ Alternative-Subculture (HPG recognises this as a broad term to define a strong sense of collective identity and a set of group-specific values and tastes. This typically centres on distinctive style, clothing, make up, body art and music preference. Those involved usually stand out to both fellow participants and to those outside the group. Groups typically under the 'alternative' umbrella include Goths, Emos, Punks and Metallers however, this list is not exhaustive).
- 2.2. This can be committed against a person or property, and can be expressed in many forms, and may include:
  - ◆ verbal abuse or ridicule
  - ◆ assault

- ◆ vandalism and/or arson
  - ◆ graffiti or posting of offensive literature
  - ◆ threatening behaviour/ communications.
- 2.3. Most perpetrators of hate incidents live in the same communities as their victims. We recognise that hate incidents undermine community cohesion and feelings of safety and security of residents. We will therefore take a zero-tolerance approach to Hate Incidents of any form and have procedures in place for dealing quickly and effectively to any reported incidents.
- 2.4. This policy is linked directly to the HPG Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) policy and will apply in all matters relating to the above, whether this is behaviour linked to assured tenancies, assured short-hold tenancies, leaseholders, shared ownership properties, private lets, private ownership, or those living in Retirement Living accommodation.

### 3. Policy aims

- 3.1. Our Policy aims to achieve the following:
- ◆ To provide employees with clear and practical guidance to ensure we support and protect victims of hate crime.
  - ◆ To ensure that all reports of hate crime are taken seriously, are dealt with sensitively and in the strictest confidence.
  - ◆ To ensure that those who are subjected to hate crime are dealt with in a sympathetic and sensitive manner, in accordance with their needs.
  - ◆ To ensure all employees provide a non-judgmental, focused service.
  - ◆ To create a safe environment where victims of hate crime feel they can approach us, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
  - ◆ To work collaboratively with partners so that we can respond quickly to any cases of hate crime and enhance the safety and security of those involved.
  - ◆ To promote the welfare of all victims of hate crime and demonstrate full commitment to the principles of equality and diversity throughout the organisation.
  - ◆ To meet the needs and choice of people from all backgrounds.
  - ◆ To ensure that our services are relevant, responsive, and sensitive to the needs of our existing and future customers.
  - ◆ To ensure that all sections of the community in which we work have equal access to our services.

### 4. How will Housing Group Plus respond to reports of Hate Crime?

- 4.1. We will deal with hate crime and racial incidents under the serious/high-risk category in our Anti-social behaviour policy and procedure, and will respond to a report within one working day.
- 4.2. We will offer a confidential service: at our offices, by telephone, or an agreed choice of safe venue, and ensure that people experiencing hate crime can access appropriate services as early as possible and are given appropriate advice.
- 4.3. We will establish a victim centered approach in dealing with hate crime. An incident will be accepted as hate crime if so defined by the victim unless it can be proven otherwise or deemed wholly unreasonable.

- 4.4. We will, where appropriate, carry out a risk and vulnerability assessment and provide support for victims, their family, and children. The risk assessment will inform a tailored approach and is used to respond to the affected individuals. Where there is a concern that an individual is at risk from abuse or neglect, we will also follow our safeguarding policies and procedures.
- 4.5. We will accept reports of hate crime directly from victims and witnesses, but also accept reports by third parties who are reporting on behalf of victims and witnesses, because we recognise that sometimes victims may be more willing to report incidents to people at advice centres, reporting stations, victim support, places of worship, the police, GP surgeries or any other establishments rather than to us.
- 4.6. We will use the full range of tools and powers available to us, including early intervention/prevention remedies, as well as enforcement powers in serious cases, taking proportionate action based on the level of harm caused and the seriousness of the incidents.
- 4.7. Proven hate crime and racial incidents break the conditions of our Tenancy Agreement and we will take appropriate action against tenants or members of their household responsible for such incidents. At the discretion of HPG, alleged hate crime and racial incidents may also be considered as a breach of tenancy agreement conditions with appropriate action being taken.
- 4.8. Where the perpetrator is not linked to one of our properties but causes problems to our residents and/or staff we will work with our partners to determine what action is most appropriate and who should lead on the case.
- 4.9. Where appropriate we will provide support to perpetrators and make referrals to appropriate agencies where we identify support needs.
- 4.10. We will deal with any repairs which are needed because of hate crime and racial incidents as an emergency (within 24 hours); and we will remove offensive graffiti within 24 hours; We may provide additional security measures to a resident's home where necessary, in line with the completed risk and vulnerability assessment and action plan.
- 4.11. We will investigate any allegations or suspected hate crime by HPG employees through our internal disciplinary procedures and formal statutory investigative procedures where appropriate.

## 5. Strategic approach

- 5.1. We will work with partner agencies, community groups, partner, and statutory organisations where appropriate to ensure coordinated services and to prioritise the safety of victims and their children.
- 5.2. We will refer cases to multi-agency panel meetings with the agreement of the victim where appropriate, to ensure that support is received from all relevant agencies.
- 5.3. We will report incidents to the Police on behalf of victims or support victims in doing so if we have their consent or where we are legally obliged to do so.
- 5.4. We will work with all relevant agencies to deal with hate crime where appropriate, using our range of existing information sharing protocols to exchange information effectively. We will not share information without the prior consent of the victim unless we have safeguarding concerns and to do so may increase the risk to the individual or others.
- 5.5. All exchange of information will be in line with our Data Protection Policy.
- 5.6. We will work to create an environment where hate crime is less likely to take place and adopt a community impact approach to better understand hate crime in the areas we operate, and identify intervention projects that will ensure hate crime is minimised.
- 5.7. Proactively work with partners and the community to comply with Good Practice Standards for social landlords on tackling hate crime.

## **6. Training of Staff**

- 6.1. All staff dealing with incidents of Hate Crime will be given the training required to be able to fulfil the responsibilities found within our policy.

## **7. Data Protection, Information Exchange and Confidentiality**

- 7.1. We will adhere to relevant data protection legislation. We have an information sharing agreement in place with partners including the Police and Local Authorities which allows us to share information, where it is for the purpose of safeguarding the health and safety of individuals and/or preventing crime and/or disorder. This is made clear in our Privacy Statement on our website.

## **8. Monitoring and Review**

- 8.1. Regular case management reviews are undertaken to ensure that hate crime and racial incident issues are dealt with effectively and within timescales.
- 8.2. This policy will be reviewed not less than every three years. Reviewing the policy will ensure that it is effective and complies with current legislation and good practice.

## Risk Assessment

- ◆ The Group fails to maintain Consumer Standards in line with the objectives and framework set out by the Government (Risk Map ref: 6.2)
- ◆ Group policies do not incorporate current legislation, equality and diversity, or best sector practice and fail to protect the business (Risk Map ref: 1.2)

## Regulatory Issues

National Standards are Neighbourhoods & Community Standard and Tenancy Standard.

## Links to Other Policies, Procedures or Documents

- ◆ ASB Policy
- ◆ Neighbourhood Management Policy
- ◆ Safeguarding Policy
- ◆ Data Protection Policy
- ◆ Privacy Policy
- ◆ ASB Procedure and supporting documents
- ◆ Safer Estates Agreements
- ◆ Information Sharing Protocol
- ◆ Tenancy Conditions

## Supporting and Associated Information

- ◆ Housing Act 1985, 1988 and 1996
- ◆ Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004
- ◆ Serious Crime Act 2015 (section 76)
- ◆ ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014
- ◆ Human Rights Act 1998
- ◆ Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- ◆ Stop Hate UK
- ◆ Galop
- ◆ Victim Support

## Monitoring and Review

Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) are set and regular case management reviews undertaken to ensure that complaints of ASB and Hate Crime are being dealt with effectively and within timescales. KPI's include customer satisfaction that will be reported on the Board scorecard.

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years.

## Impact Assessments

An Equality and Diversity impact assessment has been carried out and there is a positive impact on customer groups.



v1 May21