

**GREEN VALE HOMES**

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**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

**GREEN VALE HOMES**

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## 1. Introduction

Green Vale Homes is committed to ensuring that all of the tenants and residents on its estates enjoy a quality of life that is unhindered by the small minority of people who fail to recognise their obligations to their neighbours and the wider community.

To this end we will take every necessary and appropriate action against perpetrators of anti social behaviour. To ensure either their behaviour changes or they suffer the consequences of their actions.

**Green Vale Homes intends to build relationships with agencies working within Rossendale which includes:**

- Other Registered Social Landlords
- Accredited Private Landlords Schemes
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

**Our aim is to work in Partnerships to develop sustainable housing and to regenerate local communities.**

Green Vale Homes recognises that, when left unchallenged, anti-social behaviour can have a significant and long term impact on individuals, families and neighbourhoods. This can damage the health and wellbeing of individuals as well as entire communities.

In tackling anti-social behaviour we will ensure that we comply with all appropriate legislation and regulations, and that we develop our policies and procedures to meet our legal requirements.

## 2. Our strategy

**Green Vale Homes will work together with the Rossendale Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to tackle anti-social behaviour within the borough.**

All partners will make use of powers available within relevant legislation, such as the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

In doing so we will have regard to wider obligations within communities; this includes the prevention of homelessness, and the protection of children and young people.

Where there is a complaint of anti-social behaviour we will intervene at an early stage, and will take a strong and consistent approach towards taking enforcement action.

We will use legislation to assist us in developing a balanced approach towards the prevention of anti-social behaviour, in taking enforcement action and in seeking to rehabilitate perpetrators

We will consider 'best practice' in developing our approach towards anti-social behaviour and we will be open to learning from others and share our experiences

We will adopt a multi agency approach towards tackling anti-social behaviour and will seek the support of other agencies to assist us in developing the best possible solutions. This will include offering effective support and advice to victims.

We will seek, where possible and practical, to reconcile parties in neighbour disputes. However, the needs of the victim(s) will always be paramount

We will ensure that our policies, procedures and actions consider strongly the needs of all groups and that achieving equality and recognizing diversity are central to our approaches. This will include offering assistance and support to residents on our estates

We will seek to promote good race relations within our communities

We will take very seriously all reported instances of hate crime

We will endeavour to assist in the developing of strong, sustainable communities where communities can feel safe and secure

### **3. Our joint working**

The causes and effects of anti-social behaviour are wide and varied and affect individuals and communities regardless of tenure type. As landlords we cannot act in isolation in tackling these issues.

We are therefore committed to working with other stakeholders to develop the solutions needed to deal with anti-social behaviour.

#### **These include:**

- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
- Police
- Social Services
- Children and Young Peoples' Services

- Rossendale Borough Council
- County Council
- Voluntary Sector
- Tenants bodies and representatives

It is our intention to ensure all agencies with responsibility for dealing with anti-social behaviour play a full and active role in confronting this issue, and that wherever necessary we will work to provide multi agency solutions to eliminate the causes and effects of anti-social behaviour within our communities.

#### **4. Our definition of Anti-Social Behaviour**

Anti-social behaviour can cover a wide range of behaviour from noise nuisance to serious harassment. Anti-social behaviour is considered to be “anything which interferes with the peaceful enjoyment of the home and surrounding area” of our tenants and residents.

#### **Some examples of anti-social behaviour are listed here:**

- Problems with dogs
- Violent and criminal behaviour
- Problems with children
- Racial harassment
- Serious noise problems
- Intimidation
- Verbal abuse
- Drug dealing

This is not an exhaustive list and appropriate action can and will be taken against any person perpetrating acts of anti-social behaviour.

#### **5. Our definition of racial harassment**

Racial harassment can take many forms, ranging from verbal abuse to physical as well as attacks on homes and property.

An example of a racist incident is “any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person”.

(Recommendation 12 of the Stephen Lawrence enquiry McPherson report 1999)

## **6. Our approach to hate crime**

Green Vale Homes recognises the importance of reporting incidents of racial harassment and other hate crime and actively seeks to ensure that minority groups feel confident in reporting incidents to us.

### **In addition to the commitments listed above we will:**

- Ensure access to interpreters
- Involve the Council's Community Safety Officer
- Make literature available in other languages
- Work closely with other appropriate agencies

## **7. Our approach to preventing anti-social behaviour**

Green Vale Homes working together with our partners, is committed in its approach to preventing anti-social behaviour in Rossendale. As responsible landlords we will use a range of initiatives, including some or all of those listed here to demonstrate our commitment to preventing any anti-social acts or behaviour which have a detrimental effect on the lives of our tenants and residents:

- Reference and verification checking of potential tenants
- Making new tenants aware of their responsibilities by fully explaining the tenancy agreement to them
- Multi-agency working with Police, Youth Offending Teams, Probation Service, Social Services, Drug agencies, Schools and others
- Developing and working with Youth Initiative Projects
- Using Acceptable Behaviour Contracts
- Floating Support/Tenancy Support Schemes
- Promoting mediation as an early remedy
- Carrying out regular estate inspections
- Supporting clean-up campaigns on our estates
- Supporting diversionary schemes for young people e.g play schemes, youth projects.
- Use of technology e.g CCTV cameras, noise monitoring equipment

## **8. Our enforcement measures**

The aim of Green Vale Homes is to resolve problems speedily and without the recourse to legal action whenever possible. We do recognize that residents have a right to enjoy their own lifestyle, but only where this does not have an adverse effect on the quality of life of their neighbours and their communities.

Conciliation, mediation, diversion and working with outside agencies will be the preferred approach but if all these options have been tried and failed or are

deemed in appropriate Green Vale Homes will consider the following enforcement actions:

- Possession Proceedings
- Anti-social Behaviour Orders
- Injunctions
- Demoted tenancies
- Closure of premises (in partnership with the Police)

**If enforcement action is taken this could result in:**

- Eviction
- Tenants having difficulty in obtaining satisfactory references
- Restrictions in obtaining another property from a social landlord provider

## **9. Our rehabilitation of perpetrators**

Green Vale Homes will look closely at working with perpetrators and offering support to avoid legal action being taken against them. This is particularly the case where the actions of the perpetrator are a result of:

- Mental Health Problems/Learning Difficulties
- Alcohol abuse
- Drug abuse
- Disability

**Green Vale Homes will work together with the following agencies in supporting the individual where appropriate:**

- Outside agencies including Social Services, Schools, Youth Services, Youth Offending Teams, Probation, Drug agencies
- Floating Support/Tenancy Support Worker
- Initiatives that aim to make reparation to the victim

We will take all reasonable steps in rehabilitating perpetrators, whilst recognizing this can only be achieved with the cooperation of those concerned. Where perpetrators fail to engage with us and continue to commit anti-social acts we will take appropriate enforcement action.

## **10. Our support for victims**

It is our intention to ensure that victims and witnesses receive every assistance when reporting and pursuing a complaint against perpetrators of anti-social behaviour.

Green Vale Homes recognizes that victims and witnesses of anti-social behaviour need support and assurance from us, if they are to retain confidence in our ability to successfully resolve their complaint.

We also recognize that the successful application of our policies and procedures is greatly enhanced when victims and witnesses play a full part in supporting us in tackling anti-social behaviour.

**To ensure this is the case we are committed to:**

- Recording each and every complaint
- Investigating every complaint, even when reported anonymously
- Allocating a named case worker
- Protecting the identity of the victim or witness, and only revealing it to perpetrators or their representatives with the person's explicit permission
- Where necessary, using professional witnesses to stand in for victims and witnesses
- Providing additional security
- Moving victims and witnesses for their protection, when we consider it necessary
- Working with other relevant agencies in providing support and/or counselling
- Taking swift and effective action against perpetrators wherever possible
- Making measures available to support victims and witnesses before, during and after court action
- Keeping people informed at all stages of the investigation

We will be flexible in our approach to each individual and will work with them to arrive at an effective and proportionate response to their complaint.

**11. Our staff**

**All staff dealing with receipt of reports of anti-social behaviour will be trained to ensure:**

- They promptly and accurately record reports
- That reports are effectively prioritised and actioned
- They are fully aware of the need for sensitivity, confidentiality and, where requested, anonymity

**All staff investigating reports of anti-social behaviour will be trained to ensure they:**

- Can deliver prompt advice and support to victims and witnesses of anti-social behaviour

- Act swiftly in taking action to deliver effective and proportionate responses to acts of anti-social behaviour – are fully aware of the options available to them
- Are aware of the full range of support their organisation offers to victims and witnesses of anti-social behaviour
- Have an awareness of issues affecting minority groups

Training will be provided on a regular basis to ensure staff are aware of changes to procedures, policies and legislation that will assist them in tackling the issue of anti-social behaviour within our communities.

## **12. Improving our services**

Our partners within Rossendale understand the value of collaboration and co-operation in tackling anti-social behaviour and are committed to ensuring that stakeholders are actively involved in the development and review of our policies and procedures, our stakeholders include:

- Our tenants
- Tenant bodies and representatives
- Our staff
- Rossendale Borough Council Partners
- Other service providers
- The wider community

And we will ensure that we will be recording and monitoring all reports of anti-social behaviour to assist in the planning and development of the service and to identify our key priorities in this for the future.

## **13. Review and monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed during 2006, and every 3 years thereafter.

## **14. Responsibility**

Policy development and monitoring      Board

Implementation      Head of Housing Management Services