

- 'Acceptable Condition Contracts'
- 'Acceptable Behaviour Contracts' and 'Parental Control Agreements'
- take possession proceedings, which can lead to eviction
- use professional witnesses to gather evidence in serious cases
- apply to the courts for injunctions (court orders prohibiting certain actions)
- apply to the courts for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders
- refer the problems to other agencies such as Environmental Health
- work with other agencies including crime and disorder reduction partnerships
- discussion with any street wardens employed by your local council, to see if they can help.

We will work with you to tackle your problems and achieve a long-term solution. We will discuss with you any action we take including formal action (such as court proceedings) and will review this with you regularly.

If we decide to consider legal action, your evidence will be important. We are likely to ask you to keep diary sheets so that there is a written record of incidents. We are likely to need you to agree to give evidence in court. Without this, it is difficult to start legal action. We may need other neighbours to give us statements and keep diary sheets, though we understand that acting as a witness can be difficult. Legal action can take a long time, but if we cannot resolve the problem any other way, this will often be our only course

of action. We will support you and any other witnesses through this. If, in serious cases, giving evidence is not an option, we will consider using professional witnesses.

### What can you do to help yourself?

- Speak to your neighbour calmly and see if the problem can be sorted out.
- If the problem is about dogs, ring the dog warden at your local council for help.
- Try to be tolerant if you know that your neighbour has difficulties.
- Remember that children should be allowed to play as long as they are not causing a nuisance.
- Tell the police immediately if you have been assaulted or threatened or if you have seen someone committing an offence such as damage to property.
- Ring your local council's Environmental Health Department if you are suffering from noise problems.
- Accept mediation if we offer it - this really does work.

***This information can be made available in large text or on audio tape. It can be translated into another language on request.***

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# TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR



***Estuary is a housing association with Charitable Status***



Estuary Housing Association believes that everyone has the right to quiet enjoyment of their own home, to live the way they want on the understanding that it does not affect the quality of life for others. We will work with residents and other agencies, taking every practical and reasonable step to ensure that this right is upheld.

This leaflet explains what you can expect from us and what we need from you when tackling anti-social behaviour.

### What does the tenancy agreement say?

The tenancy agreement is a legal contract between Estuary Housing Association and its tenants. It states that a tenant is responsible for their own behaviour and the behaviour of anyone living with them or visiting them. This means we can take action when a neighbouring tenant is acting anti-socially or if their children or visitors are causing problems.

### What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour covers various problems. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 describes anti-social behaviour as conduct which:

is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person;

and directly or indirectly relates to or affects the housing management functions of a relevant landlord;

or consists of or involves using or threatening to use housing accommodation owned or managed by a relevant landlord for an unlawful purpose.

The most common complaints we receive are:

- loud music
- too much general noise such as slamming doors
- playing ball games in the wrong places
- overgrown gardens
- verbal abuse
- children playing where they shouldn't
- pets out of control
- threatening behaviour
- alcohol and drug abuse
- harassment

When you report a problem to us in person, by telephone or letter we will discuss and agree with you whether your problem is a neighbour dispute, nuisance or harassment. We can do this over the telephone or by making an appointment for you to visit your local office or for an officer to visit your home. We will treat any information you give us confidentially unless agreed otherwise.

### Problems with neighbours

First we will ask you to talk to your neighbour and see if the problem can be sorted out between yourselves. Talking and explaining the situation can help. Trying to see each other's point of view and compromising can often solve the problem before involving us. If the situation doesn't improve, call your Estate Management Officer who will be able to give advice. If there has been a breach of tenancy, he or she will discuss what we can do. We will agree an action plan with you and do what we can to help resolve the situation before it becomes serious. However, we may

not be able to resolve all disagreements between neighbours and in some cases may refer you to independent mediators.

### Problems with nuisance

These problems often affect more than one household. They include excessive noise, control of pets, family disputes affecting neighbours and the behaviour of visitors. Or there might be threatening or abusive behaviour, frequent serious disturbances, vandalism and damage to property. If the problem is infrequent, we may ask you to speak to whoever is causing it to see if the matter can be resolved. However, if the person has been threatening or violent towards you, we would **not** expect you to approach them direct. Call or visit your Estate Management Officer who will give advice, arrange for an interview where appropriate and agree an action plan with you.

### Harassment

We take harassment of any kind very seriously. Persecution or intimidation of anyone by residents, members of their household or their visitors is wrong, whether it is because of their race, colour, religion or nationality, sex, sexuality or disability. We will take immediate action to stop this.

### What we can do

These are the actions we are most likely to take:

- offer mediation