

Hate related incidents policy

Policy ref: Hate related incidents

Approved by: Senior Tenancy & Estate
Services Manager

Policy author/policy holder: Tenancy Enforcement
Manager

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1:: Purpose and anticipated outcomes

We take hate related incidents very seriously. We treat all reports as a priority and take prompt and appropriate action. The purpose of our hate incident policy is to support our belief that everyone has the right to live peacefully in their homes and neighbourhoods happy and hassle free.

It supports our commitment to:

- Provide a harm focused response to all reports, recognizing the gravity of hate incidents
- Agree an action plan about what we'll do to try to resolve the issue
- Use a range of different options to deal with hate related incidents, including mediation, restorative justice and where appropriate, action through the Courts, depending on the nature of the issue
- Work with other agencies that can help resolve the incident, such as the Police, and the local community, and provide support.

We'll take all reasonable steps possible to promote and defend our residents' right to live free from violence, intimidation and abuse. We'll work with other agencies and in partnership with the Police and local authorities to make sure that a range of services and support are available to people suffering as a result of a hate related incident.

2:: Scope and definitions

This policy applies to all Knightstone residents and home owners whether they are victims or perpetrators of hate related incidents.

We encourage our residents to report hate related incidents whether they are victims or witnesses. It also applies to members of public who wish to report hate related incidents caused to them involving our residents or homeowners.

Hate related incidents

The Police and Crown Prosecution Service say something is a hate related incident if the victim or anyone else believes it was motivated by hostility or prejudice based on one of the following things:

- Disability
- Race
- Religion

- Transgender identity
- Sexual orientation.

These are called ‘protected characteristics’.

There are different types of hate related incidents. Some (but not all) examples of these are:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| ■ Assaults | ■ Hoax calls |
| ■ Bullying and intimidation | ■ Online abuse such as on Facebook or Twitter |
| ■ Harassment | ■ Hate mail |
| ■ Verbal Abuse | ■ Fraud |
| ■ Criminal damage | ■ Burglary |
| ■ Threats of violence | ■ Graffiti |
| ■ Murder | ■ Arson. |

It’s important to understand that we’re all different and everyone has the right to live free from violence, intimidation and abuse. We’ll support all Knightstone residents and homeowners on this basis.

3:: About this policy

We expect our residents to show consideration to their neighbours and their community, and not to commit, or allow their family or visitors to commit acts which are hate related.

In addition to the terms set out in the tenancy agreement or lease, we encourage all residents to:

- Report all hate related incidents to the Police and to us including threats or acts of violence.
- Respect other peoples’ rights to their chosen lifestyle.
- Work with us to resolve disputes / issues, for example by providing witness statements.

We can consider an allocation of housing to applicants who have previously been evicted from accommodation for hate related incidents, although a previous eviction or conviction for a hate related incident or harassment means they’ll be unlikely to be offered a Knightstone tenancy.

We’ll let residents know prior to signing a tenancy if the previous tenants had experienced hate related incidents, or if there have been hate related incidents in the area. Where incidents do occur we’ll provide a range of actions to prevent repeat incidents.

3.1 Reporting

We’ll support employees and contractors to identify hate related incidents, especially when they are not obvious and we’ll ensure they’re always investigated:

- We’ll encourage our residents to report all hate related incidents.
- We’ll provide a range of ways to report hate related incidents.
- We’ll work with agencies to encourage victims of hate related incidents to come forward.

Hate related incidents can be reported in several ways:

- Telephone
- Email
- Website
- In writing
- In person
- Via a third party.

We encourage residents to report such incidents to us. We treat all reports seriously and take prompt and appropriate action. We'll also offer support wherever possible.

3.2 Action and resolution

We'll respond quickly to hate related incidents through:

- Early intervention.
- Support and advice for victims and witnesses of hate related incidents, including moving a victim of a hate related incident to a safe place to ensure they're safe from harm, if this is required.
- Monitoring reports or incidents to identify potential 'hotspots'.
- Working with other agencies to deal with the immediate issues.
- Having an understanding of each local community to provide clear information to customers in different languages and formats should they suffer any hate related incident.

Additional solutions we'll consider include:

■ **Mediation**

Mediation can be used in many cases to resolve issues. Mediators are professionally trained and independent. We've found that most cases referred to mediation reach full or partial agreement, and almost everyone said they'd recommend mediation.

■ **Restorative approaches**

Restorative approaches work to resolve conflict and repair harm. It encourages those who've caused harm to recognise the impact of what they've done and gives them an opportunity to make amends. For those who've suffered harm or loss, it provides an opportunity to have it acknowledged, and to stop it happening again.

■ **Legal action**

Where a case is either serious and/or criminal or other intervention has failed to stop or prevent persistent hate related incidents, and there is clear evidence, we will take robust and severe action through the Courts.

Criminal cases will be referred to the Police to deal with, though this will not prevent us from considering our own legal action.

We will always adopt a multi-agency approach to tackling hate related incidents so we can benefit from sharing of expertise and resources at a strategic and operational level

Support we can offer

We'll provide support to the person reporting hate related incidents, witnesses and where possible the perpetrator. We promise to:

- take time to listen – and take all report seriously;
- be clear about what we can do;
- take prompt action;
- regularly keep all parties informed on the progress of the case and updated in the way they want to be communicated with;
- offer a referral to our Individual Empowerment Team or specialist support services;
- build confidence and capacity to act as a witness.

We'll work closely with the Police and other appropriate agencies to ensure that appropriate support is provided to prevent harassment.

Responding to hate incidents

We aim to tackle the causes of hate related incidents in our communities by challenging behaviour and providing remedies to resolve the behaviour.

We have a zero tolerance to hate related incidents. We take hate related incidents very seriously, as this is a breach of tenancy.

We will:

- Work to resolve the hate related incident and take into account any underlying factors that may be causing the behaviour.
- If the person committing a hate incident is a Knightstone resident we'll consider charging them for cost of any repairs for damage caused.
- We'll consider all options, including mediation, restorative approaches and legal action.

4:: Service standards, monitoring and review

Anyone who reports a hate related incident can expect to receive the following service:

- Provide a harm focused response to all reports, recognizing the gravity of hate incidents.
- We'll listen, make an assessment and take action within agreed timescales.
- Arrange to meet with the victim(s) in a safe place. Our officers are trained and sensitive to the needs of those experiencing hate related incidents.
- Refer to emergency accommodation if the victim(s) are assessed as being in immediate danger.
- If requested and where possible, arrange for the victim to speak to an officer of the same sex or protected characteristic.
- Provide an interpreter or signer, if required.

- Provide information about hate related incidents and put the victim(s) in touch with other support agencies, if necessary.
- Agree an action plan with so all parties are clear about what we'll do to try to resolve the issue.
- Use a range of different options to deal with hate related incidents, including mediation, restorative justice and where appropriate, action through the Courts, depending on the nature of the issue.
- Work with other agencies that can help resolve the incident, such as the Police, and the local community, and provide support.
- Agree a preferred method of communication.
- Keep the victim and support services, (when involved), informed of progress and action taken.
- Support the victim(s) if the case goes to court and provide transport if needed.
- Remove hate related graffiti as a priority.
- Discuss closing the case with the victim(s) once the problem is resolved and confirm the outcome in writing.

Hate related incidents are wrong and by taking action and reporting it, you will make things better for you and for other people.

We'll monitor our performance by:

- Reviewing all cases during supervision sessions.
- Customer satisfaction results.
- Feedback from complaints and compliments.
- An independent audit carried out by S.A.R.I. to ensure continual improvement in service.

We aim to get things right first time, however if we get anything wrong we'll:

- Put it right as soon as possible.
- Let the customer know what is happening.
- Say sorry.
- Learn from our mistakes so they don't happen again.
- Find out if the customer is satisfied with how we have dealt with the problem.
- Let the customer know how to make a complaint if they are not satisfied.

5:: Legal and regulatory considerations

- Race Relations Act 1976 and The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2006
- Housing Act 1988 and Housing Act 1996
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2003
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 & 2004
- The regulatory framework for social housing in England 2012

6:: Linked/associated policies and other references

- Anti-social behaviour policy
- Hate related incidents policy
- Equality and diversity policy
- Lettings policies
- Domestic abuse policy
- Data protection policy

The project to develop this policy and procedure is scrutinized by the Equalities Group. The policy and procedure has also been developed in consultation with Resident Involvement Strategy Group, SARI, Compass Disability and Bristol Hate Crime Forum Service Users.