



Housing Services

Good Neighbour Policy

2026-2029

Service Area

Housing Services

Policy Owner

Housing Services - Area Housing Manager

Policy Category

Regulatory – required to demonstrate compliance with landlord statutory duties, Regulator of Social Housing standards, and Housing Ombudsman requirements.

Version controls:

Version	Category	Trigger	Next Review	Author	Date
1.0.	Regulatory	New	01 February 2026	Area Housing Manager	01 February 2029

If you require this policy in another format or language, please contact the Housing Service by emailing policy@winchester.gov.uk or calling **01962 848 400**.



Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out Winchester City Council Housing Services approach to neighbour nuisance and lifestyle differences.

This policy supports the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Hate Crime Policy by providing guidance on proportionate responses to neighbour nuisance cases that do not meet ASB the thresholds and explains how lower-level concerns will be managed before escalation into the **Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Procedure** where appropriate.

The **Good Neighbour Policy**, **Hate Crime Policy** and the **Anti-Social Behaviour Policy** work together to support positive community relationships. The Good Neighbour Policy provides guidance on resolving low-level neighbour issues, lifestyle differences and nuisance that do not meet the threshold for Anti-Social Behaviour.

Where behaviour becomes persistent, deliberate, malicious, hate-related, or linked to harassment or criminal activity, cases will transfer into the Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime case management framework following investigation and risk assessment.

This policy aims to:

- Promote tolerance and respect between neighbours.
- Provide practical tools for resolving disputes informally.
- Encourage the use of Good Neighbour Agreements and mediation.
- Ensure consistency with the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy and the Tenancy Handbook

Scope

This policy applies to all tenants, residents, staff, contractors, and visitors to Council-managed housing for neighbour issues that fall short of ASB thresholds.

Policy Statement

Winchester City Council Housing Service is committed to:

- Supporting residents to resolve disputes themselves wherever possible
- Providing guidance and information on how to approach neighbours constructively
- Encouraging informal conversations before complaints escalate.
- Offering early intervention through advice, Assessment, Mediation, and Good Neighbour Agreements (GNA) or Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABA's)
- Respond promptly to nuisance reports with an initial triage and advice.
- Facilitate mediation between neighbours where informal resolution is realistic.

We will always try to use Good Neighbour Agreements to set out shared expectations of behaviour and help rebuild positive neighbour relationships.

As the behaviour will not normally be classed as ASB, it will therefore be unlikely to constitute an actionable tenancy breach at this stage. However, where behaviour escalates or evidence demonstrates ASB thresholds are met, the case will be transferred to the Anti-Social Behaviour



and Hate Crime Procedure for formal investigation and potential enforcement. It is also part of our commitment to:

- Distinguish clearly between neighbour nuisance and ASB
- Provide clear definitions and examples in policy, procedures, and resident communications.
- Train staff to recognise the difference and apply the correct response.
- Ensure residents understand when the Council can and cannot intervene formally.

Nuisance issues will only be escalated into formal ASB cases where behaviour is persistent, deliberate, malicious, hate-related, or linked to harassment or criminal activity, following investigation and risk assessment in line with the Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Procedure.

Understanding Neighbour Nuisance

What is a Neighbour Nuisance?

Behaviour or activities that may be inconvenient, annoying, or unpleasant to others but do not usually meet the legal definition of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).

Lifestyle Differences

Normal variations in daily routines, family life, or cultural practices that may occasionally cause tension between neighbours but are not considered nuisance or ASB.

Examples of neighbour nuisance include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Cooking smells from nearby homes
- Noise from babies crying or children playing
- One-off parties or normal household noise such as doors closing, going up and down stairs or people talking.
- Bonfires (Persistent or hazardous bonfires will be referred to Environmental Health for further action.)
- DIY, noise of a vacuum cleaner or washing machine or gardening during reasonable hours
- Parking disputes (unless linked to threats, harassment, or repeated obstruction)
- Differences in lifestyles, working hours, or cultural practices
- Staring or 'dirty looks'
- Littering and dog fouling.
- Resident CCTV or smart doorbells (unless installed or used in a way that is intrusive, targets individuals, or amounts to harassment)
- Social Media posts or text messages (unless persistent online harassment or threats directed towards neighbours, other residents, staff, or people connected to the locality of the property)



Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Housing Officers	Provide advice, assess cases, referrals to assessment and mediation, facilitate Good Neighbour Agreements, referrals to and work in partnership appropriate support agencies.
Area Housing Managers / Service Managers	Ensure consistent application of this policy, support decision-making, oversee case reviews, and authorise escalation into the Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Procedure where thresholds are met.
Residents/Tenants	Take responsibility for resolving minor disputes directly, respect neighbours' rights, and engage with Council support services where needed.
Partner Agencies	Community mediation services, voluntary sector advice, Police and Adult and Children's services and support networks may be engaged
Complainants	Report nuisance clearly, be willing to engage in informal solutions, and accept outcomes of mediation or agreements or advice of the Housing Officer.

Policy Principles

Under this Policy we will only progress reports in cases where we are satisfied our intervention is appropriate and may resolve the issues, and there is no agency better placed to respond.

Winchester City Council will be guided by the following principles in managing neighbourhood disputes and supporting good community relations:

Promoting Tolerance between neighbours

- Encourage neighbours to recognise and accept reasonable differences in lifestyles, cultural practices, and household routines.
- Provide clear guidance on what is considered everyday living noise or behaviour versus Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).
- Promote positive neighbour relationships through resident communication and community engagement.

Early Resolution

- Prioritise informal approaches such as direct conversations, or a referral to an independent assessment and mediation team.
- Provide advice and support to help residents communicate constructively before issues escalate.
- Ensure staff are trained to de-escalate disputes and offer proportionate, practical advice.
- Complete property inspections to establish any outstanding repairs or anything that may contribute to noise transference.



- Work with residents around options that may help reduce noise transference, such as understanding the importance of carpets, removal of hardwood flooring etc.
- Give advice around Housing Options to residents such as a mutual exchange.

Good Neighbour Agreements

- Encourage the use of written agreements between neighbours where appropriate to set out expectations and commitments.
- Facilitate agreements in a fair, balanced, and inclusive manner, ensuring all parties feel heard.
- Monitor agreements through the housing case system to review progress and prevent repeat disputes.

Proportionate Response

All interventions must be fair, evidence-based, and proportionate to the harm or risk identified. Officers must ensure that escalation decisions are consistent with the ASB Policy thresholds and recorded in the case management system. This can be done by considering the following:

- Escalate cases only when nuisance becomes deliberate and persistent, malicious, hate-related, or linked to harassment or criminal activity, following formal assessment and in accordance with the Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Procedure.
- Apply a consistent test of proportionality and impact when determining next steps.
- Ensure legal or formal action is evidence-based and only used as a last resort.

Partnership Approach

- Work with community mediation services, housing support agencies, social care, and community safety partners to provide sustainable solutions.
- Share information responsibly (in line with data protection and safeguarding duties) to strengthen joint outcomes.
- Actively engage residents in shaping solutions and improving neighbourhood cohesion.

Resident Empowerment

- Equip residents with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to resolve disputes constructively.
- Provide practical resources such as self-help guides, templates for communication, and access to mediation.
- Recognise vulnerabilities and provide tailored support or referrals where needed.

Good Neighbour Agreements (GNAs)

Definition and Purpose

Good Neighbour Agreements (GNAs) are informal, written agreements between neighbours, designed to help resolve disputes and promote mutual respect.

Facilitation

GNAs may be facilitated by Housing Services officers or, where appropriate, an independent assessment or mediation provider.



The process is voluntary and based on cooperation, ensuring both parties feel safe and supported. There is also an offer of independent support from agencies such as Victim Support.

Content

GNAs set out specific behaviours, commitments, and practical steps each party agrees to follow.

They may include agreements on noise levels, shared spaces, pets, garden upkeep, or respectful communication.

Status and Monitoring

GNAs are not legally binding, but provide a clear, structured framework for improving neighbour relationships.

Where parties comply, the agreement helps restore trust and prevent escalation.

Where agreements break down, the Council may consider further intervention, including escalation under the ASB Policy if thresholds are met.

Closing Cases

Cases may be closed when any of the following apply:

- The reported problem has stopped or is resolved.
- When the report is anonymous.
- When there has been no contact from the reporting resident for the last 4 weeks.
- The reporting resident has been provided with the necessary support and advice to self-help.
- Either party has refused mediation and refuse to work constructively with one another
- Either party has refused to follow the advice of the Housing Officer
- There are occasions when the resolution is understanding that some lifestyles may clash or accepting differences.

The decision to formally close a case will be provided in writing to both parties and include advice and steps to take should the report restart.

Resident Involvement

This policy has been developed and will continue to be reviewed in consultation with tenants, in line with Winchester City Council's Tenant Partnership and Influence Plan.

Feedback gathered through surveys and focus groups contributed to this final version. A summary of consultation feedback and responses is available on request

For further information on how to be involved please visit our webpage.

Winchester City Council Complaints Policy



Complaints will be handled in line with Winchester City Council's Housing Complaints Policy and the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, which set out a clear, fair, and accessible process for resolving complaints.

You can make a complaint in any of the following ways:

- By completing the online complaints form
- By email to: customerservice@winchester.gov.uk
- By telephone: 01962 848 400
- In writing to: Winchester City Council, Colebrook Street, Winchester, SO23 9LJ
- By speaking directly to any council officer

If you remain dissatisfied after our response, you can escalate your complaint to the **Housing Ombudsman**, an independent service that reviews housing complaints across England. We aim to make the complaints process straightforward, fair, and transparent.

Recording and Monitoring

When you access our service, report a problem or speak with our teams, we record it on our secure housing case system.

We only collect and share information that is relevant and necessary to help resolve the issue. We follow the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR, and the Council's Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

Sometimes we work with other agencies (for example, the police or support services). We will only share your information with them if it is safe, legal and will help protect people or resolve the issue.

Performance Monitoring and Learning

We regularly check how well we are supporting safe and happy neighbourhoods by looking at:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) especially how safe residents feel in their neighbourhood.
- How quickly, fairly, and effectively we deal with cases and outcomes.
- Annual reports on ASB performance and learning will be shared with senior management and tenant panels."
- Feedback, complaints and compliments from residents.

We learn from every case. If something could be done better, we share that learning with staff and update our ways of working.

We also review complaints and decisions from the Housing Ombudsman to make sure we follow best practice.



Equality and Safeguarding Considerations

Everyone has the right to be treated fairly and feel safe at home. We also ensure reasonable adjustments are made for residents with additional needs or vulnerabilities

Please refer to our Corporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for full details.

We follow the Equality Act 2010 and make sure we consider people's individual needs and circumstances whether they are victims, witnesses, or accused of neighbour nuisance, antisocial behaviour (ASB), or related hate incidents.

We only take legal or formal action when it is fair and proportionate to do so.

If we think anyone (adult or child) is at risk of harm, we will always put their safety first and follow the Council's Safeguarding Policy.

Related Policies and Legislation

Legislation

- Housing Act 1985, 1996
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Noise Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Protection from Harassment Act
- Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR
- Safeguarding Adults Act (Care Act) 2014
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Regulators' Code 2014

Regulation and Standards

Regulator of Social Housing – Consumer Standards (2024):

- Neighbourhood and Community Standard – expectations for safe, clean neighbourhoods and collaborative working.
- Tenancy Standard – responsibilities for tenancy management and supporting positive behaviour.
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard – ensures openness with residents.
- Safety and Quality Standard – requires safe, well-maintained homes.
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 – Strengthens proactive regulation, consumer standards, and Housing Ombudsman powers.
- Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (2024) – Sets requirements for fairness and effective complaint responses.
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) – Especially TSMs relating to neighbourhood management, ASB, and overall satisfaction.



Related Policies

- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding Policy (Adults and Children)
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Complaints Policy

Governance and Review

This policy is overseen by the Housing Services Area Housing Manager and monitored through quarterly service performance reviews, including case audits, management reviews, and learning from escalated ASB and hate-related cases to ensure consistent threshold application and early intervention

We review this policy and our approach every three years, or sooner if the law or best practice changes.

All housing staff are trained on safeguarding, equality and legal powers, and they regularly update their training to keep residents safe.



Glossary of Terms

Statutory Nuisance

Serious, ongoing problems such as loud industrial noise, smoke, or smells that can be investigated and enforced by Environmental Health officers.

Neighbour Nuisance

Behaviour that is annoying, inconvenient, or unpleasant but does not meet the legal definition of ASB. Examples include noise from daily living, minor disputes, or lifestyle clashes.

Lifestyle Differences

Normal differences in daily routines, cultural practices, working hours, family habits, or hobbies that may cause tension but do not amount to nuisance or ASB.

Everyday Living Noise

Normal household sounds such as talking, children playing, doors closing, or vacuuming. This type of noise does not usually meet the ASB threshold.

Bonfire Nuisance

Smoke or odour from bonfires that is persistent, hazardous, or impacts neighbours. Serious cases may be dealt with by Environmental Health under statutory nuisance legislation.

Complainant

A resident who reports a concern to the Council about neighbour nuisance or conflict.

Assessment and Mediation

An independent service that helps neighbours understand each other's views, communicate constructively, and agree practical solutions. Mediation is voluntary and focuses on early resolution.

Council-Managed Housing

Homes owned or managed by Winchester City Council, including general needs housing, sheltered housing, temporary accommodation, and supported schemes.

Harassment

Harassment may be related to a protected characteristic and can meet the threshold for ASB, hate incidents, hate crime, or criminal action, requiring escalation to the Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Procedure.

Proportionate Response

Ensuring that any action taken by the Council matches the seriousness, persistence, and impact of the reported issue and is fair, reasonable, and evidence based.



Protected Characteristics

Characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010 (such as disability, age, race, religion, sex). Harassment or discrimination linked to any protected characteristic may become ASB or hate-related behaviour.

Voluntary Agreement

Any informal agreement (such as a GNA or ABA) that residents choose to enter. These agreements are not legally binding but help reduce conflict and clarify expectations

