

Good Neighbourhood Management Procedure

1.	Purpose of procedure
1.1	The aim of this Procedure is to describe the actions to be taken when a customer experiences upset or frustration resulting from a person's behaviour or actions that are not deemed to be Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) or a tenancy breach.
2.	Contractual, Legislative & regulatory requirements
2.1	<p><u>Contractual:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy agreement • Lease • Licence to Occupy <p><u>Legislative:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti -Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 • Children's Act 2004 • Crime and Disorder Act 1998 • Care Act 2014 • Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 • Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 • Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 • Environmental Protection Act 1990 • Equality Act 2010 • General Data Protection Regulation 2018 & Data Protection Act 2018 • Housing Act 1988 • Human Rights Act 1998 • Noise Act 1996 • Protection From Harassment Act 1997 • Protection of Children Act 1978
2.2	<u>Regulatory:</u>
2.2.1	RSH Governance and Financial Viability Standard 2015 (2.1): "Registered providers shall adopt and comply with an appropriate code of governance."
2.2.2	National Housing Federation Code of Governance (2020)
2.2.3	On 24 October 2022 the Housing Ombudsman published a report "Time to be Heard" that particularly focused on how noise complaints are managed by landlords. The

	outcome of the report called for a fresh way of thinking where landlords manage non-statutory noise complaints differently to avoid neighbourhood disputes and to manage expectations. A key aspect of the report recommended that landlord develop a Good Neighbourhood Management Policy, which lead Watford Community Housing (WCH) to develop this policy.
3.	Scope & definitions
3.1	<u>Scope</u>
3.1.1	This Policy applies to the WCH Group, including its subsidiary and joint venture companies, shared owners, market rent tenants and leaseholders. It affects our customers and members of their household.
3.1.2	For incidences that fall under this policy, we will not label someone as an “alleged perpetrator” or “victim”, nor will we be likely to consider using any of our legal tools which are available to use in ASB cases, such as Community Protection Warnings and Notices, Injunctions or Possession Orders. For cases that fall within this policy, we will use the terms: Complainant(s) and Customer(s).
3.2	<u>Definitions</u>
3.2.1	The following (non-exhaustive) list of behaviours and actions fall under the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking • Smoking • Boundaries • Dogs Barking • Cats in gardens • Fences • Untidy Gardens • Cooking smells • Babies crying • Placement of bins • Children playing ball games/bikes • Use of trampolines • People looking/staring at each other • Littering • Working from home • General living noise (flushing toilets, closing doors, talking) • Noise made by a tenant or their household member who has protected characteristics, e.g. a mental health condition or physical disability
3.2.2	The Noise App – a method by which a complainant can record incidences of noise on their mobile phone and to share with their Officer. The Officer will then triage the noise complaint and decide whether this will fall under the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy or the ASB Policy.
3.2.3	Dear Neighbour Card – a template that customers can print off and use to inform a neighbour that they are making a noise that is causing disturbance and upset.
3.2.4	ASB Toolkit – information available to all customers on the WCH website where they can identify what to do when they experience a problem in or around their home.

3.2.5	<p><u>Reminder of Policy Objective</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there is no deliberate intention, the incident will be handled through the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy. • Where there is no deliberate intention, but the behaviour lasts longer than 30 minutes at a time for more than 5 days in a row, this will be handled through the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. • Where there is deliberate intention, the incident will be handled through the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
4. Procedure	
4.1	<p>Reports can be received via any of the following methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Communication: telephone call, in person • Indirect Communication: email, text, WhatsApp, WCH website, DTS, letter, CRM • Referrals from other agencies: Police, Children's/Adult Services/ Environmental Health
4.2	<p><u>Procedure</u></p>
4.2.1	<p>Upon receipt of the report, the Officer will call the customer to gather further information about the problem they are experiencing. The customer will be directed to the ASB Toolkit for advice on how they can respond to the incidences. The Officer will sensitively explain that we are unable to take action on incidences that are listed in point 2.</p>
4.2.2	<p>The deciding factor is when there is no deliberate intention, the incident will be handled through the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy and if the incident is listed under the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking • Smoking • Boundaries • Dogs Barking • Cats in gardens • Fences • Overgrown Gardens • Cooking smells • Babies crying • Placement of bins • Children playing ball games/bikes • Use of trampolines • People looking/staring at each other • Littering • Working from home • General living noise (flushing toilets, closing doors, talking) • One – off celebrations • Noise made by a tenant or their household member who has protected characteristics, e.g. a mental health condition or physical disability
4.2.3	<p>Where there is no deliberate intention, but the behaviour lasts longer than 30 minutes at a time for more than 5 days in a row, this will be handled through the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.</p>

4.2.4	<p>Where there is deliberate intention or criminal acts, the incident will be handled through the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. These include (but is not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual or threatened violence against people or property • Harassment or Hate Crime • Criminal activity • Threats, intimidation or verbal abuse • Vandalism, graffiti and other criminal damage • Drug and alcohol related nuisance • Vehicle-related nuisance • Uncontrolled pets • Arson
4.2.4.1	<p>If the complaint relates to a noise disturbance, the customer will be encouraged to speak to the person/neighbour who is causing the problem. Advice will be given on how to broach this subject and information of the “Dear Neighbour” letter will be shared.</p>
4.2.4.2	<p>The Officer will then give the customer advice on how to download The Noise App and start recording the incidences for a period of 14 days.</p>
4.2.4.3	<p>The Officer will then log the report in CAS in MRI under Noise – Good Neighbourhood Management Policy.</p>
4.2.4.4	<p>The Officer will monitor all recordings over a period of 14 days and make comments in The Noise App every time an email is received to notify them that a new recording has been uploaded.</p>
4.2.4.5	<p>During the 14-day period, if the Officer judges the noise to be a tenancy breach, i.e. before 8am or after 11pm and/or deliberate, the Officer will speak to the person making the noise to discuss the situation and to give advice, e.g., reducing the volume, the use of headphones, carpets, removing shoes, being mindful of others, sourcing anti-vibration mats from GRT. All communication will be supported by a letter to confirm what was discussed and a copy of this will be uploaded to the tenant’s account in MRI/Orchard.</p>
4.2.4.6	<p>If the noise continues, worsens or there is deliberate intent to cause distress, alarm, or harassment the Officer will re-categorise the case to be managed under the ASB Policy in CAS.</p>
4.2.4.7	<p>If after the 14-day period the noise recorded and uploaded to The Noise App demonstrates a non-statutory noise, e.g. “normal living” noises, the Housing Officer will contact the customer to explain that we are unable to take any further action. Advice will then be given regarding the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral back to the ASB Toolkit on the WCH website • Housing Options such as, Mutual Exchange, Rightsizing • Reporting the incident to Environmental Health • Use of noise cancelling headphones, radio/TV to fill the silence during noisier periods • Information on local groups that they can attend • WCH complaints process

<p>4.2.4.8</p> <p>4.2.4.9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Trigger • The Housing Ombudsman <p>The Officer will update the case notes in CAS after every action taken to support the customer.</p> <p>When the case is closed, the Officer will send the complainant a letter to confirm the actions taken and advice provided. This will be saved under the customer's documents in MRI/Orchard.</p>
5.	Diversity and Inclusion Considerations
5.1	WCH will act fairly and consistently in the application of this Policy and will not discriminate against any person on the grounds of their age, race, ethnicity/nationality, gender, religion, sexual orientation, marital/civil partnership status, pregnancy status or disability.
6.	Data Protection Considerations
6.1	Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Data Protection Act 2018 allow agencies to disclose information for the detection or prevention of crime and ASB. These may be relevant legal grounds to rely on in sharing personal data regarding ASB. Alternatively, we may seek to rely on our regulatory duties to provide safe homes and communities under the RSH Neighbourhood and Community Standard. Where we are unable to rely on legal or regulatory grounds, we will need the individual's express written consent (e.g. by email) to share personal information with a third party such as the police or local authority.
6.2	In all cases we will only share personal information necessary in the case and in accordance with the Data Sharing Policy and Procedure. Further advice should be sought where necessary from a WCH Data Champion or the Company Secretary, Performance and Regulation Manager.
7.	Appendices
	Appendix 1 – Dear Neighbour Card Appendix 2 – The Noise App Public Information Handout
8.	Related documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure • Domestic Abuse Policy and Procedure • Vulnerable Customers Policy and Procedure • Responding to Customer Welfare Concerns Procedure • Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk Policy & Procedure • Management of Communal Areas Procedure • Hoarding Policy and Procedure • Harassment and Hate Crime Policy and Procedure • Translation and Interpretation Policy and Procedure • Data Sharing Policy and Procedure • Voids Lettable Standard Policy • Mutual Exchange Policy and Procedure • Rightsizing Policy and Procedure

9.	Monitoring the Effectiveness of this Procedure
9.1	This Procedure will be monitored through quarterly reporting of all referrals made under the Good Neighbourhood Management category and numbers of active cases. The Assistant Director of Housing and the Housing Operations Manager will carry out monthly internal case reviews to assess any training needs among staff and lessons learned for future case-handling.
9.2	<p>Our success in achieving our objectives under this Procedure will be measured in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of cases reported under the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy (including numbers, actions taken and outcomes) • A reduction in the number of cases of anti-social behaviour • A reduction in Customer Complaints • Feedback from Housing Officers relating to time spent managing cases • An increase in customer satisfaction, (e.g. via feedback on where we have provided support) • Improved outcomes for vulnerable customers following involvement of internal or external support services • Effective use of the “Sensitive Let” UDC, placing the right customers in the right homes • A reduction in cases being referred to Environmental Health • A reduction in cases being referred to The Community Trigger • Quarterly meetings with the community safety partnership with a focus on improving our processes for our most vulnerable customers. <p>The Group Director of Customer Services, as the Executive Safeguarding Champion will consider any necessary changes or improvements to the Policy and Procedure accordingly.</p>
10.	Approval
	Approved by: EMT February 2024
	Date of approval: February 2024
	Review date: February 2029
	Policy ‘owner’: Assistant Director of Housing