

Hate Crime Policy

Scope of Policy

This policy sets out the approach of Platform Housing Group (the Group) in relation to dealing with all forms of hate crime.

Applicability

The policy applies to all members of the Group. It is not within the scope of this policy to deal with the following:

- general incidents of anti-social behaviour - as these will be dealt with in accordance with the Group's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy; and
- harassment and intimidation involving employees, these will be addressed through the relevant human resources policies.

The Group has a zero tolerance approach to hate crime and discrimination. We will also seek to protect employees from all forms of abusive behaviour and will follow the appropriate procedures and measures involving harassment and intimidation.

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Group recognises the adverse effects hate crime has on our customers, communities and assets. The aim of this policy is to ensure we minimise this by dealing with incidents effectively and that we meet regulatory and legal requirements. It is important that our neighbourhoods are safe and welcoming places and that we deliver services that are fair and transparent for all our customers.
- 1.2 The Group takes all forms of hate crime seriously, and adopts a zero tolerance approach to incidents of hate crime. This policy outlines the core commitments adopted by all members of the Group to prevent hate crime and to deal effectively with incidents should they occur.
- 1.3 We will meet all legal and regulatory requirements to ensure that our approach reflects best practice.
- 1.4 The Group is committed to working with all partners to prevent hate crime and to provide all victims of hate crime with a sensitive, appropriate service. We recognise that meeting this commitment may require an enhanced response to ensure that we respond promptly and positively in all cases. We will use all available powers and resources to deal effectively with perpetrators of hate crime or harassment, as well as to provide support to victims of hate crime.
- 1.5 This policy has been developed to deal with all forms of hate crime and sets out the principles for addressing and tackling this behaviour. This policy should be considered in conjunction with the Group Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Policy and Diversity and Inclusion Policies and associated policies.

2. Context

- 2.1 This Policy is set within the context of relevant legislation such as the Equality Act 2010 and Criminal Justice Act 2003 as amended.

It also aims to reflect the expectations outlined by the Regulator of Social Housing in relation to the regulatory framework.

- 2.2 The Government defines hate crime as follows:

“Hate crime is defined as any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic”

Challenge it, Report it, Stop it:
The Government’s Plan to Tackle Hate Crime – March 2012

This definition covers five nationally monitored characteristics of disability, gender identity, race and ethnic origin, religious belief or faith and sexual orientation. Hate crimes are therefore distinct from general anti-social behaviour in that they are perceived to be motivated by prejudice or hatred against people with an identifiable characteristic. Hate crimes may also, of course, include hostility or hatred based on other characteristics such as age, gender, political affiliation or vulnerability.

3. Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure that the Group (including customers and employees) works effectively to deal with hate crime and, in particular, to do the following:

- ensure that employees are made aware and trained to identify the needs of victims and witnesses of hate crime whether it is harassment, verbal or physical abuse or any other behaviours deemed to be criminal law, so that they can provide a responsive and effective service whilst respecting the need for sensitivity and confidentiality;
- publicise and promote our policies and procedures, ensuring that the reporting of hate crime is accessible, with clear contact details for reporting incidents, and by offering appropriate support, whether this be solely or in collaboration with appropriate external agencies. We will ensure that all information is written as far as possible in plain English, and will provide information to customers in other formats and languages where required;
- respond swiftly to reports of hate crime;
- victims of hate crime will be dealt with as a priority and safeguarding referrals made to relevant agencies;
- the Group to recognise the seriousness of hate crime and that it is treated accordingly. We also understand that it is significantly under-reported nationally and therefore are taking steps to increase awareness and improve reporting mechanisms internally and externally to relevant agencies; and

- support victims where they are required to give evidence; and monitor cases of hate crime and maintain accurate records.

4. Policy Outline

4.1 We will take the following actions to assist in the prevention of hate crime:

- communicate with customers about their rights and responsibilities, emphasising the importance of allowing people to live peacefully in their homes and neighbourhoods and being a considerate neighbour;
- raise awareness of hate crime among employees and residents;
- support community development, community safety and regeneration initiatives, in partnership with local agencies that will support and strengthen local communities;
- ensure that customer involvement arrangements are inclusive and contribute to the effective tackling of all forms of harassment and hate crime;
- encourage and support victims to report incidents of hate crime;
- challenge any attitudes and behaviours that foster hatred and prejudice, and encourage early intervention to reduce the risk of any incidents escalating; and
- Provide regular training and awareness for employees.

4.2 Dealing with incidents of hate crime

Incidents believed to be motivated by hatred or prejudice directed against any person or group of people based on any of the identifying factors will be classified as a high priority for investigation purposes, irrespective of the nature of the actual behaviour reported. Although the following is not an exhaustive list, incidents of hate crime may comprise, for example, one or more of the following:

- physical attacks on people or property;
- intimidation;
- graffiti;
- arson or attempted arson;
- abusive or threatening language or behaviour; and
- deliberate and targeted acts intended to deter residents from living in their home or to force them to leave.

4.3 We will ensure that we offer a consistent, effective approach to dealing with reports of hate crime Group-wide and specifically will do the following:

- investigate every case of harassment and hate crime reported where the alleged perpetrator and/or victim is a tenant or leaseholder with the Group, or receives a service from the Group;
- when an incident is reported, we will contact the person reporting it within one working day to take details of the incident and agree next steps;

- have a victim led approach and encourage victims to report the incident to the Police;
- remove any offensive graffiti within 24 hours of it being reported, if it is on our land. We will also deal with any related emergency repairs needed within 24 hours, if the customer lives in one of our properties;
- provide a range of options to help support victims of hate crime. In cases where the safety and wellbeing of the victim(s) is at risk, the Group will offer support in the current home (including adding extra security where needed), or through provision of alternative accommodation where practicable. This will depend on the wishes of the victim;
- offer support to witnesses of the incident and other family members, including meeting with them regularly;
- work with the Police and other agencies to resolve cases of hate crime and help reduce it;
- review hate crime data quarterly through our Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group;
- in line with the General Data Protection Regulation share information in line with good practice and any agreed protocols; whilst respecting confidentiality;
- take firm action against the perpetrator(s) as appropriate and enforce conditions of tenancy. This could include either early informal intervention, or a full range of civil legal remedies including injunction and possession proceedings;
- seek feedback from victims to monitor effectively their satisfaction with the service provided; and
- undertake case audits to review cases for examples of best practice and as a learning tool Group-wide.

4.4 We will report on the number of hate crime incidents ensuring that all data is anonymous and that we comply at all times with the Group's Policy and Procedure on Data Protection.

5. Legal Remedies

5.1 Where appropriate, proportionate and evidence has been provided to support legal action. The Group will seek legal advice and consider taking legal action against the perpetrator(s) causing hate crime harassment. Action taken by the Group will be assessed on the seriousness of the case, the level of evidence provided, in accordance with The Anti- Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and any other relevant legislation.

6. Equality and Diversity

6.1 The main legislative framework relating to equality and diversity include:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

- Equality Act 2010
- The Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013
- Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- Criminal Justice Act 2003
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Children Act 1989

- 6.2 We are committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of their colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or belief, family circumstances or offending history, as referred to in our relevant Group policies. Our aim is to ensure that our policies and procedures do not create an unfair disadvantage for anyone, either directly or indirectly. We will ensure that services take into account diversity to ensure no one is excluded.
- 6.3 Equality and data privacy impact assessments have been undertaken in respect of this policy and which identified no negative impacts on any person or group with a protected characteristic as a result of this policy.
- 6.4 The Group aims to meet the needs of its customers by providing an excellent service. However, it is acknowledged that occasionally things go wrong and customers may wish to complain. Should the need arise to make a complaint, please refer to the Group's Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

7. Performance Management

- 7.1 The operation of this policy will be managed through a comprehensive procedure and Key Performance Indicators. The procedure will provide employees with detailed, timetabled guidance for dealing with hate crime in a consistent manner.
- 7.2 The Group aims to communicate directly with victims of hate crime who report an incident. The case will be logged on performance management system within 24 hours and will be referred to Special Case Officers to investigate and contact the victim. Where necessary, a risk assessment will be completed, where appropriate, the case will be referred to the Group's Preventative Enforcement Group Panel. (PEG); where Specialist Case Officers, Neighbourhood Officers and partner organisations will be invited to contribute, monitor, review and make recommendations.

8. Monitoring and Review

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years or on the introduction of new legislation or best practice guidelines, whichever is the sooner.
- 8.2 Approved documents are valid for use after their approval date and remain in force beyond any expiry of their review date until a new version is available.

9. Associated Documents/Policies

9.1 List of documents/associated policies/publications:

- Regulator of Social Housing – Regulatory Framework for Social Housing
- Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Policy
- Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy
- General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016
- Human Rights at Home (Equality and Human Rights Commission)
- “Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government’s Plan to Tackle Hate Crime” HM Government, March 2012
- “Hidden in Plain Sight”, (2011, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
- The Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Criminal Justice Act 2003
- Terrorism Act 2006

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