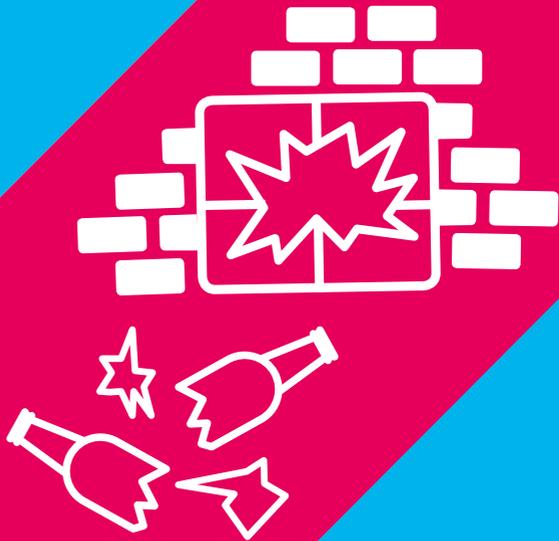




Metropolitan
Thames Valley

Dealing with anti-social behaviour



www.mtvh.co.uk

Dealing with anti-social behaviour

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1.0 Introduction

At Metropolitan Thames Valley (MTVH), we believe everyone has the right to live how they want to – as long as they don't spoil the quality of life of others. We expect our customers to consider and respect their neighbours and community.

This leaflet explains:

- What anti-social behaviour (ASB) is, as well as other types of harassment.
- What to do if you're experiencing anti-social behaviour.
- How we can help you.
- What you can do to prevent it.

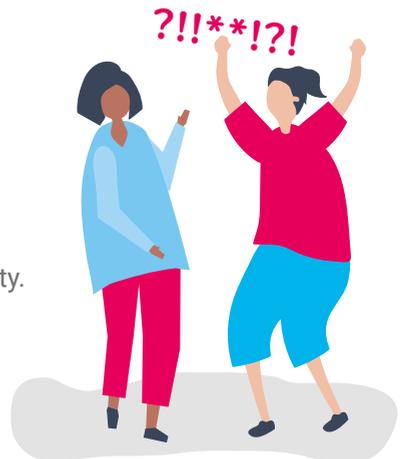
Our customers should feel safe in their homes and communities. We work with other agencies such as local authorities and the police to tackle and prevent anti-social behaviour. We know our customers have diverse needs and we look for solutions that respect their different circumstances.

2.0 What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour is behaviour that has caused, or is likely to cause annoyance, nuisance, alarm, harassment or harm to someone in their home, neighbourhood or community.

Examples of anti-social behaviour may include:

- Intimidation, verbal abuse or making threats.
- Harassment.
- Persistent noise and rowdy behaviour.
- Vandalism, graffiti or criminal damage to property.
- Criminal behaviour.



3.0 What is not anti-social behaviour?

Some behaviours may be annoying, but they are not considered ASB. For example:

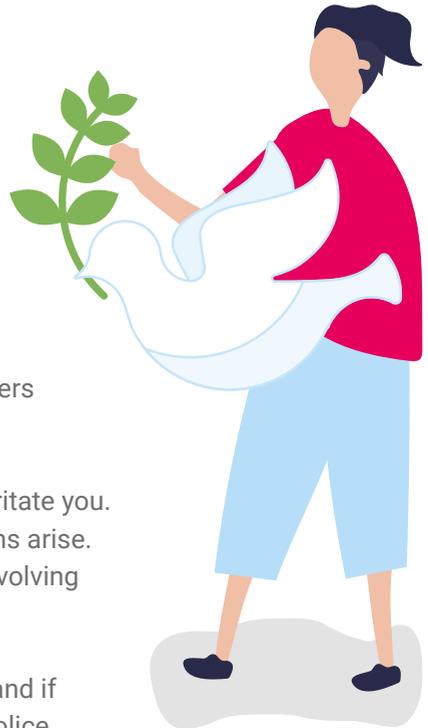
- Babies crying.
- Cooking odours.
- Normal behaviour happening at unusual times due to different working patterns e.g. people working overtime (provided attempts are made to minimise disturbance).
- One-off parties (where a disturbance is unlikely to happen often).
- Clash of lifestyles. For example, some people are more sociable than others, and may enjoy entertaining their friends from time to time, but this does not mean they are engaging in anti-social behaviour.
- Children playing.
- Minor personal differences.

4.0 Dealing with anti-social behaviour

We expect all our customers, their households (including children and pets) and visitors to consider and respect their neighbours and others in their community.

At times other people's children or pets may irritate you. Try speaking to your neighbours when problems arise. It is better to resolve issues privately before involving any other agencies.

Please report incidents to us as they happen, and if a crime has been committed, report it to the police.



4.1 What you can do

We do not have the same powers as the police and are not able to investigate criminal behaviour.

Support us to take legal action if necessary, by providing incident logs, witness statements and giving evidence at court hearings.

Be aware of the terms and conditions of your tenancy agreement.

4.2 What we can do to help

Wherever possible, our staff will try to resolve disputes informally and support those involved in resolving differences. We will offer mediation as a possible resolution, but we know this may not always be appropriate.

We will work with the police (or without the police) to agree Acceptable Behaviour Contracts with alleged perpetrators.

We will take legal action if there is evidence of serious and prolonged anti-social behaviour. This could include applying for an injunction.

We can also apply to the County Court for a possession order on the property; tenants who are evicted for ASB are deemed as intentionally homeless and the council may not have a duty to re-house them in the future.

Please be aware that we need substantial evidence before we can take legal action and we rely on your support to gather as much evidence as possible.



IMPORTANT:

We will not start legal action until we have examined the situation, considered the evidence and are confident action will succeed.

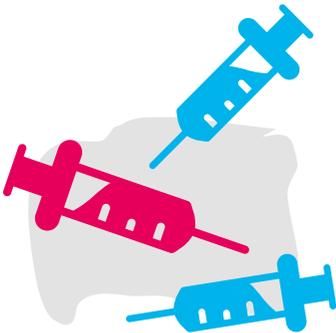
4.3 How long it takes us to respond

For **urgent** (high priority) issues we will make initial contact with you within 24 hours.

Urgent issues include violence, hate crime, vandalism causing danger, drug dealing, offensive graffiti or imminent threats to safety.

For **non-urgent** (standard) issues we will contact you within five days.

Non-urgent ASB cases include unreasonable behaviour, intimidation, suspicion of drug dealing or other illegal activity, inconsiderate household noise, dog nuisance, inconsiderate parking, non-offensive graffiti and vandalism.



5.0 Respecting your neighbours

Many cases of anti-social behaviour can be prevented by taking the right actions at an early stage. Often talking to your neighbour first will resolve the problem quicker.

You can show respect for your neighbours by considering how your behaviour may impact them:

- DIY and other noisy household jobs (including everyday jobs like using the vacuum cleaner) could impact those around you, particularly if you are living in a flat or maisonette, where noise travels easily.
- Let your neighbours know if you are planning to have a party in your home and limit the noise between the hours of 11pm and 7am.
- Place noisy household items such as televisions, radios and speakers away from adjoining walls and limit the noise during late hours. Avoid loud and excessive slamming of doors.
- Park your vehicles considerately.

5.1 When you have visitors

You are responsible for the behaviour of your family, visitors and pets (you require written permission to keep a pet in your home).

If anybody visiting your home causes nuisance or harassment to other people, MTVH may consider taking action against you.



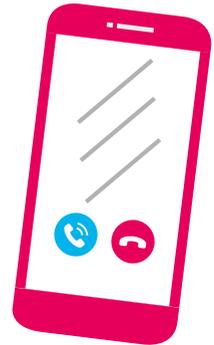
6.0 How to report ASB

There are a number of ways you can report anti-social behaviour, including: in person, through our Customer Service Centre on **020 3535 3535** (if urgent) or online on our website.

Your local authority is a key source of help and support. It has statutory powers to deal with issues such as noise nuisance, rubbish, fly tipping and abandoned vehicles. You can find details of your local council at www.direct.gov.uk

Contact your local neighbourhood policing team who are able to tackle issues such as criminal damage, graffiti and anti-social behaviour.

In an emergency, contact the police on **999**. The police non-emergency number is **101** or report non-urgent ASB issues online.



7.0 Different types of anti-social behaviour

Noise nuisance

Some noise – such as loud music, parties and car alarms – can be classed as statutory noise nuisance, so your local council may be able to help. You can also report noise nuisance to MTVH using The Noise App at www.thenoiseapp.co.uk

MTVH may share this with the local council and recordings may be used as evidence to obtain a Noise Abatement Notice, seize equipment and prosecute the people responsible. MTVH can then use this to initiate tenancy action.

Hate-related incidents and harassment

If you experience prejudice or are a victim of an incident as a result of your ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, age or disability, it could be described as a hate-related incident. If you are targeted because of the group you belong to, or your status, this could also be a hate-related incident.

Hate-related incidents can take many forms: often they can be the same as other anti-social behaviour except that they could be motivated (or perceived to be motivated) by hate or prejudice.



Dealing with anti-social behaviour

We know that due to the nature of hate-related incidents, victims may find it difficult to report it to us or the police. In some instances perpetrators take advantage of this, believing that hate-related incidents won't be reported.

You do not have to prove that the incident was motivated by prejudice; if you, or any other person, believes that it was, then we will deal with it as a hate-related incident.

MTVH takes a zero tolerance approach to hate-related issues. All hate-related incidents, without exception, are treated as serious and will be investigated.

Harassment takes many forms: verbal or physical abuse; property damage; or a targeted campaign intended to harm, intimidate or distress a person or group of people.

We treat harassment in confidence and as urgent anti-social behaviour cases.

8.0 Our staff

We will not tolerate any acts of violence, threats of violence or harassment towards our staff. We will take action against anyone guilty of this behaviour. If it is of a criminal nature we will involve the police.

9.0 Further information

Other agencies that may be able to provide information about dealing with anti-social behaviour include:

- Victim support on the government's website <http://www.gov.uk/get-support-as-a-victim-of-crime> or Victim Support Helpline 0808 1689 111
- The Crime Stoppers (www.crimestoppers.co.uk) a charity helping to prevent and solve crimes. You can share information anonymously about crimes affecting you and your community.



