



Facing up to a new reality for tackling antisocial behaviour

**A briefing by the Social Landlords
Crime and Nuisance Group**

November 2011



Foreword

Dear colleague

This paper reflects the key messages that SLCNG feels external partners and agencies, especially the Government, need to hear from Social Landlords.

It is disappointing that after 16 years of being more engaged in tackling ASB than almost any other agency, our role and our significance still remains unrecognised by so many partners and agencies.

This paper therefore contains a synopsis of the key points which we will be seeking to make on behalf of social landlords to others, including Government departments, involved in ASB. This will inform our communication strategy going forward.

This paper is based on the inputs, opinions and experiences of SLCNG members and is therefore representative in the broadest sense of the views of our membership.

In this time of structural and financial change, it is crucial that we get these messages across, particularly to individuals in partner agencies who do not have the knowledge and experience of what social landlords can contribute to the ASB agenda.

Roger Griffiths

Chair of SLCNG

Introduction

Tackling antisocial behaviour is core business for social landlords.

Social landlords, alone and in partnership with residents and partner agencies, have been in the vanguard of developing and implementing effective responses to antisocial behaviour for almost two decades. Key to this success is the SLCNG's ability through its members to shape policy and practice and evidence what works on the ground.

During those two decades we have experienced change regularly. Experience shows that those changes frequently concentrated on structures and process, lacking focus on the practical effects on the ground. As we now enter a period of unprecedented change for how antisocial behaviour is managed, it is essential that there is a much clearer focus on outcomes. Failure to do so could lead to an increase in arguments around tactics and funding at the expense of practical action.

The economic outlook demands a much keener focus on all agencies collaborating effectively at the local level to maximise the benefits of the available resource and to deliver efficient, effective and high quality services for residents.

Social landlords are very good at resolving cases of antisocial behaviour and have a huge contribution to make to the common objective of dealing ever more effectively with the crime and antisocial behaviour issues that concern people locally.

This briefing sets out how social housing landlords can contribute and respond by:

- Identifying the key issues to be addressed;
- Summarising social housing's commitment to tackling antisocial behaviour;
- Recommending positive changes that government can effect; and
- Setting out the social landlords' offer on antisocial behaviour to local communities, partners and other key stakeholders and government (local and national).

Developed with SLCNG members, it's Policy Advisory Group and Sounding Board, this briefing reflects the experiences and opinions of a cross section of social housing organisations and highly experienced ASB practitioners.

The briefing concludes with a selection of short case studies illustrating how social landlords are exercising leadership, working collaboratively and delivering positive outcomes for individuals, for neighbourhoods and for partners.

1 Key issues to be addressed

Social housing is too often stereotyped and misrepresented by politicians, the media and commentators as though it and its residents generally are a significant contributor to disorder and other social ills.

Inclusive partnerships are critical to effective delivery but social landlords (especially housing associations) are denied adequate access to essential partnership activities as a result of statutory exclusions or restrictions. This situation arises, we would argue, most probably from a failure to understand the social landlord role rather than a positive decision to exclude or restrict. The arrival of Police and Crime Commissioners in 12 months' time will alter fundamentally the dynamics of partnerships and it is vital that the role of housing as a positive contributor is understood and involved.

Housing landlords make a unique contribution to tackling anti-social behaviour through the personal contracts they hold with tenants through their tenancy agreements. The Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction (ASBI) has been a highly effective tool and we would urge that this power is retained.

The imperative of protecting people from harm is universally accepted and there is confidence that it will, in the most serious cases, continue to be resourced appropriately. Although the importance of preventive work (such as Family Intervention Projects) is acknowledged intellectually, there is growing concern that preventive services are seen as too expensive per capita and de-prioritised when it comes to the allocation of reduced resources.

2 Social landlords' commitment

Through the promotion and adoption of [*RESPECT ASB Charter for Housing*](#) we are committed to delivering high quality antisocial behaviour services with a key focus on achieving positive outcomes for residents.

Commensurate with our responsibilities as social businesses and tailoring our approach to meet local needs we will:

- Demonstrate leadership and strategic commitment to preventing and tackling antisocial behaviour
- Provide accessible and accountable antisocial behaviour services
- Take prompt, appropriate and decisive action to deal with antisocial behaviour and to protect individuals and communities
- Support victims and witnesses, focusing on identifying and minimising risk
- Encourage individual and community responsibility
- Focus clearly on prevention and early intervention and support perpetrators to change their behaviour
- Ensure that a value for money approach is embedded in our antisocial behaviour services

3 What social landlords will do

To further improve the efficiency and value for money of local services social landlords will:

- Work collaboratively at the local level, including the use of landlord consortia
- Proactively share data and information to complement those of the police and Police and Crime Commissioners.
- Exercise their ability to take a leadership role in communities that is appropriate to the scale of their local operations.
- Continue to share with and make available to local partners expertise, resources and services to prevent and to act appropriately against antisocial behaviour.
- Continue to make appropriate use of the full range of formal and informal interventions to resolve cases effectively and further reduce the use of evictions. Evictions for antisocial behaviour have reduced consistently since 2005 and, in one study, accounted for just 0.14% of the actions taken by social landlords. This decrease in evictions coincides with an increased use by landlords of the highly effective Anti Social Behaviour Injunction (ASBI) over a similar period.

4 What Government needs to do

To maximise the benefit of social landlords' proactive commitment to building safer, active communities, the SLCNG recommends that government:

- Be far more balanced in its understanding of and approach to social housing and portray accurately the positive contribution it makes to improving outcomes for individuals, families and communities. Far from being a contributor to antisocial behaviour and social dysfunction, social housing is critical to the resolution of such issues locally.
- Take action to ensure that all social landlords are included consistently in all strategic planning and review processes relating to the promotion of community safety and/or the management of antisocial behaviour. In particular, re-examine the status of all social landlords in relevant statutory and strategic partnerships.
- Establish a joint ministerial group to understand multi-agency functioning and clarify the roles of all agencies and produce a cross-departmental action plan
- Ensure attention is paid to how available resources are distributed and that prevention is prioritised appropriately at strategic levels.

Case studies

Good Neighbour Agreement - Liverpool

In 2010, Liverpool Mutual Homes (LMH) and the Home Office worked with residents on the Westminster Estate in North Liverpool to develop a Good Neighbour Agreement.

The Good Neighbour agreement sees LMH, Liverpool City Council, Merseyside Police, the Westminster Estate Tenants and Residents Association (WETRA), and the local Rathbone Youth Outreach group joining forces to reduce crime and ASB, improve service delivery and engage the wider community.

WETRA members are the eyes and ears of the community and the first point of contact for other residents.

Residents outline their priorities at regular monitoring meetings and promote residents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their family members and visitors. Residents are also charged with keeping communal areas tidy, controlling pets, organising activities that represent the interests of the whole community and keeping other residents informed.

LMH is working with partners and residents across the city to develop similar agreements.

For further information email Andrew.Oates@liverpoolmh.co.uk
Gerry.Brennan@liverpoolmh.co.uk

Project Solace - multi-agency team tackling antisocial behaviour

Project Solace was established by Gloucester City Homes in partnership with Gloucestershire Constabulary and Gloucester City Council's Community Safety Partnership to tackle anti-social behaviour.

The team's sole purpose is to tackle high level antisocial behaviour and prevent incidents of antisocial behaviour across Gloucester, including within the private sector.

Project Solace works with local communities and partner agencies to reduce antisocial behaviour through providing a holistic, effective and swift service.

In October 2011, Gloucester City Homes' 'Project Solace' obtained the first landlord led gang injunctions in the country.

For further information email victoria.king-lowel@gloscityhomes.co.uk

Consortium of social landlords – Coventry

Established in 2000 the Coventry Consortium of Social Landlords is made up of ten housing associations that manage between them around 25,000 Coventry homes.

The consortium provides all 10 housing association members with a specialist service to tackle anti-social behaviour and provides collective representation on Coventry's community safety partnership

The Coventry consortium is funded by contributions from member associations and employs a full-time coordinator.

Members and partners report:

- better partnership and team work between agencies
- improved information sharing between agencies
- better coordination of preventative action
- more effective enforcement action

Coventry's consortium model of specialist service provision is an approach that is transferable elsewhere.

For further information email kam.sidhu@whitefriarshousing.co.uk

Housing high risk offenders - ROOTS Project

New Charter Housing Trust's ROOTS project addresses the housing needs of high risk offenders, supports the public protection imperative and maintains community confidence.

ROOTS supports a maximum of 12 clients at any time and is staffed by a team of two; one from New Charter, the other seconded from Probation.

Clients are subject to rigorous assessment.

Support is provided from the point of acceptance.

Suitable housing is identified and a robust Support Plan put in place.

The project also helps clients reintegrate with their families; assists them in accessing treatment for drug and alcohol, and into employment.

For further information email kerrie.parry@newcharter.co.uk

Community Improvement Partnership - Glasgow

The Community Improvement Partnership, involving Glasgow Housing Association, Strathclyde Police, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, was established in Glasgow to undertake joint working practices between the three main key partners and other agencies to identify community concerns, establish a "customer first approach" and produce sustainable solutions to target antisocial behaviour whilst addressing vulnerabilities that build public confidence, reduce the fear of crime and increase community reassurance.

This approach has allowed the organisations to come together in a truly meaningful way at both operational and strategic levels, developing one set of combined and jointly relevant priorities. All partners now share information and jointly target individuals and families who cause a disproportionate amount of harm, whilst also identifying those who are the most vulnerable.

For further information email bryan.healy@gha.org.uk

About the Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group

The Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group (SLCNG) is the UK's leading housing based group focusing on nuisance and anti-social behaviour. Our 300 plus member organisations manage in excess of 3.5 million homes throughout the United Kingdom.

Our purpose is to:

- Share best practice on tackling anti-social behaviour
- Influence national policy and practice
- Drive performance management and improvement
- Assist the professional development of practitioners
- Promote practical and effective joint working throughout the UK

Over the last sixteen years we have been involved with the development of all the major legislative powers and statutory guidance relating to antisocial behaviour.

Recently, we have worked closely with and supported DCLG, the Home Office and partners on a range of important initiatives, including:

- introducing *Respect: ASB Charter for Housing*
- developing and promoting Community Harm Statements to highlight the impact of harm caused to a community by anti-social behaviour
- developing and promoting effective ASB case management principles to better manage risk and protect people from harm.
- supporting call handling and risk assessment trials running in eight separate police force areas in England and Wales.

Membership is open to all organisations providing or managing social housing and to all other organisations with an interest in tackling anti-social behaviour, protecting communities and promoting a culture of respect.

For more information contact:

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Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group

The Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group is a
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