



Neighbourhood Safety Policy

| | |
|--|---|
| Policy: | Neighbourhood Safety Policy- APPROVED |
| Version number: | 1.0 |
| Date effective from: | 13 February 2019 |
| Policy Owner: | Operations Manager |
| Policy Author(s): | Operations Manager, Policy Analyst |
| Approved by: | Executive Director (Operations), Executive Director of Corporate Services |
| Accountable Executive Director | Executive Director (Operations) |
| Equality Assessment: | Yes |
| Next review of policy due: | 2022 |
| Policy Grade: | 2 |
| For the full version history of this policy, see the back page | |

Please avoid referring to printed versions of this policy.

Printed versions may quickly go out of date –contact the Policy Team for support and advice.

Contents Page

| | | |
|------|---|----|
| 1.0 | Introduction and Scope | 3 |
| 2.0 | Links to organisational goals..... | 4 |
| 3.0 | Regulation and legislation..... | 5 |
| 4.0 | Our Policy statement | 5 |
| 5.0 | Roles and responsibilities | 8 |
| 6.0 | Monitoring and review..... | 8 |
| 7.0 | Confidentiality | 9 |
| 8.0 | Vulnerable Tenants..... | 9 |
| 9.0 | Policy Outcomes..... | 10 |
| 10.0 | Records | 11 |
| 11.0 | Escalation..... | 11 |
| 12.0 | Qualifications and Training | 11 |
| | Appendix 1 – Legislation and Neighbourhood and Community Standard . | 12 |
| | Neighbourhood and Community Standard..... | 12 |
| | Appendix 2 - Local Service Offers | 14 |

1.0 Introduction and Scope

1.1 This document outlines our policy in relation to Neighbourhood Safety including hate crime/incidents, malicious complaints and illegal money lending. It should be read in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Safety Toolkit, Hate Crime/Incidents Toolkit, Malicious Complaints Toolkit and the Illegal Money Lending Toolkit. Gentoo Group want to ensure that everyone within our neighbourhoods feels safe and secure. Part of this involves preventing and minimising anti-social behaviour (ASB). There is no commonly agreed definition of ASB; therefore this Policy draws on the definition in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which defines ASB as:

- *“conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person,*
- *conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person’s occupation of residential premises, or*
- *conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.”*

1.2 Our stance on hate crime/incidents is also covered by this Policy. We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and we will not tolerate discrimination against anyone on the grounds of disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender identity. We will work with partner organisations to support those affected by hate crimes/incidents and aim to strike a balance between prevention and early intervention. We want to raise awareness, build the confidence of victims and encourage reporting.

1.3 A malicious complaint is defined as a complaint which cannot be easily proven or dis-proven and which can be submitted with the purpose of causing harm or discredit to others. The making of malicious and vexatious complaints can constitute a form of harassment and ASB.

This Policy seeks to ensure that our tenants and staff are protected from harassment and intimidation caused by malicious complaints.

1.4 Illegal money lenders, often referred to as loan sharks are those who lend money illegally without the correct authorisation from the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) required by the Financial Services and Marketing Act 2000. Because loan sharks are illegal their debts are not usually enforceable by law and they will resort to harassment and intimidation. Harassment is against the law and Gentoo are working with the Government's Illegal Money Lending Team to support victims and prosecute offenders.

1.5 The scope of this Policy covers:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Gentoo Group | X |
| Gentoo Homes | X |
| Gentoo Developments Ltd | |
| Gentoo Genie | |

It applies to:

| | |
|---|---|
| General Needs rented properties | X |
| Supported Housing | X |
| Sheltered Housing | X |
| Leasehold/Shared ownership | X |
| Rent to Buy properties | X |
| Market rented properties (domestic) | X |
| Temporary Accommodation | X |
| Stock owned but not managed by the Group | X |
| Communal Areas, including those relating to Leasehold/Shared Ownership properties | X |
| Commercial Property (offices, depots etc) | X |
| Stock managed by Gentoo on behalf of a third party | X |
| Garages and outbuildings | X |
| Remote plant (district heating, electrical pumps etc) | |
| Curtilage | |

2.0 Links to organisational goals

2.1 Our Vision and Values set the direction and culture of the Group. They ensure that the business is aligned around the desire to create sustainable homes and communities and to improve the lives of our

customers. The Vision and Values ensure that all of our people understand Gentoo's ethos and are clear about what is expected of them and the contribution they can make.

Vision:

| |
|--|
| Great Homes - Strong Communities - Inspired People |
|--|

Values:

| |
|--------------------|
| Do the right thing |
|--------------------|

| |
|-------------------|
| Make a difference |
|-------------------|

| |
|---------------|
| Work together |
|---------------|

| |
|---------------|
| Keep learning |
|---------------|

| |
|---------------------|
| Give all you've got |
|---------------------|

2.2 This Policy operates within our Vision and Values and links to the Neighbourhood Safety Toolkit, Hate Crime/Incidents Toolkit, Malicious Complaints Toolkit, Illegal Money Lending Toolkit, Vulnerability Policy and Toolkit, Safeguarding Adults and Risk Policy and Toolkit, Safeguarding Children Policy and Domestic Abuse Policy. This policy has due regard to the Group's risk register and sets out to mitigate the following risk:

- Failure to protect vulnerable customers

3.0 Regulation and legislation

3.1 The Executive Director (Operations) will ensure this policy has regard to all legislation, regulation and best practice. This policy helps fulfil the RSH Regulatory code, in particularly the Neighbourhood and Community Standard. The regulation and legislation applicable to this policy is attached in Appendix 1.

4.0 Our Policy statement

4.1 Feeling safe and secure increases the sustainability of neighbourhoods and promotes community cohesion, health and wellbeing. As part of our

Group Vision we will strive to ensure that we build strong communities making sure that our homes and communities are great places to live.

- 4.2 To help people feel safe and secure, we are committed to preventing and tackling incidences and perceptions of ASB. To do this successfully, we aim to strike a balance between prevention and early intervention, support and enforcement. We will take prompt, appropriate and decisive action to deal with ASB before it escalates. We will investigate and intervene early where there are incidences of ASB, utilising mediation where appropriate, which is tailored towards the needs of the tenant and their families to prevent matters from escalating. We will also instigate preventative and proactive services or activities where they are needed. We will have in place effective support mechanisms tailored to the victim, the perpetrator and where appropriate seek to take a whole family approach. We will take prompt, appropriate and proportionate action, including legal action, where necessary.
- 4.3 As a Group we value and cultivate diversity and recognise that hate crimes/incidents undermine neighbourhood cohesion and feelings of safety and security of residents. We will therefore not tolerate hate crimes/incidents in any form. We aim to ensure that no one is treated less favourably on the grounds of disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender identity.
- 4.4 When a complaint is considered to be malicious and false, or we believe that it has been made with the deliberate intention of getting another person into trouble, we may consider the complainant to be guilty of harassment and ASB, and would take the appropriate action against them in accordance with this Policy and the Malicious Complaints Toolkit. In addition, this Policy and relevant Toolkit acknowledges the need to deal with anonymous complaints vigilantly. Anonymous complaints are often submitted by victims of ASB in fear or repercussions but they can be difficult to substantiate and may be a sign of malice.

- 4.5 Illegal money lending and the harassment that follows is against the law and constitutes a clear breach of tenancy. Gentoo may take possession action against any tenant who:
- Is found guilty of illegal money lending and/or;
 - Is found guilty of being associated with the act of illegal money lending (including collecting money or harassing victims) and/or;
 - Has allowed their home to be used by others found guilty of illegal money lending or harassment and/or;
 - Is using the proceeds of illegal money lending as a financial income, this is known as Money Laundering ***please see the Anti-Money Laundering Policy.***
- 4.6 Our past experience has shown us that partnership working is paramount in reducing ASB and increasing feelings of safety and security. We will continue to work closely within existing partnerships, such as the Safer Sunderland Partnership, while looking to develop a shared understanding of responsibilities with other local organisations where it will add value.
- 4.7 In order to achieve our aspirations, we seek to empower neighbourhoods to feel safe and secure. This will involve listening to our neighbourhoods and engaging them in a meaningful way to reduce incidences and perceptions of ASB, and inspiring confidence by communicating our actions to them and delivering a service of which we can be proud. Our success will be measured in terms of the action we take, and how safe and secure our neighbourhoods feel as a result.
- 4.8 We are committed to the principles of diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation and aim to:
- Meet the needs and choice of people from all backgrounds
 - Ensure that our services are relevant, responsive and sensitive to the needs of our existing and future tenants

- Ensure that all sections of the community in which we work have equal access to our services.

4.9 Our Neighbourhood Safety Policy and associated Toolkits will ensure that tenants are treated as individuals with fairness and respect. An Equality Assessment has been completed on this policy.

5.0 Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The Executive Director (Operations) is accountable for ensuring this policy has regard to all legislation, regulation and best practice and for ensuring implementation of this policy effectively.

5.2 The Director (Customer) is accountable for adequate resourcing and having effective processes in place to implement the policy.

5.3 The Heads of Operations are responsible for the day to day delivery of this policy but more specifically, the Operations Manager (Neighbourhood Safety and Safeguarding) is the operational lead.

5.4 All Gentoo staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy and the associated toolkits.

6.0 Monitoring and review

6.1 This Policy and the associated Toolkits will be reviewed every 3 years unless business needs or legislative changes dictate that we review it before this time.

6.2 This Policy may be subject to an audit in line with the internal audit plan.

6.3 This Policy is a grade 2 and changes will need the approval of the Executive Director (Operations) and the Executive Director of Corporate Services.

6.4 The Local Service Offers can be found in Appendix 1.

7.0 Confidentiality

7.1 We will treat all information received from people reporting cases of ASB, hate crime/incidents, malicious complaints and illegal money lending in a private and confidential manner.

7.2 We will only disclose information to perpetrators, legal representatives, or other third parties once we have the consent of the complainant to do so.

7.3 We may however, have a legal obligation to pass information on, for example to the Police or Together for Children.

8.0 Vulnerable Tenants

8.1 Gentoo aims to provide the highest level of service and care to its vulnerable tenants and service users. We are committed to developing and providing high quality homes and services that meet the needs of vulnerable people, whilst ensuring that they can live independent and full lives wherever possible.

Vulnerability can include:

- Drug and alcohol dependency
- Learning disabilities
- Physical disabilities
- Physical or mental illness
- Change in life circumstances (e.g. relationship breakdown)
- Debt problems
- Illegal money lending
- Hoarding
- Bereavement

8.2 Gentoo regards the safety and protection of vulnerable adults and children as paramount within all of our activities whether this involves direct or indirect contact, we therefore have in place a Safeguarding Children Policy and a Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy.

8.3 There is a responsibility of 'Duty of Care' which is shared by all staff and volunteers, at all levels, to take appropriate action where there is a suspicion or concern that a tenant is vulnerable and where there is a suspicion, concern or allegation of abuse. Staff must raise their concerns about abuse immediately.

9.0 Policy Outcomes

9.1 We aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Ensure that everyone within our neighbourhoods feel safe and secure by preventing and tackling incidences and perceptions of ASB
- Empower neighbourhoods by engaging with them and communicate our actions where appropriate
- Encourage reporting- this will enable us to have a better understanding of issues affecting our neighbourhoods.
- Respond to complaints of ASB quickly and effectively by using a range of methods including prevention, early intervention, support and enforcement
- Provide timely updates to complainants to build confidence and manage expectations
- Enable preventative and proactive services or activities to reduce or prevent the likelihood of ASB
- Offer appropriate support and advice to victims and perpetrators of ASB and where appropriate seek to take a whole family approach
- Take prompt, appropriate and proportionate action, including legal action, where necessary
- Continue to work effectively with existing partners and develop a shared understanding of responsibilities with other local organisations where it will add value.

- Provide a service that is sensitive to the needs of all people, regardless of disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Take a victim centred approach: by investigating all reported incidents as cases of hate crime/incidents if the victim or another person perceives this to be the case.
- Deter false complaints and allegations.
- Deal with genuine complaints only and identify those which are made with the intention of causing harm or discredit others.
- Provide an impartial and non-judgemental service during the complaints process.

10.0 Records

- 10.1 All records regarding neighbourhood safety are held on Streetwise. Breaches are case managed within this system. Some records may be recorded in Orchard if necessary.

11.0 Escalation

- 11.1 Where the Board has concerns about significant issues in any area of compliance with neighbourhood safety they must escalate these concerns to the Executive Director (Operations).
- 11.2 Where a member of staff has concerns about significant issues in any area of compliance with neighbourhood safety they must escalate these concerns through their line management structure, ultimately to the Executive Team.
- 11.3 Where a member of staff continues to have concerns about significant issues in any area of compliance with neighbourhood safety they should refer to the Group Whistleblowing Policy for further guidance.

12.0 Qualifications and Training

- 12.1 All relevant staff will receive training in relation to neighbourhood safety.

Appendix 1 – Legislation and Neighbourhood and Community Standard

This is a general overview and should not be used as a substitute for seeking legal advice in specific cases. If there is any doubt about the law relevant to a particular case, legal advice should be sought from the Legal Team

This Policy helps to fulfil the following legislation:

- The Housing Act 1985, 1988, 1996 & 2004
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2006 & 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Hate Crime: The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Policing and Crime Act 2009
- Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Criminal Justice Act 2003
- Financial Services and Marketing Act 2000

Neighbourhood and Community Standard

1.3 Anti-social behaviour

Registered providers shall work in partnership with other agencies to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhoods where they own homes.

2.3 Anti-social behaviour

2.3.1 Registered providers shall publish a policy on how they work with relevant partners to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) in areas where they own properties.

2.3.2 In their work to prevent and address ASB, registered providers shall demonstrate:

(a) that tenants are made aware of their responsibilities and rights in relation to ASB

(b) strong leadership, commitment and accountability on preventing and tackling ASB that reflects a shared understanding of responsibilities with other local agencies

(c) a strong focus exists on preventative measures tailored towards the needs of tenants and their families

(d) prompt, appropriate and decisive action is taken to deal with ASB before it escalates, which focuses on resolving the problem having regard to the full range of tools and legal powers available

(e) all tenants and residents can easily report ASB, are kept informed about the status of their case where responsibility rests with the organisation and are appropriately signposted where it does not

(f) provision of support to victims and witnesses

Appendix 2 - Local Service Offers

Description

We will:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Neighbourhood Safety - to help our neighbours feel safe and secure by preventing and minimising anti-social behaviour (ASB)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer appropriate support and advice to victims and perpetrators of ASB and domestic abuse• Take relevant action specific to any reports of ASB or domestic abuse received• Provide you with a timely response to any reports of ASB or domestic abuse received |
|---|---|

Version Control

| Version | Reason | Issuer | Date |
|---------|---|-----------------|----------|
| 0.2 | Amended after customer consultation session | Sarah Treadwell | 19/11/18 |
| 0.3 | Added in paragraph about confidentiality, escalation and training | Sarah Treadwell | 26/11/18 |
| 0.4 | Amended as per Lucy Malarkey's comments | Sarah Treadwell | 21/12/18 |
| 0.5 | Amended hate crime/incident definition as per Lucy Malarkey's comments | Sarah Treadwell | 21/01/19 |
| 0.6 | Amended hate crime/incident definition to Northumbria Police's definition | Sarah Treadwell | 28/01/19 |
| 1.0 | Approved by Michelle Meldrum and Louise Bassett | Sarah Treadwell | 13/02/19 |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |