

COMMUNITY SAFETY POLICY

Customer Service: Community Safety

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A charitable Registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014

GENERAL - EXTERNAL

1. Purpose

- 1.1. Riverside aims to ensure that all customers enjoy the peace and quiet of their home free from nuisance, annoyance, disturbance, harassment and intimidation. Riverside recognises that anti-social behaviour can have a devastating impact on people's lives and within the scope of its work is fully committed to dealing firmly and fairly with acts of nuisance, anti-social behaviour and crime in the neighbourhoods it manages.
- 1.2. Riverside believes it is the fundamental right of all people to live free from the fear of violence, threats and abuse and are committed to tackling all forms of Hate Crime and Harassment. We recognise the effect that hate crime has on people's quality of life and wellbeing and we are committed to tackling all cases of hate crime through a robust, victim-centred approach.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy is owned by the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Customer Officer. It is subject to approval via the Customer Influence Assurance Committee and the Customer Experience Committee.
- 2.2. This policy covers any customer or other person who resides in or visits a property owned or managed by us.
- 2.3. It applies to all tenures and geographies within our operations.

Definitions

- 2.4. We have adopted the same definition of ASB as that set out in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act, 2014:
 - 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.
- 2.5. We have adopted the joint Police and Crown Prosecution Service definition of Hate Crime which is:

"Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on a person's disability or perceived disability; race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; or transgender identity or perceived transgender identity."
- 2.6. There is no legal definition of hostility so we use the everyday understanding of the word which includes ill-will, spite, contempt, prejudice, unfriendliness, antagonism, resentment and dislike.
- 2.7. Hate crimes can include threatening behaviour, assault, robbery, damage to property, inciting others to commit hate crimes and/or harassment.

Legislation

- 2.8. We will adhere to all relevant legislation and requirements as they apply, including but not limited to:
 - Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

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- Equality Act 2010
- Housing Acts 1985, 1988 & 1996
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006



- Anti-social Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, 2010 & 2014
- Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
- Scottish Commission for Human Rights Act 2006

2.9. We will comply with any new legislation in relation to anti-social behaviour or hate crime that is introduced whilst this Policy is in effect.

Regulation

2.10. We will adhere with the Regulatory of Social Housing's Neighbourhood & Community Standard in respect of Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime, working in partnership with appropriate local authority departments, the police and other relevant organisations to deter and tackle ASB and hate incidents in the neighbourhoods where we provide housing. We will also adhere to the RSH Tenancy Standard in respect of Tenancy Sustainment & Evictions, providing support so that our customers can maintain their tenancy and offering advice and assistance to affected customers. Finally, we will adhere to the RSH Safety & Quality Standard in respect of Health & Safety, taking all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of our customers in their homes and associated communal areas.



2.11. We also adhere to the Scottish Housing Regulator Charter in respect of :

Equalities

Every tenant and service user are treated fairly and with respect, regardless of background or needs.

Communication

Tenants receive clear, accurate, and timely information about services and decisions.

Participation

Tenants are encouraged and supported to take part in decisions that affect them and their homes.

Estate Management, Anti-Social Behaviour, Neighbour Nuisance

Communities are well looked after, and issues like anti-social behaviour are managed properly.

Housing Options: Ensuring that people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available.

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- 2.12. We will comply with any new guidance issued by the Regulator whilst this Policy is in effect.

3. Principles

- 3.1. We will:
- Treat all customers with fairness and respect.
 - Assess our service to deliver fair and equitable outcomes, using data to understand the diverse needs of our customers.
 - Communicate and provide information clearly, in accessible formats, ensuring all communications are relevant and appropriate to the needs of our customers.
 - Support customers to use our service, ensuring that our services are accessible to all, including enabling our customers to be supported by an advocate or representative.
 - Engage with customers when reviewing and updating this Policy, creating meaningful opportunities to influence our service. We will tailor these opportunities to meet the needs of customers wishing to participate.
 - Keep customers up to date on progress, next steps and outcomes on services that affect them.
 - Clearly set out our decision-making criteria, setting these out in the Roles and Responsibilities section below and in any associated procedures.
 - Provide customers with information about how we are performing against this Policy and the actions we are taking to improve performance if required. Performance measures will be set out in any associated Procedure(s).
 - Self-refer to the RSH if we fail to meet any of these principles in a material way and put improvement actions in place to minimise recurrence.
- 3.2. This Policy sets out the harm centred approach we will adopt when handling reports of ASB and hate crime to ensure victims and witnesses are assessed in terms of risk and vulnerability, so that appropriate levels of support can be put in place as soon as possible, and throughout the life of the case. The needs of the victim and the witnesses will not be outweighed by the needs of the person who is causing the ASB/hate crime, the focus will remain on the harm that is being caused to the victims and the wider community.
- 3.3. All customers or customers who wish to report an incident of ASB/hate crime will be assessed for their risk and vulnerability to ensure the appropriate level of support can be provided and any safeguarding issues are identified.
- 3.4. We have separate Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime procedures that set out the detail and methods of our approach, the support available to victims and how we tackle perpetrators of ASB or Hate Crime living in, or visiting, our properties.

Partnership Working

- 3.5. We recognise that we may not always be the appropriate authority to deal with ASB or Hate Crime. In certain instances, we may recommend that victims contact external

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agencies such as the police or local authorities, as these organisations have the statutory role and resources to address specific types of ASB/Hate Crime effectively, especially where serious and violent crime, serious nuisance, or drug offences are involved.

- 3.6. If an incident is a crime, we would expect customers to report it to the police first and engage with them to investigate. The police are responsible for investigating criminal offences, and we will offer support to victims while taking enforcement action if breaches of tenancy agreements are evidenced. Crimes committed against someone because of their disability, transgender-identity, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation, are hate crimes and should be reported to the police.
- 3.7. We work in partnership with agencies at both the strategic level (for example, on Crime and Disorder reduction partnerships) and at operational levels (for example, with local police). We co-operate with the Community Trigger process to help resolve cases of ASB/Hate Crime with all local authorities. We will participate in local information-sharing protocols to share and receive information to prevent or detect crime and anti-social behaviour.

Tackling ASB

- 3.8. When tackling anti-social behaviour, Riverside will strive to:
 - Have in place a robust tenancy or licence agreement clearly outlining our stance on anti-social behaviour.
 - Take all complaints of nuisance and anti-social behaviour seriously and respond promptly in an effective and sensitive manner aiming to resolve issues.
 - Take ownership where action is required to protect owner occupiers or those in other tenures from the actions of our customers.
 - Work in partnership and effectively signpost where action is required against people in other tenures to protect our customers.
 - Acknowledge that each case of ASB is different and take a harm centred approach to dealing with the issue, tailoring the support offered to victims and witnesses appropriately.
 - Utilise a national standard risk assessment matrix, (recognised by other agencies) applied to any case of ASB irrespective of type or category – where there is an identifiable complainant.
 - Deal with complaints of ASB in the strictest confidence and in accordance with our legal and regulatory obligations.
 - Keep complainants informed of developments as appropriate and make them aware that they can ask for no further action to be taken at any stage in the process.
 - Consider and, where appropriate, use intervention measures such as mediation services, referral to agencies such as floating support providers and inter agency partnerships to deliver recreational or diversionary projects, such as school holiday activities.
 - Consider and, where appropriate, offer support to vulnerable customers and families who are responsible for ASB to try and help modify their behaviour.

- Give due consideration to all requests for moving home from both victims and perpetrators of ASB.
- Consider, where appropriate, the use of a range of available legal remedies.
- Use Starter tenancies for general needs tenants as part of comprehensive strategies for dealing with problems of anti-social behaviour, where agreed locally.
- Suspend applicants from obtaining accommodation with Riverside if they or a member of their household have been responsible for acts of ASB. (Refer to our Lettings Policy, Regional Allocations Strategies and the local authority's Choice Based Lettings Partnership for exclusion guidance).
- Adopt a preventative approach to minimise the potential for disputes by letting properties in a way that is sensitive to the interests of the local community and ensuring tenants are fully aware of the conditions of their tenancy relating to ASB.
- Record the information we receive about violent and abusive behaviour committed by our customers in accordance with our Data Protection obligations.
- Where appropriate, publicise the results of major ASB interventions to provide reassurance to customers that we take swift and decisive action, and to deter others from these types of behaviour. Such decisions will be on a case-by-case basis to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and that the publicity is reasonable.

3.9. Riverside do not tolerate any ASB towards staff, contractors, and agents. We will look to take enforcement action towards perpetrators to protect our staff, contractors and agents where appropriate.

Tackling Hate Crime

3.10. In addition to the ways we aim to tackle ASB (3.8), when tackling hate crime and harassment, we will strive to:

- Take a positive, supportive, non-judgemental, and person-centred approach to victims of hate crime to ensure their choice and control is maximised.
- Respond to incidents swiftly and within agreed timescales.
- Work in partnership with other agencies and support groups, particularly the police, on the collection of intelligence and evidence, and in pursuing prosecutions for hate crime.
- Support individuals to obtain legal remedies against their perpetrator either directly (civil) or by signposting to alternative legal advice and representation (criminal).
- Ensure safety where there is an immediate threat of danger to customers by either improving the security of their existing accommodation or identify suitable temporary accommodation for them.
- Deal with complaints of hate crime in the strictest confidence and in accordance with our legal and regulatory obligations.

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- Riverside will consider using relevant legal interventions, as provided for in current legislation, including obtaining injunctions against the perpetrators of the Hate Crime, seeking possession of perpetrators' homes, and asking partner agencies to make use of powers available to them.
- Consider criminal remedies as an option in certain cases (e.g. assault, criminal damage, threatening letters, nuisance phone calls, repeated harassment) and encourage victims to pursue this where we cannot.
- Remove offensive graffiti promptly within the agreed target time (see Neighbourhood & Estate Management Policy).
- Support inclusive resident involvement structures and practices that contribute to the effective tackling of all forms of harassment.
- Where the alleged perpetrator is a member of staff, investigate the incident in accordance with The Riverside Group's Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure.

Local Nuisance

- 3.11. We may not consider all types of nuisances to be ASB. Some types of nuisances reported may not be dealt with under this Policy but dealt with under our Neighbourhood and Estate Management Policy as Local Nuisance.
- 3.12. We will follow our Neighbourhood Management Procedure instead of our ASB Procedure for reports of nuisance that:
- We do not consider to be ASB.
 - May be a type of ASB (e.g. dog nuisance, noise, misuse of communal areas) and we consider it the most effective way of resolving the issue.
- 3.13. Consideration will be given to this policy and to the individual circumstances of the case as communicated to the Community Safety Team.
- 3.14. Customers or other individuals complaining of neighbourhood issues that are not considered to be ASB may also be directed to external partners, Housing Services Teams, Property Management Teams or individual Care and Support schemes dependent on the issue in the first instance.
- 3.15. Minor personal differences or fall outs relating to social media posts will not be investigated, and we would advise customers to report these to the social media outlet directly or the police if applicable.

Staff Training and Support

- 3.16. Riverside will ensure relevant colleagues are confident in their ability to identify and investigate incidents and reports of ASB and Hate Crime by providing appropriate induction and system training, refresher training, updates on relevant legislation and access to relevant external/internal training from our legal partners and other agencies. We will also ensure that all relevant colleagues are aware of this policy, the associated procedures, and set out expectations for staff within ASB/Hate Crime case management.

Anonymous Reporting

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- 3.17. If an anonymous report of anti-social behaviour or hate crime is received, we will attempt to investigate the report. This may involve checking our internal records for any previous reports, contacting customers who live in the immediate area to ask if they have experienced any problems and asking our partners, such as the Police, if they are aware of any relevant information. We are unlikely to make any contact with the alleged perpetrator if we cannot substantiate the anonymous report of anti-social behaviour and therefore the case will be closed.

Customer Responsibility

- 3.18. In addition to the legal responsibilities outlined in their tenancy agreements, customers are expected to:
- Take responsibility for local nuisances with their neighbours and attempt to resolve any issues as reasonably as possible.
 - Where appropriate, talk to their neighbour first to resolve any pet or noise-related problems.
 - Report incidents of ASB or local nuisance.
 - Report crimes, including threats or acts of violence, to the police.
 - Report noise nuisance to the Local Authority Environmental Health Department and provide evidence, such as a noise diary covering 7-14 days of incidents for review.
 - Respect others right to their chosen lifestyle and be tolerant of everyday, reasonable levels of disturbance. Examples may include cooking smells, babies crying, or religious practices.
 - Work and cooperate with us fully to resolve disputes/issues, for example by providing us with updates of incidents, attending mediation, providing witness statements, and attending court, as necessary.
- 3.19. Leaseholders must ensure the behaviour of subtenants is reported.

4. Further Information & Support

- 4.1. Customers and other stakeholders can access our Policies through the Riverside website at Our policies - Riverside and Our policies - Riverside Scotland. Internally, Policies are available on the Policy Management System at Riverside Policies.
- 4.2. This Policy conforms to our Customer Care Policy. We aim to deliver high quality customer service across all business streams, operating areas, and subsidiaries, and within all activities whilst meeting all legal and regulatory requirements. This involves putting the customer first, respecting their rights, needs, and views.
- 4.3. This Policy conforms to our Tailored Services & Vulnerable and Reasonable Adjustments Policy. We aim to identify and support customers who, because of a protected characteristic, vulnerability or diverse need require extra support or an adjustment to access our services, in line with our organisational values of 'We Care,' 'We are Inclusive' and 'We are Trusted'.
- 4.4. This Policy has been written in collaboration with our customers through our approved customer panels. Reviews will be undertaken every three years, or as required when new legislation or regulatory requirements are published, and customers will be given the opportunity to influence the way we work within the requirements set out in the relevant housing law and regulations described above,

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and in conjunction with our Customer Involvement and Engagement Strategy and Policy.

- 4.5. Here we share a passion and a vision to make a difference for our customers by transforming lives and revitalising neighbourhoods. To achieve our vision, we consistently look for ways of improving the way we work, and how we deliver our services so we can always put our customers first. Our Riverside Way represents who we are, what we stand for and guides how we work, treat our customers, and each other.
- 4.6. Data Protection and Privacy are at the heart of the services we offer and are the foundations of our relationships with our customers, colleagues, partners, and stakeholders. Personal data is valuable, and we must always act fairly, ethically and with integrity when dealing with it. The fair and lawful handling and protection of personal data is critical to developing trust and confidence and building and sustaining long term relationships with those we provide homes to, and care for. We are dedicated to safeguarding the personal data under our care and to the continual development of a Privacy and Data Protection framework that is effective, fit for purpose and demonstrates an understanding of, and appreciation for Data Protection and the opportunities it brings. We are committed to the continuous cycle of improvement and enhancement of our compliance and governance framework. Although we aim to gain consent prior to any information sharing, there may be instances where we have a statutory duty to share information without consent, e.g. where children are at risk.

Safeguarding Responsibilities

- 4.7. We are committed to safeguarding all our customers and children and will take appropriate action when concerns are raised, suspected, or disclosed. When abuse is disclosed, we will be clear about confidentiality and our safeguarding obligations. This policy aligns with Riverside's Safeguarding policies for adults and children.

Domestic Abuse

- 4.8. Riverside take cases of domestic abuse seriously: we have a robust domestic abuse policy which outlines our commitment to address cases in our communities.
- 4.9. Other Strategies, Policies and Procedures that support this Policy are:
- Community & Livelihoods Strategy
 - Customer Experience Strategy
 - Neighbourhood and Estate Management Policy
 - Hate Crime Procedure
 - Anti-Social Behaviour Procedure
 - Neighbourhood Management Procedure
- 4.10. We are looking into how we can make our Procedures more access to Customers and other stakeholders, in the meantime requests for information can be made through the CSC (processed as a STAIRS request). Internally, Procedures are available on the Processes and Procedures Hub at Riverside Processes.

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5. Roles and Responsibilities

Group Board and Chief Officers	• Provide overall leadership and approval of the Policy • Monitor the Organisations approach to Community Safety
Directors	• Champion Community Safety across all directorates, keeping awareness of the issue high and encouraging colleagues to report all incidents to allow for meaningful reporting and trend analysis
Heads of Service and Service Managers	• Knowledge of cases in designated area deemed 'high risk' • Ensure good case management including multi-agency approach and contemporaneous record keeping • Encourage colleagues to link with Community Safety Team as needed
Community Safety Team	• Offer advice and guidance in cases of Community Safety (victim/survivor has not yet disclosed) • Effectively manage complex cases • Establish good working relationships with relevant partner agencies • Advice on case management, best practise and referral options • Champion our response and the service Riverside offer to colleagues, customers and stakeholders
All Colleagues (including Front Line workers and CSC)	• Actively demonstrate Riversides values when dealing with Community Safety • Seek advice or guidance if unsure • Attend training identified for specific job role • Awareness of local support services and referral pathways

6. Risks

Customer Experience

- 6.1. As we improve the customer experience, we are identifying and addressing exceptions to our customer standards which have developed over many years. We accept this risk as part of our current business model as we are seeking to address these issues as a priority. Over time our tolerance of such will diminish and we will revise the score accordingly.

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- 6.2. The short-term consequence of making major improvements may be a temporary reduction in customer service and as a result customer satisfaction. We will only accept such reductions where there is a clear articulation of the potential impact and an agreed action plan to return to acceptable levels. We also accept that, as such change may not be welcomed by all our colleagues, there is a risk of industrial action and adverse media comment.
- 6.3. We have a full suite of customer experience KPIs which are scrutinised by Executive Directors, Group Board and our Customer Experience and Care & Support Committees. Targets are set as informed by Customer Experience and Care & Support Committees.

Changing Regulatory Environment

- 6.4. We have no appetite for failing to achieve the requirements outlined within the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the Neighbourhoods & Communities Consumer Standard in regard to service delivery and accountability to customers and effective, transparent communication on anti-social behaviour and hate crime reporting, investigation, and resolution.
- 6.5. We have a full suite of KPIs relating to Customer Service which are scrutinised by Executive Directors, Customer Experience Committee bi-annually. Targets are set as informed by Customer Experience Committee.

7. Appeals & Complaints

- 7.1. As detailed in the Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, and by the Scottish Housing Regulator, customers are invited to hold us to account for the decisions we make, that impact upon them, under this Policy.
- 7.2. If a customer wishes to appeal a decision made under this Policy, this should be received and heard under our Tenancy Policy and Right to Review Procedure.
- 7.3. If a customer wishes to complain about the service they have received under this Policy, this should be managed through our Complaint Handling Procedure, which is governed by the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code of Practice and the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman Service.
- 7.4. These associated Policies and Procedures are available on our website at:
- England: <https://www.riverside.org.uk/you-your-home/customer-feedback/>
<https://www.riverside.org.uk/about-us/our-policies/>
 - Scotland: Customer feedback | Complaints | Riverside Scotland
or <https://www.riversidescotland.org.uk/about-us/our-policies>
 - and are also available by contacting our Customer Service Centre.

8. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- 8.1. We are committed to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. We strive to be fair in our dealings with all people, communities and organisations, taking into account the diverse nature of their culture and background and actively promoting inclusion. This policy aligns with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

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- 8.2. Riverside will consider the Equality Act 2010 when making any decisions about a person's right to remain in their home. Specific consideration of any protected characteristic will only be given where Riverside is made aware of the same.
- 8.3. It is the responsibility of individuals to advise Riverside Colleagues at the earliest opportunity of any vulnerability, disability, or protected characteristic that victims, perpetrators, or any other person involved in or affected by ASB, or nuisance may have. This is the case even if the protected characteristic or vulnerability has previously been brought to Riverside's attention.
- 8.4. Riverside will consider making reasonable adjustments for any person with a protected characteristic where such adjustments are requested.

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