

Support and diversionary work

February 2011



We believe you should be able to enjoy peace and quiet in your own home, feel safe and secure and not have to suffer the anti-social behaviour of others.

The term anti-social behaviour (ASB) includes all types of behaviour, which affect the quality of life of local people. It is the bad behaviour of a few that seriously affects those around them who experience it.

We:

- take all reports of anti-social behaviour seriously
- are determined to address unacceptable behaviour
- will look to work with organisations such as the council, police and other partners and agencies to develop and deliver solutions to reduce anti-social behaviour.

This factsheet outlines some of the methods that can support HFI tenants who experience or witness ASB.

Mediation

HFI engages the Witness Service to provide an impartial mediation service for resolving disagreements between residents by attempting to find a mutually acceptable resolution. HFI officers will refer any anti-social behaviour cases, where appropriate, to the Witness Service. Mediation requires both parties to be prepared to compromise, but it is often the best way of settling differences before they get worse.

The Witness Service

The Witness Service provides a free and confidential service which includes advice and support for residents who have experienced anti-social behaviour and may have to appear in court. Witnesses can talk to the Witness Service in confidence which can help them to prepare for attending court. HFI residents can speak to an ASB Officer who can refer them to the service.

The Witness Service also engages with the community to encourage the reporting of anti-social behaviour by attending tenant meetings (TRA) and working with the community to produce impact statements that demonstrate how anti-social behaviour is impacting on the local area.

Acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs)

These are written contracts that are made between individuals and local agencies. They are voluntary and, despite not having a statutory basis, they have been used effectively in tackling ASB issues at the level of individuals. Usually, they are most effectively used with young people under the age of 16 years, but can also be applied to adults. An ABC should detail the expected future behaviour of the individual and the actions that the agency will take if they fail to observe the terms of the agreement.

Family Intervention Projects

Family Intervention Projects (sometimes just known as FIPs) are designed to work with families with the most challenging and anti-social behaviour, balancing both support and enforcement action across all members of the family. Key features of a project include:

- A contract between the family and key worker, which sets out the changes that are expected, the support that will be provided and the consequences if changes are not made
- A key worker who works closely with the family
- Challenging behaviour through
 - Anger management
 - Parenting skills
 - Educational support

HFI and partner agencies identify families to refer to FIP, advising families of a referral. Once a referral has been made the FIP will co-ordinate meetings, and will seek the engagement of the family to the programme. The programme is not compulsory however refusal to engage can result in the application of other measures such as enforcement of tenancy or ASBO.

Parenting contracts

Parenting contracts are voluntary agreements made between local agencies and a parent or parents. They set out what parents will do to address the anti-social behaviour of a child or children for whom they are responsible. They may contain an agreement to attend a parenting programme, or to ensure that a child attends school regularly. They are often made between schools or local education authorities with the parent(s) of a child who has truanted or been excluded from school.

Parenting orders

Parenting orders can be made by a court when there has been a problem with a young person's behaviour. The order imposes requirements on the parent(s) or guardian, which will usually include their attendance on a guidance or counselling programme. Other requirements, such as ensuring that the child attends school, can also be included. In some cases, for example if an ASBO is in place against a child/young person or if they have been convicted of an offence, the court **must** make a parenting order or state why this has not been done. Penalties for failing to comply include a fine of up to £1000 or any non-custodial sentence.

Individual support orders

Individual support orders are attached to an ASBO against a person aged between 10 and 17. They contain positive obligations designed to tackle the underlying causes of the person's anti-social behaviour, and are usually overseen by a member of the youth offending team or social services. The orders can last for up to six months, and can require the young person to attend up to two sessions a week. Failure to comply with the conditions of the order is a criminal offence.

Intervention orders

Similarly to individual support orders, intervention orders are attached to anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) but are designed to tackle ASB as a result of drugs misuse. They require individuals who cause ASB as a result of drugs misuse to comply with positive conditions to tackle their behaviour. Intervention orders can only be given to individuals aged 18 or over and can last 6 months or less. Failure to comply with the conditions of an order is a criminal offence.

Out of Hours ASB Response Team

The Out of Hours ASB Response Team patrols 'hotspots' that are identified by ASB Officers or reported by the public through the ASB hotline. The team work on our estates outside normal office hours and address problems of nuisance, vandalism, abandoned vehicles, fly tipping and graffiti. They help to build the confidence of the community through engagement and by discouraging acts of anti-social behaviour but they have no powers of arrest and are not a replacement for the police. The team is available from Sunday to Thursday between 4pm and midnight and on Friday and Saturday between 5 pm and 1 am; and all Islington residents should feel free to approach them and ask for help.

Noise machines

Noise machines can be given to tenants who are experiencing noise nuisance. A noise machine can be used to record noise levels at times when others may not be around to hear the volume. Recordings may be used to refer cases to the Environmental Health Noise Patrol or they may be included as evidence in legal action that may be taken against a perpetrator. The equipment is very sensitive and will record ordinary everyday noise. The machines are effective at recording consistent noise such as music, but are less effective for recording impact noises such as doors slamming or balls bouncing. Tenants who would like to find out more about noise machines should speak to an ASB officer.

Professional witness

Occasionally HFI uses professional witnesses who can be used to monitor areas that are suffering from anti-social behaviour by providing important visual evidence. Surveillance can be used to identify individuals involved in causing anti-social behaviour and used to support further enforcement action to deal with ASB problems.

ASB hotline

Residents can report cases of anti-social behaviour 24 hours a day through the anti-social behaviour hotline number. All calls will be responded to within 24 hours and appropriate action will be taken. Calls will not be responded to immediately so residents should call 999 when a criminal act occurs. For incidents that occur during normal office hours of 9.00 am to 5.00 pm residents should call their area housing office. Messages can be left on the ASB hotline by calling 020 7527 7272 (24 hours a day).

Environmental works

HFI has a policy to discourage ASB through physical improvements in local areas such as better lighting on estates, secure door entries, CCTV and climb proof surface covering.

Who to contact

Reception telephone numbers for area housing offices are provided below:

Old Street	020 7527 6250	Holland Walk	020 7527 7480
Lyon Street	020 7527 6880	Upper Street	020 7527 5300

The ASB hotline is available 24 hours a day on **020 7527 7272**