

Edition 2 – July 2007

# STANDARD ISSUE

**RESPECT  
STANDARD  
FOR HOUSING  
MANAGEMENT**



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## **LATEST NEWS**

**Welcome to Edition 2 of Standard Issue. I hope once again you find this newsletter informative. In this edition we focus on positive parenting and the important role it can play in the prevention of anti-social behaviour.**

**I would like to thank everyone for their contributions. However, as in the previous edition we have not been able to fit them all in but are encouraged to see just how much innovative work is going on out there.**

**This is your newsletter so please let us know if there is anything in particular you would like to see covered in future editions.**

**Robert Attrill**  
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## **100 DAY EVENT**

With summer upon us it seems odd to be talking about Christmas, but it was in December that we held our '100 days on' event to thank those of you who had signed up to the Respect Standard for Housing Management in the first hundred days since its inauguration. The event, which we hope those of you who attended enjoyed, provided us with an opportunity to thank all of you who had signed up within the first 100 days of the Standard. We also welcomed twenty new signatories, all members of the Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group, who were presented with their certificate by the Secretary of State Ruth Kelly.

Guests had a chance to hear from Ruth on the role of the Standard and its success to date. Ruth said that she was "delighted to be here because we recognise and value the important role social landlords play in preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour as well as acting as broader agents for change in our communities." She also went on to say that "Sign-up is vitally important as a public pledge of commitment but of course it is delivery that matters to residents. Your residents will judge you not on your commitment but your performance. Sign-up is clearly an important step but must of course be matched by action. I have every confidence you will do so."

We also heard from Joe Tuke from the Respect Taskforce and John Rouse, Chief Executive of the Housing Corporation. Joe reiterated the points Ruth had made and went on to say "there's no escaping the fact that housing providers are central to the challenge of making the Respect vision a reality. I'm sure that you, as signatory landlords to the Respect Standard will meet that challenge for your residents!" Joe and John also helpfully took questions from the audience.





John Rouse,  
Chief Executive of  
the Housing Corporation

**“Sign-up is vitally important as a public pledge of commitment but of course it is delivery that matters to residents.”**

Sign-up to the Standard has continued unabated since the ‘100 days on’ event. At our last quarterly stocktake we were heartened to see that in excess of 250 landlords have signed up covering almost 2 million homes. This means that we are heading towards 4 million residents having a right to expect quality services in line with the Standard (around half of the social housing sector).

### **SO WHAT NEXT?**

As this edition goes to print we have just finished a successful round of regional events for RSLs on positive parenting where we worked with nearly 300 practitioners on the forthcoming changes, as outlined in the Respect Action Plan, on parenting powers. The Home Office has legislated, through the Police and Criminal Justice Act, to extend the use of Parenting Orders and Contracts to local authorities and registered social landlords (RSLs).

The extension of Parenting Orders and Contracts to local authorities and RSLs is to enable their use as a tool of early intervention rather than waiting until a criminal offence has been committed, or the child has been excluded from school. They will be available to nip problems in the bud where children are showing propensity to get involved in anti-social behaviour. We believe the ability to seek Parenting Contracts and Orders will provide social landlords with a useful additional tool in tackling root causes of anti-social behaviour. The seminars put the extension of this power into the wider context of the parenting programme and provided a platform for RSLs to input into guidance that the Respect Taskforce will be introducing to formally accompany the power when it becomes available on Friday 29 June.

## **PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT**

Positive Parenting may be a relatively new area of work for some of you. You may be feeling fearful of this new agenda and your capacity to get engaged. However, for others it is part of the holistic approach already being used to deal with the range of anti-social behaviours. We thought it useful therefore to set out some of the good practice already out there and demonstrate just how valuable

and diverse this work can be. Below are a selection of contributions from practitioners already using positive parenting in their approach to anti-social behaviour. We hope they will give you some ideas of what can be done and encourage those of you already using positive parenting in your approach to anti-social behaviour and further ideas about what more you could do.

## **DRUM HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

Drum Housing Association have entered into an agreement with RELATE to enable us to refer families for family counselling, where members of the household are either causing or likely to cause anti-social behaviour. Through RELATE we are also able to offer Parenting Classes. We are pleased to be able to offer to our customers the opportunity to work with RELATE to solve issues within the household and to stop anti-social behaviour occurring.

family, where there has been an opportunity for each member of the household to have their say on the issues within the family. We are happy to establish this relationship with a leading organisation in providing counselling. We feel that this is a further commitment to Drum meeting the Respect Standard for Housing Management.

**Petra Norris**  
Housing Manager  
Drum Housing Association

One family have already been referred to RELATE, where the children are causing anti-social behaviour. Several sessions have been attended by the

## ERIMUS HOUSING

Since signing up to the Standard in October 2006 Erimus Housing Ltd has appointed a specialist Tenancy Support Officer to deal specifically with challenging and dysfunctional families within its tenure that are causing anti-social behaviour in East Middlesbrough. The Tenancy Support Officer has made significant working links with Middlesbrough Council, a RESPECT area, liaising with and supporting the Children and Families Unit and the Middlesbrough Families Project, accepting referrals and making joint home visits. The Tenancy and Support Officer has received fifteen referrals to date, three of which are from external agencies.

One such family, referred from the Middlesbrough Families Project, concerns a mother whose son has Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder and an Anti-social Behaviour Order pending. With a history of domestic violence, truancy and anti-social behaviour issues, exasperated by the son's peers within the family, various agencies were already involved but there had been a lack of intervention due to the mistrust of the family towards the external agencies.

The action plan drawn up and agreed by the family and the Tenancy Support Officer has resulted in a referral to the Youth

Inclusion Project, which has enabled the son to get involved in outreach activities as a diversion from anti-social behaviour. A strong relationship has been built up with the mother enabling ongoing support with parenting issues, providing links to adult education and career guidance. The Officer has attended regular meetings at the son's school (where inclusion into a part time programme is now moving towards full time) and also with other external agencies like the Middlesbrough Families Project to progress an integrated approach.

As part of its commitment to meet the Respect Standard for Housing Management, Erimus Housing Limited is making an active, challenging approach to intervene in the lives of problem families who are causing anti-social behaviour, supporting parenting with achievable and measurable results.

### Heather Tisbury

Respect Champion – Housing Management  
Erimus Housing Limited  
Middlesbrough

## ROCHDALE BOROUGHWIDE HOUSING

The parenting programme run by Rochdale Boroughwide Housing is already held up as an example of good practice by the Department for Education and Skills. Our parenting strategy is to offer a consistent service across all the agencies involved in supporting parents – including health, schools, social care and the voluntary sector.

We do our best to remove barriers to parents attending courses, for example by providing crèches, help with transport etc. We also provide support for parents of children at different ages, from primary to the transitional age between primary and secondary school, right up to age 18.

The classes help parents understand what is "normal" behaviour and how child development progresses so that they understand their children better and find out that their children are not the only ones behaving in that way. We try to make parents feel that they are the experts in coping with their own children by changing the way they think and putting the emphasis on positive aspects of children and young people rather than focussing simply on problem behaviour.

The parenting courses are a chance for parents to meet others going through the same things and gain peer support. The courses run for 12 weeks,

two hours a week, and take place during the day and in the evenings. They are available to everyone, not just those whose children are at risk of, or committing, anti-social behaviour. The courses are also available to members of the child's extended family, including grandparents, aunts and uncles etc – everyone who can have a positive influence on the child.

The idea is to get across to parents that having problems coping with their children is something that can happen to anyone and to try to remove the stigma from it.

In addition to group parenting courses, some one-to-one support is also available in cases where it is appropriate. This support work is done on behalf of the multi-agency group by Shelter

### Jane Howard

Communications Manager  
Rochdale Boroughwide  
Housing

## EALING HOMES

Ealing Homes resident Zeneb Ali had never used a computer before. She had no idea how to turn one on, let alone send emails or search the web.

But thanks to a free Ealing Homes computer course, she is well on her way to becoming computer savvy.

"I'm very, very happy. Soon I will be able to send emails to my son away at university."

Mrs Zeneb jumped at the opportunity to learn more about computers through a six-week course offered by Ealing Homes at Golf Links estate. More than 60 people expressed an interest in gaining a spot on the two courses being run.

Computer tutor Neena Kumar says residents will learn the basics of typing, word processing, using the internet and spreadsheets. Many had signed up because they wanted to be able to help their children with homework, as well as being able to send emails to friends and family. Others wanted to brush up on their computer skills before looking for work.



**Adele Stevens**  
Communications Team Leader  
Ealing Homes

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## MIDSUMMER HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Here at Midsummer Housing Association we had a particular tenant (with 2 children under 5 years) who was struggling with day to day responsibilities of being a parent. We had reports of anti-social behaviour from neighbours, rubbish in the garden and around the house and the children running wild, still up at around 10.30pm and being very noisy. Our Tenancy Support Officer (TSO) contacted the Health Visitor and joint visits were done. The TSO also put the mum in touch with local support groups of other mums who could help out with the children. The Health Visitor initiated a sleep training programme and as a result of that the children are in bed by

7.30pm. The reports of anti-social behaviour have now stopped.

For us this was a good example of joint working and going into the situation with a supportive perspective rather than an enforcement one, even though the complainants were putting pressure on us to take this type of action.

**Emma Wallington**  
Area Housing Manager  
Midsummer Housing  
Association



## INSPIRED?

Why not keep us up to date with what you have done with your community to show your public commitment to meeting the Standard. Tell us about current projects or innovative ideas that you have undertaken to help create a culture of respect.

# RESPECT STANDARD TOOLKIT

HouseMark and the Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group (SLCNG) are working with Communities and Local Government to develop a Performance Improvement Toolkit for the Standard as committed to in *Respect Standard for Housing Management, A Guide for Landlords*.

The Toolkit will assist social landlords measure their effectiveness in tackling anti-social behaviour and meet the requirements of the Standard. It will include

a suite of local performance indicators and guidance on their selection, interpretation and use, in contributing to service improvements in tackling anti-social behaviour.

A model complainant satisfaction survey and annual resident perception survey will also be produced for landlords to adopt based firmly on existing social landlord good practice.

The Toolkit will be a non-prescriptive tool that will support landlords in:

- measuring their effectiveness in tackling anti-social behaviour
- gathering robust management and performance data
- enabling residents to influence services delivered by their landlords and other local agencies
- engaging residents in developing, selecting and monitoring progress against performance indicators
- using performance information to drive performance improvement alone and in partnership
- setting effective targets and benchmarking against the performance of peers
- seeking out and adopting best practice.

The Toolkit will be available to download from the Communities and Local Government, HouseMark and SLCNG websites from August 2007.

**Steve Osborne**  
Knowledge Manager  
HouseMark

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU...

**In this edition we profile the work of a Leicester New Start Project.**

**Although this contradicts what we said in Edition 1, that we would look at a signatory landlord each edition, we thought it preferable to continue with the parenting theme and explain in more detail the work of a Family Intervention Project. This is especially appropriate given the announcement on 11 April, by the Respect Taskforce, of funding for 53 family intervention projects across the country to work with the most difficult and anti-social families. We will return to focus on our signatories in Edition 3.**

Managed by NCH the Children's Charity, Leicester New Start Families Project was established in early 2005 and is modelled on the successful Families Unit in Dundee. The project works with families living in the City of Leicester who have been evicted or are at risk of eviction due to their anti-social behaviour. Families working with the project can be from council, housing association or privately rented accommodation.

The Project aims to stabilise families who have been engaged in anti-social behaviour through support, challenge and resettlement. This approach is a crucial adjunct to enforcement, as this alone cannot always provide the solution to housing related problems. Evicting families without change can simply move the problems elsewhere and may further entrench the behaviour.

The Project works with up to nine families facing eviction for their anti-social behaviour. In addition, it houses six families who have been evicted for their anti-social behaviour in dispersed properties.

To date the project has prevented ten evictions and re-established two families in social housing, following intervention, in dispersed accommodation.



**Tessa Godfrey and  
Lucie Gibson at Leicester  
New Start Project**

Following a positive evaluation of similar projects, the Respect Unit has provided funds to set up Family Intervention Projects throughout the country. In addition, the Unit has provided funds for project workers to train in accredited parenting programmes, acknowledging that poor parenting is at the root of many neighbourhood nuisance and anti-social behaviour incidents.

When families are first referred to the project, presenting problems often follow a familiar pattern. Children and young people are not attending, or are excluded from school. The family has often fallen in to a nocturnal pattern of behaviour, staying up late in to the night (and disturbing neighbours) and not waking until midday. There are few, if any controls on children's behaviour. Behind these presenting problems lay other common causes; loss of a partner or child; learning difficulties for parents and/or children; mental health problems; substance misuse and much more.

The project starts by helping the family to re-establish routines. This has to be a 'hands on' approach; an alarm clock provided to a chaotic family just gets smashed or lost. Instead, project workers go in to homes in the evening and early morning to show parents how to establish bedtime and morning routines. Once this is

done, school attendance can be re-established and the detailed, intensive work of addressing anti-social behaviour can begin.

In addition to the 'hands on' approach, Leicester New Start uses other innovative approaches with service users. One such approach is Video Interactive Guidance (VIG), which uses video to help parents improve their communication and positive interaction with their children. The method differs from those currently shown on many television parenting programmes, as parents are only shown video of themselves doing well. This may seem counterintuitive, as parents referred to the project are normally failing in many areas of their parenting. However, they also have very strong feelings of failure and hopelessness. We have found that building on the positives, however small, re-builds confidence and skills and helps parents believe that they can take control again. We have found that the visual medium of video has been one of our most powerful and positive tools in achieving positive change with very challenging families.

**Tessa Godfrey**  
Leicester New Start  
Email: [tessa.Godfrey@nch.org.uk](mailto:tessa.Godfrey@nch.org.uk)

**Here we answer some frequently asked questions about Parenting Contracts and Orders which will become available to social landlords on Friday 29 June 2007.**



**Parenting contracts and orders**

Those who most need help are very often those who are unlikely to seek help voluntarily. However this does not mean we should not intervene. With persistence, many parents will take help, but formal contracts and court orders should also be employed to ensure that people comply. The evidence shows that parents who attend parenting programmes as part of a parenting order benefit as much as those who join schemes voluntarily and wish they had got help earlier.

**What's in a parenting contract?**

A parenting contract is a written agreement that can be used between any agency and a parent/carer to gain co-operation in relation to the supervision of a child. The use of formal written agreements makes it clear what is expected of each party to improve the behaviour of the child or children.

A parenting contract may contain requirements to ensure:

- that a child is effectively supervised
- that s/he keeps away from a specific area or from specific individuals
- that they attend school regularly and that parents attend school meetings.

The contract may also confirm that a parent will attend a parenting programme. The agency may undertake to arrange a parenting programme, which the school will provide, with tailored help for a child or whatever other help or intervention has been identified.

**Who can enter into a parenting contract?**

It is important to emphasise that any agency can enter into a parenting contract. In this sense they are similar to ABCs and can be used alongside ABCs or other interventions. However, the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 formalised the use of parenting contracts for schools, LAs and youth offending teams such that:

- Schools (head teachers) and LAs can enter into parenting contracts with the parent of a child who has been truanting or been excluded from school.
- Youth offending teams can enter into parenting contracts with a parent of a child who has engaged in criminal conduct or anti-social behaviour.

**What is a parenting order?**

Parenting orders are used to secure the engagement of parents who are not willing to take up help voluntarily. They are made in a criminal court, family court or magistrates' court acting under civil jurisdiction.

Parenting orders impose requirements on the parent(s) or guardian which will usually include their attendance on a programme. Other requirements, such as ensuring that their child attends school, can also be included.

**In what circumstances is a parenting order made?**

The court *must* make a parenting order, or state why they have not, where an ASBO has been made in respect of the child or young person and where a child or young person has been convicted of an offence.

An *application* for a parenting order can also be made in the following circumstances:

- by the youth offending team where a child or young person has engaged in criminal conduct or anti-social behaviour
- by the local education authority where a child has been excluded (permanently or for two fixed periods) from school for serious misbehaviour
- where a child safety order has been made in respect of the child
- where a sex offender order has been made in respect of a child or young person.

Under the Criminal Justice Act 2003, parenting orders can also be made when a referral order is made or when a youth offender panel refers a parent back to court for failing to attend panel meetings.

If the parent does not comply with the order, the court can impose a Level Three fine (maximum £1000) or any sentence available for a non-imprisonable offence.

**Forthcoming legal changes in relation to parenting contracts and orders**

The legislation below has received Royal Assent, it broadens out the circumstances and the agencies that can enter into parenting contracts and orders:

- The Police and Justice Act (2006) contains provisions for local authorities to be given powers in relation to parenting contracts and orders.
- Community safety officers, Registered Social Landlords and others on the front line will be able to enter into contracts or apply for orders where a child is involved in anti-social behaviour. This underlines the use of parenting contracts or orders as an anti-social behaviour power for front line practitioners. These powers will come into force on Friday 29 June.
- The Education and Inspections Act (2006) gives local education authorities and schools the power to make earlier use of parenting contracts to modify behaviour well before exclusion occurs. The Act also extends parenting orders, allowing them to be used in cases of serious misbehaviour – whether or not the pupil is excluded – and empowering schools to make their own applications for orders in cases of serious misbehaviour or exclusion. All these changes will come into force on 1 September 2007.



**WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

From Friday 29 June, local authorities and Registered Social Landlords have the power to apply for a parenting order. Local authorities have discretion to nominate staff to use the powers as best fits the local context (this should include anti-social behaviour teams and others at the forefront of tackling anti-social behaviour).

## MY VIEW...

from Matthew R Sanders, Professor of Clinical Psychology, The University of Manchester and the University of Queensland



**All children need strong parenting. When young children are persistently disruptive, hurt others or become violent, there is often great concern that these problems can turn even more serious later on. Not all early behavioural problems in toddlers and pre-schoolers turn into serious anti-social behaviour problems in adolescence; however, an early persistent pattern of disruptive and oppositional behaviour is a warning sign and increases the risk that problems will continue or worsen.**

Fortunately, there is now good evidence showing that these early conduct problems can be resolved. Numerous randomised clinical trials show that 8–12 session group parenting programmes that train parents to use positive parenting skills (eg praise and positive attending) and consistent discipline and behaviour management skills (eg clear instructions, consistent back up, consequences) can greatly reduce these early problems. The result is happier children and a much reduced risk that children will grow into anti-social teenagers and young adults.

However, there is still a stigma around parenting programmes that has to be reduced. Enrolling in a parenting course for some parents is like admitting they have failed as a parent. Nothing could be further from the truth. I would like to see participating in a quality parenting programme as a healthy, normal and positive thing that all parents do as a matter of course when they become parents. It's probably one of the best investments in a child's future a parent can make.



In breaking down the stigma, the benefits of parenting programmes should be spotlighted. It has long been known that children benefit greatly when their parents are more confident, positive and consistent in their parenting role. Children are typically more cooperative, less aggressive and demanding; they get on better with siblings and peers, and have improved self esteem. Some even refer to children's "Likeability Quotient" (LQ) improving by a number of points. Parents often say their children become more likeable and easy to live with after doing a parenting programme.

What is not recognised enough is that parenting programmes often benefit parents even more than children. Research examining the effects of Triple P-Positive Parenting Programmes has shown a range of parent benefits. These include improved self confidence in their parenting skills; reduced stress, anger and depression; reduced conflict with partners over parenting issues; greater resilience if coping with adversity and other stressful life events; and more recently, improved functioning at work. These changes collectively add up to a very meaningful quality of life shift that benefits parents and children.

The Government's investment in increasing access to evidence based parenting programmes as part of the Respect Agenda is a very positive move. It is enabling more service providers throughout the country to be trained to implement positive parenting programmes that work. As a result, more parents who might benefit from participating will be able to do so.