

# **RESPECT** **STANDARD** **FOR HOUSING** **MANAGEMENT**

**A GUIDE FOR LANDLORDS**



**Give respect Get respect**



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# SECTION 1 OVERVIEW

## INTRODUCTION

The Respect drive aims to ensure that local agencies tackle unacceptable behaviour and its causes to improve quality of life for residents – particularly those in the most disadvantaged communities. The Government's proposals to deliver on the Respect drive were set out in the *Respect Action Plan*. More details are available at [www.respect.gov.uk](http://www.respect.gov.uk)

The Respect Standard for Housing Management forms part of this drive and is aimed at social landlords. It is a voluntary Standard which the Government wants as many landlords as possible to sign.

The Standard provides recognition for those delivering good services, while providing a benchmark to aim towards for landlords who are striving to improve.

## SCOPE OF THE STANDARD

The Standard establishes an outline of the components which together deliver an effective response to anti-social behaviour and help create a culture of respect. Communities and Local Government have done this by drawing on the best practice generated by landlords and their partners over the last few years.

The Standard is built around six core commitments (details are provided in Section Three):

### **1 Accountability, leadership, and commitment**

Landlords need to make a visible commitment to the community so that everyone is clear they take issues of anti-social behaviour and respect seriously and will deliver what they say they will.

### **2 Empowering and reassuring residents**

Landlords and the community need to work as one by involving residents and giving them input into decision making. Engagement and effective communications act to reassure and empower communities.

### **3 Prevention and early intervention**

Landlords can play a key role in preventing anti-social behaviour from occurring. Where it does, addressing problems quickly often gets the best results.

### **4 Tailored services for residents and provision of support for victims and witnesses**

Success rests on people being prepared to report and then give support to agencies in taking action. Every case and every person deserves a robust, tailored and sensitive response.

### **5 Protecting communities through swift enforcement**

Government has provided landlords with the tools they need to tackle a wide range of anti-social behaviour. Landlords need to understand how these tools work and be prepared to use them quickly to protect communities.

### **6 Support to tackle the causes of anti-social behaviour**

Provision of support can put an end to unacceptable behaviour by tackling underlying causes. This leads to sustainable outcomes and gets peoples' lives back on track.

# SECTION 2

## WHAT DOES SIGNING THE STANDARD INVOLVE?

### HOW DO I SIGN?

Sign up is voluntary and will not involve accreditation. There is a strong expectation that landlords will undertake self-assessment of the level, quality and scope of their services. They should sign up if they are confident those services meet the Standard's demands.

Some landlords will already be confident in the services they provide (perhaps following a recent inspection report or through a recent internal audit). Others will want to undertake some gap analysis to see what more they need to do to before setting in place an action plan.

Sign up is quick and easy and can be completed online at:  
[www.communities/standardsignup](http://www.communities/standardsignup)

This will access a dedicated web-page where an electronic registration form, requesting some basic information can be completed.

Upon registration signatories will receive an acknowledgement by e-mail. This will be followed by mail of a certificate signed by the Secretary of State highlighting their commitment. Signatories will also be provided with an electronic file by e-mail of the Respect Standard logo which they will be entitled to use.

The key to the Respect Standard is accountability to residents. Upon signing landlords should consider how they can let the community know about the action they have taken – for example by issuing a press release, organising a local meeting or event to publicise their commitment. Landlords should also ensure that residents are clear about the standards they have committed to – for example by displaying the Standard certificate in prominent locations or disseminating the content through newsletters.

### JOINT SIGN UP

A number of landlords have asked whether they can sign as part of a consortia (eg where a number of housing associations operating in an area want to make a joint commitment).

This approach may be appropriate in areas where a number of landlords hold and manage stock. There may be advantages in joining up to deliver more extensive and effective services. Where a 'consortium' wish to sign up, all members will need to do so individually, but should tick the appropriate box on the electronic sign up form.

This approach should only be adopted where every landlord is satisfied that the services provided to all residents in the area covered by the consortia will meet the demands of the Standard.

Where a local authority has delegated its housing management services to Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs), Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) or bodies managing housing as part of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes, then these organisations should sign the Standard as the bodies responsible for delivering front-line services. This should be done with the agreement and support of the 'parent' local authority.

## **LANDLORDS WITH STOCK IN A NUMBER OF AREAS**

Many Registered Social landlords (RSLs) have stock in a large number of locations across the country. For example, a landlord may manage a number of large estates in a few areas, but only do so for a small number of homes in other places.

In signing as an organisation (at national level) it is reasonable for residents to expect that the landlord will do all it can to deliver services that meet the Standard in all the areas it operates in. However, the Government recognises that practicalities mean that the level of service may not always be consistent across all areas in which the landlord has an interest. Signing up as part of a consortia may provide a way forward.

## **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

The Standard describes activities a landlord may deliver alone as part of their housing management role and those activities which are dependent on support of partners.

Delivering the Standard requires a wide range of local agencies to play their part – for example, local authorities and the police. It expects landlords to do all they reasonably can to build and contribute to partnerships but acknowledges this depends on other agencies doing likewise.

## **PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORKS**

The Government is committed to strengthening the effectiveness of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) by setting national standards. These include:

- Holding regular Face the People sessions to respond to issues raised by local communities; and
- A Community Call for Action is to be introduced to enable local communities to trigger intervention by the local authority scrutiny committee if community safety issues have not been adequately addressed by the police or their partners.

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) now include mandatory outcomes on respect and anti-social behaviour. Partners need to agree at local level how they will meet the outcome and targets. This provides a framework for partner agencies to enable social landlords to contribute effectively to area based strategies. The LAA good practice toolkit provides information about how this can be achieved.

The Respect Task Force will disseminate good practice outlining the role that the relevant agencies can be expected to play at the local level. We are also committed to incorporating the Respect programme into performance management frameworks. Signing up and implementing the Standard will give landlords and partners a 'head start' in delivering against these requirements.

## **SECTION 2**

### **WHAT DOES SIGNING THE STANDARD INVOLVE?**

#### **SUPPORT FOR SIGNATORY LANDLORDS**

The Department will circulate an electronic newsletter to signatories of the Standard at regular intervals, this will include best practice. Workshop events will also be convened for signatories to discuss best practice in more detail.

Additionally the Respect Squad is a team of trouble-shooters who can be called in to help local agencies tackle anti-social behaviour. They do so by accelerating action in cases where agencies need extra support (eg where partnership working has broken down or complex cases where solutions have been sought but failed). A proportion of their input will be dedicated to supporting signatory landlords.

The Department will be sponsoring a high profile national awards scheme open to signatories of the Standard. Signatory landlords will be approached on a regular but voluntary basis to submit examples of outstanding and innovative practice so they can be collated and disseminated to other landlords.

Over the coming months The Department will liaise with signatories to see what other support can be provided.

#### **HOW WILL PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE STANDARD BE MEASURED?**

The Standard's credibility depends on landlord's taking their commitment in signing seriously. Accountability to residents and service users is key. The primary formal measure of assessing performance will be through the housing inspection programme carried out by the Audit Commission's Housing Inspectorate.

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY TO RESIDENTS**

Residents will legitimately hold the expectation that landlords will deliver a service in line with the Standard when they sign up, and should be able to challenge their landlords where performance falls short through usual complaints procedures.

The Department will be working with residents groups (including the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and Tenants and Residents Organisation for England (TAROE)) to raise awareness of the Standard. The aim will be to ensure residents actively challenge landlords to sign where appropriate and help them work towards doing so, in partnership, where services do not yet meet the Standard's demands.

#### **THE HOUSING INSPECTION PROGRAMME**

The Housing Inspectorate carries out service inspections using the published key lines of enquiry (KLoE) and descriptors that inform their judgements. The Audit Commission is committed to reviewing coverage of anti-social behaviour within the KLoE 6 (tenancy and estate management) so that it reflects best practice to date as reflected through the Respect Standard.

By linking the Standard with the mainstream inspection programme the role of the Standard as a benchmarking tool will be strengthened. Burdens will be minimised on landlords by aligning the two as they can be reasonably confident that the content of the Standard is reflected in the scope of the KLoE, from February 2007 onwards.

The KLoE will examine whether a landlord is a signatory to the Standard but the Inspectorate will act reasonably in recognising that landlords who do not sign the Standard may still be delivering good services and achieving positive outcomes. Being a signatory to the Standard will not be a pre-requisite to achieving a good inspection rating. However, it is expected that most landlords strongly committed to tackling anti-social behaviour will want to signal this through the visibility signing provides.

The Respect Standard is primarily designed to outline the core components of delivering a comprehensive and effective service 'the building blocks'. Where these core components are in place positive results should follow. The inspection process (through the KLoEs) allows for a more in-depth examination of outcomes.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT**

Some landlords struggle to measure the outcomes of their activities. Developing performance indicators to measure progress in tackling anti-social behaviour and creating a culture of respect is complex. Any assessment needs to cover the wide range of activities involved (prevention, enforcement and support). It can prove difficult to assign outcomes (eg shifts in the perceptions of residents) to any particular activity or the activities of any single agency.

To help support landlords in establishing and monitoring their own performance indicators a toolkit on performance management linked to the Standard will be developed. It is expected this will be made available in summer 2007.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL FLEXIBILITY**

The building blocks shown under each commitment (in Section Three) are commonly accepted (confirmed through consultation) as best practice but they are not intended to be exhaustive.

It is important to recognise that practitioners are constantly learning all the time about what works best. Over time it is likely that new approaches will emerge. The Standard should act as a benchmark but not a static model that precludes further innovation. Some landlords may be carrying out activities that don't precisely match with the building blocks established here but which are achieving positive outcomes.

All the building blocks listed under each of the core commitments will not be relevant to all local areas but signatory landlords should be able to demonstrate they have actively considered whether they are appropriate and if not what other approaches they have deployed to deliver against the six core themes.

# **SECTION 3**

## **THE RESPECT STANDARD FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT**

### **YOUR COMMITMENT**

In signing the Respect Standard you are making a visible commitment to residents and other interested parties. You are committing to doing all you reasonably can to provide good services to tackle anti-social behaviour and create a culture of respect through your housing management role and broader involvement in neighbourhood management.

The Standard you have signed up to requires that the services you provide, both alone and in partnership, properly address the following core components:

- 1 Accountability, leadership, and commitment**
- 2 Empowering and reassuring residents**
- 3 Prevention and early intervention**
- 4 Tailored services for residents and provision of support for victims and witnesses**
- 5 Protecting communities through swift enforcement**
- 6 Support to tackle the causes of anti-social behaviour**

# **COMMITMENT 1: ACCOUNTABILITY, LEADERSHIP, AND COMMITMENT**

## **BUILDING BLOCKS:**

- Demonstrable commitment to tackling anti-social behaviour and creating a culture of respect.
- Backing up commitment by aligning capacity and resources and providing value for money.
- Assignment of responsibility so that everyone delivering services is clear about their role and what is expected of them.
- Seeking out best practice and adopting new approaches.
- Delivery of outcomes defined by measurable local targets (eg year on year increases in resident satisfaction by estate or neighbourhood as measured by regular surveys).
- Continually reviewing performance to inform improvement planning and engaging residents and partners in this process.
- Commitment to robust policies of zero tolerance towards abuse of staff, resident representatives and voluntary workers in delivering their functions.

## **WORKING WITH PARTNERS:**

- Working with partner agencies at strategic and operational levels (for example the neighbourhood police, neighbourhood management, other landlords including the private rented sector, social services and schools):
  - Employing service delivery protocols where appropriate.
  - Active and effective participation on local partnerships, including Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, where feasible and neighbourhood level structures where they operate (eg regeneration partnerships and neighbourhood management).
  - Information sharing.
  - Making the appropriate links between strategy on anti-social behaviour and respect and other strategies, including homelessness, supporting people, gypsy and travellers, community cohesion and diversity.

## **COMMITMENT 2: EMPOWERING AND REASSURING RESIDENTS**

### **BUILDING BLOCKS:**

- Involving residents, including young people, in setting local priorities as part of broader resident participation.
- Delivering regular, meaningful and accessible feed-back sessions on issues of local concern involving partner agencies where appropriate (eg 'Face the People' sessions).
- Engaging residents in developing and agreeing local standards of conduct (eg through Good Neighbour Agreements).
- Facilitating 'community led audits' of anti-social behaviour hotspots and environmental problems (eg estate walks to identify graffiti and fly-tipping).
- Providing residents with regular updates of actions you and partner organisations have undertaken to tackle anti-social behaviour (both positive activities and use of enforcement action) and how they might be involved in delivering solutions (eg leaflet drops etc).
- Publicise use of enforcement tools (generally or specific uses where appropriate) so that the community is reassured and is aware of any terms so they can help report suspected breaches.
- Tailoring services to take account of diversity so that no one is unduly excluded through barriers to involvement, information and advice.
- Rewarding positive 'community minded' behaviour (eg sponsoring activities for young people who contribute to the community or who successfully address their behaviour and celebrating residents who are prepared to 'take a stand' and give support to action to tackle anti-social behaviour).

### **WORKING WITH PARTNERS:**

- Working with partner agencies and the local media to promote action/successes in tackling anti-social behaviour. Where appropriate this could involve a multi-agency communications strategy.
- Making links between respect and broader area-based work on community capacity building and community cohesion (eg facilitating projects to foster inter-generational understanding or community wide mediation to resolve local issues that generate tensions within a neighbourhood).
- Working independently or with partner agencies to engage young people in constructive and purposeful activities (eg volunteering, community clean ups, sports and the arts and activities during school holidays).

## **COMMITMENT 3: PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION**

### **BUILDING BLOCKS:**

- Ensuring tenancy agreements and leases meet Office of Fair Trading (OFT) guidelines and contain clear prohibitions on anti-social conduct – linked where appropriate with Good Neighbour Agreements.
- Running user-friendly sign up-meetings for new residents to include a clear explanation of your policies on anti-social behaviour, how problems will be addressed, what you expect of the resident and what they can expect of you in return.
- Undertaking full assessments of any potential problems that may require tenancy support when entering into new tenancy agreements.
- Regularly reviewing allocations and lettings policies (including Choice based schemes) to ensure issues of respect and anti-social behaviour are fully reflected – eg sensitive lettings to avoid potentially problematic situations.
- Adopting introductory or starter tenancy schemes for new residents where appropriate.
- Designing out anti-social behaviour through environmental gating schemes and improvements (eg security lighting).
- Deploying robust screening processes to determine whether mediation is appropriate at the earliest possible opportunity. Where it is – making appropriate referrals.
- Providing clear warnings backed up by evidence of past action taken against perpetrators of anti-social behaviour.
- Using early intervention tools like Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) (and Parenting Contracts if available) linked to provision of support where appropriate.
- Taking swift action on environmental damage (eg rapid removal of graffiti and clearance of fly tipping) to give a strong signal that action will be taken.

### **WORKING WITH PARTNERS:**

- Sharing of information when making/accepting nominations to identify any issues with past behaviour and establishing support needs.
- Providing evidence to partner agencies and working with them to identify anti-social behaviour hotspots and areas where incidents appear to be emerging and contributing to the delivery of tailored strategies to address these problems.
- Working with partner agencies to provide a visible presence in hotspots (eg community support officers/police and wardens patrols).
- Working closely with warden schemes where available including sponsoring schemes where appropriate.

## **COMMITMENT 4: TAILORED SERVICES FOR RESIDENTS AND PROVISION OF SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS & WITNESSES**

### **BUILDING BLOCKS:**

- Making sure reporting is easy by offering a variety of reporting methods (ie telephone hotlines, emails and reporting centres). This should be open to all (ie using jargon free plain English) and pay regard to diversity (ie translation of material, sensitivity in reporting hate crime).
- Ensuring the first point of contact is helpful, courteous and sensitive to the stress reporting incidents of anti-social behaviour often involves.
- Making sure all staff are clear about what procedures should be followed when they receive a complaint.
- Delivering to achievable but challenging deadlines for each key stage of the process and agreeing appropriate action with the complainant. On occasions where deadlines cannot be met explanations should be given as soon as possible.
- Providing complainants with regular updates of progress of their case from the point of complaint to resolution and beyond, including the outcomes of any court hearings.
- Minimise burdens on complainants in collecting evidence (eg short focused use of diary sheets rather than prolonged use with no clear outcome).
- Where attendance at court is required, full explanations of the procedures and pre-visits to court should be offered in advance and support offered throughout, including escort to court and mentoring.

### **WORKING WITH PARTNERS:**

- Carrying out full assessments of the support needs of individuals who report anti-social behaviour or agree to provide evidence/act as witnesses.
- Systematically supporting victims either directly or in conjunction with specialist care and support agencies (eg witness support services and networks).
- Prompt deployment of reassurance measures where appropriate including regular patrols and (housing officers, wardens, police etc), visits, provision of personal alarms and CCTV systems.
- Focus on 'target hardening' – (eg fire proof letter boxes and wide angle spy holes) liaising with Crime Prevention services as necessary.
- Liaison with court services to minimise the stresses of a hearing (eg secure holding areas).

## **COMMITMENT 5: PROTECTING COMMUNITIES THROUGH SWIFT ENFORCEMENT**

### **BUILDING BLOCKS:**

- Ensuring staff are fully aware of the range of tools available and can identify how each will be used either alone or in line with broader policies and procedures. This should include use of introductory/ starter tenancies, ABCs, ASBOs, Injunctions, Parenting Contracts/ Orders, Demotion, Right to Buy measures and possession action.
- Ensure staff are provided with training on how the tools operate and what each demands in terms of evidence gathering and consultation with other agencies.
- Having clear procedures in place to minimise the use of eviction, wherever possible (though it will sometimes be necessary), through use of other tools to tackle anti-social behaviour in situ (eg injunctions etc).
- Ensuring robust case management procedures are in place which enable fast-tracking of legal action where required (eg systems which facilitate pursuing interim injunctions at short notice and enforcement of breaches).
- Proactive gathering of evidence of anti-social behaviour from a wide variety of sources.
- Commitment to visibly upholding standards of behaviour in public space and challenging those who do not wherever possible.
- Monitor use and outcomes of tools to feed into broader reviews of performance and improvement planning.

### **WORKING WITH PARTNERS:**

- Develop strong working relationships and strategic links with partners including the local authority, police and court service (eg through court user groups or court anti-social behaviour co-ordinators where available).
- Joint tasking of enforcement/evidence gathering from multi-agency staff.
- Have robust procedures in place to seek enforcement of breaches as quickly as possible through strong links to ensure proactive action backed up by the police and courts.

## **COMMITMENT 6: SUPPORT TO TACKLE THE CAUSES OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

### **BUILDING BLOCKS:**

- Ensure staff are fully aware of the range of support provision available and are able to identify how each approach should be used as a core component of case management.
- Ensure staff have a clear understanding of how support provision should be linked with triggers. (eg early intervention measures or use of enforcement action such as demotion).
- Ensure Policies and Procedures state clearly how support provision will be provided or accessed and the triggers/process by which support needs will be identified.
- A clear focus on delivering support and challenge solutions (ie linking support with enforcement at an early stage) rather than crisis-based interventions where problems have escalated.
- Making it clear to residents that enforcement action may be considered where suitable offers of support are refused and their behaviour does not improve.
- Clear policies and procedures on dealing with vulnerable residents (eg mental health issues and drug and alcohol problems).

### **WORKING WITH PARTNERS:**

- Following assessment (involving multi-agency case conferencing where appropriate) deployment of 'floating support' designed to work with residents in stopping anti-social behaviour and where possible, maintaining a tenancy.
- Where available and appropriate, referral to Family Intervention Programmes for residents with complex support needs who are causing anti-social behaviour in the community.
- Negotiate with local Supporting People teams in order to build on existing floating and residential housing related support schemes to ensure that the appropriate support is available for those residents/families with complex needs. Where no support currently exists explore possible opportunities for Supporting People to fund new support projects.



### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

Further information on the Respect Standard for Housing Management is available via the Communities and Local Government website:

[www.communities.gov.uk/antisocialbehaviour](http://www.communities.gov.uk/antisocialbehaviour)

Further copies of this guide, *Respect Standard for Housing Management – A Guide for Landlords*, Product code: 06HC04085/B and *Respect Standard for Housing Management – A Guide for the Public*, Product code: 06HC04085/A are available via the website or from:

Communities and Local Government Publications  
PO Box No 236  
Wetherby LS23 7NB  
Tel: 0870 226 236

Email: [communities@twoten.com](mailto:communities@twoten.com)

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