

Wythenshawe
Community Housing Group



Your Guide to

Dealing With Anti-Social
Behaviour & Hate Crime

One Service

Making your community safe for you is top priority for Wythenshawe Community Housing Group. Stopping nuisance behaviour, anti-social behaviour and harassment are a vital part of our work to make your neighbourhoods a good place to live. Wythenshawe Community Housing Group will not tolerate any anti-social behaviour and will take action against anyone carrying out such behaviour

Our approach to community safety has been worked out after talking to people just like you. We are working with organisations like the Crime and Disorder Partnership, the Police and Manchester City Council to keep your neighbourhood safe and peaceful.

Wythenshawe Community Housing Group's Community Safety team is made up of Specialist Anti-social Behaviour Officers and Assure 24.



What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour is any behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress or which causes or is likely to cause a nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to people living in your neighbourhood. Anti-social behaviour can cover a wide range of activities, from minor disputes with neighbours arising from differences in lifestyles to serious criminal behaviour.

To the right are examples of anti-social behaviour. These include but are not limited to:

- Excessive noise (especially late at night);
- Threatening or swearing at neighbours;
- Criminal activity;
- Nuisance caused by animals;
- Vandalism;
- Assault or physical violence;
- Dumping of litter or rubbish;
- Racist or homophobic abuse or graffiti;
- Domestic abuse

Remember, as the tenant, you are responsible for the behaviour of everybody who lives with you or visits you.



How can I be a good neighbour?

The best way of dealing with anti-social behaviour is to not let it happen in the first place. This means showing consideration for and being polite to other people, especially your neighbours. You also need to be aware that other people may have a different lifestyle to you.

For example, some people may have to work shifts so they may be asleep during the day; other people may have large families so they may make more noise than someone who lives alone. We ask that you try to understand and be tolerant of other people's lifestyles.

Some tips on how to be a good neighbour:

- Introduce yourself when you move in – you could even become friends!
- Warn your neighbours if you are going to have a party
- Keep your stereo and TV volume down at night
- Train your dog not to bark unnecessarily.



What if I have an anti-social neighbour?

Try talking to your neighbour to see if you can sort out the problem between you. Your neighbour may not realise their behaviour is causing you a problem. Here are some useful tips;

Do

- Be courteous, calm and polite, as you are far more likely to receive a courteous response yourself
- Plan what you are going to say beforehand
- Describe the nuisance and be prepared to quote some examples of the disturbance if asked, particularly times and dates and how it affects you
- Give them plenty of time to express their views
- Listen carefully
- Accept differences on attitudes and ways of life
- Be open to suggestions for resolving the problem
- Come to an agreement that is suitable to all of you.

Don't

- Do not retaliate - this will only make the problem worse and increase tension with your neighbours.
- Do not go round to your neighbours when you are angry
- Do not wait until you are at the end of your tether
- Do not use threatening behaviour
- Do not exaggerate the problem
- Do not gang up on your neighbour.

If your attempts don't work or you feel uncomfortable about approaching your neighbour, then please contact your nearest Wythenshawe Community Housing Group office. You can also phone our Customer Services Team on **0800 633 5500** or **0300 111 0000** or contact us at **asbresponse@wchg.org.uk**.

How can I report anti-social behaviour?

The simplest way to tell us about anti-social behaviour is to call into your nearest Wythenshawe Community Housing Group office. You can also phone our Customer Services Team on **0800 633 5500** or **0300 111 0000** or contact us at **asbresponse@wchg.org.uk**.

We can sort out some problems very quickly but others may take more time. If the anti-social behaviour is not obvious to everyone, or if you are being directly harassed, we will need talk to you before we can start the investigation.

What will we do to help you:

- Investigate all reported cases of ASB within our agreed timescales and acknowledge all complaints within 1 working day. Advise you of the steps we can take and what you can expect to happen next.
- Meet with anyone subjected to ASB within 1 week or in cases of serious harassment or nuisance within 24 hours.
- Treat all information in confidence unless you agree otherwise.
- Agree with you how often we update you. This will be at least every 2 weeks and at key stages of the process.
- Provide appropriate witness support and an out of hour's service for emergency incidents
- Use a variety of different methods to tackle ASB including legal actions and preventative measures depending on what is required.



Confidentiality

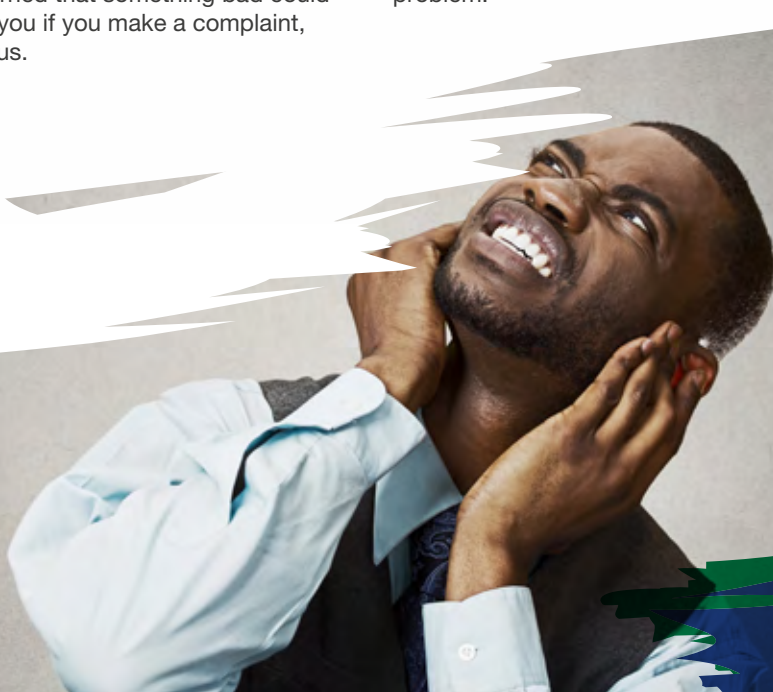


We will treat what you tell us in confidence. We'll try and help you stay anonymous, but people can sometimes guess who is complaining about them. In most cases we will need to talk to the person you are complaining about. You can ask us not to do this but, we may not be able to take your case any further. If you are worried that something bad could happen to you if you make a complaint, please tell us.

Gathering evidence



Depending on the case we will use different types of evidence e.g. diary sheets that you complete, noise recording evidence and evidence from our officers. You may be asked to keep a diary so that we can see the frequency and impact of events. This may be for a few weeks or longer, depending on the nature of the problem.



Supporting witnesses

In our experience cases where members of the public are prepared to come forward as witnesses and give evidence in court have the highest chance of success. We understand that attending court can be a frightening and daunting experience for many people. Wythenshawe Community Housing Group will therefore do all they can to help support witnesses through the process.

We understand that people can be put off attending court for a number of reasons, including:

- Travel expenses;
- Loss of income;
- Meeting the alleged perpetrator; or
- Fear of going to court.

Wythenshawe Community Housing Group can help by:

- Arranging visits to the court before the court date, so witnesses know what to expect on the day.
- Ensuring that a separate waiting room is available at court to minimise the chance of witnesses meeting the accused.
- Accompanying all witnesses to court to provide reassurance and explanations of how the case is progressing.
- Arranging for the payment of lost wages, travel expenses, taxis and provide interpreters or other support, where appropriate.

There are some instances where people will be just too frightened to attend court because for fear of reprisals and / or intimidation. Wythenshawe Community Housing Group will not reveal your details at any stage of the process, unless they have your permission to do so.

Hate crime

Hate crime is behaviour deliberately intended to hurt or upset someone because of their race, colour, national origin, ethnic origin, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation. A hate crime can be:

- Racial harassment
- Homophobic harassment
- Sexual harassment
- Harassment of the disabled or mentally ill

It can include:

- Physical assault
- Damage to property
- Graffiti
- Arson
- Verbal abuse

We are determined to stop hate crimes in the Wythenshawe area. We will take legal action against any tenant who acts like this, or who lets people living with them or visiting them act like this. Anyone who commits a hate crime is breaking the Tenancy Agreement.

If you are the victim of a hate crime you must tell us. There are many ways we can help you. To get help go to your nearest Wythenshawe Community Housing Group office, phone the Customer Services Team on **0800 633 5500** or **0300 111 0000** or contact us using our website **www.wchg.org.uk**.

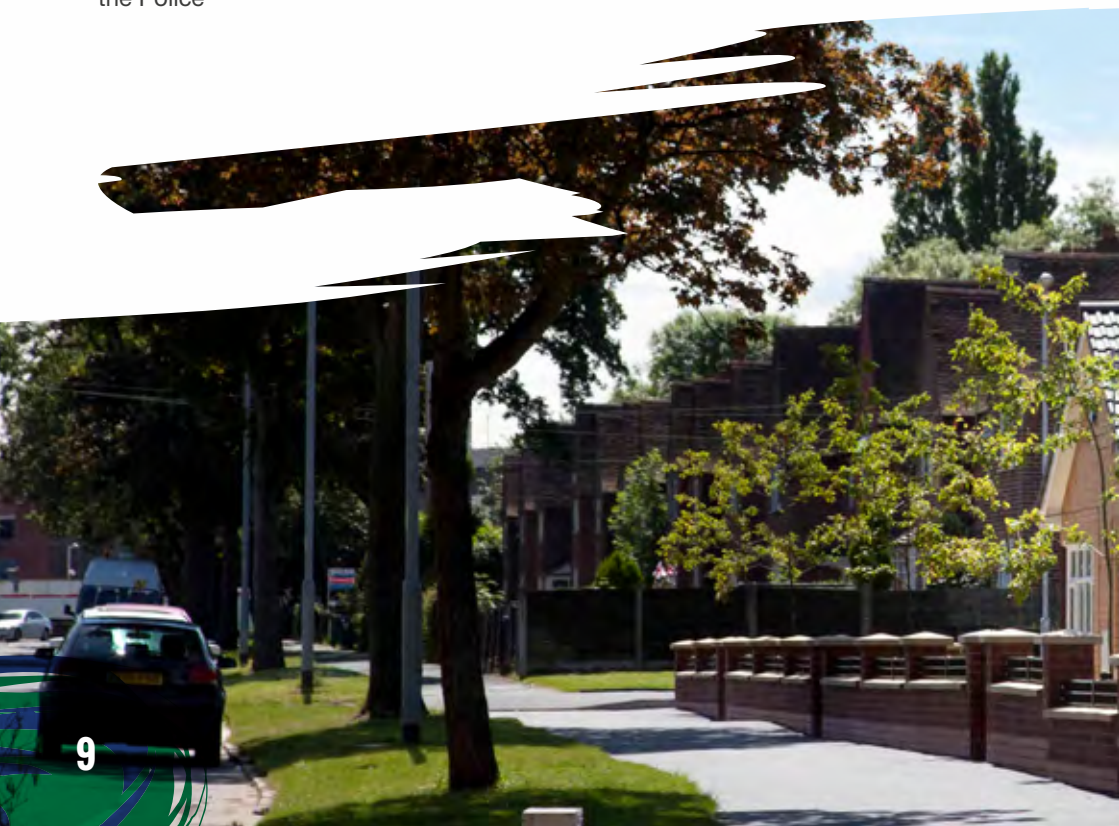


What can Wythenshawe Community Housing Group do?

We want you to be safe in your own home and we will do our best to deal with any people who harass you.

These are some things we will do to help you:

- We will talk to you within 24 hours of you reporting your harassment
- We will arrange emergency repairs or remove graffiti
- With your agreement we will tell the Police
- We will visit you regularly and tell you what is happening
- We will lend you a mobile phone (if you are not already on the phone) so you can call the Police in an emergency
- We will give you emergency priority if you are in danger and want to be rehoused
- We will provide extra security measures such as CCTV and security lighting

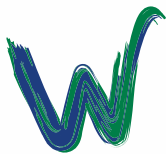


What happens to the people who harass you?

If we have enough evidence of the harassment we will take action. The action we take will depend on the severity and nature of the harassment.

- In very serious cases, where you or another person have been put in danger we will pursue legal action straight away against the people responsible
- In most situations we will talk to the person responsible first and tell them if they don't stop they could face legal action
- If they keep harassing you we will start legal action.





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