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St. Helens Council

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St. Helens Council



St. Helens Community Safety Partnership

Anti-Social Behaviour Pledge



Contents

What is Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)?	1
Our Pledge	2
Reporting ASB	7
Environmental ASB	11
Noise, Abandoned vehicles and Dogs	12
Making a complaint	16
What happens to people responsible for ASB?	18
Vehicle Nuisance	20
Alcohol Misuse	20
Powers used by Registered Social Landlords and housing providers	21
Our Performance	22



Your Views, Your Concerns, Our Community

St.Helens Council and Community Safety Partners understand that the views of our Community are key when it comes to tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. We recognise that disorder, anti-social behaviour, drug misuse and environmental crime have caused concerns for some residents. We have put this booklet together so you can find out what standard of service you can expect from St.Helens Council and our partner agencies when you report anti-social behaviour.

What is Anti-Social Behaviour?

The Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 defined anti-social behaviour as:

“conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person”.

Anti-social behaviour is an activity that is considered aggressive, destructive or intimidating and influences the quality of another person's life.

This can be:

1. Abandoned or burnt out cars
2. Noisy neighbours or loud parties
3. People being drunk or rowdy in public places
4. People using or dealing drugs
5. Rubbish or litter lying around
6. Teenagers hanging around the street
7. Vandalism, graffiti and deliberate damage to property or vehicles
8. Irresponsible dog owners

Our Pledge

We have heard your concerns and are committed to addressing them.

We will:

- Tackle all aspects of anti-social behaviour
- Make perpetrators aware that their behaviour is unacceptable and they will face tough enforcement action if required
- Record and assist in the investigation of reported cases of anti-social behaviour and keep victims informed of action taken
- Offer support and practical help to victims of anti-social behaviour
- Increase your confidence that anti-social behaviour in St.Helens continues to fall and not increase
- Reduce the number of anti-social behaviour calls for service made to Merseyside Police
- Reduce the number of repeat victims of anti-social behaviour
- Reduce the number of anti-social fires
- Keep you informed about our efforts to tackle anti-social behaviour
- Give you the opportunity to complain if effective action is not taken by local agencies.

What can you expect?

Victims of anti-social behaviour can expect St.Helens Council's Safer Communities Anti-Social Behaviour Unit to always:

1. Take all reported incidents/complaints of anti-social behaviour seriously, whether made anonymously, in person, in writing or over the telephone
2. Treat victims and witnesses sympathetically and in confidence
3. Assess all incidents/complaints against our risk criteria
4. Inform those who have reported anti-social behaviour of how the matter will be progressed

5. Ensure all incidents/complaints have an auditable trail
6. Send out clear messages that we will not tolerate anti-social behaviour.



How will we do this?

St.Helens Council's Safer Communities Anti-Social Behaviour Unit will continue to work with our Community Safety Partners and listen to the views of our Community. We will deliver a programme of campaigns, provide advice, offer and identify supportive resources and tackle anti-social behaviour through a number a multi-agency annual operations, such as:

- Springwatch - tackling expected rises in anti-social behaviour in spring by providing young people with positive fun alternative activities
- Safespace - working together for a safer summer by tackling anti-social behaviour and off-road vehicle nuisance in parks and open spaces
- Good Guy - reducing anti-social behaviour and nuisance fires in the lead-up to, and over the bonfire period, by encouraging residents to report build-ups of combustible waste.

Working in partnership, we also tackle anti-social behaviour by:

Keeping you informed

We will keep you informed of our progress in tackling anti-social behaviour on our partnership website - www.safersthelens.org.uk



Managing information

We will co-ordinate and collate anti-social behaviour perpetrator referrals on behalf of the Council and its partners and use all anti-social behaviour powers and tools available to use when appropriate. The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit workload will be prioritised by the seriousness of each case.

Tackling problems in your neighbourhood

On receipt of a report of Anti-Social Behaviour to the St.Helens Council's Safer Communities Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, we will log the case on to the Council's Contact Centre system.

The officer will ask you some specific questions in order to determine how severe the anti-social behaviour is so they can identify any urgent action which may need to be taken. You should therefore try to answer these questions honestly and openly.

An action plan may then be agreed with you setting out the following:

- How the initial investigation will be carried out: an Anti-Social Behaviour diary may be issued in order to gather further evidence, as it will be valuable if the behaviour continues
- Recommend the most appropriate method of resolution, with realistic outcomes, taking into account all the tools and powers available, which may include referrals to other support services where necessary
- In cases where enforcement action is taken, discussing and explaining the processes involved in supporting the complainants and witnesses through the process (e.g. by providing transport to court in appropriate cases and support at court to ensure that complaints and witnesses are adequately safeguarded);
- Your officer will also agree with you how often you will be contacted and by your preferred method of communication. This will be reviewed throughout the duration of the case.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit will work closely with three Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs) across the Borough. NAGs are multi-agency problem solving groups who work together to reduce crime and the perception of crime in each Neighbourhood Policing area.

Who is responsible for tackling anti-social behaviour in St.Helens?

Anti-social behaviour covers a very broad range of events.

The following incidents are types of anti-social behaviour, which can be recorded as crime and will be dealt with by Merseyside Police appropriately:

- Hate crime incidents (for example, racism or homophobia)
- Graffiti and vandalism
- Threatening behaviour by groups of people
- Alcohol-related incidents, such as underage drinking and disorderly behaviour
- Begging
- Drug dealing

Other types of anti-social behaviour

Not all cases of anti-social behaviour involve crime. For example, abandoned vehicles and noise issues may be anti-social, but they are not crimes.

In such cases a decision will be made about who can resolve the problem and take relevant action. Merseyside Police may deal with an incident or it may be dealt with by another agency, such as the Council or a Registered Provider of Social Housing.



How and to whom can I report anti-social behaviour in St.Helens?

To report anti-social behaviour, you can call:

Merseyside Police

Non emergency **101**

Emergency **999**

However, you must only call 999 if:

- A crime is happening now
- People are injured
- People are being threatened or are in danger
- The offender is still there or is nearby

An emergency is something that demands an immediate response and using the 999 line unnecessarily could prevent somebody who is in danger from getting through.

Merseyside Police aims to respond to all calls concerning anti-social behaviour appropriately, giving information concerning response times to callers.

St.Helens Council

Safer Communities Anti-Social Behaviour Unit

01744 673114

The Unit has links with a number of different agencies, including Merseyside Police, Registered Providers of Social Housing, the Council's Private Sector Landlord and Tenant Liaison Officer, the Youth Service and Environmental departments. The Unit will try to help you and provide advice on what they and you can do to tackle anti-social behaviour.

St.Helens Council Contact Centre

01744 676789

You can get in touch with the Centre between 8.00am and 8.00pm, Monday to Friday and 10.00am to 2.00pm on Saturday.

The Contact Centre team deal with a wide and diverse range of enquiries and issues, as well as assisting customers in general.

They will listen to your issues and, if applicable, refer you to the most appropriate department within the Council.

Email: contactcentre@sthelens.gov.uk

St.Helens Council Mobile App

The App allows you to photograph, video and report problems directly, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The App is available to download free of charge from the App Store and Android Market.

Registered Providers of Social Housing

If you are a tenant of a Registered Provider of Social Housing or Housing Association, you can contact your landlord as they have powers to tackle anti-social behaviour too. See below for how to contact your housing provider to report anti-social behaviour, but if you need immediate assistance, due to a serious incident, then you should contact Merseyside Police on **999**.

Helena Homes

If you are a tenant suffering from anti-social behaviour, or witness an incident, you can contact Helena by:

Telephone: **01744 637383** (One Call)
(normal working hours 8.00am to 6.00pm)

Online reporting: www.helenapartnerships.co.uk

By email: onecall@helenapartnerships.co.uk

In person: Details of Helena's Neighbourhood Officers and opening times can be obtained by telephoning One Call on **01744 637383**

Your Housing Group

Residents can report anti-social behaviour by:

Telephone: **0345 345 0272**
(24 hours a day, 365 days a year)

Online reporting: www.yourhousinggroup.co.uk

Regenda Homes

Residents can report anti-social behaviour in several ways, including:

Telephone: **0844 736 0066**

Online reporting: www.regendafirst.org.uk

By email: info@regenda.org.uk

Text-only number: **07970 865865**

Crimestoppers

If the anti-social behaviour is also criminal behaviour, you can call Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** if you wish to give information and remain anonymous.





Environmental Anti-Social Behaviour

You can report environmental anti-social behaviour to St.Helens Council on 01744 676789, by using the online 'report a problem' form at www.sthelens.gov.uk or using the St.Helens Council Mobile App. Environmental anti-social behaviour is classed as the following:

Flytipping

The Council will:

- Investigate reported incidents and take action wherever possible
- Arrange for removal of illegal waste once the incident has been investigated
- Engage with businesses to ensure that they are properly managing their waste
- Issue Fixed Penalty Notices for Litter and other environmental offences
- Investigate dumped waste in alleyways and take action as appropriate
- Work proactively with other agencies to try and reduce the amount of dumped waste and litter.

Litter

The Council will:

- Monitor street cleanliness
- Provide equipment and support for community clean-ups on public or private land
- Issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to those caught depositing litter on land open to the air
- Educate and take enforcement action against owners and occupiers whose land is defaced by litter
- Educate and take enforcement action against shops and businesses who do not comply with litter legislation

Needles and Sharp Items

The Council will:

- Remove items within 24 hours from open land readily accessible to the general public

Graffiti

The Council will:

- Remove graffiti from public buildings (offensive graffiti will be removed or temporarily covered within 24 hours of it being reported)
- Work with the partnership to encourage graffiti to be removed from private property
- In some cases, remove graffiti from private property with the consent of the owner

Noise

In most instances, people complaining of noise will be sent an information pack to progress their complaint.

This pack will contain a questionnaire and log sheets, which must be completed and returned to the officer in order for the matter to be investigated further.

Certain types of noise complaint - for example constantly ringing burgler alarms - are dealt with differently and may be responded to as a priority. Officers will work closely with other agencies and departments in the Council where this is appropriate, sharing information and taking joint action where necessary. Merseyside Police, Community Safety and Registered Social Landlords work together to tackle the worst cases of noise related anti-social behaviour.

Noise from Industrial and Commercial Premises

We approach noise from industrial and commercial premises in several ways:

- By commenting on applications for public entertainment licences
- By recommending conditions be placed on new planning consents, where appropriate, to avoid noise problems being caused

- By investigating complaints about noise
- By advising on preventative measures
- By taking enforcement action where necessary

Barking Dogs

Of all the neighbourhood noise complaints we receive, barking dogs are by far the most common. Concerns of the welfare of a dog should be reported to the RSPCA in the first instance and where required, officers will work with other departments/agencies e.g. Noise Control Officers and the RSPCA.

Neighbourhood Noise

We receive many complaints about neighbourhood noise, in particular:

- loud music
- television and radio volume
- noisy parties
- DIY
- loud voices or shouting
- heavy footsteps

If you are being disturbed by noise from a neighbour:

First, approach your neighbour and explain politely that you are troubled by noise. You may find this difficult, but often people are unaware that they are causing a problem. Most will be glad to do what they can to reduce noise. However, approach the matter carefully if you think your neighbour might react angrily to a complaint. In cases where you might feel threatened, or where previous personal approaches have not worked, report to the Council or if you reside in social housing, your landlord. Most Conditions of Tenancy require that tenants do not cause nuisance to neighbours; which include the private sector and private landlords, and social housing providers can take action if a nuisance is being caused.

Abandoned Vehicles

Report abandoned vehicles to Merseyside Police on 101.

If a vehicle looks in a poor state, has not moved for a considerable time and you haven't noticed anybody using the vehicle, then it may be abandoned. Before reporting a vehicle as abandoned, ask yourself a few simple questions:

- Has the vehicle been there for a long time? Is there a build-up of soil, weeds and debris around the vehicle?
- Is there mould on the windows, inside or outside the vehicle?
- Does the vehicle look kept or is it full of waste?
- Is the vehicle being vandalised, such as smashed windows, number plates missing?

Merseyside Police will make further enquiries and, if necessary, they will notify the Council, who will then take steps to trace the owner of the vehicle. If steps are not taken by the owner to remove the vehicle, then the Council will take steps to remove the vehicle and recharge the owner for any costs incurred.

Dog Fouling

The Council will:

- Carry out dog fouling patrols
- Issue Fixed Penalty Notices to people who do not clean up after their dogs
- Take informal action or issue a legal notice against residents who allow large amounts of dog faeces to build-up in yards and gardens
- Prosecute people who allow their dogs to repeatedly foul

Dangerous Dogs

What is a dangerous dog?

Any dog can be dangerous in certain circumstances. However, certain types of dogs have been identified as inherently dangerous because they were originally bred for their ability to fight, and as such, these dogs are prohibited under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. The illegal types are:

- Pit Bull Terrier types
- Japanese Tosa
- Dogo Argentino
- Fila Brasileiro

Some common Pit Bull type names are:

- Pit Bull Terrier
- American Pit Bull Type
- American Staffordshire
- Irish Staff
- Irish Blue Staffordshire

To report

St.Helens Council Dog Welfare and Enforcement Team is available between 8.00am and 5.00pm, on **01744 676338** or **01744 676299** or alternatively, you can access us via minicom on **01744 671671**.

At other times, dangerous dog incidents should be reported to Merseyside Police on **101** or **999** in an emergency.

Does the law only apply to these types of dangerous dogs?

No, the law gives protection to the public from any type of dog which is out of control in a public place or which causes injury to anyone in any place, whether private or public. Dogs deemed dangerous or illegal can be seized immediately.

What should I do if I think I have a dangerous dog?

If the owner has a dog that they believe to be a prohibited type under the Dangerous Dogs Act, such as a Pit Bull, they should contact Merseyside Police who can assess the dog and provide advice.

What should I do if I suspect that a relative, friend, colleague or neighbour owns an illegal dog?

If you suspect that someone owns an illegal dog, you can contact Merseyside Police on 101. Alternatively, if you want to remain anonymous, please contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. Crimestoppers is a charity independent of the Police. You won't be asked your name or personal details.

Who will decide if a dog is illegal?

Merseyside Police has a team of officers trained to identify illegal dogs.

Will dogs that are a danger to the public be seized?

Merseyside Police and St.Helens Council will always seize any dog that is believed to be a threat to the owner, their household or the general public.

What happens to an owner of a dangerous dog?

If an owner has a banned dog, they are breaking the law and liable for prosecution. The court will decide upon a suitable sentence and whether the dog should be put on the exempted list or destroyed. The maximum penalty for illegal possession of a prohibited dog is a £5,000 fine and/or six-month imprisonment.

What happens if you are not satisfied with the response given?

If you have made three or more reports of anti-social behaviour to St.Helens Council, Merseyside Police or a Registered Provider of Social Housing or one hate crime within the last six months, you can request a review of your case, by activating the Community Trigger.

What is the Community Trigger?

The Community Trigger gives victims and communities the right to request a review of their case if there are concerns that ongoing reports of anti-social behaviour have not been addressed.

The Trigger can be used by individuals, businesses or community groups whose case meets the criteria.

How do I activate the Community Trigger?

The Community Trigger is there for you or any member of our community to use if the following has taken place:

- You have reported anti-social behaviour on three occasions in the last six months
OR
- Five individuals have made reports about the same problem in the past six months
OR
- You have reported a hate incident in the last three months
AND
no action has been taken

You can activate the Community Trigger by contacting St.Helens Council on:

Telephone: **01744 676789 / 01744 673114** (dedicated ASB line)

Email: communitytrigger@sthelens.gov.uk

For more information about the Community Trigger visit:

www.safersthelens.org.uk

If you want to make a complaint

The Community Trigger does not replace the complaints procedure of any agency. You can make a direct complaint to the organisation you have been dealing with. You can also complain to the Ombudsman or Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) if you are unhappy about the service you have received from an individual officer or service.

What happens to people responsible for anti-social behaviour?

St.Helens Council, Merseyside Police and Community Safety Partners use the following tools and powers to tackle anti-social behaviour in St.Helens:

Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC)

An Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) is a 'goodwill' agreement made for a minimum of six months between any individual, group(s) or household involved in anti-social behaviour and St.Helens Council, the local police or a Registered Provider of Social Housing.

Civil Injunction

A Civil Injunction is a court order that requires a person to stop doing something. The court can also include positive interventions within the order, for the person responsible to take part in, with the aim of preventing them from engaging in further anti-social behaviour. A Civil Injunction can be given to anyone aged 10 years or over and is obtained through the Civil Courts.

Criminal Behaviour Order

A Criminal Behaviour Order can be issued by the Magistrates' Court if an individual is convicted of a criminal offence and where the individual is involved in persistent anti-social behaviour.

Premises Closure Order

A Premises Closure Order allows St.Helens Council or Merseyside Police to quickly close somewhere for a minimum of three months, where anti-social behaviour has been committed, or was likely to be committed..

Dispersal Order

A Dispersal Order can be placed on a specified area for up to 48 hours to provide short-term respite to a local community if a Police Officer determines an individual(s) are causing or are likely to commit anti-social behaviour there. When a Dispersal Order is in place, a Police Officer can ask anyone over 10 years of age to leave the designated area.

Parenting Orders

A court can enforce Parenting Orders when there has been a problem with a young person's behaviour. They impose requirements on the parent(s) or carer, which will usually includes their attendance on a guidance or counselling programme. Other requirements, such as ensuring that the child attends school, can also be included. Non-compliance can result in a fine of up to £1,000.

Penalty Notices for Disorder

Penalty Notices for Disorder are targeted at low-level anti-social behaviour offending. A person aged 18 years or over may be given a penalty notice, offering them an opportunity to pay the penalty notice instead of facing a conviction.

Truancy Sweeps

Truancy Sweeps aim to tackle non-attendance and involve the Police and Education Welfare Officers working together. Truancy sweeps are carried out during normal school hours. They involve stopping any young person believed to be of school age, whether accompanied by an adult or not. The intention is to establish whether or not the young person is registered at school and, if so, whether he/she is out of school legitimately.

Truancy sweeps can help to identify parents who are not taking their child's attendance seriously. Parents who allow their child to truant regularly can be prosecuted by means of Fixed Penalty or court sanctions.

Community Protection Notice

A Community Protection Notice (CPN) is intended to deal with particular, ongoing problems or nuisances which negatively affect the community's quality of life by targeting the person responsible. The notice will direct the individual, business or organisation responsible to stop causing the problem and it could also require the person responsible to take reasonable steps to ensure that it does not occur again.

Vehicle Nuisance

Seizures

A Police Officer in uniform can exercise powers when he/she has reasonable grounds for believing that a motor vehicle is being used in a manner which contravenes Section 3 (Careless Driving) or Section 34 (Driving elsewhere than on a road) of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

If the vehicle is used in a manner where it is causing, has been causing or is likely to cause, alarm distress or annoyance to members of the public, the Officer can initially give a written warning and, on a subsequent occasion, seize the vehicle.

The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 has given Police the power to seize vehicles that are being used without insurance or being driven without a licence.

Misuse of Alcohol

Confiscation of Alcohol

The Confiscation of Alcohol Act empowers Police Officers to confiscate alcohol from the possession of anyone under the age of 18. The Act can also be applied to a person over 18 if the Officer believes that the person intends to supply a minor with alcohol.

Persistent possession of alcohol by under 18s

A person under the age of 18 in possession of alcohol in any relevant place on three or more occasions within a period of 12 consecutive months, is committing an offence and is liable to a fine, if convicted, of up to £500.

Alcohol Designatory Orders

Residents told us of their problems and their experiences of people drinking in the streets, residential parks and open spaces and, as a result, a Designation Order was introduced in 2007 to cover most of the Borough. It gives the Council the right to designate areas where people cannot drink alcohol if asked by the Police not to do so (e.g. in the street, in parks or open spaces). The Police in such areas can stop people drinking alcohol (and confiscate and dispose of any other alcohol they are carrying) and people could face a fine or arrest for refusing to do so.

Is it an outright ban on drinking in public?

No - it's not an offence to drink alcohol in a public place, but it is if people don't stop when asked to do so by a Police Officer in a designated area.

Registered Providers and Housing Powers

There are a few different things that can happen if you have to go to court for a possession hearing:

Demotion Orders

Demotion Orders are used by landlords when a tenant, resident or visitor to the tenant's home has behaved, or threatened to behave, in a way which is capable of causing nuisance and affects the housing management of an area. They allow landlords to apply to the courts to reduce the security of tenure for tenants, by removing a number of tenancy rights, including the right to buy and the right to exchange. If a tenant continues to misbehave, then action can be taken to seek possession of their home.

Suspended Possession Order

A Suspended Possession Order can be granted if the court believes that the tenant could stay in their home as long as they agree to conditions agreed by the Court. For example, they could be asked to prevent certain visitors coming to their home again if they've caused anti-social behaviour in the past.

Possession Order

A Landlord can apply to the courts for a Possession Order that ends a tenant's right to live in their home and gives possession back to the Landlord.

Outright Possession Order

In extreme cases, the Courts can grant an Outright Possession Order which means that the tenant has to leave the property by a specified date. Bailiffs can be instructed to evict the tenants from the property if they don't leave by the date specified by the court.

Our Performance

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) members have established performance standards and targets in the Pledge that they strive to achieve in their work to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Residents will be kept informed of progress against these standards and targets on a regular basis via newsletters, websites and in the press. They will be given the opportunity to raise complaints on issues and tell us how they think we are doing.

How will we monitor our progress?

There are a number of ways we will monitor our progress in tackling anti-social behaviour. These include:

- Monitoring the number of calls made to Merseyside Police regarding anti-social behaviour and analysing the data on a monthly basis
- Monitoring the number of repeat victims who report anti-social behaviour on a monthly basis and analysing the data
- Analysing reports of anti-social behaviour to the Council Contact Centre on a monthly basis
- Evaluating our progress towards changing perceptions about anti-social behaviour and its seven strands.

We will also evaluate our progress towards tackling anti-social behaviour through feedback from the Community by completing surveys such as the annual CSP Survey and national British Crime Survey, and we will also survey residents at locations where anti-social behaviour has been a particular problem (ASB Hotspots).

It is by working with our Community that we can keep St.Helens a safe place to live, work and visit.

We want to do our best for you, but if we fail to meet our Pledge, we will always explain why it has not been possible to deliver the high standards to which we aspire and which you deserve.

