

GOOD PRACTICE NOTE

Promoting Respect:
Tackling anti-social
behaviour through
partnership working

March 2007

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Introduction

This Good Practice Note has been produced to assist associations work more closely with their local partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and promote Respect in their neighbourhoods. It contains information and tips on how to work more closely with your local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) as well as detailing the imminent change to housing associations' status in relation to CDRPs that will be enacted in the summer of 2007.

The role of the Housing Corporation

The Housing Corporation is committed to working with associations and their partners to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) effectively and to develop safe and secure communities as part of the Respect agenda.

The Regulatory Code section 3.5 states that housing associations must provide good-quality housing services for residents and prospective tenants. Within that section there are a number of requirements that can be seen as referencing the need to address ASB effectively. To reinforce this specifically, Circular 08/04 – Statutory Housing Management Guidance on Anti-social Behaviour Policies and Procedures requires all housing associations to have strategies in place to tackle ASB. We also collate information on the use of ASB powers by associations through the Regulatory and Statistical Return (RSR).

We have close working relations with partners in government, including Communities and Local Government and the Audit Commission, to ensure progress is effectively monitored. This is mainly done through housing inspections, most notably Key Line of Enquiry 6 on Tenancy and Estate Management.

The Corporation has been involved with many projects that look to deal with ASB including running a Respect conference, issuing guidance for associations on ASB strategies, funding the development of a consortium to work more closely with CDRPs and most recently the production of a Respect strategy and funding for five Family

Intervention Projects. We also recently included Respect and ASB as one of the themes for our Innovation and Good Practice Grant programme. Building Respect is also one of the five key headings in our Neighbourhood and Communities Strategy.

Respect and dealing with ASB are also central to partnership working with local authorities. Local authorities are essential partners for housing associations. They have a key leadership role across sectors, tenures and markets. Their wider responsibilities contribute significantly to the success and wellbeing of neighbourhoods and communities, through direct delivery of services, as well as being catalysts for wider partnership and delivery. We believe that all housing associations should actively engage with local authorities in communities where they have a significant presence and agree with local authorities how they can contribute to the delivery of local strategic priorities. We have signed a national protocol agreement with the Local Government Association that sets out how Housing Corporation funding can better help to meet the needs and priorities contained in local housing strategies. Importantly, it also focuses on elements linked to the ongoing effective use of social housing stock to promote sustainable neighbourhoods and communities, including preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour. Local protocols drawing on this national agreement are being developed with key local authorities across the country and Respect has emerged as an important theme.

Why is tackling ASB important?

Anti-social behaviour has long been a concern for communities and service providers across the country. Members of the public have been making complaints for many years about a range of nuisance behaviour, from graffiti and noisy neighbours through to more criminal matters, such as serious harassment. Many of these complaints are made to housing providers as well as to the police and the local authority.

The Housing Corporation recognises the devastating impact that anti-social behaviour can have on individuals and the wider community and believes that housing providers have a key role to play in tackling this problem. We intend to work with housing associations to tackle issues such as criminal damage, harassment and noise nuisance effectively and to attempt to create a culture of respect in our neighbourhoods.

Research tells us that social tenants are more likely than other residents to perceive ASB to be a problem in their area and therefore it is imperative that housing providers see this as an important part of their core function.

In 2003 the Government launched the Together campaign to provide advice and guidance and to raise awareness for practitioners and the wider community about anti-social behaviour. Alongside this, the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 was implemented introducing new and strengthening existing powers to tackle nuisance behaviour. In 2004, we produced guidance for the sector on

producing ASB policies and procedures as required by the Act.

At the same time, many agencies, including housing providers, were developing innovative approaches to education, diversion and prevention. The Housing Corporation has been proactive in supporting and promoting schemes run by housing associations such as youth activity schemes, job clubs, mentoring, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs), community clean-ups and neighbourhood warden schemes.

The Respect Action Plan

The Government's Respect Action Plan was launched in January 2006 and seeks to consolidate this holistic approach to tackling ASB, recognising that the root causes of nuisance behaviour need to be addressed in order to deal with the problem effectively. To this end, the plan looks at issues as broad as education and truancy through to enforcement and rehabilitation.

There is a great deal in the plan that will impact on associations, including changes to Parenting Orders, the Respect Standard for Housing Management and Neighbourhood Charters. In addition to this, there are many other less obvious things that will impact on associations, such as the roll-out of police Safer Neighbourhood teams and scrutiny powers in relation to crime and disorder.

This Good Practice Note aims to assist associations with meeting the Respect agenda by working in partnership with each other, the police and local authorities, voluntary and community groups and their local CDRP. It contains a number of case studies that identify ways to get over the barriers that associations might face when working to tackle ASB and offers practical advice as to how to get the most out of working with their partners.

The Respect Standard for Housing Management

The Respect Standard for Housing Management (RSHM) was launched in August 2006. It is made up of six commitments that social landlords should be meeting in order to be effectively and robustly tackling ASB.

Whilst signing up to the standard is voluntary, we actively encourage associations to sign up in order to show their tenants and communities that they will tackle and not tolerate ASB and are fully committed to making their estates and neighbourhoods safer.

The commitments cover the following areas and the associated guidance gives practical examples as to how the commitments might be met:

- accountability, leadership and commitment;
- empowering and reassuring residents;
- prevention and early intervention;
- tailored services for residents and provision of support for victims and witnesses;
- protecting communities through swift enforcement; and
- support to tackle the causes of ASB.

The RSHM makes very clear that social landlords cannot be expected to meet all of the strands of the Respect agenda on their own and lists in detail

the sort of input that can be expected from local partner agencies.

This Good Practice Note is intended to assist associations in finding ways to work together and build constructive and positive relationships that will allow them to meet the Respect Standard for Housing Management and the Respect Action Plan as a whole.

The role of housing associations in tackling ASB

There is already a great deal of expectation on landlords to deal with community problems and ASB. The Respect agenda re-emphasises this expectation by introducing new powers and initiatives for landlords.

As the RSHM outlines, landlords cannot be expected to do this alone. Whilst there are many associations that have sophisticated and well developed support teams and ASB units, there are many still attempting to get up to speed. This issue is of particular importance for housing associations, which vary widely in size, capability and resources. They may also face challenges such as having stock in multiple local areas over a wide geographical area. It is therefore of paramount importance that associations are able to work closely with their local partners to tackle ASB effectively.

The Housing Corporation has been advocating the use of the DEEPER acronym when it comes to meeting the Respect agenda. This is explained in our recent publication *Promoting Respect: Tackling Nuisance Behaviour*. DEEPER stands for Diversion, Education, Enforcement, Prevention, Engagement and Rehabilitation.

We believe that if an association can illustrate through its strategies and any activities it has in place, that it is touching upon all of these elements it will be a large part of the way to meeting the Respect agenda. This simple test, when used alongside key tools such as the RSHM will serve to allow associations to stay ahead when

Housing Respect Charter

A large number of the housing associations in Manchester have come together and signed a Respect Charter that illustrates their commitment to tackling ASB and to signing the RSHM.

They will support each other in meeting the commitments and sending the right messages across the community in order to reassure residents.

This approach allows smaller housing associations which might have fewer resources to work alongside larger landlords to provide a complete ASB response to local people.

it comes to ensuring their services are adequate and responsive.

This Good Practice Note contains a range of case studies and information to help associations work better in partnership with local agencies when dealing with ASB and the Respect agenda.

Working in partnership

There are a range of different agencies involved in tackling anti-social behaviour. These include the local authority, primary care trust and the police as well as social landlords. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced local arrangements for effectively dealing with shared issues in relation to crime and ASB. They are called Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs).

What is a CDRP?

Every local area has to have a CDRP, as prescribed by Section 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended by the Police Reform Act 2002). The CDRP is tasked with addressing issues of crime and disorder in a local area. At present, it is required to produce audits and strategies for its area every three years to illustrate where the problems are and what they are, as well as detailing how it intends to tackle them. The way the cycle runs is shortly to change from three-year audits and strategies to three-year rolling plans reviewed on an annual basis, but the duties on those involved will remain. This review is part of larger measures incorporated in the National Standards for CDRPs that will make partners more accountable to the communities they have been developed to support.

A CDRP is made up of a number of partners. There are three tiers of involvement – responsible authority, co-operating body and invitee. The responsible authorities are the main members of the partnership and are defined as: local authority, police, fire and rescue authority, primary care

trust, and police authority. The members are responsible for supporting the development of strategies and plans to reduce crime and disorder in their respective areas.

CDRPs have access to various government funding streams to assist them with this work as well as being able to secure more mainstream funding from those who have a seat at the table.

The constitution and operating procedures of partnerships vary across the country in order to meet local need. Some partnerships have a team of dedicated staff, who will work with all of the partners to set up new projects, carry out performance management, collect data and generally service the partnership.

If housing associations are to play a larger part in the ASB and Respect agenda, it is essential that they have access to and knowledge of what CDRPs can offer, and that CDRPs have access to and knowledge of what housing associations can offer them. CDRPs are the gateway to organisations and agencies that housing associations can work alongside and share information with. In addition they may also be able to assist with access to funding.

However, up to now, engagement between CDRPs and housing associations has been variable. In some areas, local housing associations play a key role in these partnerships as both sides have realised the benefits that such an approach can bring (see case studies). However, in other areas

they will never have come into contact. Housing associations may not even know that these partnerships exist.

This situation might exist for a number of reasons, including:

- inadequate publicity from CDRPs to housing associations;
- associations feeling that there is no need for them to get involved;
- disparity in CDRP working practices when it comes to engaging partners; and
- geographical issues – the association is unsure how it can engage with all the CDRPs in the areas it covers or there may be a large number of associations operating in that one area.

Changes to CDRPs

In an attempt to reinforce the important role of housing providers and to clarify the situation, the Home Office is implementing changes to the status of housing associations when it comes to engaging with CDRPs.

Associations will be elevated from Tier 3 status, 'invitees to participate in CDRP', to Tier 2 status, 'duty to co-operate'. Those members that have been designated as having a 'duty to co-operate' have a requirement to support reduced crime

Coventry Consortium of Social Landlords

The pioneer of housing association CDRP forums, the Coventry Consortium of Social Landlords has a membership that spans all of the housing associations that manage general needs stock across Coventry.

The purpose of the consortium is to allow members to engage efficiently and effectively with the Coventry Community Safety Partnership (CDRP) and to allow access for all of its members to the full range of interventions available to tackle ASB.

An evaluation report detailing how the project was set up and details of its successes can be found at:

www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk/documents/policy-documents/anti-social-behaviour-findings.pdf

Newham RSL Forum

The Newham Forum was set up to encourage a seamless approach to tackling ASB in the borough. It enjoys excellent attendance levels at its meetings and, recently, speakers from the Housing Corporation, Audit Commission and Communities and Local Government have addressed its members.

The Newham Forum has a representative who sits on the board of the local CDRP and it also provides representatives on various sub-groups that look at race equality and substance misuse. The Forum has developed an action plan that is in line with the overarching CDRP strategy and is proud at the way it has been able to work with and influence the local CDRP.

Kent and Medway Social Landlords ASB Group

Local housing associations and Kent police set up a social landlords group to work jointly on local initiatives and access the local CDRP. The group meets twice a year and members share best practice and discuss current problems in the area. As a group they are currently focusing on the commitments in the Respect Standard for Housing Management and see themselves as not only a regional support forum for landlords but also as a group raising the profile of housing with the local CDRP.

and anti-social behaviour in their respective communities. It is hoped that this will allow closer working as associations will be able to access the partnership more easily, and in addition CDRPs will be able to compel associations to get involved when there is a substantial problem that they could assist with regarding crime, disorder, drugs and ASB issues.

The main difference between a co-operating body and an invitee is that co-operating bodies have a duty to: 'Co-operate fully in the audit and strategy functions of relevant authorities and assist in the development and delivery of objectives that have been set out in the CDRPs crime and disorder reduction strategy.'

It is hoped that this change will lead to more consistent practices across the country. As co-operating bodies, associations will be placed at the heart of decision making and delivery and this has the potential to strengthen information sharing, open up access to potential funding streams and ensure associations have a voice in deciding local priorities around crime and disorder. It should be stressed that this change not only places a duty on the association: the CDRP and all of its partners will also have to co-operate fully with the association if required. The change will be based on a reciprocal duty.

A social landlord consortium can be one of the most effective ways to engage with a CDRP (see case studies). This is when a group of associations working in a local authority area come together

to discuss and address issues of ASB. After setting up a link with the local CDRP, they nominate a representative from the consortium to attend the CDRP meeting and feed in the views of the sector. The RSHM promotes the use of consortia by allowing joint sign-up, highlighting that it may be particularly useful in areas where there are multiple landlords.

The forthcoming government regulations regarding status will mean that in the future, closer working between associations and CDRPs will be more commonplace. However, it may still be worth familiarising yourself with a list of mutual benefits to encourage partnership working:

- associations have frontline staff who often know about issues long before other agencies;
- associations can provide information in relation to tenure and track problems as they emerge;
- associations may already have support projects in place that the CDRP could benefit from;
- associations will already have established links and associations within local communities;
- CDRPs may be able to piggyback on an association's local 'surgery' activity;
- associations could spread crime reduction messages more effectively to their tenants and neighbourhoods;

Setting up a consortium

- 1 Inform the CDRP of your plans to set up a group and ask for their help and involvement.
- 2 Agree with the CDRP how the consortium can access the partnership meetings – often this is through a consortium representative attending the main CDRP meeting.
- 3 Try to involve as many housing associations that operate in the area as you can.
- 4 Set the meetings at regular intervals but ensure they are not too frequent (so that there is too little to discuss each time) or too infrequent (to fail to maintain momentum).
- 5 Set clear agendas for the meetings. You could invite guest speakers from the police or local authority, or get members of the consortium to speak about their approach. Be clear about what will and will not be discussed e.g. what your stance will be on individual ASB cases.
- 6 Be clear about how it will be funded.

Working with the Police

Carlisle Housing Association

The association has worked with the police to set up two neighbourhood police bases on their estates. They were set up to reassure residents, to allow the police to have roots within the local community and to build links between the two agencies.

New Charter estate walkabout initiative

In this project local police teams, New Charter and the local authority agreed a regular series of estate walkabouts involving members of staff from all agencies. The patrols focus on areas with high levels of crime, ASB, void properties and fly-tipping. The areas targeted are sent newsletters and the patrols are as high profile as possible in order to reassure local residents that something is being done.

Wakefield and District Housing Association

This association is working closely with the police to tackle ASB in the local community, build trust amongst local residents and reduce the fear of crime and ASB. One of the ways it is doing this is by providing office space for the local neighbourhood police team, so that housing officers and the police can work more closely together.

- many associations have dedicated ASB teams that could be an available source of information to the CDRP; and
- communities will be more confident that action will be taken if there is visible joined up working.

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)

There is good evidence of effective housing association involvement in LSPs as well as CDRPs. Where associations are involved in these key local partnerships, real benefits can be brought about. Where associations are not involved, it reduces the extent to which the association can align its priorities with developing local strategies and the delivery capacity available to local partnerships. In our Neighbourhood and Communities Strategy we have set out our expectation that housing associations should play an active part in LSPs, either individually or through representatives.

Neighbourhood policing

The roll-out of local neighbourhood policing teams presents a clear opportunity for associations to work in partnership with the police. Every local area should have a team in place by 2008. These teams will focus on local people and their issues and will aim to forge strong links with local partners such as the local authority, voluntary groups and housing providers. The police teams

are required to set up steering groups that will be made up of local people and partner service providers in order to identify problems, monitor progress and consult on new ideas and projects.

By getting involved with the police teams, either by introducing housing officers to the police staff or by joining the local steering group, associations can improve the relationship, increase the efficiency of information sharing and develop joint projects to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

There is also the possibility of exploring the use of the 'extended policing family'. Some associations have funded police officers to work exclusively on their estates or have employed policy community support officers as part of an overall neighbourhood management strategy.

Information sharing

There is often confusion and misunderstanding about information sharing between partners.

There are many occasions when it will be necessary for an association to request data or information from a partner such as the police or the local authority. This could include clarification on previous arrests or enforcement action.

Alternatively, it is common for the police to require information from an association. They may need clarification on the tenure of a property or confirmation as to the tenants identity or information on levels of ASB for the local audit.

In an ideal world, the sharing of information should be a straightforward process, however it often causes dispute and delay as individuals and organisations are unsure of their obligations.

The act of information sharing is governed by section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which allows for the exchange of information where the disclosure is necessary or expedient for the purposes of any provision of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, or amendments to that legislation. In addition to this, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Data Protection Act 1998 allow for the exchange of information if the purpose is the prevention of crime and disorder. The Police and Justice Act 2006 strengthens section 115 by placing a duty on CDRP-responsible authorities and the bodies currently covered by section 115 to share depersonalised data which is relevant for community safety purposes and which is already held in a depersonalised format. This replaces and strengthens the previous power to share information.

In many local areas, protocols have been developed between members of the local CDRP to facilitate the sharing of information more easily. Associations should take proactive steps to ensure that they are represented on such protocols. The pending changes to the partnership provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 contained in the Police and Justice Act 2006 will mean that each partnership must have in place an information-sharing protocol to set out what will be exchanged, by whom,

Information sharing

Three Rivers Police Partnership

Three Rivers Housing Association works closely with the local police teams to tackle ASB. The swift sharing of information, facilitated by a dedicated Three Rivers ASB co-ordinator has allowed it to take prompt action in cases where serious and violent ASB was being carried out.

Servite Houses information-sharing protocol

As well as being signatories to the CDRP protocol, Servite has reached agreements with the local police teams to share information more effectively under section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This has resulted in closer and more efficient working relationships and helped smooth the way for effective partnership operations such as crack house closures.

with whom, for what purposes and with which safeguards in place. In addition someone will need to be identified in each of the responsible authorities to facilitate information sharing among partners.

In some areas, associations have taken the step of developing an information-sharing protocol themselves. There is some useful guidance on information sharing protocols on the Respect website, and associations may find it beneficial to contact their local CDRPs once again in light of the changes in relation to information-sharing protocols detailed above.

Working with voluntary and community agencies

As noted earlier, housing associations are not equipped to carry out everything in the Respect Action Plan, nor are they best placed to deal with all aspects of anti-social behaviour. There is, however, a wide range of groups and organisations within local communities that provide tailored support and projects.

These range from large-scale voluntary organisations such as Victim Support through to very localised community groups that may only have a handful of staff.

Groups such as these may already be involved with providing local diversionary activities or rehabilitation schemes and associations can

benefit from this local knowledge and expertise by working in partnership with such organisations to deliver schemes that tackle the causes and effects of anti-social behaviour.

Associations could contact their CDRP to see if there are already schemes ongoing that they could get involved with. Alternatively, it may be worth contacting your local Voluntary Service Council for a list of voluntary groups operating in the local area. The local authority should have contact details.

It is worth remembering that funding may be an issue with projects such as these. Associations should be clear about where funding comes from and how your contribution is going to be used. Groups that carry out work to tackle crime and disorder may well be receiving grant funding from the CDRP so they may be able to advise how the partnership arrangement could work.

Useful contacts

Useful contacts

Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group

www.slcng.org.uk

Respect

www.respect.gov.uk

Housing Corporation

www.housingcorp.gov.uk

Communities and Local Government

www.communities.gov.uk

ENCAMS

www.encams.org

Crime concern

www.crimeconcern.org.uk

Audit Commission

www.audit-commission.gov.uk

Chartered Institute of Housing

www.cih.org

