

Housing
Executive

Safer Together

Community Safety Strategy

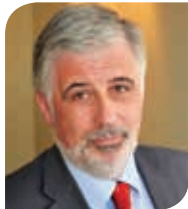
2015 - 2017



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1. Foreword



This Strategy document is produced at a time of great change for the Housing Executive. The Minister for Social Development has announced proposals for the reform of social housing

which will undoubtedly transform the ways in which we do our business. The aim of this strategy is to ensure that we continue the work we have done in recent years to promote and further the community safety agenda even as new structures and processes emerge.

The direction of travel has already been mapped out. The Department of Justice's Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017, **Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities**, identified the need to focus on prevention rather than cure in the effort to build safer communities and reduce anti social behaviour (ASB). It stressed the need to reduce levels of ASB in local communities through targeted programmes delivered regionally and locally. The document also recognised that success in building safer communities does not rest with the justice system alone and depends upon partnership working across government and with local communities. It also stated that underpinning all of this will be focus on building a shared future. Shared communities are safer communities and the justice system and its partners can play a positive role in helping to build a shared future by confronting sectarianism and other forms of hate crime and prejudice by helping build vibrant, confident and sustainable communities.

These themes are familiar to the Housing Executive, as they have informed much of our Community Safety work over the past decade. We have forged a range of partnerships with other agencies and with communities in the effort to prevent ASB from arising or to tackle it effectively when it presents. We will build upon this approach in the next three years by adopting the three themes of Building Community Confidence, Ensuring Local Solutions and Working Together. We will also continue with our Community Cohesion strategy to develop shared, inclusive communities which are safe and welcoming to all and threatening to no-one.

This Strategy will incorporate new directions in community safety, like the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs), for example. PCSPs will build upon the progress made by Community Safety Partnerships and District Policing Partnerships. The Housing Executive is one of the designated agencies on these new bodies and we will play an active role with other statutory groups, local political leaders, voluntary and community groups and local communities in the effort to tackle local issues and build safer communities.

This document sets out the Housing Executive's key priorities for the next three years. Community safety is a quality of life issue which impacts on all of society, both collectively and individually. While we are proud of what we have achieved so far in this area of work, we are not unaware of the work still to be done. This document tells you how we intend to tackle that work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clark Bailie". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Clark Bailie, Chief Executive

2. Our Vision for Housing in Northern Ireland

Our vision is one in which housing plays its part in creating a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous and fair society.

In seeking to turn this vision into reality, the Housing Executive is committed to working in partnership to ensure that everyone has access to a good affordable home in a safe and healthy community. We are committed to tackling ASB in all its forms as and when it arises on our estates.

We are committed to prevention and early intervention when addressing community safety and look forward to a time when everyone can enjoy a safe and peaceful environment free from anti social behaviour. In tackling ASB we will:

- Do more than is legally required under the conditions of tenancy
- Actively encourage reporting of incidents
- Quickly and formally acknowledge all reports of ASB
- Investigate all reported cases of ASB in a timely manner
- Provide advice and support to victims
- Engage support for perpetrators with complex needs to address offending behaviour
- Attempt to identify and interview all interested parties
- Establish inter agency working where appropriate
- Use legal action in appropriate circumstances
- Take action on behalf of our tenants if they are victims of ASB perpetrated by non Housing Executive tenants
- Take full account of serious ASB when considering applications for rehousing, both on the part of the applicant or any member of their household, to the extent that it is legal to do so
- Introduce a risk assessment process in order to better address the needs of victims and witnesses

3. Strategic Context

Community safety is a quality of life issue which impacts on all of society, individually and collectively. It is widely recognised that responsibility for crime prevention and community safety cannot be viewed as the exclusive responsibility of the Criminal Justice system.

Since the Housing Executive first launched its Community Safety and Community Relations Strategy in 2000, the work of the organisation in addressing ASB is making an important contribution to delivering real social change in many of the most disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland. The purpose of this document is to outline our key themes and priorities for the next three years.

In preparing this strategy, we have taken account of a number of important influences on our direction of travel.

Policy Influences

The Housing Executive has taken note of developments within the wider community safety network in Northern Ireland. Our strategy has therefore been influenced by:

- Priorities identified in the Northern Ireland Executive’s Programme for Government 2011-15
- The DSD’s Housing Strategy 2012-17, **Facing the Future: Housing Strategy for Northern Ireland**
- The Department of Justice’s Community Safety Strategy 2012-17, **Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities**
- The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Department of Justice’s Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence & Abuse Strategy 2013 – 2020
- The OFMDFM’s Race Equality Strategy 2014 - 2024
- The OFMDFM’s Together: Building a United Community
- The OFMDFM’s Gender Equality Strategy 2006 - 2016
- The future Peace IV Co-operation Programme 2014-2020



4. What We Are Doing Now

a. Statutory Interventions

In addressing ASB the Housing Executive employs an incremental and proportionate approach at all times. We work with the perpetrator through a range of interventions in an attempt to keep the individual in their home, while at the same time addressing the offending behaviour. However, if the individual fails to respond to offers of assistance and the anti social behaviour continues, or if the ASB is of such a serious nature that the Housing Executive must take immediate action, then we will use the legal powers available to us to ensure that the victims of ASB are protected and the unacceptable behaviour is stopped. Legal interventions can take a number of forms. We may choose to repossess the property occupied by the perpetrator, or we may seek an injunction to stop the ASB and protect the community. The statutory powers available to the Housing Executive are as follows:

- The Housing (NI) Order 1981 Art.22A
- The Housing (NI) Order 1983 Art.25 – Schedule 3A (as amended by 2003 Order)
- The Housing (NI) Order 1988 (Part 11) Art. 7A
- The Housing (NI) Order 2003
- The Anti Social Behaviour (NI) Order 2004
- Housing (Amendment) Act Northern Ireland 2011

b. Non Statutory Interventions

The Housing Executive receives and processes approximately 4500 reports of ASB annually. Over 90% of these are of low level forms of ASB and are resolved at local office level without the need for legal action. The local Housing Executive office has a range of non statutory interventions it can resort to in order to resolve these cases. These include:

Warning Letters

Warning letters have proved extremely successful in stemming ASB. It is estimated that over 70% of reported ASB ceases following initial interview and the issuing of a warning letter from the local office. When it is made clear to the individual that their behaviour

is unacceptable and that continuance will carry penalties, the problem is often stopped before more robust action becomes necessary.

Mediation

The Housing Executive continues to give focus to the use of mediation as a way of resolving neighbour disputes. While many disputes are resolved through informal discussion or negotiation by the parties involved, mediation provides an alternative when that is unsuccessful. Research has shown that its use at an early stage in disputes can prevent a conflict from escalating to the point at which court action is necessary. However, we understand that mediation may not be an appropriate intervention in certain instances and we will always keep the interests of victims' wellbeing and safety to the forefront.

Mediation allows people in dispute to reach their own solutions. The mediator, as an independent third party, helps both sides find an acceptable agreement. The process is often faster, less stressful and more cost effective than enforcement measures.

Mediation is also confidential and information discussed during the process cannot be used in court or any other legal action that may occur later.

The Housing Executive introduced its own in house Mediation Service in 2002/2003. Referrals from local offices rose dramatically in the first few years the service was operating, to the extent that in 2009 the organisation had to change from using trained Housing Executive staff, to employing the services of skilled external mediation practitioners on a sessional basis. We have over 30 trained and accredited mediators on this panel, based throughout Northern Ireland and in the border counties of the Republic. We employ these professional mediators as and when we need their services. The result has been that we now offer a truly independent, impartial service to our customers, one which is delivered by some of the most experienced dispute resolution professionals in the country.

CASE STUDY 1

Mediation as a means of successful dispute resolution

Complaint: A tenant in her twenties complained about the noise coming from her neighbour's flat. She alleged that her neighbour was having parties every Saturday and Sunday evening. According to the complainant, the noise was so loud it prevented her and her partner from sleeping and frequently wakened her two children. On two occasions, she claimed, people leaving the party had thumped her windows with their fists and shouted abuse at her and her partner.

A housing officer called with the neighbour, a young woman in her late teens. She denied playing loud music and alleged that the complainant and her partner had been harassing her by carrying out minor acts of vandalism on her property: she claimed that her wheelie bin was overturned on a regular basis, while her front door had been damaged when someone put glue in the lock. She also claimed that her neighbours had verbally abused her in the street. Her view was that they were determined to drive her out of the property.

Action: The local office was unable to take any enforcement action in this case, as there was no evidence to support the claims of either tenant. Instead, they were offered, free of charge, the services of a trained, independent mediator to help them resolve their dispute. Both neighbours agreed to give it a try.

The mediator visited both women separately in their homes on two occasions, to hear their accounts of the dispute. It transpired that the complainant and her neighbour were well known to each other. The relationship between them had always been good; the younger woman, in fact, had been the older couple's baby sitter before taking up her tenancy next door three months previously. Things had turned sour after the young woman held a 'moving in' party for a few friends.

Mediation Meeting: A face to face meeting facilitated by the mediator in a nearby community centre allowed the two women to discuss their difficulties. The complainant stated that she had been pleased to hear that her young friend was moving in next door, but the noisy party in the first week had annoyed her, particularly as she hadn't been given any notice. The younger woman, for her part, said that she felt her neighbour had over reacted to what had been an unexpected visit from friends. She said she'd felt hurt by her reaction.

The meeting allowed the women to clear up some misunderstandings. The complainant pointed out that the bins of several other neighbours had also been knocked over and their locks glued. The culprits were thought to be a group of kids and the matter had been raised with their parents. The complainant admitted during the conversation that she had exaggerated some of her noise complaints out of frustration and anger. The younger woman apologised for the actions of her brother, who had been the individual thumping on the windows and shouting abuse. The pair agreed that the rows in the street had made them both look and feel a bit silly.

Outcome: The women talked for half an hour, almost forgetting that the mediator was present. Both had come into the room separately, looking tense and nervous. By the end of the session, both were smiling and laughing and they left together to walk back to their homes. The housing officer called with them a fortnight later and was told that there were no further problems.

Community Based Restorative Practices

Following the introduction in 2007 of the Criminal Justice Branch (NIO) Protocol for Community Based Restorative Justice Schemes, the Housing Executive entered into formal partnership working arrangements with Northern Ireland Alternatives (NIA) and Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI). The NIA partnership commenced (with Board approval) in January 2008 and the CRJI partnership commenced just over a year later in May 2009.

Both NIA and CRJI deliver a Mediation and Community Support (MACS) project on behalf of the Housing Executive. MACS provide community based mediation as a means of addressing reported incidents of ASB. In addition to providing mediation services, both organisations provide, where appropriate, ongoing programmes of support tailored to the individual and designed to reduce the risk of re-offending. NIA delivers its services in the Greater Shankill / Ballysillan area, Rathcoole and North Down. CRJI works in the Greater West Belfast area.

In societal terms, the work of both organisations has made a significant difference to the quality of people's lives. Both address anti-social activities, neighbourhood disputes, alcohol and substance misuse and family issues. The projects have assisted clients to resolve their own issues and have contributed to helping them live in a peaceful environment. The MACS project is starting to build trust within local communities and this change is reflected in the annual increase in casework year on year. The increase can be attributed to a number of factors, including a marked increase in community confidence in reporting crime and ASB, increased community capacity and an improved understanding and co-operation with other statutory service providers.

The MACS schemes were externally evaluated after their first year of operating. NIA has now completed six years of partnership working, while CRJI has completed four and is well into its fifth.

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts

An ABC is a voluntary written agreement between the Housing Executive and a person who has been involved in ASB. The PSNI and Councils are also able to sign them. There is no statutory provision for ABCs and they are not legally enforceable documents, but since their introduction in 2006/2007, they have proved to be extremely successful in stopping ASB. An ABC can be processed either as a stand-alone action or as part of a partnership with NIACRO, who have devised a support programme which is offered voluntarily to all those signing up to an ABC. The programme is called Assisting People and Communities (APAC). Whilst it is not aimed exclusively at young people, and the signing of an ABC is not a pre-requisite to avail of the service, it has been found that this form of support works particularly well for some young people and their families.

CASE STUDY 2

The use of ABCs as a means of successful early intervention

The local office was presented with a number of complaints of recurring ASB coming from a property on a local estate. Investigations confirmed teenage parties were taking place several nights a week. The tenant of the house was an OAP with her 15 year old grandson living with her. Following interagency discussions at an ASB Forum meeting, the tenant was invited in, along with her grandson to meet with the manager who explained the reported incidents and the options available to resolve them. At that meeting the young person accepted responsibility for his behaviour and it was agreed that both parties would sign an ABC. The grandson also accepted a referral to the APAC programme delivered by NIACRO to help address his behaviour.

ASSESSMENT: Following an assessment by APAC of the grandson, it was found that his unacceptable behaviour stemmed in part from the marital break up of his parents which resulted in him being placed with his grandmother. Further investigations found that the grandmother had an alcohol problem which resulted in her being unable to control her grandson's behaviour: not attending school, damaging properties, having noisy parties etc.

AGREED SOLUTION: APAC took on both the grandmother and grandson as case referrals. The grandmother received treatment for alcohol abuse. Staff mentored the grandson for 6 months and working with the local headmaster got the young person back into full time education. APAC also worked with the young person's father and reached agreement that his son would spend weekends with him.

OUTCOME: The young person was reunited with his father, providing a positive role model. He remained at school and will now move onto third level education. His grandmother has continued with her programme and all ASB has stopped.

COMMENT: By bringing in the expertise of NIACRO, the Housing Executive managed to resolve, not only the ASB but the underlying problems of the individuals concerned. The outcome has been that each party has benefited from this approach.

This case demonstrated key partnership working between community representatives, the Housing Executive and the PSNI. Whilst direct evidence from neighbours/witnesses is preferred when seeking possession of a property, there are situations when we can try to protect those directly affected by the behaviour. This will always be dependent upon the willingness of community representatives to attend court and to be able to convey details of specific incidents reported to them.

c. Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPS) and District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (DPCSPs)

PCSPs and DCSPs are statutory bodies established under the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Under the Act, Councils are obliged to establish a PCSP structure in their locality.

The overall purpose of these bodies is to help make communities safer and to ensure that the views of local people are heard on policing and community safety issues.

Each PCSP is made up of three different types of member:

- Political, nominated by the council;
- Independent, members of the community, recruited by the Policing Board;
- Designated, those organisations, nominated by either the Department of Justice or the PCSP, which have a role in community safety.

The Housing Executive is a designated body and is expected to send a representative to the PCSP for each council area. This representative is expected to contribute alongside the political and independent members in all facets of work relating to community safety. The success of PCSPs is dependent on all partners working towards the same goal – making their community safer.

PCSPs will engage with the local community and statutory groups in order to identify local concerns in relation to policing and community safety. They will put in place structures and delivery mechanisms that will contribute to a reduction in crime and the enhancement of policing and community safety in the Partnership's area. The Housing Executive is committed to playing a full role in this process.

d. Hate Crime

Hate crimes are an attack on someone because of their identity and as such can have a devastating impact on victims. Housing Executive Neighbourhood Officers and Housing Officers play an important role in identifying and responding to incidents of hate crime. Perpetrators will be dealt with through the Anti Social Behaviour process where possible.

The Housing Executive provide support to victims of hate crime in a variety of ways: the provision of emergency temporary accommodation followed up by permanent rehousing of the victims of serious attacks; if victims choose to stay in their homes after a hate crime, the Housing Executive can provide security measures to victims NIHE homes in order to assist them remain safely within their properties; HIPA (Hate Incident Practical Action) works are undertaken by NIHE to non-Housing Executive properties to ensure ALL victims of hate crime are fully supported. We also work with community and voluntary groups and support advocacy workers to help victims' access services. We are currently funding a pilot project whereby Northern Ireland Alternatives have expanded their service to respond to incidents of hate crime and community conflict. This project will support anti-racism work in the communities where the STEM project is in operation. Through its Supporting People Programme the Housing Executive funds NIACRO to deliver the STEM project (Supporting Tenancies for People from Ethnic Minority Communities). The aim of this project is to prevent homelessness and to support people living in the community who could be at risk of being victimised or targeted because of their perceived ethnicity, and to strengthen positive community responses in dealing with incidents of intimidation.

We are involved in tension monitoring programmes which are an essential element in dealing with emerging issues within Housing Executive estates and ensuring appropriate interventions are introduced.

It is compulsory requirement for all Housing Executive staff to receive training on equality issues; raising their awareness of related legislation and practice in this field.

CASE STUDY 3

The Use STEM - Supporting Tenancies for Ethnic Minorities

Background

This client is an Eastern European National in her mid 30's with 2 children under the age of 12. She is currently a Housing Association tenant and the Housing Association referred the client to the STEM following on-going problems with harassment being directed at families from BME backgrounds within a new development.

Despite on-going problems the family is keen to stay as they are there just over a year and have spent time and money on property. The harassment has involved continuous incidents of young people banging on the back door and windows, abuse being aimed at the mother when speaking with the young people involved and in particular racial abuse being directed at her young son. Both the mother and son have been experiencing emotional difficulties and the son is unable to leave the house on his own to play due to harassment.

There have been attempts to address on-going issues with other families involved, police, local support organisations and the Housing Association. It has been advised that gates should be erected at the back of houses to restrict access to homes. The STEM project worker attended meetings to discuss problems and potential solutions.

Actions: A referral has been made for the mother to appropriate counselling service and the son has also met for assessment. A link has been made to another Housing Executive service provided by Northern Ireland Alternatives to deliver both a mediation service and community support through the MACS programme (Mediation and Community Support). This programme aims to help create more inclusive local environments where non indigenous residents are made to feel welcome and where everyone can have the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the life of their community through feeling a sense of belonging, community ownership and shared identity.

Additionally access to employment services has been made on mother's behalf including referral to Community Family Support Programme and a supporting letter provided for Storehouse food parcel following disclosure of financial problems.

The support projects continue to work closely with the family and Housing Association to enable the tenancy to be sustained and the family to avail of support available.

e. Supporting victims of domestic and sexual abuse

The Housing Executive is proactive in taking a gender neutral approach in its action to address the particular needs of victims of domestic violence. We are a key agency in the Multi – Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process where options for increasing the safety of domestic abuse victims are agreed. One such option is making use of the Sanctuary Scheme where additional security measures can be put in place for Housing Executive tenants who are victims of domestic violence who wish to remain in their home rather than seek alternative accommodation. The Housing Executive has developed a protocol with Women’s Aid which sets out referral procedures and monitoring arrangements relating to cases referred to them by Housing Executive local offices. In addition to making referrals to MARAC, Women’s Aid will advise clients of other services provided by them. The Housing Executive also continues to provide support for the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline.

Services in response to sexual and violent offenders: Extensive research has clearly shown that stable housing arrangements and effective monitoring are key to minimising the risks posed by sexual and violent offenders. Stable accommodation contributes both to the successful rehabilitation of the offender and to minimising the risk of homelessness and to the protection of people in the community in which that person lives. The Housing Executive plays a key role in addressing accommodation issues identified under the auspices of the Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland (PPANI). Housing Executive staff take part in the prison pre-release risk management process along with other agencies through Local Area Public Protection Panel (LAPPP) meetings and operate a case management approach to enable those deemed appropriate to make the transition to permanent accommodation taking account of risk assessment and management.

f. Interface areas and shared space

The Housing Executive has a key role to play in assisting those areas which suffer from the impact of community division including particularly interface areas and those most

affected by the legacy of conflict. Most interface areas in Belfast, Derry/Londonderry and Portadown have Housing Executive homes located immediately adjacent to them and in fact NIHE actually own 20 of the interface structures in Belfast. We are working in collaboration with our statutory partners in the Department of Justice, DSD, OFM/DFM and Councils to facilitate changes to the physical infrastructure around these structures and are supporting communities who wish to reconfigure or remove the physical barriers.

The promotion of shared space is an issue which goes well beyond areas with interfaces and the Housing Executive have been leading out a Shared Community’s Programme and a Shared New Build programme to support those communities who wish to be open and welcoming to all and threatening to no-one. Shared housing is a key programme for the Housing Executive and we are working to develop and deliver shared housing schemes under the Together Building a United Community Programme For Government initiative and will provide regular updates via the Ministerial Panel.

g. Working Together

Most of our interventions, statutory or non statutory, are based firmly on the principle of partnership working. ASB is not an issue which can be dealt with by one statutory agency working in isolation. It requires the intervention of all the relevant government bodies working closely with the community to deliver real results, so working together with other groups and agencies forms the core of our ASB strategy. The Housing Executive’s unique contribution to these collaborative efforts is our staff’s experience of community safety issues and their knowledge of grassroots concerns.

In recent years, we have established positive working relationships with a number of different organisations in the effort to tackle ASB more effectively and to provide safer areas for our tenants. Being a representative on the Department of Justice’s ASB Delivery Group we agree action plans to tackle ASB and promote community safety in partnership with other statutory members. We continue to have close, formal ties with several statutory agencies, including the PSNI, local councils and the Youth Justice Agency, with whom we

have signed information sharing protocols, while our projects with NIA, CRJI and NIACRO continue to deliver impressive results. We also work with political, community and tenant

representatives to ensure that our resources are targeted on areas and incidents that are causing concern to our tenants.

CASE STUDY 4

Housing Executive Works in Partnership with Community Reps and PSNI to Obtain Decree for Possession

Staff from a local Housing Executive office were asked to attend a meeting with the PSNI, local politicians and community representatives.

The meeting was called as the community was concerned about the high levels of ASB being caused by one particular family. The family consisted of two sons, whom the community alleged were dealing drugs, involved in disorderly behaviour and were generally causing fear in the locality with their nuisance behaviour.

The NIHE office had not received any specific reports from neighbours or members of the community. The local representatives at the meeting advised that everyone within the community was afraid to report anything directly to any of the agencies, but had been reporting incidents of the behaviour to political and community representatives. The PSNI supported this view and also advised of a number of pending court cases, one of which related to the mother, father and two sons being arrested in relation to a drugs raid on the family home.

The NIHE office awaited the outcome of the hearing prior to serving the Notice Seeking Possession and one of the sons was found guilty with intent to supply.

In order to demonstrate the effect the behaviour of the family had on the community, a political representative attended the court hearing. He took the stand and was able to advise the court the detrimental effect the behaviour of the sons was having on the community. The PSNI Inspector for the area was also a key witness, with the local office manager representing the Housing Executive at the hearing. A Decree for Possession of the parents' tenancy was awarded.

This case has demonstrated key partnership working between community representatives, the Housing Executive and the PSNI. Whilst direct evidence from neighbours/witnesses is preferred when seeking possession of a property, there are situations when we can try to protect those directly affected by the behaviour. This will always be dependent upon the willingness of community representatives to attend court and to be able to convey details of specific incidents reported to them.

If you would like to know more about this case please contact the Housing Executive's South Belfast Office or Community Safety Team.

5. Analysis of Reported ASB

Overview

All reports of ASB made to the Housing Executive are registered and placed on a computerised system which facilitates casework analysis. This process permits the organisation to apply performance standards to casework and identify potential hotspots and trends across its network of offices.

This chapter provides an overview of the extent of ASB reported to the Housing Executive during the period 2013-14. It should be noted that while the majority of ASB has been defined as relatively low level, all reported cases require some form of intervention to ensure resolution.

Types of Reported ASB

For the purposes of ASB casework processing, all reports of ASB are categorised across 22 types of reported behaviour. These are: Ageism; ASB Arising from Alcohol or Substance Abuse; Boundary Disputes; Criminal Damage; Damage to Property; Disability Related; Domestic Violence; Drugs; Gardens; Harassment; Homophobic Abuse; Intimidation; Multiple; Noise; Nuisance from Business Use; Nuisance from Vehicles; Nuisance in Public Spaces; Pets and Animals; Racial Abuse; Rubbish Dumping; Sectarian Abuse; Verbal Abuse.

Volumes

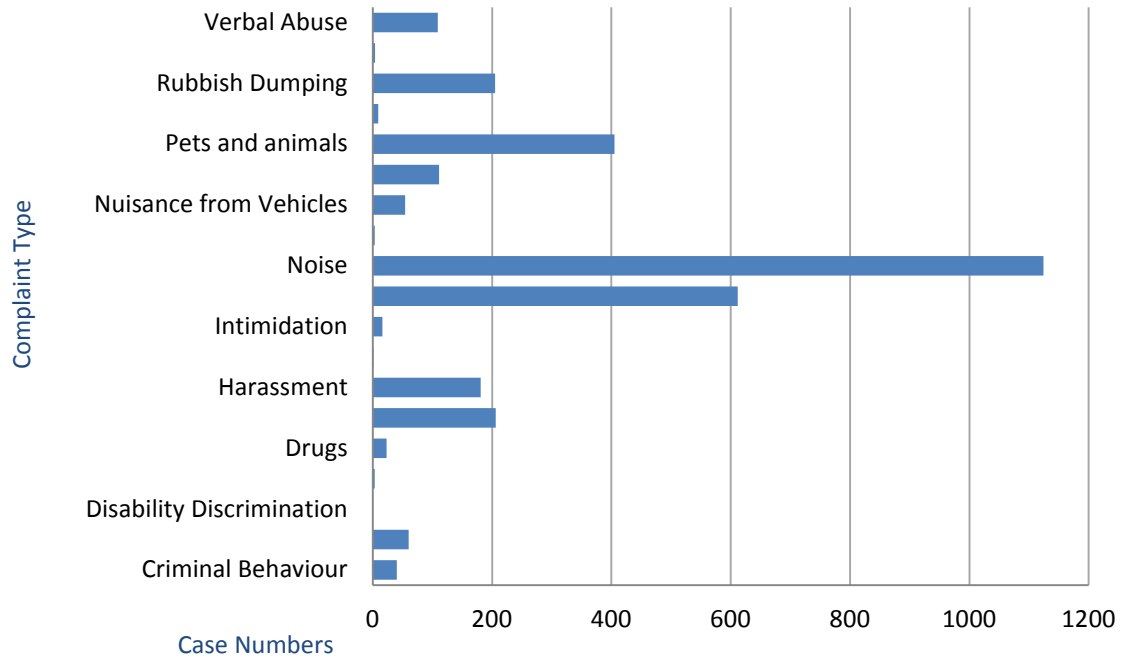
During 2013-14, the Housing Executive received and processed approximately 3206 reports of ASB. Just over 600 cases involved multiple incidents of ASB, often taking place over a period of many months. Such cases can be resource-intensive in terms of staff time. The most common type of ASB complaint the Housing Executive receives, by quite some margin, concerns noise. In the year under review, the organisation received 1124 complaints about excessive noise.

The 'Breakdown of Interventions' charts show that, over the 2013-14 period, approximately 80% of the ASB cases requiring significant intervention were dealt with through mediation, ABCs or floating support. After exhausting such options, 20% of the cases resulted in repossession of the property. This demonstrates that we seek to employ an incremental and proportionate approach at all times, only resorting to repossession when all else has failed.

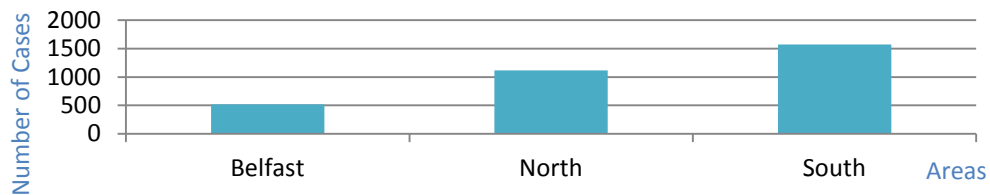


Total ASB Cases by Area

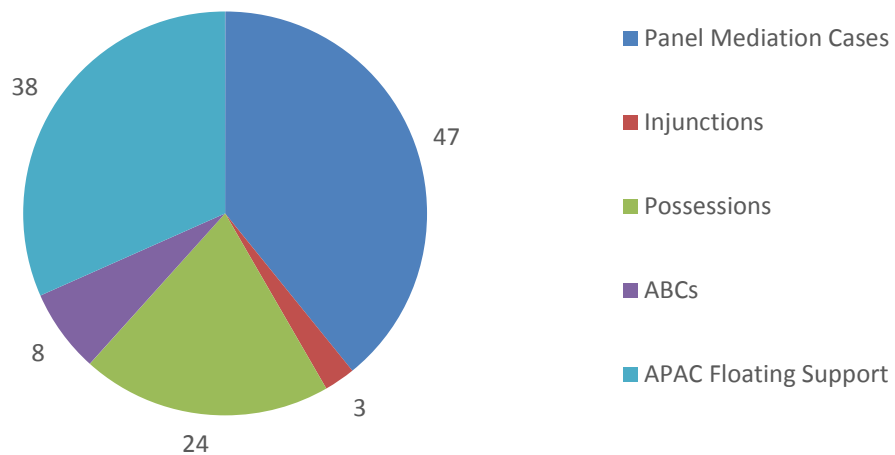
Recorded ASB By Nuisance Type 2013-2014



Total ASB Cases by Area 2013-2014



Breakdown of Interventions 2013-2014



6. Emerging Issues for Action

Social Housing Reform Programme (SHRP)

In January 2013 the Minister for Social Development announced his proposals for the reform of social housing. The proposals recognise that the time has come to separate key landlord and non-landlord functions in order that they can flourish and deliver to their maximum potential. NIHE understand that there is broad stakeholder support for the principle of separation. This process of change will take some time, and be guided by extensive consultation regarding the detailed design of the new organisations.

As part of this process, the Board has approved proposals to restructure the organisation on an interim basis with the dual intent of strengthening control and oversight of key business areas and the Housing Executive is working closely with the DSD in support of the SHRP. The uncertainty associated with the change programme will be managed through good communication with our customers and partners and we are committed to ensuring the service to our customers will not suffer during this change period.



Proposal to Introduce New Form of Social Housing Tenancy

The Department for Social Development (DSD) are currently consulting on a proposed Housing (Anti-Social Behaviour) Bill that would introduce short secure tenancies in Northern Ireland. Largely based on the Scottish short secure tenancy model, it is proposed that the new legislation would introduce a new social housing tenancy (the short secure tenancy) for tenants who have been involved in anti-social behaviour. The DSD proposes that social landlords in Northern Ireland should be able to convert secure tenancies to short secure tenancies where, within the previous 3 years, the tenant or a member of their household has been convicted of an offence which involves using the dwelling-house (or allowing it to be used) for immoral or illegal purposes, or of an indictable (i.e. criminal) offence committed in, or in the locality of, the dwelling-house, or certain orders of the court such as anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) or injunctions have been made against the tenant or a member of their household.

The proposal links demotion of tenancy to the acceptance of some form of assistance, the aim being to address offending behaviour while at the same time sustaining tenancies. The legislation is intended to support struggling tenants who might otherwise lose their tenancies through eviction. It is envisaged that landlords could use this power in cases where the cause of the offending behaviour is capable of being addressed by counselling or other support. The Housing Executive and registered housing associations, as social landlords, could choose to use short secure tenancies in these cases, rather than seek immediate orders for possession. The Housing Executive will fully implement this action as and when it is introduced.

Community Relations and Shared Communities

OFM/DFM's Together: Building a United Community (TBUC) Strategy has tasked the Housing Executive with developing 10 new shared New Build schemes and continuation of the Shared Communities Programme to existing Housing Executive estates. We will also be tasked with contributing to meeting the TBUC objective of removing all peace walls by 2023.

Increasing Community Confidence

This is an issue we have been seeking to address in recent years, but it is most definitely a case of progress made, much still to be done. While many of our tenants feel comfortable about reporting ASB to us, there remains a significant level of under reporting in some areas. In cases of severe ASB, this can be due to fear of being identified and targeted by perpetrators. Measures to address this include the use of professional witnesses, together with closer cooperation generally between the Housing Executive and its statutory partners, particularly the PSNI and non-statutory parties as appropriate. Our partnerships with community based restorative justice groups are also central to the attempt to instil confidence in our processes and in our capacity to deal with issues of ASB affecting our tenants. In the period 2010-12, NIA and CRJI dealt with over 350 reports of ASB on our behalf, providing mediation and community support to many hundreds of families in the process. As always, our Housing Community Network, with its 400 community groups, provides a vital link to the people who use our services. The establishment of Tenant Scrutiny Panels presents an opportunity to enhance the level of service provision and community confidence in it. Our Journey to Excellence programme gives us the opportunity to enhance our service provision to best deliver on the needs of our customers; thus instilling community confidence.

7. What We Are Planning To Do In The Next 2 Years

DSD Strategy

The DSD Strategy identified one outcome as continuing to reduce the levels of anti social behaviour in local communities through targeted programmes delivered regionally and locally, primarily through PCSPs. The guiding principles of the DoJ approach include partnership working, a proportionate approach and the support of local delivery.

To meet the challenging objectives set out in the previous chapter, therefore, the Housing Executive has drafted a three year Community Safety Action Plan across the following headings:

1. Building Community Confidence

The Housing Executive will work to build community confidence in the ability of the organisation to tackle ASB effectively

2. Ensuring Local Solutions

The Housing Executive will ensure that all our efforts to tackle ASB are relevant to the needs of local communities.

3. Working Together

The Housing Executive will work closely with other agencies to improve community safety on our estates.

An Action Plan detailing how we will achieve these objectives during 2015-2017 is attached at Appendix 2

Appendix 1

Glossary of Terms

ABC

Acceptable Behaviour Contract

APAC

Assisting People and Communities

ASB

Anti-social behaviour. This is defined as when the tenant or a person residing in or visiting the dwelling house has been guilty of conduct causing, or likely to cause, a nuisance or annoyance to a person residing, visiting or otherwise engaging in a lawful activity in the locality.

CRJI

Community Restorative Justice Ireland

DoJ

Department of Justice

DPCSP

District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

DSD

Department for Social Development

HIPA

Hate Incident Practical Action Scheme

LAPPP

Local Area Public Protection Panel

MACS

Mediation and Community Support

MARAC

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference

NIA

Northern Ireland Alternatives

NIACRO

Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders

NIHE

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

OFMDFM

Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

PCSPs

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships

PPANI

Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland

PSNI

Police Service of Northern Ireland

SHRP

Social Housing Review Programme

STEM

Supporting Tenancies for People from Ethnic Minority Communities

TBUC

Together Building a United Community

YJA

Youth Justice Association

Appendix 2

ACTION PLAN 2015 - 2017		
Item	Key Task	Target date
Building Community Confidence		
Develop staff competency	Develop and deliver programme of competency based ASB training in 2014/15 to support the new internal structures and the new legislation	Dec 2015 - subject to introduction of new legislation
Support intergeneration programmes to build trust & positive perceptions of younger people	Include intergeneration training as part of ASB competency training	March 2016
Increase focus on prevention and early intervention	Promote the use of warning letters Promote the use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts Promote the use of mediation Promote the use of restorative justice interventions Support PCSPs to deliver local early intervention programmes	On-going On-going On-going On-going On-going
Better address the needs of victims and witnesses	Introduce a risk assessment process Ensure victims of ASB are kept fully informed throughout the investigation and appropriate action when dealing with their case delivering the HIPA scheme to protect victims of hate incidents at their homes contribute to PCSPs on development of responses to hate crime deliver and develop supporting people programmes to vulnerable tenants continue to support victims of domestic and sexual violence through the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference and Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland projects Continue to support and promote the 24 Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Helpline Continue to take swift and robust action, including repossession when necessary, in response to serious ASB Improve recording of customer satisfaction with service	Sept 2015 On-going On-going On-going On-going On-going On-going On-going April 2015
Ensure appropriate powers are in place to tackle ASB	Respond to any proposals from DSD to introduce a new form of social housing tenancy	On receipt of DSD proposals

Item	Key Task	Target date
Building Community Confidence (continued)		
Encourage Community Cohesion	Lead out a programme of interface intervention support for interface communities by supporting local plans for the regeneration and re-modelling of interface areas	On-going
	Deliver an Interface Normalisation programme which carries out works to NIHE and privately owned properties. This will provide security measures to homes adjacent to interface barriers which are being re-modelled and regenerated and therefore provide security and safety to residents.	On-going
	Continue to deliver the Shared Communities Programme and the Shared New Build programme across Northern Ireland.	On-going
Support perpetrators	Engage support for perpetrators with complex needs	On-going
Ensuring Local Solutions		
Develop community capacity to address ASB at a local level	Talking with local communities	On-going
	Liaise closely with housing community network	Quarterly
	Support PCSPs to ensure that local solutions are identified for local problems	Bi-monthly
	Facilitate and support the work of community groups which tackle ASB in their own locality	On-going
Working Together		
Effective partnership working	Renewed focus on our partnerships with community organisations	On-going
	Greater use of and cooperation with supporting people groups	On-going
	To consider the expansion of community based ASB support services	On-going
	Develop greater links with statutory partners, through participation in multi-agency forums.	On-going

