

Resident Engagement Panel (REP)

Anti-Social Behaviour Review

February – March 2024



Resident
Engagement
Panel

....Reviewed by tenants, for tenants!

1) The purpose of the review

The impact of anti-social behaviour (ASB) can have a long lasting and serious effect on individuals, households and the wider community. Whilst Cornerstone prioritise their response to ASB and work hard to resolve issues reported to them, recent customer feedback indicates low, and falling, satisfaction with Cornerstones ASB performance in responding to and resolving ASB, with the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) data showing that;

- Quarter 1 TSM data shows that 69% of customers were satisfied with Cornerstones response to ASB
- Quarter 2 TSM data shows that 58% of customers were satisfied with Cornerstones response to ASB
- Quarter 3 TSM data shows that 54% of customers were satisfied with Cornerstones response to ASB
- Quarter 4 TSM data (to date) shows that 59% of customers were satisfied with Cornerstones response to ASB
- Overall customer satisfaction with response to ASB between April 2023 and April 2024 is currently 59%

The REP are undertaking a review of Cornerstones ASB performance, and policy & procedures, to understand where there may be areas of performance that can be improved upon and thereby increase how safe residents feel in their homes and estates.

2) The aims of the review

- To ensure that Cornerstone are listening to customer feedback and are consulting customers about how Cornerstone responds to anti-social behaviour in our neighbourhoods. Identify the specific areas of customers dissatisfaction and provide evidence to support any required changes to procedures, or policy, so that Cornerstone are responding to ASB with all latest guidelines and legislation fully considered enabling the highest level of performance achievable in tackling ASB. Explore how Cornerstone communicates, including listening to reports of ASB and dissatisfaction related to ASB performance, with customers about ASB and provide recommendations where required to increase the effectiveness of communication and contribute to greater customer satisfaction.

3) Who else was involved with the review?

In addition to reviewing existing ASB policy and procedure, our REP members interviewed other residents by phone and met with Housing Officers. Cornerstone sent

out an ASB survey to approximately 600 customers in the identified areas that are most dissatisfied and provided this data to the REP for consideration.

4) Other resources used

- Tenant Satisfaction feedback (TSMs)
- Transactional resident feedback from residents who have reported ASB
- ASB case statistics
- Case study provided by Housing Officer
- Cornerstone website guidance
- Cornerstone staff guidance

5) The REP findings and recommendations

The REP reviewed existing policy and fed back that it was easy to understand, with no recommendations to update the policy made by the REP. Cornerstones Housing, Customer & Communities manager advised that a full review of the ASB policy is due by 2025 but that a recent government “action plan” advised that there would be “more powers” for housing associations, however there is no guidance about when “more powers” would be granted or what they may be and the policy update would be postponed until the new legislation is released.

REP members called 4 other residents and asked them about their experiences of ASB. The following relevant issues were noted;

- Residents feel that Cornerstone are “slow to act” or “did not take much action”
- Unresolved and recurring communal area issues include; lack of safe lighting, and misuse of bin stores
- Drug dealing and crime impacts on residents
- Reporting is not always easy, can involve keeping records “constantly” and Cornerstone “did not offer any help”

The same REP members found interviewing 2 Housing Officers at Cornerstone House very insightful and explored; how the roles impacted on them, what the ASB report process is and how they feel when they “win” a case. The following observations were made;

- Housing Officers will listen to all residents complaints of ASB and assess what response is needed, if necessary visiting for more information
- Perpetrators of ASB will be warned about their behaviour at an early opportunity
- There is a wide variety of ASB complaints made to Cornerstone
- Low level complaints include; noise issues, smoking, petty quarrels and garden issues
- More serious issues include; drug dealing, organised crime and use of weapons
- Some issues can be resolved between complainant and perpetrator by reaching agreements or through mediation
- More complex issues can take months to years to resolve and can include legal action with the last resort being to evict someone from their home

- Housing Officer feels “neither happy or sad” when they resolve a case, they feel relieved that residents are not affected any longer and when they report feeling safer in their homes
- Housing officers are well trained and receive good support in managing cases and with the impact it can have on them

Cornerstone provided data from an ASB survey they sent to 600 customers in areas that were identified as being the most dissatisfied with Cornerstones ASB performance. The survey data, presented at a REP meeting and circulated to members, highlighted the key considerations below;

- Residents are most worried about crime, such as; violence, threats, hate crime, domestic abuse, drug use and dealing
- The next most concerning thing for residents is street based anti-social behaviour (street drinking, rowdy behaviour and large groups)
- The other issues affecting residents are; neighbourhood communal areas (graffiti) or poor condition of properties and lastly animal nuisance
- Most residents wish to report ASB using; website (29%), telephone (28%) and email (26%)
- The easiest way for residents to provide further information or evidence is by email (38%), telephone (26%) and uploading via a link or app (19%)
- Residents did not find keeping a written diary easy (9%) or providing evidence in person to the Housing Officer on a visit or by visiting the office (6%)

A question in the survey asked residents how Cornerstone can “best help keep them safe” in their homes and neighbourhoods, with the following ranked as most effective;

- Regular visits to the estate (**highest ranked**)
- Enforcement action (tenancy enforcement and/or legal action)
- Increased security measures (CCTV, flood lights, fencing or gates)
- Community Engagement (housing officer drop ins, social or sports activities)
- Effective partnership working with services (police, social work, environmental health)
- Environmental improvements (litter picking, fly tip clearance, graffiti removal)
- Mediation or community conference (**lowest ranked**)

Considering the data from survey results provided by Cornerstone and from the information gathered through our interviews with residents and housing management staff, the REP seek to increase effective reporting of ASB incidents and gain better communication between Cornerstone and ASB complainants through the following recommendations;

1. Provide easy to understand information to residents about how to report ASB, this should be available on the website and in easily accessible leaflets and links that can be sent electronically.
2. Communicate how incidents are responded to and what action Cornerstone can, or cannot, take in individual circumstances.

3. Review the website to identify how to make it easier to report incidents online and to update investigating Housing Officers online.
4. Ensure there is a clear procedure in place, that residents can access, that explains the process of receiving an ASB report, this should include; how the report is recorded, the standard response time including when complainants should be contacted/updated, an action plan that is easily shared with complainants and perpetrators.
5. Explore ways of Cornerstone being more visible on estates and implement any changes identified for increasing a presence in neighbourhoods.
6. Engage with communities directly about neighbourhood issues that need to be resolved and respond to environmental issues (like bin stores, fly tipping or graffiti) quickly, communicating that this is done.
7. Involve residents in regular neighbourhood visits, consult onsite about any increased security needed and provide opportunities for involvement in social or healthy activities.
8. Consult the REP further in planned ASB policy and/or procedures changes.

