

Policy name:	
Hate Crime Policy	
Section:	Housing
Exec responsible:	Director of Housing
Review by:	Housing & Customer Engagement Manager
Tenant review:	Yes
Authority to amend:	Chief Executive
Frequency of review:	Every 3 years
Last review:	September 2025
Next review:	September 2028
Responsibility for delivery:	Housing Team
Strategy:	Customer & Communities Strategy
Associated risk ID:	8. Inadequate and ineffective customer service and/or engagement 9. Health and safety failure or neglect
Health & safety:	
Equality & diversity:	Particular types of ASB, such as hate crime and harassment, are closely linked to equality and diversity. Our approach to victims and those who have complained will adhere to our equality and diversity policy.
Associated costs and value for money:	Tenant satisfaction with case management will be benchmarked against peer groups.
Associated documents:	ASB procedure and associated tenant and staff forms

VERSION CONTROL			
Version Number	Sections Amended	Date of update	Approved by
1.0	First issue. Previously included within ASB policy	September 2025	

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1. Introduction

This policy supports Cornerstones' values and is a commitment to improving lives and supporting colleagues by detailing our response to complaints and allegations of hate crime and incidents.

2. Aims of this policy

In responding to complaints and allegations of hate crime and incidents, we intend to:

- Provide clear information on how to report hate crime and incidents, including how a third party can also report a hate crime or incident.
- Inspire confidence amongst residents that we want to deal with all hate crime and incidents and encourage reporting of individual incidents.
- Respond rapidly and effectively to hate crime and incidents at an early stage to try to prevent further incidents and/or the escalation of the seriousness of incidents.
- Improve the safety and welfare of adults and children that are affected by such incidents.
- Investigate reports of hate crime and incidents sensitively, provide victims with support and undertake a victim centred approach taking all reasonable steps to prevent it.
- Increase awareness and understanding amongst residents and colleagues of hate crime, including reports from third parties. This will be supported through the provision of training.
- Create a consistent approach for recording and monitoring hate incidents and look to identify repeat incidents.
- Work in partnership with various key agencies when dealing with hate crime and incidents, sharing intelligence and taking joint action where required to help create safer communities.

Cornerstone is committed to tackling hate incidents and crime to provide safe and secure neighbourhoods and to create sustainable communities. We recognise that we live in an open, multicultural and diverse society and appreciate the benefits that such diversity brings to our communities and encourage all residents to welcome and appreciate the diverse cultures that are part of their locality.

Cornerstone values the diversity of our residents and believe that all residents, their families and visitors to their home have a right to live without fear of abuse, intimidation, harassment, humiliation or attack, irrespective of gender, age, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or appearance.

Cornerstone understands that hate incidents and crime can have a serious and devastating impact on an individual's sense of security, health and wellbeing. This also has a negative impact on communities in relation to cohesion and integration. We condemn all forms of hate incidents and crime and will treat all incidents reported to us as an emergency.

The key objectives of this policy are to:

- Understand and define what hate crime and incidents are.
- Understand the term 'hate crime'.
- Detail the legal and regulatory framework that provide us with the tools to respond to hate crime and incidents and that we are required to comply with.
- Outline our approach and commitment to dealing with hate crime and incidents effectively and efficiently.
- Outline how we will assess the risk to complainants and undertake a victim centred approach.
- Monitor performance to assess the quality and effectiveness of service.

This policy is subject to review as we develop and regularly review our policies, in line with legislative requirements.

3. Relevant Legislation:

This policy fully complies with Cornerstone Housing legal and regulatory obligations.

- Complies with Regulator of Social Housing Neighbourhood and Community tenancy standard.
- The Housing Acts
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code
- The Care Act 2014
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Criminal Justice Act 2003
- Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Counter-Terrorism Disorder Act 2015
- Crime & Disorder Act 1988
- Human Rights Act 1988
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

4. Scope of this policy

The term 'Cornerstone' incorporates all employees and contractors acting on our behalf.

The policy applies to:

- All customers who hold a tenancy with Cornerstone Housing, including leaseholders, shared owners, all employees and contractors.

The policy does not form part of any colleague's contract of employment, and the policy may be amended at any time.

5. Definition of a hate crime or incident

We define a hate incident or crime as:

"Any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate."*

ACPO Good Practice and Tactical Guidance on Hate Crime 2005.

*If a third party perceives an incident to be motivated by prejudice or hate then this same definition will apply.

6. Repeat victimisation of hate crime

This occurs *"where a person or immediate family member suffers more than one hate incident in a 12 month period following the date the first crime was reported"*.

6.1 Home Office & ACPO 2005

Hate incidents or crime is hatred, bias or prejudice that is based upon the actual or perceived age, gender, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or appearance.

Hate incidents or crimes can occur in a variety of forms; examples include, but are not limited to the following:

- Physical assault
- Bullying
- Harassment
- Verbal abuse, insults and threats
- Abuse through social media or cyber.
- Damage to property or personal belongings.
- Threatening or abusive behaviour including spitting, ridicule of cultural differences, arson or attempted arson, offensive jokes or comments.

Behaviour identified as harassment but not a hate incident or crime will be dealt with through our Anti-Social Behaviour policy, but when we receive a report our team will seek to establish if hate is a likely motivator.

6.2 Mate Crime

Mate crime is defined as the exploitation, abuse or theft from any vulnerable person by those they may consider to be their friends. Those that commit such abuse or theft are often referred to as 'fake friends'. For instances of 'mate crime' please refer to the Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children policy and referral process if applicable.

Mate crime may involve the following:

- Financial Abuse - where the perpetrator might demand or ask to be lent money or property and then not pay it back or return it.
- Physical Abuse - where the person may be assaulted or seriously injured by the perpetrator, possibly for the amusement of the perpetrator.
- Emotional Abuse - where the perpetrator might manipulate or mislead the person, make them feel worthless, call them names or groom the person for criminal offences.
- Sexual Abuse - the person might be coerced into prostitution, sexually exploited by someone they think is their partner or friend or might be persuaded to perform sexual acts they do not feel comfortable with.

7. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Under the Equality Act 2010 Cornerstone Housing has a general duty to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate the unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.
- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate where their level of participation is particularly low.

8. Responding to reports of hate incidents or crime

In responding to reports of a hate incident or crime we will:

- Adopt a victim-led approach in dealing with hate crimes, which means that if a person or a third party feels that they or someone else has experienced a hate crime we will deal with it under this policy.
- Talk to victims and agree the action to be taken and encourage them to report incidents to the Police to pursue the possibility of a criminal investigation.
- Review any potential vulnerability and the risk of harm to the victim.
- Offer victims and complainants support through our own colleagues but will also try to engage more specialist support services.
- Adapt our response to the individual circumstances and needs of the victim, recognising that every reported hate incident or crime will be different.

Hate crime legislation allows for a third party to report and indeed stand as a witness to a hate crime where they have witnessed the incident. When we receive a report from a third party, we will investigate the incident, ensuring that interaction occurs with the victim(s) and the third party. The views of the victim will be taken into account, however, should they not wish to pursue the matter this will not necessarily prevent us from taking appropriate action where the third party is willing to provide evidence and be a witness.

9. Confidentiality

Victims will be encouraged to allow us to share information with other agencies, including the Police and local authority, to ensure that the full range of civil and criminal action can be pursued, and appropriate support provided. However, all information provided by the victim will be treated with the utmost confidence and only passed to external agencies where we are required by law to do so, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Where we do not have the victims' consent and we consider there is a high risk of serious harm to anyone involved, we may make a report to the Police without the victim's consent. The Director of Housing or in their absence, another member of the Executive Team, will approve any such disclosure.

10. Training

All colleagues are responsible for ensuring the policy is incorporated into their working practices.

Appropriate training will be given to colleagues to raise their awareness and to equip them to implement this policy and its related procedures effectively.

11. Equality, diversity and inclusion

Cornerstone is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion and as such will make reasonable adjustments to the policy to recognise, accommodate and support individual needs, where needed. The policy adheres to Cornerstone's general approach to equality and diversity. Cornerstone employees and contractors will take a proactive approach to ensure that no individual or group is discriminated against or treated differently as a direct or indirect result of this policy

Additional needs and addressing vulnerabilities

Cornerstone recognises that, for various reasons, some of our customers and service users may be vulnerable. Policies, therefore, will take account of the recommendations made by the Housing Ombudsman and Regulatory recommendations on vulnerabilities.

Cornerstone will take a proactive approach when making a decision relating to a customer and where practicable, tailor and adapt our services to suit the needs of customers and support vulnerable people.

12. Evaluation, review and performance monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years to ensure it remains fit for purpose. A policy review may also be required earlier, in response to internal or external changes, for example, changes in legislation. Prompt and effective action will be taken where improvements are identified.

As part of case reviews, we will carry out audits to monitor compliance. Regular checks may also be completed by our internal auditors.

The policy also be reviewed:

- Following information suggesting that the policy is not effective.
- To reflect any service enhancements.

13. Related policies

- Customer & Communities Strategy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Neighbourhood Management Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy