



Title of policy:	Tackling Hate Crime Policy and Procedure
Version:	1.1
Purpose:	To set out a clearly defined policy for dealing with Hate Crime
Updated:	June 2022
Next review:	June 2023
By:	Diane Smith – Housing Service Manager

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 North Star is committed to dealing with reports of hate crime and incidents by working in partnership, and by using collective resources, knowledge, skills and enforcement powers.
- 1.2 We recognise hate crime if left unchallenged, can have a significant impact on the lives of our tenants and residents. We are committed to ensuring that tenants and residents are able to enjoy peace, quiet and security in and around their homes.
- 1.3 We know that to tackle hate crime effectively means developing and maintaining close partnerships with Local Authorities, local residents, the police and other statutory and voluntary agencies if we are to achieve successful outcomes.
- 1.4 We will not tolerate hate crime and will take timely, effective and consistent action to tackle all forms of it at the earliest opportunity possible.
- 1.5 We acknowledge that many crimes, particularly hate crimes are under reported and we will work with our partners to promote the reporting of all incidents.
- 1.6 The policy is one of a set of policies and guidelines around equality, diversity and human right issues. The other policies include:
  - Equality and Diversity Policy
  - Domestic Abuse Policy
  - ASB Policy
  - Child and Vulnerable Adults Policy

## 2 The Aim of the Policy

- 2.1 The aims of the policy are to strengthen North Star's commitment to tackling hate crime and incidents in the areas we work to make sure support is always available to people who are victims of hate crime or incidents.

### 3 Our Commitment

- 3.1 We value our diverse communities which make our Country a unique and vibrant place to live, work and visit.
- 3.2 However, we know that these diverse communities can face discrimination, harassment, hate crime and incidents. There is no place for these forms of prejudice and hate and we will do all we can with our partners to tackle this.

### 4 What is Hate Crime/Incident?

- 4.1 A **hate crime** is any crime which is perceived by the victim or anyone else, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice towards someone because of:

- disability
- gender identity
- race or ethnic origin
- religion or belief including lack of belief/religion
- sexual orientation

It can be against an individual or their property.

- 4.2 A **hate incident** is a non-crime incident but can feel like a crime to those who suffer from an incident like this. Just as a hate crime, it is an incident which is perceived by the victim or anyone else, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice towards someone for the same reasons as a hate crime.

- 4.3 Hate crimes can be, but are not limited to:

- a physical attack like hitting and assault
- verbal abuse or insults including name calling or offensive jokes
- offensive graffiti
- spitting, insulting gestures
- neighbourhood disputes
- threats, harassment or intimidation
- unfounded malicious complaints
- people doing things that frighten, intimidate or distress you
- offensive letters, posters, emails, texts, phone calls, social media messages, photographs and videos
- damage to property or belongings, arson and vandalism
- dumping rubbish outside homes or through letter boxes
- bullying at work, at school or college or university
- befriending vulnerable people to take advantage of, exploit and or abuse them – often referred to as ‘mate crime’.

## 5 Reporting Hate Crime and Incidents.

- 5.1 Everyone has the right to live without fear and harassment, it is really important that you report a hate crime or incident. This is whether you have been a victim, a witness or you are reporting on behalf of someone else, for example a friend, family member or for one of your colleagues at work. We have a duty to keep our community and workspace safe and unless we know what is happening, we can't do anything about it. Reporting does make a difference and you can stop it happening to someone else.
- 5.2 You will also help the Police to understand the level of hate crime and incidents in the local area and improve the way they respond to them.

## 6 Ways to you can report Hate Crime/Incident

There are a number of ways in which you can do this including:

- In person at one of our offices.
- In writing:

North Star  
St Marks Court  
Thornaby  
Stockton-on -Tees  
TS17 6QN

- By telephone 03000 11 00 11 (local rate number)
- Through our website [www.northstarhg.co.uk](http://www.northstarhg.co.uk) or by emailing our dedicated Customer Service line [customer.services@northstarhg.co.uk](mailto:customer.services@northstarhg.co.uk)
- ASB and Hate Crime line [asb@northstarhg.co.uk](mailto:asb@northstarhg.co.uk).
- Through a third party such as advocate, social worker, etc
- Direct to your Housing Officer/Support Worker.

If there is a problem out of hours you can email us and we will get back to you as soon as possible. Alternatively, if the problem is urgent you can contact the Police on 101.

You should always dial 999 when there is an immediate danger, or you witness a crime taking place.

## 7 Support for Victim and Witnesses

- 7.1 Some of the most persuasive evidence comes from local residents. Where enforcement action is taken, they can often identify the perpetrators in court and describe the effects behaviour has had on their lives.
- 7.2 Resolving a case using local residents also strengthens the community, boosting the morale of victims and so helping to sustain long term improvements.

- 7.3 It is essential to any legal enforcement action that we are able to use the information available, including any evidence provided by witnesses.
- 7.4 Where witnesses are prepared to give evidence directly, this makes the case significantly stronger.
- 7.5 Where a witness is not prepared to provide evidence directly, their statements can be presented with their consent by us on their behalf. However, this weakens the evidence, because there is no opportunity for the defendant to directly challenge the evidence.
- 7.6 Housing Officers can also give evidence on behalf of the tenant without revealing the identity of the tenant. This is known as 'hearsay' evidence. Again, this does not carry as much weight as it would if it were given directly by the tenant.
- 7.7 It is important that people living and working in our communities feel confident to report hate crime and incidents. It is also important that complainants, victims and witnesses are reassured that confidentiality will be maintained at all times.
- 7.8 We recognise that victims and witnesses may have anxieties about reporting hate crime and incidents and providing evidence; we will work with victims and witnesses and agree what support is required throughout the process. We will work with Victim Support and make referrals to them where necessary and appropriate.
- 7.9 We will:
- Treat all reports of hate crime sympathetically and in confidence
  - Treat all reports of hate crime as high risk
  - Carry out a full and thorough investigation of all hate crime reported to us
  - Provide advice and information and signpost victims to support agencies where we are unable to help
  - Work in partnership with other agencies including police, local authorities, other social housing landlords etc
  - Take action against perpetrators where appropriate
  - Agree an action plan

## **8 Partnership Working**

- 8.1 We recognise that effective and sustainable solutions cannot be achieved by any individual agency in isolation. As a landlord we have a key role in creating safe and sustainable communities and can only achieve this in partnership to deliver a comprehensive approach to local problems and priorities.
- 8.2 We participate in various multi-agency partnerships to resolve issues within communities where we have properties through an early intervention and collaborative approach.

## 9 What we will do when you report a hate crime or incident

- 9.1 Any complaint or incident of hate crime will be taken seriously and will be awarded the highest priority. The housing officer will contact the complainant (victim) in the most appropriate method within the following timescale.

**Category 1** – Serious - Crime/Criminal activity (i.e. drugs, domestic violence threats of violence, hate crime/incident) – **ONE** working day

- 9.2 When taking the complaint, the housing officer will ask you for the following information:

- Name, address and contact details of the complainant.
- Most appropriate method of contacting complainant i.e. telephone, email.
- Brief description of the incident.
- Date and time of incident.
- Any information relating to the perpetrator such as name and address if known.
- Has the incident been reported to a third party i.e. Police.

- 9.3 The housing officer will arrange to interview the complainant and discuss the procedure for responding to complaints of hate crime as well as arranging a course of action within the following timescales:

**Category 1** – **ONE** working days

- 9.4 If English is not the first language of the complainant, the staff member will arrange the appropriate translation/interpreter services.

- 9.5 We will keep you updated and will keep weekly contact with you until the case is resolved.

- 9.6 The following will be carried out if required:

- Arrange for any offensive graffiti to be removed within 24 hours of notification.
- Carry out any repairs as a result of the Hate Crime or incident.
- Inform any appropriate agency/partner such as Hate Crime Forums.
- Make referrals to MARAC for serious cases of Domestic Violence.

## 10 Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

- 10.1 We will record and monitor all reports of hate crime and incidents by complaint category and area. We will also monitor the number of cases resolved by area and how they were resolved. This information will be used to enable us to build up profiles of area specific problems, volume of complaints, identify hotspots and target resources when such trends emerge. We will monitor the number of complaints, reviews and appeals and use the information to improve our service.

- 10.2 We will contact all complainants when the case has been closed to ask how satisfied you were with the service you received. We will use this information to improve the way we deliver services and ensure we are targeting our resources in the right areas.

## **11 Working Together and Sharing Information**

- 11.1 The new powers will allow the police, councils, social landlords and others to deal with problems quickly. Working together will be key to resolving issues more effectively.
- 11.2 The Community Trigger outlined in the policy includes a specific duty on some bodies to share information when the trigger is activated, however, we should not wait until a victim feels they are being ignored before coming together to prepare a response.
- 11.3 Housing Officers can work with a range of Multi-Agency Partnerships to address cases of Anti-Social Behaviour, harassment, **hate crimes** or domestic violence. Some of these partnerships include, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Hate Crime Forums, Multi-Agency Public Protection Conferences (MAPPA) as well as a variety of problem-solving groups. In cases where the victim is known to be a victim of repeated incidents of hate crime, a referral should be made to the local authorities Repeat Victim Case Group to ensure a multi-agency collaborative approach is taken.

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