



<b>Title of policy:</b>	Tackling Hate Crime Policy
<b>Version:</b>	1.2
<b>Purpose:</b>	To set out a clearly defined policy for dealing with Hate Crime
<b>Updated:</b>	April 2024
<b>Next review:</b>	April 2025
<b>By:</b>	General Needs Housing Service Manager

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 As a responsible landlord, North Star aims to provide appropriate support and housing management services to any customer who may be at risk, has suffered or is suffering any form of harassment or hate crime/incidents.
- 1.2 In operating this policy, North Star intends to send out a clear message that we will not tolerate harassment or hate crime directed to or from any of our customers, directly employed staff or those acting on our behalf such as contractors.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 We recognise hate crime if left unchallenged, can have a significant impact on the lives of our customers. We are committed to ensuring our customers can enjoy peace, quiet and security in and around their homes.
- 1.5 We know that to tackle hate crime effectively means developing and maintaining close partnerships with Local Authorities, residents, the police, and other statutory and voluntary agencies if we are to achieve successful outcomes.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 In operating this policy, we will comply with all legal and regulatory requirements regarding harassment and hate crime/incidents, including but not exclusive to the following:
  - Neighbourhoods and Community Standard as set out by Regulator of Social Housing
  - The requirements of the Equalities Act 2010
  - Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
  - ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014
  - Criminal Damage Act 1971
  - Common Law Offences against the Person 1981

- Public Order Act 1986
- Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998

## 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.
- 2.2 Our approach to hate crime ensures that we meet the regulatory requirement of the Regulator of Social Housing Neighbourhood and Community Standard.

## 3 Preventative Measures

- 3.1 As part of the signing up procedure, housing staff will make customers aware of the Association's Hate Crime Policy. Customers will be informed they are responsible for the behaviour of family members and visitors, and if any behaviours listed under this policy are proven, it will be deemed a breach of their tenancy and could result in eviction.
- 3.2 We will raise awareness of harassment and hate crimes through information published via our website, newsletters and on social media. We will publish our policy on our website.
- 3.3 Through active participation in multi-agency forums in communities we operate in, we will maintain strategic influence over provisions for dealing with harassment and hate crime issues and will look to provide a coordinated response with our partners on cases involving our customers. Some of the multi-agency forums we are members include Join Action Groups (JAGs) Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Hate Crime Forums, Multi-Agency Public Protection Conferences (MAPPAs) as well as a variety of problem-solving groups.

## 4 What is Hate Crime/Incident?

- 4.1 We have adopted the definition of a Hate Crime as used by the Police and Crown Prosecution Service

"Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on a person's disability or perceived disability, race or perceived race religion or perceived religion, sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation, transgender identity or perceived transgender identity."

The law recognises five types of hate crime based on:

Race  
Religion  
Disability

## Sexual Orientation Transgender Identity

Hate crimes can be committed against a person or property and any person can be the victim of a hate crime. A person can be the victim of more than one type of hate crime.

4.2 A hate incident is a non-crime incident but can feel like a crime to those who suffer from an incident. 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 cause distress.
- 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 Ways Hate Crime/Incidents can be reported.

North Star will ensure there are numerous and accessible means by which customers can report harassment or hate crime/incidents including the following:

- In person at any of our offices where we have staff present
- 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 their Housing Officer/Support Worker.

If there is a problem out of our office hours, you can email us, and we will make contact within one working day.

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

## **6 Support for Victim and Witnesses**

- 6.1 We will deal with all incidents reported to us under this policy by taking a victim-centred approach such that the necessary support and protection will be provided to the victim.
- 6.2 We will take firm action against the perpetrators, and in cases where there is an immediate risk to life or property, we will assist in liaison with the police immediately.
- 6.3 We recognise it is important to ensure that appropriate service responses are in place to support all victims of hate crime. We will ensure that we have a consistent approach to hate crime in line with good practice and relevant legislation.
- 6.4 We will keep in regular contact with customers until their case is satisfactorily resolved or closed.
- 6.5 We will consider management transfers on the grounds of harassment fairly and sympathetically where this is a resolution of the case.
- 6.6 Where necessary improve security, helping to protect vulnerable customers in their homes such as window locks, fireproof letter boxes etc.
- 6.7 Where appropriate, our staff can give evidence on behalf of the customer without revealing the identity of the tenant. This is known as 'hearsay' evidence.
- 6.8 It is important that customers 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 always maintained.
- 6.9 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 specialist agencies and organisations where appropriate.
- 6.10 We will:
  - Treat all reports of hate crime sympathetically and in confidence.
  - Treat all reports of hate crime as high risk.
  - Carry out a risk assessment and agree an action plan with the complainant.
  - Carry out a full and thorough investigation.
  - Work in partnership with other agencies including police, local authorities, other social housing landlords etc.
  - Act against perpetrators where proven.

## **7 Partnership Working**

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 We are committed to providing the best possible support to our customers experiencing harassment or hate crime/incidents and we will work closely with a variety of organisations that can offer specialist advice, assistance, and advocacy services.
- 7.3 We work with a range of multi-agency partnerships to address cases of Anti-Social Behaviour, harassment, hate crimes or incidents. Some of these partnerships include, Joint Action Groups (JAGs) Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Hate Crime Forums, Multi-Agency Public Protection Conferences (MAPPAs) 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, we will refer to the local authorities Repeat Victim Case Group to ensure a multi-agency collaborative approach is taken. We will make an active contribution through our involvement and memberships of these groups and forums.
- 7.4 We will review this policy each year.

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

- 8.1 When it is apparent through observations, direct reporting or via a third party that someone is in immediate danger or risk we will take the appropriate action which may include:
- Informing emergency services.
  - Visiting the complainant within one working day and carrying out a risk assessment.
  - Making Social Services aware or raising an appropriate Safeguarding alert.
  - Making referral to the local authorities Homelessness/Housing Options Team.
  - Target hardening of any addresses.
  - Providing advice and support on options.
  - Seeking independent legal advice.
  - Referral to external support and advocacy agencies.
- 8.2 North Star undertakes to investigate cases of hate crimes listed in the policy in a sensitive and professional manner and will contact complainants to obtain detailed information within one working day. Where we receive a report of a hate crime incident, staff are trained to record and investigate these. Any complaint or incident of hate crime will be taken seriously and will be awarded the highest priority.

Police will be the lead agency to investigate any hate crime incidents and we will work with them to ensure that any response to requests for support and action are dealt with appropriately and in a timely manner.

8.3 When taking the complaint, we will seek 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 Confidentiality

9.1 When investigating or making referrals regarding harassment or hate crime/incidents, we will always respect individuals right for confidentiality and will comply with all requirements of the UK Data Protection legislation.

9.2 This will include the following:

- Working under established information sharing protocols when exchanging personal data with external agencies and partners
- Only passing on information to third parties and external agencies with the explicit consent unless we have a good reason to believe they are at risk or in danger of immediate harm and emergency intervention is required.

## 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 they were with the service they received. We will use this information to improve the way we deliver services and ensure we are targeting our resources in the right areas.

**Housing Services Manager**  
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