



BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

Community Safety Strategy 2025-2030

Housing
Executive

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Foreword

Social housing communities face challenges when it comes to ensuring the safety and security of their residents. Factors such as high population, economic discrepancies and complex social dynamics can contribute to an increased risk of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour. This community safety strategy has been developed to proactively address these issues and provide a framework for creating a safer more inclusive living environment for all communities.

As Northern Ireland's largest housing authority, it is our responsibility to ensure our communities are safe and Anti-Social Behaviour is tackled appropriately. We want to ensure that housing plays its part in making an important contribution to creating peaceful, prosperous and a fair society. Community safety is about feeling safe, whether that is at home in the community or at work. It is important that people feel safe within their communities as this can contribute hugely to their overall quality of life, physical and mental health and wellbeing. It can also have a bearing on the ability to make the most of social, domestic, and economic opportunities available to individuals, without fear or hindrance of crime and disorder or anti-social behaviour. Crime and Anti-social behaviour can have a detrimental effect on individuals, families, businesses and our communities. Living in unsafe neighbourhoods can also cause anxiety, depression, stress, economic decline and an increase in community tensions. That is why we are committed to identifying issues and working to tackle community safety issues that affect our residents, our communities and our estates.

By adopting a multifaceted approach that combines tenant engagement, crime prevention initiatives and strong partnerships with statutory bodies and community organisations, this strategy seeks to empower residents, reduce the prevalence of Anti-Social Behaviour and foster a greater sense of community. Our holistic approach works toward enhancing the safety and wellbeing of social housing tenants. By addressing key safety concerns, engaging with residents and fostering collaborative partnerships, this strategy aims to create a safer and more secure

living environment for all members of the community. The strategic view of Building Safer Communities Together, encompasses everything we want to achieve as an organisation tackling Anti-Social Behaviour and incorporates the need for collaborative working with stakeholder agencies.

This strategy places emphasis upon ensuring that those responsible for causing nuisance or annoyance within the community change their behaviour in an effort to stop or reduce the incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour occurring. The Housing Executive will work with those individuals in an effort to resolve issues using the intervention, prevention and support measure at our disposal. This approach aligns with our Anti-Social Behaviour policy and demonstrates our commitment to dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour in a balanced incremental way. Communities should be reassured that we will not hesitate to use more robust action whenever it is required.

Anti-Social Behaviour includes a range of complex behaviours. It is essential that partnership working sits at the heart of this strategy, with a clear focus on reducing incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour and addressing the underlying causes. Our communities have an integral role in improving community safety and preventing Anti-Social Behaviour. We will continue to encourage our communities to assist us in tackling issues of Anti-Social Behaviour and preventing further incidents by communicating to responsible agencies and formally reporting witnessed incidents. We do not want to become complacent, and endeavour to build on relationships and partnerships developed/improved throughout the life of the previous strategy and work further to deliver our strategic aims.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Grainia Long".

Grainia Long
Chief Executive

Executive Summary

Over the past 50 years the Housing Executive has been committed to providing high quality housing and a wide range of additional support services to our communities. Over these years our communities have been involved in transforming our services through a process of partnership working, and this strategy seeks to create the environment for continued progress in this regard with communities and partnership working at the forefront of what we do.

From our recent research into customer segmentation and the communities in which we live, we know that our neighbourhoods are becoming ever more culturally diverse with levels of complexities. We want to ensure our communities and tenants feel safe in their homes and are confident when reporting incidents of anti-social behaviour to us. We believe that supporting communities and building confidence within, will result in a community where everyone is valued, diversity is celebrated, and everyone is assured that we are working together with partners across Statutory and Voluntary sectors to achieve the best outcomes for all.

During the latest Housemark/ Benchmarking group exercise 2022-23 the Housing Executive was compared to similarly large stock holding social landlords (with a minimum stock size of 20,000 units), from across the UK and across all social providers: local authorities, Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs), and Housing Associations. The Housing Executive scored 89.6% with the UK median being 78.2% for Respondents Satisfied with their Neighbourhood as a Place to Live. This reflects positively on the working being conducted to address Anti- Social Behaviour (ASB) within our communities.

The results from these benchmarking exercises assist in the overall approach to facilitate improvements in services provided by the Landlord (Housing) Services Division. In relation to new ASB Cases per 1000 properties the Housing Executive received 17.43% ranking 1st with a UK performance median being 47.4%. In relation to management cost per property the NIHE cost per property for ASB was £58.39 ranking in quartile position 2 and showing a substantial saving in comparison to the UK median cost per property for ASB of £72.26. This reflects positively on the community safety work carried out within our organisation. Of the customers who took part in our annual Continuous Omnibus Tenant Survey (CTOS), only 6.2% were dissatisfied with how the Housing Executive deals with ASB.

This strategy has been developed in keeping with the Housing Executives Corporate Plan and sets out three key aims; Building Community Confidence, Ensuring Local Solutions, and Working Together. Highlighted within this strategy are activities that will help us achieve our aims and shape our work. Our action plan sets out in more detail, the actions that we will deliver throughout the life of the strategy and will be updated annually whilst reporting on progress. We will take a flexible approach, responding to new challenges and opportunities as they arise. It is expected the strategy will continually evolve and take cognisance of the changing internal and external environment; such as changes in legislation or government policy. It will be necessary to react to any changes, to develop our response and ensuring best practice.

Organisationally we will support the delivery of this strategy through internal structures, policies, and intervention tools. Additionally, with our investment in the provision of services, we will successfully achieve our outcome of 'Building Safer Communities Together.'

Introduction and Vision

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) is committed to creating safe and thriving communities for all its social housing tenants. This comprehensive community safety strategy outlines the key objectives and actions the NIHE will undertake to address ASB, support vulnerable residents, and foster a culture of community and mutual respect for all.

We recognise that community safety is essential to create thriving neighbourhoods and improve the quality of life in our communities. This community safety strategy sets forth a bold and comprehensive vision that fosters safer, more resilient communities through collaborative partnerships, proactive interventions and a steadfast commitment to empowering tenants and residents.

Underpinning this vision of Building Safer Communities Together, is the recognition that community safety is a shared responsibility requiring close collaboration between housing authorities, law enforcement, statutory agencies, voluntary and community sectors, tenants and the communities themselves. By outlining concrete objectives, innovative programmes and evidence based best practice, this strategy provides a framework for stakeholders at all levels to work together towards the common goal of building safer, more resilient communities. Through empowering tenants, strengthening community bonds and implementing targeted interventions we can foster an environment where everyone feels safe and secure, respected and empowered to contribute to the overall wellbeing of their communities. We want tenants to feel empowered to share their experiences, report incidents and voice their specific safety needs. Additionally, we will leverage the data obtained and intelligence to identify patterns, potential trends, and deliver targeted interventions.



Figure 1 A community garden and kitchen, funded by the community safety team.

This strategy sets out three key aims: Building Community Confidence, Ensuring local Solutions and Working Together. It is supported by an action plan that we will deliver throughout the life of the strategy and will update annually. We will take a flexible approach, responding to new challenges, stakeholder engagement and opportunities as they arise. This strategy will be a living document, continually evolving and taking cognisance of the changing internal and external environments, developing in response to new ideas, research and best practice.

What is Community Safety?

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. It requires a joint up approach. The Housing Executive is committed to making a difference by improving the quality of life for residents in our estates.

The Housing Executive defines ASB as: Engaging in or threatening to engage in conduct causing or likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to a person residing in, visiting or otherwise engaging in lawful activity in the locality of a dwelling house.

Community safety is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the overall wellbeing, security, and resilience of a neighbourhood. At its core, it involves creating an environment where residents feel safe, secure, and empowered to engage with their community without fear of crime, ASB, or other threats or nuisances to their quality of life. A key aspect of community safety is crime prevention and reduction. This involves implementing targeted strategies to address the root causes of criminal activity, such as poverty, lack of opportunity, and social isolation. It also requires close collaboration between housing authorities, law enforcement, and statutory bodies to identify and mitigate risk factors, while empowering residents to become active participants in crime prevention efforts and to actively communicate to relevant agencies.

Equally important is the mitigation of ASB, which can have a significant impact on the overall sense of safety and cohesion within a community. This can include addressing issues such as vandalism, noise nuisance, illegal dumping, and other disruptive activities that impact upon the quality of life for communities. Ultimately, community safety is about fostering a sense of belonging, empowerment, and mutual support among residents. It requires an approach to create an environment where everyone feels safe, respected, valued, and invested in the overall wellbeing of their community.

While the majority of our estates are safe and popular places to live, we recognise that nuisance and ASB are real issues which can have a major impact on individuals and communities as a whole.



Figure 2. Volunteers in a local community garden.

Legislative and Policy Context

Northern Ireland has a robust legislative landscape when it comes to community safety and addressing ASB and protecting victims. The legal framework draws from a variety of Acts and Regulations, each designed to empower authorities, protect tenants, and promote safe inclusive neighbourhoods. In addressing ASB, the Housing Executive employs an incremental and proportional approach. 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. If, however, the individual fails to respond to offers of assistance and the ASB continues, or the behaviour is of such a serious nature that the Housing Executive will take immediate action, using 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 seek an injunction to stop the ASB or choose to repossess the property occupied by the perpetrator to protect the community. The statutory powers and related duties of the Housing Executive are contained in the following:

- Housing (NI) Order 1981, 1983, 1988, 2003.
- Anti-Social Behaviour (NI) Order 2004.
- Housing (Amendment) Act (NI) 2010, 2011, 2016.

Tackling ASB must be seen within the context of existing statutory obligations which include but are not limited to:

- The Housing (NI) Order 1998 (Part II) Article 7A and The Housing (NI) Order 1981 Article 22A.
- The Children (NI) Order 1995 (Article 46).
- The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (Article 22 (3)C).
- The Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 (Article 21/22).
- The Human Rights Act 1998.
- The NI Act 1998 (Section 75).
- The Housing (NI) order 2003.
- Anti-Social Behaviour (NI) Order 2004.

ASB legislative review

For the duration of our last strategy 'Working together for safer communities 2020-2023', the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Department for Communities (DFC) have been carrying out a public consultation to review the criminal legislation framework to tackle ASB.

The proposals relate to:

- Drinking in Public
- Anti-Social Behaviour Orders. (ASBOs)
- Injunctions Against Anti-Social Behaviour
- Absolute Grounds for Possession

If these proposals are accepted it would bring the relevant Northern Ireland legislation more closely in line with provisions enacted for England and Wales in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. The Housing Executive will await the outcome of this review and action accordingly.

Update on Implementation of Review of Hate Crime Legislation:

- Following a Review of Hate Crime Legislation by Judge Desmond Marrinan (2020), the (DOJ) is currently implementing a number of recommendations aimed at improving the criminal justice system's response to addressing hate crime and providing redress to victims of hate crime.
- Plans are in place to bring forward legislation that will ensure the most effective approach for the justice system to deal with criminal conduct motivated by hate. Key hate crime provisions are now scheduled to be delivered in the current mandate as part of existing legislative vehicles.
- The Department has accepted the need for the introduction of a new statutory aggravation model for all criminal offences whereby each existing offence can be aggravated by hostility if evidence shows the crime is motivated by hostility or hostility is demonstrated. This will allow the provision of an increased sentence up to the current maximum sentence. The Department is also progressing proposals to support victims of hate crime - retaining protected categories of disability, race, homophobia, faith/religion - and to offer enhanced protection measures for victims of hate crime within the criminal justice system.
- Recognising that hate crime can be experienced due to more than one characteristic, proposed legislation will also include recognition of intersectionality.
- Progress on non-legislative recommendations from the Review of Hate Crime Legislation is also ongoing. It encompasses work to include hate crime cases in adult restorative justice systems and monitoring the implementation of UK Government's Online Safety Act 2023 to address online harms.

The National Picture

Scotland

- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2004.
- Review of the National ASB Strategy 2007.
- Promoting Positive Outcomes: Working Together to Prevent Anti-Social Behaviour in Scotland 2009.
- Housing (Scotland) Bill 2013.
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.
- Scotland has introduced new hate crime legislation under the Hate Crime and Public Order Act 2021.

England & Wales

- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003/2004.
- Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- The Housing Act 1985/1996/2004.
- Localism Act 2011 .
- Statutory Guidance for Frontline Professionals 2019.
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.



Draft Programme for Government

The Housing Executive has taken note of the development within the wider community safety network in Northern Ireland which includes the Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most' by the Northern Ireland Executive. <https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/newnigov/draft-programme-for-government-our-plan-doing-what-matters-most.pdf> We are dedicated to reflecting these commitments in this strategy, and will continue to reflect further iterations and considerations during the life of this strategy.

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland - CJINI March 2024

This inspection looked at the community safety strategy in Northern Ireland and partnership working. Inspectors made a number of recommendations for improvement some of which included:

- The DOJ needs to lead the creation of a new community safety vision, strategy, and action plan for delivery. This should include up-to-date information and analysis on key priority areas, clear objectives and reflect public feedback.
- The Police service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) needs to ensure that Neighbourhood Policing Teams are consulted in all appropriate Community Impact Assessments and that there is effective monitoring of this consultation.
- The Police service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) should improve their problem-solving guidance for all Neighbourhood Policing Teams including what a problem-solving folder is and how to open and close it as well as the identity and role of problem-solving champions.

Internal Policy Influences

Fundamental Review of the Social Housing Allocations

The Housing Executive is implementing a series of changes to the Housing Selection Scheme and allocations process which were identified in the Department for Communities (DFC) Fundamental Review of Allocations. Twenty proposals for change are being implemented on a phased basis which seek to make the allocation process more fair, transparent, and effective. The first group of four changes were delivered in early 2023. Two of the longer-term proposals relate to changes to the ineligibility provisions for social housing and homelessness assistance in relation to unacceptable behaviour. Firstly, that an applicant who has been involved in unacceptable behaviour should not be eligible for social housing or full duty homelessness status unless there is reason to believe – at the time the application is considered – that the unacceptable behaviour is likely to cease. Secondly, that the Housing Executive may treat a person as ineligible for full duty homelessness status on the basis of their unacceptable behaviour at any time before allocating that person a social home. These changes require amendments to the Housing and Homelessness legislation and the Housing Executive is working with DFC to bring forward these legislative changes and the necessary policies and procedures which are anticipated to be implemented during 2024/25.

Community Involvement

Engaging, Enabling and Embracing communities has been at the core of what we do, and we will continue to play our role in developing the capacity of our communities to make improvements in their estate, whether that be social, economic, or environmental. Tenant, residential and leaseholder participation and community involvement is embedded in the way the Housing Executive delivers services and we are committed to ensuring we engage with our customers in a way that suits them. We aim to promote community involvement and cohesive communities, as well as enabling our communities, to challenge, influence and shape our housing service.

Tenancy Sustainment and Support

As a caring and responsible social landlord, we offer our tenants more than just a property by providing them with the support, advice, and access to resources and services they need to make a lasting home. We not only want to prevent crisis or adverse tenancy breakdown (that can potentially result in homelessness), but ensure that we are fostering happy, healthy and resilient tenancies at all points of the tenancy journey. During 2025 the Housing Executive's new Tenancy Support & Sustainment Strategy and Action Plan will be launched which takes account of the impact. These documents will set out a direction of travel which is cognisant of the impact of Community Safety has the well-being of tenants and their sense of home, and how these relate to tenancy sustainment. We also administer the Sustaining Tenancies Grant Funding Programme 2023-25 – through which NIHE will invest over £3million in projects that support sustainability and resilience of Housing Executive tenancies, and contribute to the comfort and well-being of our tenants – particularly those who are vulnerable and at greater risk of tenancy crisis or breakdown.

Social Enterprise

The Housing Executive is committed to supporting the creation of self-sustaining and economically vibrant communities through the development and implementation of local social (housing) enterprise initiatives. Our Social Investments Strategy is complementary to a number of other Housing Executive strategies, including Community Involvement, Community Safety and Community Cohesion in order to help build and sustain safe, vibrant communities. Each of these strategies commits funding to deliver their respective objectives, providing social investment, funding and support. As we come to the conclusion of this current strategy and develop and implement our new strategy, we plan to work in partnership with those in our communities and the wide social enterprise sector to ensure we have a strategy that meets the changing needs of those in our communities.

Race Relations

The Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015-2025, launched in December 2015, aimed to establish a framework for Government departments (and others):

- to tackle racial inequalities and to open up opportunity for all;
- to eradicate racism and hate crime; and
- along with Together: Building a United Community, to promote good race relations and social cohesion

We recognise that the Housing Executive has an important role to play in working towards the aims of the Race Equality Strategy. We work closely with The Executive Office on a number of race thematic groups and our policies are designed to align with government aims and objectives and demonstrate our positive commitment to promoting equality and good race relations. In support of this we have developed a race work stream to inform policy and promote race issues throughout the organisation. We have developed close working relationships with a wide range of minority ethnic representative groups across Northern Ireland and we foster these relationships via the Consultative Forum on Equality to ensure these diverse interests are accommodated in policy and strategy.

Housing Policy

All allocations of permanent social housing are made using the Housing Selection Scheme. Under the Rules of the Scheme allocations may only be made to eligible persons and the eligibility criteria includes considering if an applicant has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant. Investigations are undertaken at assessment stage to ascertain if an applicant may have been guilty of such behaviour.

The Housing Executive has taken note of the developments within the wide community safety networks in Northern Ireland. Our strategy takes cognisance of:

- Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan (psni.police.uk)
- The Executive Office - Racial equality 2015-2025
- PSNI - Crime Prevention Strategy 2025
- Department of Education - Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030
- Department of Justice - Draft Organised Crime Strategy for NI 2020-2023
- Department of Justice - Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2030

This strategy complements the following existing Housing Executive Strategic documents including:

Community Involvement and Cohesion Strategy 2024-2029
Ending Homelessness together Strategy 2022-2027
Customer Support and Tenancy Sustainment Strategy 2019-2022
Social Enterprise Plus Strategy 2020-2024
Racial Equality Strategy for NI 2015-2025
Financial Inclusion Strategy 2023-2028
Tenancy Support and Sustainment Strategy 2025 – 2030



Fig 3. Drumgor Detached Youth Group

Achievements - What success looks like

Highlighting the positive actions and achievements of the Housing Executive and the community we serve can go a long way in building confidence and fostering a greater sense of pride and ownership. The Housing Executive invests in our communities through various funding streams to fund community safety initiatives, community cohesion projects and social enterprise investment. Going forward we will continue to have a major role supporting and working with our communities and others to ensure that we develop, maintain, and sustain attractive, connected, healthy and economically active places. This will require us to remain committed to involvement in strategic collaborative working arrangements which seek to tackle and deal with ASB and to actively participate in all relevant inter-agency partnerships. We regularly promote these initiatives using a range of communication channels including local press and social media. This allows us to profile the positive work we are carrying out within our communities.

- Customer Satisfaction Surveys (2023-2024) have evidenced tenant confidence in staff dealing with ASB.



Our Achievements from 1/4/2020 until 31/3/2024 includes

- We received and responded to **6,064** reports of alleged ASB. With the highest reported category being **Noise** nuisance.
- Most reports of anti-social behaviour were resolved through the use of interventions which included **2,237** of these complaints being closed after the issue of warning letters and visits by local office staff.
- A combined Community Safety/ Community Cohesion Mediation Service delivered by Tides allows local offices to address neighbour/neighbour and community disputes through independent mediation. During this period Tides dealt with **153** cases.
- We regained possession of **29** dwellings following legal action as a last resort.
- Community Safety funding of **£2,025,142** has been provided to a range of community-based groups, Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, Councils and voluntary sector groups to enable the development of local solutions to address unacceptable and anti-social behaviour in our estates. This funding allows for community safety warden schemes, Good Morning Services, detached youth work programmes, education in schools, diversionary activities and intergenerational workshops.
- Our Community Restorative Justice Partners Northern Ireland Alternatives and Community Restorative Justice Ireland continued to be utilised with **2,318** mediation referrals.
- The Hate Incident Practical Action (HIPA) scheme continues to be available to support victims of hate harassment where there is damage to the property by providing additional security measures to homes allowing victims to feel safer. **37** recommendations for repairs were received.



£2,025,142

Spent on community safety

Our plan to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour

The Housing Executive is actively working to address ASB within social housing communities across Northern Ireland. Our estates have an assortment of tenures within them. We will investigate complaints of ASB that involves or affects one of our properties or our tenants. This includes reports from our tenants who are victims of ASB by non-Housing Executive tenants and individuals and non-Housing Executive tenants and individuals who are subject to ASB by our tenants.

As the largest social housing provider, the Housing Executive recognises that tackling ASB is a critical component of their mission to create safe, vibrant, and inclusive neighbourhoods for all tenants. We are working to improve community safety for individuals and to ensure our communities are safe through various approaches, some of which can be seen below:

- We will tackle ASB by employing an incremental approach, and we will work with the perpetrator through a range of interventions in an attempt to keep them in their homes whilst addressing their unacceptable behaviour. This may include the use of warning letters, support for underlying issues, mediation, or a Community Restorative Justice resolution. Where individuals fail to respond to offers of assistance, or where the ASB is of a serious nature then the Housing Executive will take immediate action using our statutory powers to protect victims. These powers include initiating taking possession of a Housing Executive property, injunction proceedings or seeking an Anti-Social Behaviour Order.
- We know that being a witness or victim of ASB can cause stress and upset. We want to tackle ASB in all its forms, and we need communities to tell us when it occurs, and this includes any incidents of hate/ hate harassment which we investigate through our ASB process. We want victims to feel confident in the service they receive from us. We will ensure we deal with each case in a timely, supportive, and highly professional way.
- Support for victims and witnesses is available, and the Housing Executive will signpost individuals to specialist organisations to avail of their services.
- Empowering tenants to be active participants in addressing community safety is a critical component of this strategy. We will provide tenants with the knowledge and resources they need to identify and report safety concerns, take proactive measures to secure their homes and engage with statutory agencies and law enforcement agencies. By equipping tenants with the skills and confidence to be part of the solution we can cultivate a shared sense of ownership and responsibility for maintaining safe and vibrant neighbourhoods.
- The local office is the first point of contact for those wishing to report ASB. The Housing Executive has put in place dedicated Patch Managers who will deliver on all aspects of housing. These Patch Managers have received comprehensive training in how to deal sensitively and speedily with ASB.

- When tenants raise concerns or report ASB to us, it is essential that we address these concerns in a timely manner. By demonstrating a genuine commitment to resolving issues and responding to tenant and community needs, we can build trust and confidence in our ability to effectively tackle challenges. This will involve implementing policy, establishing clear communication channels, and providing regular updates on the status of reported incidents.

By adopting a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach to addressing anti-social behaviour, the Housing Executive aims to create a safer, more inclusive, and more resilient social housing landscape for our residents and our communities. Through ongoing **collaboration**, community **engagement**, and evidence-based **interventions**, the Housing Executive is committed to fostering a culture of mutual respect, responsibility, and pride within its social housing developments.

- We will continue to work collaboratively with our partner agencies across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors to address issues of ASB where it occurs in our estates.
- A dedicated Community Safety Team is in place responsible for the delivery of the ASB policy. The Housing Executive has adopted a structured approach to dealing with ASB and very clear procedural guidance is in place and is continually monitored and reviewed to ensure customers receive an optimum service.
- Investing in targeted environmental improvements and community safety programmes, such as neighbourhood warden schemes to deter criminal and anti-social activities and enhance the overall sense of safety and security.
- Implementing swift and effective enforcement actions, including warning letters, acceptable behaviour contracts, and, in the most serious cases, eviction proceedings. Hold perpetrators accountable and protect the well-being of the broader community.

The Housing Executive values feedback from our customers. In order to help us understand what our customers believe a good community safety service means to them we will be working in partnership with our Customer Engagement & Campaigns Team to analyse customer data already gathered and carry out further engagement.



Strategic aims and the principles in delivery

This community safety strategy is guided by a clear vision and 3 strategic aims:

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

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

Working together - The Housing Executive will work closely with other agencies to improve community safety in our estates.

These strategic aims remain unchanged from our previous strategy, as following consultation it is apparent that they still remain at the forefront of what we want to achieve.

We are working to strengthen our **engagement with residents** within our communities. This will allow us to better understand what matters to people and how their lives are affected by crime and ASB so that we can respond appropriately and effectively. This work will involve working together with local people to identify and deliver community-led solutions. We are implementing a renewed and more **proactive** approach to community safety. This will include an early identification and intervention approach to help prevent ASB and crime before it happens, thus reducing the likelihood of issues escalating and we will promote appropriate support for victims of crime. This work will also have a focus on **protecting** those who are most vulnerable to crime, ASB, violence in all forms, abuse and exploitation.

We will continue to **work closely** with PSNI and criminal justice partners as well as a broader range of agencies to ensure that community safety issues are identified and tackled swiftly. Perpetrators will be dealt with appropriately, through supporting work to ensure they face up to the consequences of their actions. A key part of this work will be to **raise awareness** of how members of the public can and should **report** hate crime and ASB within their communities.

Better communications does not cost much but it does help communities know how to respond to ASB. By **improving the frequency and quality of our communications** we can help to empower communities to reduce ASB and increase reporting. We know that ASB is underreported, and better communication should serve to improve this. There also needs to be more information around what to expect after a report has been made as well as better communication throughout the process. Better communication should help to increase satisfaction levels.

To assist us in meeting our strategic aims we have:

A dedicated Community Safety Team

There is a dedicated Community Safety Team with specialist officers who remain committed to work directly with front line service staff to ensure we deliver a first-class service to our tenants and communities.

Transparent anti-social behaviour policy and procedural information

The Housing Executive continue to have in place a robust set of policies and procedures to deal with ASB and remain committed to ensuring these are current and up to date. Policy is applied consistently across the organisation, is publicly available and can be found in the “Statement of Policies” on the Housing Executive’s website. This policy statement also sets out how ASB can be reported and the process that is initiated once a complaint has been received. Any changes which may be required, for example, by the introduction of new legislation, will be reflected in our policy for dealing with ASB and community safety. We have also developed our Hate Harassment Toolkit to assist staff and customers in reporting and addressing incidents of Hate in our communities.

Provision of anti-social behaviour clinics for front line staff

Specialist officers from the Community Safety Team deliver regular ASB clinics to local office front line staff providing advice and assistance on case management issues, how to support their customer as well as sharing best practice.



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**ASB clinics held for staff
from April 2020 until
December 2024**

Use of professional witnesses/community impact statements

In order to promote and develop community confidence local representatives can act in a ‘professional witness’ capacity. In addition, community impact statements can be used to support cases should victims or witnesses not feel confident enough to provide this information directly. Whilst the best form of evidence is direct evidence there are circumstances where this is not possible because of fear of reprisal.

The Housing Executive has at its disposal a range of statutory and non- statutory interventions. Communities should be reassured that we will respond appropriately to anti-social behaviour where it occurs in our estates by using measures available which include:

Non-statutory interventions

Not all complaints about ASB require a legal response; rather they can be resolved by early intervention and preventative action by the Housing Executive and/or in partnership with other agencies. These measures can take the form of:

- Warning Letters
- An independent mediation process
- Use of restorative practices through the Mediation, Advocacy and Community Support Programme
- Tailored support for victims and perpetrators of ASB.
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs)

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE: Possession case

The Housing Executive received a complaint regarding the condition of one of its properties. The tenant in question refused to engage with their Patch Manager. On further investigation it became clear there were a number of breaches regarding the 'General Conditions of Tenancy' obligations. The tenant had 6 dogs in a flat with no permission granted by local office. There was clear evidence of poor tenancy management and internal structural damage as well as severe maintenance issues.

Despite interviews, being served with warning letters and offers of support to assist with sustaining their tenancy, they unfortunately continued to refuse to engage. This resulted in the Housing Executive being left with no other options but to serve a Notice Seeking Possession (NSP). The case was presented to the courts and the Judge awarded an immediate possession order.

Statutory interventions

Where situations are more serious or where intervention or prevention measures have had no impact then the Housing Executive can use statutory powers in order to resolve issues.

These include:

- Use of Injunction Proceedings
- Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (not generally used by Housing Executive but still listed under statute)
- Issuing of possession proceedings against Housing Executive tenants

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE: Possession, injunction & eviction case

The Housing Executive initially received complaints about loud noisy parties emanating from one of its properties. During the course of the investigations it was established the tenant, and visitors to their property were engaging in sustained and serious anti-social behaviour on a daily basis. This ranged from playing loud music, shouting at passers-by, verbal abuse/swearing to both neighbour's and staff, dogs barking, arguing, and fighting both inside and outside of the property.

This inconsiderate behaviour was having a major impact on their neighbours right to peaceful enjoyment of their homes and to live free from fear and intimidation.

The Housing Executive worked in partnership with the PSNI and the Council, in order to obtain independent evidence and incident diaries were gathered as part of evidence collection. Given the seriousness of the incidents in question the Housing Executive applied to court for a possession order.

The Judge awarded the Housing Executive a possession order with a 4 week stay. At this stage the anti-social behaviour continued to escalate, resulting in serious threats being made by the tenant towards their neighbours. The Housing Executive takes this type of behaviour very seriously and an Injunction was secured by our legal service department.

The tenant refused to provide vacant possession to the Housing Executive whilst at the same time continuing to threaten the neighbours. This resulted in the Housing Executive requesting the Enforcement of Judgements office to evict the tenant with the support and back up of the PSNI. The eviction was successfully carried out and the property was returned to Housing Executive.

Partnership Working

Fostering strong, collaborative partnerships is the cornerstone of this community safety strategy. Tackling the full range of behaviours that constitute ASB requires effective partnership working with PSNI, Youth Justice, Social Services, Education, Health, Councils and the voluntary and community sector. Many of these partnership arrangements are underpinned by Information Sharing Protocols, which allows us to take a more joined up approach to tackling ASB.

By bringing together these agencies we can leverage a diverse range of expertise, resources and perspectives to develop holistic, multi faceted solutions to address the unique safety needs of our tenants and the communities. These partnerships facilitate vital information sharing, coordinated response efforts and the implementation of evidence-based programmes.

The Housing Executive cannot solve issues of anti-social behaviour alone and recognises the need to work with partner organisations and communities to effect behaviour change and create safer places for our tenants to live thus increasing confidence in our response within our communities. Working together will improve community resilience, support victims and challenge the behaviour of perpetrators. The Housing Executive remains committed to working with specialist, community and statutory organisations going forward.

Our partner organisations express an appetite for continued engagement and collaboration to deliver this strategy. The NIHE is committed to participating in collaborative advisory groups with other housing partners and central and local government to inform the focus of our delivery plans.



Figure 4. Partnership meeting to tackle ASB in local areas.

Below are some examples illustrating our continued commitment to Building Safe Communities Together, through effective partnership working and meeting our strategic aims:

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs)

PCSPs are statutory bodies established within each council area with the objective of ensuring the voices of local people are heard on issues pertaining to Policing and Community Safety. The Housing Executive is a designated body participating in monthly meetings alongside political and independent members in all facets of work relating to community safety. PCSPs consult and engage with the local community and statutory groups in order to identify local concerns in relation to community safety. They prioritise and prepare action plans to address these issues, and fund major programmes of work with voluntary and community bodies.

Anti-Social Behaviour Forums

Anti-social behaviour forums work collectively and are underpinned by information sharing arrangements between the Housing Executive, PSNI, Youth Justice and respective councils. These localised forums focus on addressing anti-social activity within our communities in partnership with the other agencies.

Mediation, Advocacy & Community Support Project (MACS)

Following the introduction in 2007 of the Criminal Justice Branch (NIO) Protocol for Community Based Restorative Justice Schemes, the Housing Executive entered into partnership arrangements with Northern Ireland Alternatives (NIA) and Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI). These organisations deliver a Mediation, Advocacy and Community Support (MACS) project on behalf of the Housing Executive. NIA provide this service in the greater Shankill, North Belfast, Newtownabbey, North Down, Portadown and Mid Ulster and CRJI works in the Greater West Belfast and North and East Belfast areas.

‘When I was referred to MACS, I felt as if some type of breakdown was occurring and I was unable to control what was going on in my life. I was vulnerable and at risk of losing my home because of anti-social behaviour. Over a 5 month period the wrap around support from MACS helped me with

managing my money, my addiction and how people in the community view me as well as my mental health. I am still in my home and am working with the MACS Support Worker to improve relationships with my neighbours and my community. I feel that without MACS, I would be homeless.’

The MACS projects provide community-based mediation and have made a significant difference to the quality of people's lives by addressing anti-social activities, neighbourhood disputes, alcohol and substance misuse and family issues within communities. They assist clients to resolve their own issues and have contributed to helping them continue to live in a peaceful environment with their neighbours. These two groups have built trust within local communities, increased capacity and improved understanding and co-operation with other statutory service providers as a means of addressing reported anti-social behaviour.

'I am a single parent with a teenage daughter and we were impacted by Anti-social behaviour within the previous complex we lived in. We had received help intermittently over a period of time from CRJI. This involved the MACS practitioner supporting myself and my daughter through interventions of mediations, advocacy, emotional and practical help. The most important aspect was the confidentiality

and a safe environment they created for us as a family. My daughter and I have suffered emotionally and mentally during those times and we were helped with the situation appropriately, advised how to deal with our mental health along with personal problems relating to a family breakdown. My daughter and I have benefited greatly by the support given.'

Mediation, Advocacy and Community Support (MACS) Hate Crime Project

Delivered by Northern Ireland Alternatives this project is focused in South, East and North Belfast to work closely with local communities to provide a programme of education and support around hate crime. It acts in a mediatory and brokering role allowing prospective tenants from ethnic minority backgrounds to accept an offer of accommodation. It also aims to promote understanding for the need for acceptance of change and diversity.

"I wasn't doing well in life and wasn't getting all the help I was entitled too. I had given up, to be honest and was struggling. I shouldn't have given up as I was entitled and had no money, that was making me really depressed. Alternatives really helped with

lots of things, and even though I had got myself to a point where I wanted to do something, it was them who got me over the line. I was so grateful for all the support even when I got the first help from the food bank. I feel able to cope with my situation now.'

Mediation Service Provision

The Housing Executive works in partnership with TIDES (Training & Consultancy) in the delivery of a specialised mediation service. This ensures we provide a service for tenants and communities to access independent mediation as an option to resolve disputes. The mediation service is available across Northern Ireland. This is a non-statutory method of addressing neighbour disputes and can be used to prevent a conflict from escalating to the point at which court action is necessary. The process is often faster, less stressful and more cost effective than enforcement measures.

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE:

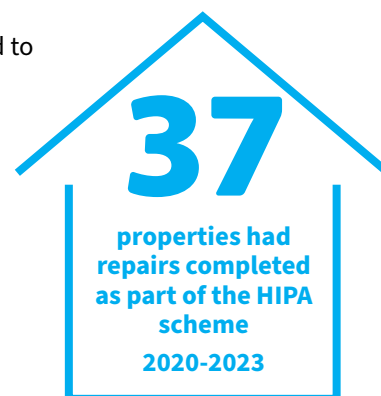
Party A had lived in their property for 12 years, Party B moved in and at the start relationships were very good and amicable. Then around 10 months into the tenancy party B reported party A to NIHE for shouting abuse at her in her front garden. This then started a spiral of tit for tat of reporting resulting both reporting each other to different statutory agencies. Party A was happy to accept mediation however party B was reluctant. TIDES mediation had an hour call with Party B, and they agreed they had nothing to lose and hopefully something positive to gain from embracing and becoming involved in the process. Meetings were set up for the following week between the parties separately and within their own houses.

The TIDES mediation team had a further meeting with each party in the following weeks just to build confidence in the process and to build good relationships with each party. All parties then agreed to meet at the local Housing Executive office and have a face-to-face meeting. The TIDES mediation team used positive language and open questions to get both parties talking about what was happening. Both parties offered apologies and shook hands and TIDES put structures in place to make sure it didn't go back to conflict

The Housing Executive is represented on many different fora and partnership arrangements at both Area and Regional level. Additionally, we are involved in a number of strategic partnerships and cross government groups focused on dealing with community safety issues e.g. hate crime, information sharing, legislative amendments, emerging trends and best practice. Examples of these collaborations include:

HIPA

The Hate Incident Practical Action Scheme (HIPA) is available across Northern Ireland to support victims of hate incidents in their homes. The scheme can provide personal and home protection measures if the home has been damaged or a victim has been targeted in the vicinity of their home, where the motivation for the attack is racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, sectarian or faith related. The HIPA scheme is available to all tenures. It is jointly supported by the DOJ, PSNI, the Housing Executive and the DFC. When an incident is confirmed by the PSNI and the victim wants to remain in their home, the Housing Executive can provide security measures to the home in order to assist the occupant to remain there safely. A Service Level Agreement between the Housing Executive, DOJ, PSNI and DFC underpins this scheme and is in place until 31st March 2027.



Multi Agency Support Hubs (MASH)

A Multi Agency Support Hubs (MASH) is where a group of professionals from different organisations come together to work with a person who needs help. This ensures that the person who needs the help does not have to keep telling many organisations the same story and we all work together. These arrangements are currently in place in several locations throughout Northern Ireland. The Housing Executive is committed to prevention and early intervention approaches and the Support Hub models offer an opportunity for us to work collaboratively across agencies to reduce vulnerability and improve individuals' wellbeing. Importantly this can include working with individuals who have been the victim of ongoing anti-social behaviour or other crime. Some people may need support in order to avoid being drawn into behaviour which may lead to offending, or others may find themselves in difficult situations which can affect their personal safety, physical or mental health. Through this partnership approach we envisage building safer, stronger, and more confident neighbourhoods, where appropriate partner organisations will refer vulnerable cases, share information and work together to achieve the best possible outcome. Confidentiality in relation to our customers' details, is of vital importance and consent will be sought prior to any discussion or referral of a case to the Support Hub. This innovative approach to collaborative problem solving demonstrates our commitment to making a difference.

Mid & East Antrim Agewell Partnership (MEAAP)

The Housing Executive has contributed to core funding the Mid & East Antrim Agewell Partnership (MEAAP). This is a local inter-agency-based partnership aimed at improving the lives of older people aged 60 years and over, living in the Ballymena, Larne & Carrickfergus areas. The partnership has been successful in receiving significant funding from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to deliver a wide range of activities and services to support frail and older people in areas such as access to transport, loneliness and literacy and, therefore, positively impacting on the health and wellbeing of older people in our communities.

Floating Support

Floating support services are available throughout Northern Ireland and are delivered by a range of organisations providing specialist intervention to those dealing with the range of issues which may threaten their tenancy. Such services include:

Assisting People and Communities Project (APAC)

The Housing Executive has a funding agreement with Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) to deliver the Assisting People and Communities (APAC) floating support programme. This programme provides comprehensive end to end tailored support to individuals involved in ASB, working with them to address underlying issues. It works to prevent people becoming homeless as a result of anti-social behaviour, offers support to help maintain tenancies and it seeks to promote community integration. This service is available across Northern Ireland.

CASE STUDY: (Jason 28, not real name)

Jason a young man who was referred by the NIHE following serious ASB against his neighbour. He had recently moved to the flat from a hostel and was not settling in his new community. At first Jason was reluctant to engage with his APAC worker or other services and rarely left the house. APAC worked with Jason for almost 2 years and during this time he started engaging with mental health services and

he attended a social prescribing programme. As his mental health improved, he better understood how the ASB was a symptom of other things in his life and how it impacted on others. At the point of closing there was no new reports of ASB. Jason was extremely appreciative of APAC and the support he received, stating 'It was the first time someone had stuck by him'

Sustaining tenancies for people from ethnic minority backgrounds (STEM)

This programme is delivered by Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO). This is a floating support service within NIACRO's APAC programme providing support and assistance to people whose tenancy may be at risk due to harassment because of their ethnicity. This service is currently only available in Belfast.

Housing support was provided for a young single mum and her daughter following ongoing racial harassment and subsequent physical assault. Work was done alongside NIHE for a transfer and the family received an offer of an alternative tenancy. There was some apprehension due to tensions within the new community and the experience of their last tenancy. The support worker at STEM worked intensively with our partners in East Belfast

Alternatives and the PSNI, offering practical support to help the family resettle. Resettlement included support with benefits, sourcing new schools, GP and a dentist, with help to source furniture from charities such as Glasspool, Children in Need and St.Vincent DePaul. The family settled in well and over time began to feel safe in their new house that they now call home.

Hourglass

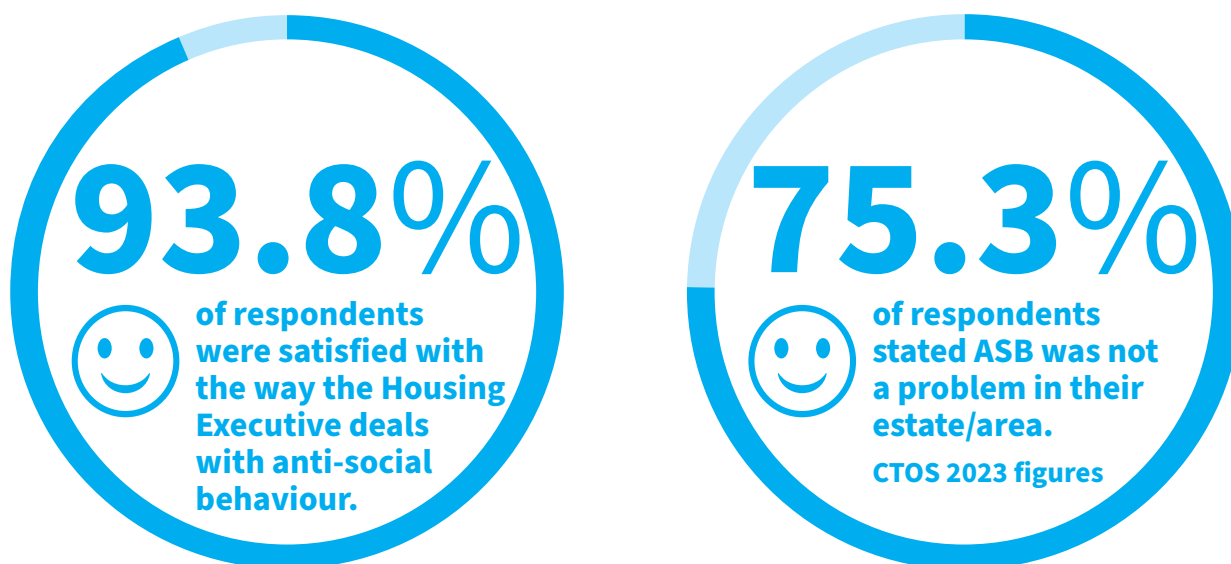
Hourglass (Safer Ageing), is Northern Ireland's only charity dedicated to calling time on the harm, abuse and exploitation of older people. They deal with the very worst elements of physical, sexual, financial/economic, psychological, domestic abuse and neglect. They currently stand alone in this field, offering life-changing support to victims, their families and wider communities.

Participating at events

The Community Safety Team will continue to use public events such as the Community Conference and PCSPs events amongst others to raise awareness of the Housing Executive role in dealing with community safety issues. These events offer the opportunity to highlight the consequences of engaging in such behaviour and promote pro-social behaviour.

Utilise and promote the use of the victim matrix

Supporting victims of ASB and taking a victim centred approach is of the utmost importance to the Housing Executive. We know the drivers of ASB are often complex, with adverse childhood experiences, mental health, drug and alcohol misuse needing much more attention. Many of today's perpetrators were previously victims themselves and so we ought to adopt a trauma informed approach and seek to offer help and support to individuals who need it before and or even after they engage in ASB. All our frontline officers have been trained to deal with individuals experiencing ASB issues. We do, however, recognise there are circumstances where specialist services are required and have introduced a victim matrix to ensure we better understand the impact of ASB on their lives. The matrix will assist our officers in identifying if a more specialist response is required. If so, we will make a referral to the most appropriate organisation, but only with the consent of the victim.



Monitoring satisfaction levels

The Community Safety Team monitors satisfaction levels in relation to the Housing Executive's response to complaints relating to ASB and uses this data to highlight any issues in service delivery. The analysis of this information allows us to assess the impact of our services and it also allows us to tailor resources to improve customer satisfaction in the delivery of anti-social behaviour services in areas where issues have been identified.

We will increase confidence in our response by continuing to engage directly with our tenants and take account of feedback.

Investing locally in our communities:

Good Morning Services

Over the last number of years and in conjunction with other organisations, the Housing Executive has contributed to the funding and delivery of Good Morning Services. The main aim of the Good Morning telephone service is to befriend older and vulnerable people with a morning telephone call. This call not only helps older people who are isolated to connect to people within their community but also provides reassurance and the ability to talk with someone about any fears. It offers signposting to relevant agencies who can help with various issues and acts as an alert service seven days per week - 365 days per year.

The overall aim of this service is to reduce:

- Feelings of loneliness and isolation.
- Feelings of vulnerability and connect clients to their local communities and services.
- Fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Good Morning Newtownabbey

This service is delivered by Monkstown Community Association to over 250 elderly and vulnerable residents in the borough by a team working on a rota basis. The Association regularly asks its users for their opinion on the service and if there is anything they could do to improve.

“This service is a lifeline for me”

“I look forward to my call, I don’t know how I managed without it”

“If it wasn’t for the service, I wouldn’t speak to another person for a long time”

Lisburn Safe

The project acknowledges the important role of community volunteers taking responsibility for community safety within their own areas. It’s team of skilled volunteers are supported by a multi-agency steering group. It aims to reduce levels of ASB, crime, drugs misuse, environmental damage and deterioration in public order. It covers both urban and rural estates. The project is managed and supervised at a local level in partnership with local Neighbourhood Policing Teams.



Social Return on Investment:

Social Return on Investment (SROI) attempts to capture the value generated by investments into social or community ventures. The approach uses the tools of cost-benefit analysis to assess the return of these investments. To do this we used an independent external organisation to help us determine the impact of the work being done within our communities and the value for money invested. A ratio is created that states how much social value (in £) is created for every £1.00 of investment.

Social return for our investment for Resurgam/ Lisburn Safe Scheme:



Figure 5. Lisburn Safe volunteer, funded by the community safety team.

YZone

The YZone's Youth-hut Facility aims to support marginalised and at-risk young people in the Edenderry area of Portadown. With funding from the Housing Executive's community safety budget they have developed a "Safe Space" where young people can contribute & participate in safe social gatherings. A central feature of the programme is the progressive involvement of the young people in taking responsibility for their actions.



Figure 6. YZone Volunteers using the community kitchen and pizza oven.

**Yzone Social Return
On our investment**



Young people are encouraged to develop many of the skills needed for employment and to experience the disciplines of work in a supportive environment. Through meaningful activities young people are helped to understand more about their community and how to positively contribute to it.

West Belfast Community Safety Initiative

With funding from the Housing Executive's community safety budget and Belfast City Council, Upper Springfield Development Trust have established a community safety team to support residents to report incidents of crime and ASB across West Belfast. Upper Springfield Development Trust host monthly inter-agency meetings where local Housing Executive Managers can get together with the PSNI, DOJ, Children's Service, and other organisations.



Figure 7. USDT employees and volunteers.

They do promotional work in various West Belfast venues, particularly where there are concerns about reporting ASB to the PSNI. Should the need arise to take legal action to address anti-social behaviour, they can provide a professional witness service.

**Social Return on our
investment for Upper Springfield
Development Trust**



Community Safety Warden Schemes

The Housing Executive contributes to funded warden schemes in a number of councils. The wardens provide a visible presence and act as a deterrent against low level crime in anti-social behaviour hotspots during evening and weekend hours across our estates. They have forged relationships with residents, community organisations and voluntary and statutory agencies to help tackle anti-social behaviour and improve community safety.

Figure 8. Wardens on patrol in local Hot spots.



The Respect Programme

For many years, the Housing Executive has been partnering with the Children's Safety Education Foundation to deliver the Respect Programme to at least two schools per year. The schools receive textbooks, e-books, worksheets and support from the Children's Safety Education Foundation. The programme teaches young people about the devastating consequences that crime and anti-social behaviour has on their health, safety, and well-being as well as the effect it has on their community. In turn this will help create a community where it is socially unacceptable amongst peer groups to take part in anti-social behaviour.



Figure 9. Children reading Respect booklet aimed at tackling ASB.

Antrim Grammar School said:

“We have been very grateful for the resources we received from the Housing Executive. The Respect Programme tackles many of the current issues our young people face and it really helps us to better prepare our pupils for life beyond school.”

St Benedict's College said:

“The Respect Programme covered a wide range of important, relevant and engaging topics. Our pupils enjoyed taking part in class discussions and exploring the activities that accompanied each theme.”

What can communities do?

Community safety is a shared responsibility, and that the active involvement and commitment of social housing tenants and local residents is essential for creating safer and more resilient neighbourhoods. To that end, we encourage and work to empower communities to take **a proactive role** in addressing issues that impact community safety within their local areas. Communities can do this by **reporting ASB** to us and other appropriate agencies. By coming forward to report ASB communities may prevent the same problem happening again and help make communities a safer place.

Evidence from victims and witnesses is important as it demonstrates the distress and annoyance caused and helps us to build and develop our cases and response to ASB. It is vital we work together to make a difference and create an environment where ASB is not tolerated but tackled.

Building a strong sense of community is essential for creating a safer environment for communities. This can be achieved through regular social events, tenant-led clubs and activities, and opportunities for residents to get to know one another. By **fostering connections** and a shared sense of identity, communities can develop a stronger collective voice and a greater willingness to look out for one another.

Community representatives and groups can also play a vital role in **advocating** for safety focused improvements to their areas and constituted groups can apply for funding for community safety initiatives.



Figure 10. Warden Scheme volunteers in Derry/Londonderry.

Engaging young people in the community safety initiatives is crucial for building a sense of ownership and responsibility among the next generation of residents. This can include mentorship programmes, afterschool activities and youth led projects that empower young people to become active contributors to the well-being of their neighbourhood. By investing in the development and empowerment of youth, communities can help break cycles of ASB and cultivate a culture of civic pride and engagement.

Emerging Issues

We need to re-focus our priorities in response to emerging or challenging trends in crime and ASB. Look at the impact of previous interventions, the emerging external national or local factors and reflect upon the learning gained through the delivery of existing priorities.



In recent years, Northern Ireland has witnessed a concerning rise in the prevalence of hate crime/ hate related incidents, posing a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing of our social housing tenants and communities. These bias motivated offences, targeting individuals or groups based on characteristics such as race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, have had a profoundly damaging impact on communities across Northern Ireland.

Racist Incidents

Attacks on the beliefs and identities of those who are perceived as being “different” because of their ethnic or cultural origins.

Sectarian/Religious Incidents

These could include any incident by one individual or a group against another on the basis of perceived religion or political opinion.

Homophobic Incidents

These can include incidents, committed on those perceived as lesbians, gay men, bi-sexual or transgender.

Disability Related Incidents

This can include incidents committed on those who have a physical disability or mental health issue.

Any hate harassment reported to the Housing Executive will be investigated in line with the ASB process and we will respond in a sensitive way. We will take appropriate actions responding to hate crime within our communities. The aim of reducing the number of hate crime incidents within our communities is a core aim of this strategy.

Feeling connected to neighbours and the wider community is key to feeling safe. Without this we see division between people and groups, whether it is through ASB targeted against individuals or in our public spaces because of hate crime driven by intolerance and misunderstandings between different groups in society.

Division in Northern Ireland was once related to religious beliefs, mainly of two communities. Now Northern Ireland is evolving to recognise diversity of all kinds embracing a much more multicultural society. It is important to build our understanding of hate crime through improved data.

As our communities become more diverse, it is imperative that we get this right. We increase community confidence in reporting and our services and our workforces are equipped to deal with differing experiences.

Our objectives to tackle hate in our communities

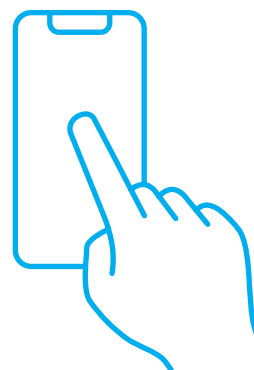
- Provide support to victims of ASB and hate crime taking a victim and harm centred approach.
- Empower communities and professionals to report ASB and hate crime.
- Use all appropriate tools to prevent perpetrators of ASB and hate crime from causing further harm.
- To better understand the impact of ASB and Hate crime on minoritised communities.
- Facilitate a joined up multi agency approach to reduce ASB and hate crime for individuals and communities.
- Create opportunities to bring people together to increase community cohesion.
- Increase reporting and access to support for victims of hate crime.
- Promote our Hate Harassment Toolkit further.

As referenced previously a Review of Hate Crime Legislation is ongoing, and being overseen by Judge Desmond Marrinan (2020), DOJ are currently implementing a number of recommendations aimed at improving the criminal justice system response to addressing hate crime and providing redress to victims. We will respond to recommendations and take action where appropriate, to protect our tenants and communities.

The 'Hate Harassment Toolkit' was developed by the Housing Executive in partnership with other organisations to provide customers, staff, community groups, professionals and the general public with a wide range of information and advice about hate harassment.

[Hate Harassment Toolkit \(nihe.gov.uk\)](https://nihe.gov.uk/hate-harassment-toolkit)

HELPinHand App launched February 2024 has been created to help users report hate incidents to the PSNI. It utilises avatar technology and easy-to-read translated materials in 5 chosen languages. The App provides critical information around reporting hate crime and incidents, signposting for support, all in a person-centred compassionate format for the victims of racist hate crime/incidents in Northern Ireland. The app not only serves as a quick info guide for victims but also as an educational resource for ethnic minority communities at large.



From the pre-consultation process staff and a number of stakeholders have raised concerns in the rise in substance abuse within their communities. Unfortunately, a large volume of crime and anti-social behaviour is linked to substance abuse, as individuals are more likely to engage in risky behaviours. It is important for us to recognise that drug and alcohol misuse can be the symptoms of underlying societal problems.



Addressing substance abuse and its relationship with ASB requires a holistic approach that involves support from healthcare professionals, community organisations and the wider society. By understanding the impact of substance abuse and offering assistance and support to those affected, we can promote healthier, safer, and more socially responsible behaviour, hence enhancing the overall wellbeing, safety, and harmony within our communities.

There are local dedicated drug and alcohol support services, providing help to people with drug and alcohol problems [Northern Ireland Drugs & Alcohol Services Directory | Northern Ireland Drug and Alcohol Services \(drugsandalcoholni.info\)](https://www.northernirelanddrugsandalcoholni.info/)

The use of our Victim Matrix (previously referenced) will assist staff in identifying if specialist support is required for the victims of ASB. If identified we will make referrals to the most appropriate organisation, with the consent of the victim.

At the heart of this strategy lies a fundamental belief that every individual deserves to feel safe, secured, respected, and able to fully participate in the life of the community without fear of harm or ASB. The NIHE is dedicated to working hand in hand with tenants, community groups, statutory agencies and other key stakeholders to identify and address the root causes of emerging issues impacting community safety. By taking a holistic, evidence-based approach, this strategy aims to create lasting positive change and to build a future where all NIHE communities can thrive.

Our action plan sets out the actions that we will deliver throughout the life of the strategy. We will review regularly and update annually, whilst reporting on the progress being made. We will take a flexible approach, responding to new challenges and opportunities as they arise, including working with partner agencies and looking to develop new working relationships to help us deliver our key aims. This strategy will continually evolve and taking cognisance of other areas of the business, other jurisdictions and the changing internal and external environment, such as anticipated changes in legislation and government policy. It will be necessary to react to any changes, developing our response, ensuring best practice, and placing the customer at the heart of what we do.

Strategic Aim: Build Community Confidence

Outcome 1: Residents and communities will report issues to us, confident that we will respond to ASB in their areas.

Outcome 2: Residents and Communities are engaged and informed about community safety issues and the action we have taken in their area.

What will we do	How will we do it	Delivery Mechanisms	How will we measure
Helps support communities to address under-reporting of ASB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with individuals and communities to actively involve them in identifying ASB issues. • Increase awareness and improve understanding of ASB represents in our communities. • Ensure we make it easy for victims to report to us through various methods. • Work to improve our digital platform and progress Digital Tenancy Services. • Continue to work with partners at a strategic and operational level to build relationships and confidence within our communities. 	Local Office Community Safety Team (CST) Patch Manager/ Local Office Community Safety Team/ IT/Customer Excellence team	Annual action plan review Numbers of awareness sessions delivered. Customer satisfaction surveys
Ensure our communities are confident that we have resources in place to respond and deal with ASB issues and encourage communities to come forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have in place transparent and robust organisational policy and procedures to deal with ASB and ensure they are reflective of any changes in Government policy or new amended legislation. • Ensure staff are trained in all aspects of managing ASB in sourcing specialist advice and assistance in dealing with complex cases of ASB. 	Community Safety Team Functional Training Team/ Community Safety Team	Annual action plan review Number of Staff trained. ASB clinics delivered and cases recorded for advice
Support victims and witnesses of ASB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use victim matrix to identify vulnerabilities and provide support where appropriate, including referrals to specialist services where required. 	Patch Manager	Analyse data on referred mediation service

What will we do	How will we do it	Delivery Mechanisms	How will we measure
Utilise intervention as a means of resolving neighbour / neighbour disputes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referrals to mediation are undertaken. 	Patch Manager	Analyse data on cases referred to mediation service
Provide support for perpetrators to address underlying issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signposting to specialist support agencies. 	Patch Manager	Analyse cases referred to floating support
Tackle Fear of Crime issues for those elderly groups within our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support projects providing services tackling fear of crime and social isolation and promoting intergenerational engagement and activities. 	Local Office / Community Safety Team	Analyse supported Projects
Monitor and Review Customer Satisfaction with service and implement improvements where identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to carry out Customer Surveys on each closed case (where there has been an identified complainant) to establish service issues. 	Customer Service Unit	Analyse customer satisfaction surveys completed
Publicise to a wider audience the work being undertaken within communities to tackle ASB and raise awareness of Housing Executive services to our communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Communications Plan to include a wide range of communications e.g. website, events, Housing Community Network (HCN), social media. 	Community Safety Team/ Communications Team	Communications Plan in place

What will we do	How will we do it	Delivery Mechanisms	How will we measure
Have in place online reporting mechanisms for tenants and customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with our partners in the Customer Excellence and IT teams to develop online reporting facility as well as a reporting mechanism on the tenants portal.	Community Safety Team/ Communication Department/ MRI/ IT	Review, test environment. Analyse the data captured

Strategic Aim: Ensuring local solutions to Local issues

Outcome: Interventions / Resolutions are designed to respond to the needs of communities

What will we do	How will we do it	Delivery Mechanisms	How will we measure
Provide interventions and resolutions to respond to the needs of communities at a local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participate in Policing and Community Safety Partnership meetings (PCSPs) across NI. Undertake an internal review with Area Managers about the workings of PCSPs and monitor bi-annually Review outcome of CJNI PCSP Report (Working Together for Safer Communities) and implement appropriate recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Recommendation 5 - to increase the recognition of the role of PCSPs and delivery of shared positive outcomes in their corporate planning Operational Recommendation 2 - to have direction from NIHE and internal lines of reporting within NIHE to report on achievement through PCSP Review CJINI report (An Inspection of Community Safety and Local Policing Arrangements in Northern Ireland.) Strategic Recommendation 1 - Within one year of report publication, the Department of Justice should develop and publicly consult on a new community safety vision, strategy and action plan for delivery. This should include an up-to-date, evidence-based analysis of current community safety issues and clear, timebound objectives for delivery. 	Area Office Community Safety Team / Local Office Community Safety Team / Local Office Local Office Community Safety Team Community Safety Team	Monitor with Area Managers Outcome of Review Annual Action Plan Review Monitor with Area Office Outcome of Review
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively tackle ASB within Housing Executive estates across NI through local ASB Forums Undertake a review to gather feedback from operational staff to establish the effectiveness of Anti-Social Behaviour forums and produce analysis on feedback 	Patch Manager/ Community Safety Team	Analyse records on ASB system detailing type of nuisance by patch

What will we do	How will we do it	Delivery Mechanisms	How will we measure
Gain intelligence on types of Anti-Social behaviour and hot-spots within our neighbourhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record all individual complaints of ASB by type and location. Laise with other agencies about intelligence around potential hot spots and increase in hate related incidents. 	Patch Manager/ Community Safety Team Housing Managment System/ASB system & Dashboards	Analyse records on ASB system detailing type of nuisance by patch. Use of Geographical Information System (GIS)
Use Community based organisations to resolve neighbour/ neighbour disagreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of community restorative justice organisations where available to deliver resolutions or interventions to ASB within local community settings. 	Patch Manager/ Community Safety Team	Analyse ASB complaints mediation or restorative practice referrals
Empower communities and promote tenant responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to promote the use of the Good Neighbour agreements at sign up. 	Patch Manager	No measurement required part of sign up
Work with communities to tackle emerging issues and trends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively engage with our communities to understand trends, increase reporting and develop solutions. 	Community Safety Team	Annual action plan review
Ensure our Officers actively encourage and act upon customer feedback at a local level to improve customer service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cases failing to meet customer satisfaction rate of 80% or above to be contacted. 	Community Safety Team	Analyse Cases requiring contact
Consider supporting organisations to deliver projects and initiatives to deal with issues relating to Community Safety based on the needs of the local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Safety Funding support. 	Area Manager/ Community Safety Team	Assessing the number of community safety applications submitted and numbers approved within local areas

Strategic Aim: Working Together


Outcome: Communities are assured we are working together with partners across statutory, voluntary and community Sectors to achieve best outcomes for tenants and communities.

What will we do	How will we do it	Delivery Mechanisms	How will we measure
We will work with partner organisations and communities to tackle anti-social behaviour and hate crime and create safer places to live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work in partnership with our procured independent mediation provider, TIDES, to provide a specialist Mediation Service to our customers to prevent disputes between neighbours and communities escalating. We will work collectively and take a multi-agency approach to reduce vulnerability and improve the wellbeing of individuals in Support Hubs where they exist. Where tenancies are at risk of failing because of unacceptable behaviour we will work with the tenant to try to sustain their tenancy where possible and offer to sign post our tenants to relevant support agencies. Represent the Housing Executive on a range of relevant multi-agency strategic, steering and working groups to respond to issues relating to community safety in all its aspects. We will continue to deliver the multi-agency Hate Action Practical Action Scheme (HIPA), on behalf of the Department of Justice, to ensure repairs are undertaken to properties to assist victims to remain in their homes in safety. Work collectively to review and update the Information Sharing Protocol. 	<p>Local Office</p> <p>Local Area Managers</p> <p>Local Offices /Community Safety team</p> <p>Local Office and Community Safety Team</p> <p>Community Safety Team</p>	<p>Analyse cases referred to mediation or restorative practice referrals</p> <p>Monitor with Area Office</p> <p>Analyse Floating Support referrals data</p> <p>Number of cases referred for HIPA support</p> <p>Updating and reviewing Protocol</p> <p>Analyse Floating support referrals</p>

What will we do	How will we do it	Delivery Mechanisms	How will we measure
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where tenancies are at risk of failing because of ASB we will work with tenant to try to sustain their tenancy and sign post to support agencies. We will explore potential for staff training with voluntary sector eg Womens Aid. 	Local office/ Community Safety Team	Annual action plan review
Identify and categorise incidents where they are perceived as a hate crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASB system configured to record type of Hate Crime. 	Local Office	Analyse cases recorded in hate crime categories
Develop initiatives to support and sustain tenancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to develop innovative interventions to support customers to remain in their own homes. 	Community Safety Team	Outline new initiatives
Work with a range of partners and communities to deliver focused services where hate crime issues have been identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of Community Safety Funding. Review Hate Harassment Toolkit. Work with the Housing Community Network to challenge housing myths in relation to migrants and increase awareness of ASB and hate crime. 	Community Safety Team/ Local Office Community Safety Team	Monitor with Area Office Action Plan Review
Explore new approaches for tackling Anti-Social Behaviour using intelligence led models based on problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with organisations to explore new practices for dealing with Anti-Social behaviour using different models. 	Community Safety Team/ IT	Outline new initiatives

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