

# Supporting good neighbourhoods - policy and guidance

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# 1 Purpose and Scope

## Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out how we will manage or give advice on matters that may cause disagreement and frustration between neighbours, but which would not usually be at a level to be considered under our anti-social behaviour (ASB) policy.

**Note:** The legal definition of ASB is broad enough to potentially include some instances which may be a nuisance or have disturbed others, but which it may not be appropriate or reasonable for us to manage the same way as we do other types of ASB.

- 1.2 This policy is designed to work alongside our ASB policy, providing information about what we can do or what we can advise, in situations that fall outside of the ASB policy. If we make the decision that something reported to us will not be investigated as ASB, we will clearly explain this and provide any suitable advice and guidance. Likewise, if in the course of an investigation it becomes clear that it is appropriate for us to manage a matter under the ASB policy, rather than this policy, we will move to that approach.
- 1.3 We recognise that lifestyle clashes and disagreements between neighbours can still cause upset or frustration, and create tension. We also recognise that some people may be more affected by these issues than others and may need more support or guidance.
- 1.4 This policy and guidance contains advice and practical steps that we may use to help resolve problems between neighbours quickly and effectively. It is the goal of this policy to help deescalate disagreements, and to maintain or reestablish peaceful and tolerant relationships between those living in our neighbourhoods and communities. We will do this by raising awareness, understanding, and identifying opportunities for compromise.

## Scope

- 1.5 This policy applies to all types of tenure and neighbourhoods managed by L&Q.
- 1.6 The ASB policy sets out definitions for what comes under that policy. This policy and approach will be used for matters of disagreement or nuisance that do not meet the level for the ASB policy.
- 1.7 The following are some examples of the type of things we may consider under this policy. While we understand they can feel like a nuisance, we won't usually manage them as ASB cases. Our approach isn't limited to these areas, but they are typical of what will come under this approach:

- Noise from everyday living, such as children playing, babies crying, washing machines, TV. This type of noise may occur and disturb at times because of differing work/shift patterns, but we do expect residents to respect their neighbours and restrict noisy activity altogether (e.g. DIY work) where it is most likely to disturb sleep (10pm to 7am). And at these times to try to lower other noise levels where it is in your capacity to do so (e.g. TV, music)
- Lifestyle differences, e.g., smells from cooking, minor car repairs, garden disputes, putting rubbish out on the wrong day, parking in the wrong bay.

## 2 Our approach

### 2.1 We will:

- Assess, acknowledge and respond to your reports
- Listen and ask questions to check that we understand the issues
- Give you advice, appropriate support and take appropriate action
- Be honest about the actions we can take, and what other action or support we recommend
- Refer to people involved as a 'reporting party' for the party who contacts us first, and 'the other party'. We will not use terms such as perpetrator or victim in these types of situations.
- Try to recognise and consider the support needs and circumstances of the parties involved. (See 4.6) We recognise that personal circumstances can sometimes affect someone's perception, tolerance, or ability to cope with certain situations. If we recognise that this could be a contributory factor, we will use this to try to identify suitable support, assistance, or an alternative solution.

### 2.2 We ask that you:

- Consider the options and advice we suggest
- Show consideration to others, especially at night-time, or when you know they are unwell
- Respect that other people's views and lifestyles may be different to your own
- Are prepared to make some small adjustments to contribute to peaceful relationships with your neighbours
- Look out for other neighbours who may be having issues and let us know if you are concerned

2.3 This approach is based on building understanding and relationships between parties. It may therefore be difficult for us to be able to fully assist where the person making the report wants to remain anonymous. We will advise the reporting party on options and next steps where this is the case.

#### 2.4 **Partnership working and information sharing**

We may not always be able to assist with a situation by ourselves. As with our ASB policy, there may be times when we will involve another partner organisation to help resolve a problem such as a Local Authority. We will always share, store and dispose of information in line with legislation and local information sharing arrangements.

There will be times where we cannot guarantee confidentiality, even where someone requests it. This could include situations where we identify a safeguarding concern or where a criminal offence has taken place or been alleged.

## 3 **Triage**

3.1 We use an approach where we ‘triage’ every report of ASB or upsetting behaviour received. This helps us to decide whether we will deal with the matter under this policy or our ASB policy. We will consider the following factors:

- What is the intention of the behaviour? Is the behaviour purposefully or knowingly disruptive?
- What is causing the behaviour that the reporting party is telling us about? Is it unreasonable activity?
- How often is it occurring? How long does it last and what times of day is it happening?
- What impact is it having on the reporting party?

3.2 While we will always consider the impact on the reporting party, this factor alone does not mean that we will always consider the other party to be at fault. For example, if noise is transferring between properties, for example due to poor sound installation and thin walls, this could be having a high impact on the reporting party. However, if the other party is undertaking only reasonable activities, it would not be fair for us to consider them at fault, even though the impact may be high.

3.3 In this type of situation, we are likely to focus on whether we can make improvements to reduce the sound transfer, and how we can support the reporting party – particularly if they have circumstances or health issues that mean the impact is higher than it would be for someone else. We will also look at how we can work with the other party to see what options might be available to reduce the noise.

3.4 Where we do not find a matter to be ASB, we will make it clear to the reporting party, as soon as possible, why we have reached this decision. We recognise that things

can change over time, and that something we initially assess as a neighbourhood management issue may later evolve into something we'd assess as ASB. One factor we may consider is how all parties have responded to any previous interventions and advice. We will continue to reassess our decision in a case each time a report is received, making sure we do not miss an opportunity to intervene.

## 4 Possible actions

- 4.1 Where the behaviour is not classed as ASB, and therefore unlikely to be a tenancy breach, we won't look to use legal tools in our response.
- 4.2 If you are the reporting party, we will usually ask you if you have/can speak to the other party to raise your concern. We ask this as we often find the other party is not aware that their activity has caused a problem. If possible, we recommend you try to discuss the matter and reach agreement amicably without us. Once a landlord is called in the situation can feel like its escalating, and this can cause relationships to break down further.
- 4.3 We will assess whether this seems like an appropriate approach for you (based on the triage guidance above). If we encourage the reporting party to approach another party, we will always give practical advice on how best to do this.
- 4.4 Other responses and actions we may consider are:
  - Carrying out internal mediation
  - Referring both parties to an external mediation company
  - Carrying out a property inspection to identify possible property improvements that may help to address issues (Either for L&Q to make or for a resident to rectify if an alteration has been made without our permission, such as laying laminate without adequate insulation).
  - Asking parties to make reasonable changes to activities as part of being a good neighbour. For example, recommending the use of headphones if playing music late at night.
- 4.5 This is not an exhaustive list, not all solutions will be appropriate to all cases, and there isn't a particular order we will follow each time. The focus will always be on a practical solution for that situation. When we have exhausted the options that we feel are appropriate to each situation, we will let everyone involved know if we do not feel there is anything more we can do at that point, especially if there doesn't seem to be a clear legal tool we can then use.

## Support

- 4.6 At all stages, we will aim to consider the support needs and/or vulnerabilities of the parties involved. We recognise that personal circumstances or a person's health may affect how they see a situation or the impact it has on them. When we recognise that this could be a factor, we will work to identify ways we can offer assistance, which could include a referral to another organisation who can support or advise. (Further information can be found in our policy 'Supporting residents with additional needs').
- 4.7 Occasionally, we need more information about the health or well-being of one of the parties involved, to help us assess how we can most effectively help. If we do this, or want to make a referral, we will need to get consent, and this would need to be provided to help us to progress the matter.

## Reviewing the decision

- 4.8 We will make every effort to take appropriate and effective action, but recognise that in some circumstances our action may not always meet each parties expectations.
- 4.9 If you are unhappy with how we have handled your case, either the way we have categorised it or the actions being taken, you may wish to make a complaint through our complaints policy.
- 4.10 Residents also have a statutory right, under the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014, to request an ASB Case Review (Community Trigger) from the Local Authority within which they live. Each Local Authority will have their own threshold for acceptance (details can be found on each Local Authority's website, or by telephoning them directly). Matters dealt with under this policy are generally unlikely to meet the level required for a Local Authority's Community Trigger threshold - "*behaviour causing or being likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress*". We will of course participate fully in such case reviews.
- 4.11 Other L&Q policies that may relate to this policy include:
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
  - Supporting Residents with additional needs
  - Complaints policy

## 5 Monitoring and Controls

- 5.1 We will monitor this policy alongside our ASB policy. To do this we monitor:
- Timeliness of our responses
  - Complete and accurate record keeping
  - Checks on the ways we have communicated with you about your case

- 5.2 For more information about legislation, regulation, and good practice that we considered when developing this policy and implementing it, please see our ASB policy. This includes consideration of the Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community standard, and the Housing Ombudsman's spotlight report on noise.

## **6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

- 6.1 We conducted an equality impact assessment when reviewing this policy and the ASB policy. As part of this we checked for any impact on protected characteristics. We have explained how our approach is designed to take into account individual circumstances and support needs. We have also checked our language and tone, to make sure we clearly explain what we will do, and to manage expectations about what we won't do.

## **7 Communication**

- 7.1 This policy will be published alongside our ASB policy on the L&Q website.
- 7.2 We will publish this policy internally for colleagues to access, alongside the ASB policy and associated procedures, processes and guidance. We have a programme of staff training for staff who are required to respond to reports of ASB and nuisance, to enable us to implement this policy consistently.
- 7.3 Complaints regarding the application of this policy, will be managed in line with our complaints policy.

## 8 Policy controls sheet

**Date of approval:** 10/06/25

**Approved by:** Director of Housing Management & LQ Living

**Effective date:** 11/06/25

**Next Review date:** 10/06/28

**Policy owned by:** Director of Housing Management

**Associated documents:** ASB policy, Supporting residents with additional needs policy

Main change	Key points
No change in policy position.  Revised alongside ASB policy to ensure both policies are designed to complement each other.	Sets out clearly what we will do and what we expect of involved parties.  Title reflects that this is partially guidance and that in some instances we recommend but do not enforce certain action.
Reviewed by: L&Q Policy Team	