

Your Neighbourhood





ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

We want all tenants to be able to enjoy their homes and live peacefully without fear of anti-social behaviour. It is important to be a 'good neighbour' and to show consideration to others. The Tenancy Agreement prohibits 'anything which is likely to cause nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to neighbours'. Ark Housing is committed to tackling anti-social behaviour and nuisance to create safer and better communities for all our tenants. Our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy is available on our website, www.arkhousing.co.uk.

An individual may be deemed to have acted in an anti-social manner if they have:

- ★ Been convicted of using the dwelling-house or allowing it to be used for illegal or immoral purposes;
 - ★ Been convicted of an arrestable offence committed in, or in the locality of the dwelling house;
 - ★ Directly or indirectly affected the management functions or matters relating to those functions.
- Anti-social behaviour might include amongst other things:
- ★ Violence or threat of violence;
 - ★ Hate behaviours that target members of identified groups because of their perceived difference (e.g. religion, political opinion, race, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability and dependant status);
 - ★ Noise nuisance (rowdy parties, loud music/TVs, dog barking, etc.);
 - ★ Arguing and door slamming;
 - ★ Environmental quality issues (e.g. litter, dog fouling, graffiti, fly tipping, nuisance vehicles);
 - ★ Offensive drunkenness;
 - ★ Using housing accommodation for illegal/immoral activity or other unlawful purposes, e.g. selling drugs/drug abuse;
 - ★ Intimidation or harassment.



Legal action may be taken against tenants who are found guilty of anti-social behaviour or nuisance as this may be deemed as a breach of the Conditions of Tenancy.

What Ark Housing Will Do?

Ark Housing acknowledges that every individual is entitled to live in peace within their neighbourhood. We will seek to address the problem of anti-social behaviour and in doing so provide a quality and supportive housing service.

We will:

- ★ Quickly and formally acknowledge reports of anti-social behaviour;
- ★ Seek to investigate reported instances of anti-social behaviour in a timely manner;
- ★ Provide advice and support to tenants;
- ★ Identify, interview all interested parties and take appropriate and affirmative action within our remit as Registered Social Landlord;

- ★ Liaise with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) as appropriate;
- ★ Establish inter agency working where appropriate;
- ★ Use legal action when all efforts at conciliation have failed. Action can include possession, injunction and applying to relevant authorities for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order;
- ★ Endeavour to act on behalf of Ark Housing tenants who are the victims of anti-social behaviour;
- ★ Seek to respond to instances of anti-social behaviour in Ark Housing schemes and properties whether the complainant is a tenant, private tenant or an owner occupier;
- ★ In the context of re-housing, take full account of any anti-social behaviour carried out by the housing applicant or their household.

Each case is regularly reviewed to determine when further action is required, and regular updates are provided to those involved.

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Tenant Responsibilities

The tenant is responsible for the behaviour of every person (including children) living in or visiting their home, including responsibility for their behaviour in the home or on surrounding land, in communal areas (stairs, lifts, landing, entrance halls, paving, shared gardens, parking areas) and in the locality of the dwelling house.

Whether the tenancy is secure or introductory, a breach of any of the general conditions of tenancy or statutory obligations may result in the Association either issuing possession, injunction proceedings or applying to the relevant authorities for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order.

Furthermore, anyone who has been involved in anti-social behaviour may find they are ineligible for housing and homelessness assistance in the future.

Tenants who are experiencing any element of anti-social behaviour should report these incidents to their Housing and Customer Services Officer when they occur. If the issue is ongoing, tenants will be asked to complete an incident diary.

If the incidents are of a criminal nature, then tenants should contact the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

Any incidents relating to noise, dogs barking or any other environmental health issue should be reported to the local council.



TENANT PARTICIPATION

Ark Housing Association strongly believes that one of the most effective ways of improving services is to provide more opportunities for tenants to become actively involved.

By being involved with the Association, you will have the opportunity to:

- ★ Influence and shape the services that the organisation provides;
- ★ Make positive and real changes to your home and the area in which you live;
- ★ Ensure that the services provided are people centred and meet needs;
- ★ Gain new skills;
- ★ Receive training;
- ★ Have a better understanding of how Ark Housing operates.

Participation can range from simply providing regular feedback to our satisfaction surveys or becoming more involved through Residents Groups, to engaging with the Association through a Tenants' Forum.

We recognise that it is important that there are a variety of ways in which you can be involved in shaping our services. Therefore, we have developed the following 'menu' of participation levels from which tenants can choose.

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TENANT PARTICIPATION

Level	What Is Involved?	How much of my time will be required?
1. Information and Communication	<p>You can sign up to a 'Register of Tenants' where you can receive regular information regarding our services.</p> <p>You will be asked to participate in surveys via email, phone or face-to-face and provide feedback on key areas of the organisation, e.g. service charges, policies and procedures.</p>	<p>As and when required - you can choose to opt out at any time.</p> <p>The commitment can be as little as 15-20 minutes.</p>
2. Estate Walkabouts	<p>We will walk around your scheme to identify areas of concern and work with you to engage with other agencies to identify issues</p>	<p>This will take place annually and usually takes about 2 hours.</p>
3. Resident Champion	<p>If you do not have enough people to set up a Resident's Group, you can, with the support and approval of tenants in your scheme, become the Resident Representative.</p> <p>You will act on behalf of your scheme and meet with Ark Housing staff to provide updates and feedback on housing related matters that have been raised in your scheme.</p>	<p>Meet with Ark Housing staff once a month for approximately 1.5 hours.</p>
4. Group Structure	<p>You can represent your scheme on a wide range of issues by being part of an elected resident's group for your area.</p> <p>We will assist you in the development and set up of a resident's group and provide you with all relevant training and support required.</p>	<p>Residents groups usually meet once a month and meetings usually last for 2-2.5 hours.</p>



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5. Formal Based Tenant Group	<p>You can participate at a more formal level with Ark Housing, together with other tenants of the Association, through a Tenants Forum</p> <p>You will get the opportunity to scrutinise our services and activities and actively review or policies and procedures to ensure that they benefit all tenants</p> <p>We will provide you with the relevant training and support to ensure that you can fully participate in this Forum</p>	<p>The Tenants Forum will meet on a quarterly basis and will last for approximately 2-2.5 hours.</p> <p>The venue for these meetings will be agreed by Forum members.</p>
6. Governance Structure	<p>You will have the opportunity to apply to serve on the Board of Ark Housing</p> <p>At this level, you will have the opportunity to influence the organisations strategic direction and how the organisation is governed</p> <p>We will provide you with the relevant induction, training and support so that you can participate fully.</p>	<p>The Board meets on a quarterly basis and meetings last for approximately 3 hours.</p>

If you would be like to get involved with Ark Housing, please contact your Housing and Customers Services Officer.