

Harassment and Hate Crime

**Together we can
take a stand**



Cobalt
Housing



Harassment and Hate Crime

Cobalt believes that it is a fundamental right of all people to be free from harassment and hate crime.

People from different backgrounds and lifestyles should live together within a culture of understanding, cooperation, inclusion and respect.

There are various forms of harassment and hate crime which are perpetrated against individuals and groups of people who may be vulnerable to such actions due to a variety of reasons. It is up to organisations like Cobalt to play its part in helping to tackle such issues.

COBALT'S APPROACH TO DEALING WITH HARASSMENT AND HATE CRIME

Harassment and hate crime will not be tolerated and Cobalt investigates any complaints of such behaviour that has taken place in the area whether victims and alleged perpetrators are Cobalt tenants or not.

The Cobalt tenancy agreement states that tenants and anyone living with or visiting the tenant must not . . . **'harass any person on the grounds of sex, age...caring responsibilities, appearance, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or any other reason'**

WHAT IS HARASSMENT AND HATE CRIME?

Acts of harassment and hate crime occur when the perpetrator's conduct is motivated, or perceived to be motivated, by the victim or any other person, in whole or in part, by hatred, bias or prejudice based on actual or perceived differences of another individual or group.

A victim of harassment and hate crime does not have to be either a member of a minority community or someone who is for some reason considered vulnerable.

Other situations are also applicable, for example:

- A heterosexual person leaving a gay venue is verbally abused by passers by
- A mother of a disabled child is verbally abused by their neighbour each time she leaves her house because of her child's disability.

Different forms of harassment and hate crime

Cobalt will follow a victim centred approach in dealing with reports of harassment and hate crime.

The following can be reasons for harassment and hate crime to take place:

Sexual orientation - Gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual

Gender - Female, male, transsexual

Disability - Physical, mental health, learning difficulties

Religion - Religion, faith, incl. atheist

Age - Older person or young person

Lifestyle or Appearance - For example, punk, transvestite, self care, life skills

This list is not exhaustive, but they are the main forms of harassment and hate crime as identified by Cobalt. **Racial Harassment and Domestic Violence are dealt with separately (please see Racial Harassment and Domestic Violence leaflets).**

EXAMPLES OF HARASSMENT AND HATE CRIME

Harassment and Hate Crime often takes place without witnesses being present. The absence of witnesses will not determine whether or not the matter is investigated or taken seriously.

The following acts are examples of harassment or hate crime:

- Physical assault (spitting, unprovoked physical assault including common assault, actual bodily harm and grievous bodily harm)
- Damage to property (including breaking windows, doors, fences and vandalising other fixtures, or belongings such as cars)
- Graffiti (including writing slogans/graffiti of a racial nature within, on, or near the victim's home)
- Arson or attempted arson (for example when rags, paper, rubbish or any other material has been set alight and pushed through the victim's letterbox)
- Verbal or written abuse (such as threatening, or insulting racist behaviour, including telephone calls and letters or notes)
- Other offensive behaviour (such as the dumping of excreta, rubbish etc in the victim's home).

This list is not exhaustive, but gives examples only.

REPORTING HARASSMENT AND HATE CRIME

A complaint could come via:

- Face to face contact with the victim
- A telephone call from the victim
- Letter
- E-mail
- Report from a third party

Following a new report of harassment or hate crime where there is violence or the threat of violence, the victim/complainant will be interviewed either immediately (if possible) or contacted within one working day by a member of Cobalt's ASB team.

If the report does not consist of violence, the ASB team will aim to contact the victim/complainant within two working days.

Any member of Cobalt staff can make a referral to the ASB team if you are suffering from harassment or hate crime.

Cobalt's approach will be victim centred. While all reports of harassment and hate crime have to be investigated as thoroughly as possible, every complaint will be dealt with seriously and as sensitively as possible.

A dedicated officer will be assigned to deal with your case.

Support measures exist for victims ranging from 'target hardening measures' (such as lighting, spy-holes, or fire proof letter boxes) to referrals for practical and emotional support (such as the Independent Hate Crime Advocacy Service). Please also see the list of contacts on page 10 of this leaflet and the Cobalt leaflet relating to 'Supporting victims and witnesses'.

DEALING WITH CASES

Cobalt has developed procedures for dealing with claims of harassment or hate crime, covering issues such as:

- Receiving complaints
- Commencing investigations
- The first interview
- Supporting the victim
- Preparing a case file
- Progressing the case
- Interviewing witnesses and alleged perpetrators
- Reviewing a case
- Possible case outcomes
- Taking action against perpetrators
- Confidentiality
- The affect on children

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Cobalt is committed to dealing with harassment and hate crime in partnership with the Police, other agencies, other social landlords, and working closely with them on the collection of intelligence and evidence, and in pursuing prosecutions for racially aggravated offences.

Cobalt will work with any body or agency to collate details of cases of harassment and hate crime and will ensure that our response is appropriate on both a case by case and strategic basis. We will actively participate in citywide initiatives such as the Hate Crime Joint Agency Group.

Cobalt will also work with the above and any other organisations such as local Tenant and Resident Associations, the Independent Hate Crime Advocacy Service and interpreter provision agencies in order to provide the best possible support to victims and witnesses.

REVIEWING A CASE - Deciding what to do

The possible outcomes include:

- Monitor the case and review after a specified time period
- Assist in providing support and measures to allow the victim to stay in their home
- Assist in the re-housing of the victim in certain circumstances
- Take action against perpetrators
- Close the case.

TAKING ACTION AGAINST PERPETRATORS OF HARASSMENT AND HATE CRIME

Action that can be taken against any perpetrator includes:

1. Non Legal Remedies

Non legal remedies against anyone living in the area regardless if they are a Cobalt tenant, living in a Cobalt property or living in a non Cobalt property:

- Verbal and written warnings
- Acceptable Behaviour Contract to stop certain types of behaviour.

2. Tenancy Action

Tenancy proceedings against a Cobalt tenant due to the behaviour of anyone living at or visiting the property:

- Starter tenancy proceedings for a serious or continuous breach of tenancy. These tenants have less security than those with Assured or Protected Assured tenancies
- Demotion proceedings when the court is asked to downgrade an assured or protected assured tenancy for a 12 month period. This gives the tenant less security (similar to a starter tenant) which means we can act quickly if there are further breaches within the demotion period
- Possession proceedings against assured or protected assured Cobalt tenants to end a tenancy and take back a property due to a serious or continuous breach of tenancy when other remedies have been tried and failed.

3. Legal remedies against anyone in the area including those living in non Cobalt properties:

- Injunctions are available against anyone aged 18 or over and can prevent a person acting in a particular manner, and being near a person and property. Some injunctions can come with the power of arrest if breached
- An Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) is available against anyone aged 10 or over and is put in place to prevent a person acting in particular ways. They can also be used to prevent a person from entering a defined area such as a particular street or estate
- Criminal proceedings instigated by the police due to the nature of the harassment/abuse. In these circumstances Cobalt would provide assistance and information as required.

Remember that committing acts of harassment or hate crime is a criminal offence that can result in a prison sentence of up to 7 years.

The action taken will depend on the severity of the harassment/abuse, the level of evidence, and the wishes of the victim.

OUR SERVICE STANDARDS

We will:

Monitor, report, and where necessary publicise the activities of the anti-social behaviour team with regards to harassment and hate crime.

REPORTS OF HARASSMENT AND HATE CRIME

We will:

1. Contact you within 1 or 2 working days of your initial report. This will be dependent on the seriousness of your report
2. Advise you of the steps that will be taken to help address the matter you have reported. This will be referred to as the action plan and you will receive a signed written copy
3. Contact you on a regular basis (as agreed in the action plan) updating you of the progress of the case
4. Notify you in writing when your case has been closed, advising you of the outcome or explaining the reason for closure
5. Contact you within 5 working days of your case being closed and gather your views on the quality of the service you have received from the ASB team.

If you have any ideas on how we can improve our service to you and other customers please contact us.

CONTACTS

If you or someone you know is suffering from racial harassment, or you have witnessed an incident, then ring Cobalt Housing on **0151 633 8000**.

You can call the Stop Hate U.K. 24 hour help line on **0800 138 1625**

For support, contact the Independent Hate Crime Advocacy Service on **261 1969 / 281 1000**

To report incidents to the police, contact **0151 709 6010** and advise them it's relating to harassment or hate crime.

In an emergency contact **999**

To report anonymously contact Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**

OTHER USEFUL ORGANISATIONS INCLUDE:

The Lesbian and Gay Foundation	Helpline: 0161 235 8000
Spirit Level: Support group aimed at overcoming prejudice about transgender issues.	Tel: 0151 709 1432 Website: www.spirit-level.org.uk
RASA (Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre for Women on Merseyside)	Tel: 0151 666 1392 Website: www.rasamerseyside.org

Young Persons Advisory Service: Offering support and advice to young people.	Tel: 0151 707 1025 Website: www.ypas.org.uk
Age Concern - Liverpool	Tel: 0151 236 4440 Website: www.ageconcernliverpool.org.uk 5 Sir Thomas Street, L1 6BW
MENCAP:	Tel: 0808 808 1111 Website: www.mencap.org.uk
Liverpool MIND:	Tel: 0151 529 3247 Aintree Hospital NHS Trust Fazakerley, L9 7AL
MSDP - Merseyside Society for Deaf People	Tel (voice/minicom): 0151 228 0888 Sign Language: 0151 259 5741 Fax: 0151 228 4872 E-mail: reception@msdp.org.uk
RNIB - Royal National Institute for the Blind	RNIB Helpline: 0845 766 9999 Tel: 0151 298 3220 E-mail: e&enorthwest@rnib.org.uk
The Liverpool Muslim Society	Tel: 0151 709 2560 Website: www.ljmu.ac.uk
Hindu Centre	Tel: 0151 263 7965
Al Ghazali Multicultural Centre	Tel: 0151 734 3843 E-mail: info@al-ghazali.org.uk

If you need this information in Braille, large print or as an audio version, please contact Cobalt Housing at the address below.

If you need this information translated please tick your language. If your language is not listed below, please write it in the box and return the form to Cobalt Housing at the address below.

ARABIC

إذا أردت هذه الوثيقة بلغة أخرى أو بطريقة أخرى، أو إذا كنت بحاجة إلى خدمات مترجم، فنرجو أن تقوم بالاتصال بنا.

MANDARIN

本文件可以翻译为另一语文版本，或制作成另一格式，如有此需要，或需要传译员的协助，请与我们联系。

HINDI

यह दस्तावेज़ यदि आपको किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये, या आपको आनुवाद-सेवाओं की आवश्यकता हो तो हमसे संपर्क करें

SOMALI

Haddii aad ku rabtid dokumentigaan luqado kale ama daabacaad kale, ama haddii aad u baahan tahay turjibaan, fadlan nala soo xiriir.

URDU

یہ دستاویز اگر آپ کو کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہو، یا اگر آپ کو ترجمان کی خدمات چاہئیں تو براۓ مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کیجئے۔

POLISH

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać ten dokument w innym języku lub w innym formacie albo jeżeli potrzebna jest pomoc tłumacza, to prosimy o kontakt z nami.

KURDISH

ئەگەر دەتەوی ئەم بەلگەییەت بە زمانیکی که یا به فۆرمیکی که هەبێ، یا پێویستت بە مۆتەرجم هەبێ، تکایە پەییوەندیمان پێوه بکە

FRENCH

Si vous souhaitez obtenir ce document dans une autre langue ou sous un autre format ou si vous avez besoin des services d'un interprète, veuillez nous contacter.

Language:

Name:

Address:

Tel:

Cobalt Housing, 199 Lower House Lane, Liverpool, L11 2SF
Tel: 0151 633 8000 www.cobalthousing.org.uk

Cobalt Housing is a charitable organisation and part of the Vicinity Group