

Racial Harassment

Together we can
make a difference



Cobalt
Housing



Racial harassment

The communities in the Cobalt area are made up from people of different backgrounds. We have people of different race, ethnicity, colour, nationality, language and culture.

We expect residents to understand, value and respect each other, and the diverse nature of our community so that we can help people to live without fear of discrimination or prejudice.

Cobalt's approach to dealing with racial harassment

Racial harassment and abuse will not be tolerated. Cobalt investigates any complaints of racist 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 . . . race, colour, ethnic or national origin . . .'**

What is racial harassment?

Cobalt has adopted the nationally accepted definition of racial harassment which is 'an incident or series of incidents intended or likely to intimidate, offend, or harm an individual or group because of their ethnic origin, colour, race, religion or nationality'.

The accepted definition of a racist incident is **'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.**

Examples of racial harassment

Racial harassment often takes place without witnesses being present. The absence of witnesses will not prevent the matter being investigated or taken seriously.

The following acts are examples of racial harassment:

- 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 is not a complete list, but gives examples only.

Reporting racial harassment

A racial harassment 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 racial harassment 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 Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team.

If the report does not involve 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 racial harassment.

Cobalt's approach will concentrate on the victim. While all reports of racial harassment 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 pages 10 and 11 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 racial harassment, 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 racial harassment 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 racial harassment and 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 agencies providing interpreters 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.

Action against perpetrators of racial harassment

Action that can be taken against any perpetrator includes:

1. Non legal action 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 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 and where other remedies have been tried and failed.
3. Legal action 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 racial harassment 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 racial harassment.

Reports of Racial Harassment

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 UK 24 hour help line on **0800 138 1625**

For support, contact the Independent Hate Crime Advocacy Service on **0151 261 1969 / 0151 281 1000**

To report incidents to the police, contact **0151 709 6010** and advise them it is relating to racial harassment.

In an emergency contact **999**

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

Other useful organisations:

Commission for Racial Equality Organisation working towards the elimination of racial discrimination	Main Office: 0161 829 8100 www.cre.gov.uk
Chinese Community Centre Runs projects for the Chinese community	0151 709 2560 (no official website)
The Liverpool Muslim Society Advice and information for the Muslim community	0151 709 2560 www.ljmu.ac.uk
Merseyside Caribbean Council Advice and information for the Caribbean community	0151 708 9790 (website being set up)
The Pakistani Centre Advice and information for the Pakistani community	0151 708 9669
Hindu Centre Advice and information for the Hindu community	0151 263 7965
Liverpool Yemeni/Arabic Club Organisation that works alongside Yemeni and Arabic speaking individuals and communities	0151 734 0550 lyac-1@hotmail.co.uk www.liverpoolarabiccentre.org.uk
Irish Community Centre Advice and information for the Irish community	0151 707 4302 (website being set up)

<p>Sikh Community Centre Advice and information for the Sikh community</p>	0151 327 6710
<p>Liverpool Somali Centre Advice and information for the Somali community</p>	0151 709 3853
<p>Al Ghazali Multicultural Centre Advice and information for the Muslim community</p>	0151 734 3843 info@al-ghazali.org.uk
<p>Merseyside Bangladesh Society Advice and information for the Bangladeshi community</p>	0151 726 0294
<p>Nigeria Community Association Advice and information for the Nigerian community</p>	0151 709 6162 64 Upper Parliament Street, L8 7LF
<p>Kuumba-Imani Provides service to women from the black and ethnic minority community</p>	0151 709 8162
<p>Hate Incident and Domestic Violence Help Line Signposting service for victims of hate crime</p>	0800 953 4433 www.kuumba-imani.org.uk
<p>Refugee Action Provides, advice, information and support to asylum seekers and refugees</p>	0151 702 6300 www.refugee-action.org.uk/liverpool

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 بە 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