



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

# The Wales Housing Management Standard for Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

**'A comprehensive and effective  
response to anti-social behaviour'**



### **Extra copies**

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### **Welsh Language**

This consultation document has been issued in accordance with the Assembly Government's Welsh Language Policy.

### **Different Formats**

This Guidance, the National Strategy and the plain language summary of it, are available in large print and in audio formats on request.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

- 1.1 The Document 'One Wales : a progressive agenda for the government of Wales'<sup>1</sup> sets out a four year agenda for the Welsh Assembly Government (Assembly Government). A joint commitment to the principles of social justice, sustainability and inclusivity - of the whole of Wales and for all its people - runs throughout the programme. The agenda includes both enhancing community cohesion and ensuring an effective youth and criminal justice system.

The document further goes on to say that:

'We are firmly committed to supporting and including those who are marginalised from society. We will offer appropriate and effective treatment and support to re-engage with the wider community and to ensure that the wider community is fully inclusive. We want to see a fair system of youth and criminal justice, in which the people of Wales have every confidence.'

- 1.2 The standards for tackling anti-social behaviour support the implementation of the priorities set out in 'One Wales'<sup>1</sup> and are an important measure towards achieving the creation of strong and safe communities throughout Wales.

### Background

- 1.3 Anti-social behaviour covers a broad spectrum of behaviours of which there is a corresponding diversity in the agencies involved in dealing with it. It can cause minor irritation or can be utterly devastating. Much anti-social behaviour is not criminal in its nature, but this type of behaviour does undermine people's confidence that crime is being tackled and fuels a fear of crime. Whilst anti-social behaviour is not just a housing issue, it is clear that the housing sector has an important role to play in preventing and responding to it. Indeed, in many cases social landlords have taken the lead on tackling anti-social behaviour in their communities and there exist many examples of good practise within the sector.
- 1.4 The important role of social landlords (local authorities and housing associations) in tackling anti-social behaviour is reflected in Assembly Government) publication '*Anti-Social Behaviour: Policies and Procedures – Code of Guidance for Local Authorities and Housing Associations*' (2005)<sup>2</sup>. This sets out the roles and responsibilities of social landlords to deal with anti social behaviour as required by s.12 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.
- 1.5 The '*Respect Standard for Housing Management*' (Respect Standard)<sup>4</sup> is aimed at social landlords in England and outlines the core components the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) believes are essential to delivering an effective response to anti-social behaviour and building stronger communities.

- 1.6 In Wales, the Assembly Government has considered the potential for developing a housing management standard for social landlords, to complement the existing Code of Guidance<sup>2</sup> and other anti-social behaviour policies and initiatives. A consultation exercise has informed the Assembly Government's decision to proceed with the Wales Standard and informed the content and application of it.
- 1.7 The Assembly Government has decided that the standards will be voluntary with social landlords being actively encouraged to sign up. The standard provides recognition for those delivering good services, whilst providing a benchmark to aim towards for landlords who are working on improving the service provided.

## Chapter 2: Making the Connections and Anti-social Behaviour

- 2.1 Social landlords do not operate in isolation. They are part of a wider community and will share the problems and challenges of that wider community. Given this and the complexity of anti-social behaviour, the causes and solutions to it will not lie solely within the remit of a single organisation and a range of agencies will have a role to play in developing effective responses to anti-social behaviour. The Assembly Government expects social landlords to take a pro-active role in working with partners whilst acknowledging that ultimate responsibility to take action and achieve results should be shared by all partners.
- 2.2 This chapter describes some of the other agencies involved in dealing with anti-social behaviour and some of the Assembly Government anti-social behaviour policies and initiatives.

### Responsible Authorities

- 2.3 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 required local authorities and the police to do all that they 'reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder' in their area. The Police Reform Act 2002 provided for police authorities, fire authorities and local health groups to become responsible authorities, alongside Chief Police Officers and local authority Chief Executives. The Police and Justice Act 2006 includes updates to the 1998 Act, which aim to improve partnership working and provide clarity regarding the expectations of 'responsible authorities' under their partnership arrangements.
- 2.4 The Police and Justice Act 2006 (which came into force in Wales in October 2007) places a duty on responsible authorities to work in partnership to formulate and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder and combat substance and alcohol misuse in the local area. (see note 1) Statutory 'Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships' (or 'Community Safety Partnerships' as they are known in Wales) have been set up in each local authority in Wales. As well as the responsible authorities, statutory partnerships generally include representatives from

- probation
- courts
- magistrates
- Youth Offending Teams
- voluntary and community organisations

#### Notes

1. These are set out in:  
SI 2007 No 3076 The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) (Wales) Regulations 2007 and

SI 2007 No 3078 (W.265) The Substance Misuse (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) (Wales) Regulations 2007.

- housing associations (currently Housing Associations are not included in the definition of 'co-operating bodies'. However, regulations to include them within this definition are to be introduced in Wales under the provisions of the Police and Justice 2006)
- 2.5 Community Safety Partnerships work with local partners to prepare and implement a Community Safety Plan which includes provisions to tackle anti-social behaviour. 'Guidance for Community Safety Partnerships – Delivering Safer Communities - A guide to effective partnership working'<sup>4</sup> can be found on the Home Office website. Community Safety Partnerships' were given funding by the Home Office for anti-social behaviour co-ordination work – most if not all used the funding to employ an anti-social behaviour co-ordinator. From 1st April 2008 this funding will be included in the Home Office Crime Reduction and Anti-Social Behaviour Grant made to Community Safety Partnerships.

### **Children and Young People**

- 2.6 Children and young people are by no means the only perpetrators of anti-social behaviour though the likelihood of pro-social behaviour in adulthood will stem from initiatives focussed on promoting positive behaviour in people's formative years and in tackling the causes of anti-social behaviour. In view of this many Assembly Government anti-social behaviour policies and initiatives are focused on the promotion of positive behaviour and through tackling wider social problems such as poverty and social exclusion.

#### *Preventing Offending*

- 2.7 The Assembly Government published the '*All Wales Youth Offending Strategy*'<sup>5</sup> in July 2004, jointly with the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. The Strategy provides a national framework for preventing offending and re-offending among children and young people in Wales. Funding to support the delivery of the strategy is administered by Community Safety Partnerships. The funding has enabled Community Safety Partnerships to support projects that tackle youth crime, including anti social behaviour, criminal damage and vandalism and support interventions that target drug and alcohol misuse.
- 2.8 The On Track Programme was part of the Crime Reduction Programme (C.R.P.) announced by the Home Secretary in 1998, the objective of which was to establish 'what works' in terms of early community safety intervention. On Track was a long term initiative that ran for 7 years. It aimed to improve inter-agency co-operation and develop targeted services to children, aged between 4 and 12 years of age. These are children who are deemed to be at a real risk of offending later in life and through early identification they and their families are provided with intensive support.

Twenty four areas in England and Wales were invited to participate in the On Track programme – all chosen because of high levels of social deprivation. Two of the twenty four Projects selected to take part in the programme were in Wales - Tylorstown in Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council and Maesteg in Bridgend County Borough Council. The areas were selected by reference to the Welsh Index of Social Deprivation and in consultation with colleagues in Children and Families Division. The comprehensive evaluation was an essential component of the On Track programme and will inform future policy in this area. 6

### *Effective Parenting*

- 2.9 Another important area of policy linked to tackling anti-social behaviour includes improving services around parenting provision so that help can be focused on parents who need it most. In December 2005, the Assembly Government published its '*Parenting Action Plan*'<sup>7</sup>, which sets out how it will be supporting mothers, fathers and carers with raising children in Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government has funded development work on two Family Intervention Projects within its Social Housing Management Grant Programme for 2008 -2009. These projects have proved highly successful in other parts of the UK in tackling the underlying causes and patterns of behaviour of families exhibiting chronic anti-social problems.

### *Tacking Child Poverty*

- 2.10 In the wider context, tackling child poverty is a fundamental component of the Assembly Government's broader strategy to improve quality of life and extend opportunity to every community in Wales. This means addressing the complex issues that underlie anti-social behaviour, such as poverty, poor housing and worklessness, recognising that these very often impact on the lives of people in our most disadvantaged areas.
- 2.11 The Assembly Government's '*Child Poverty Implementation Plan*' 2006<sup>8</sup> comprises a range of policy proposals aimed at eradicating child poverty in Wales by 2020. '*Eradicating Child Poverty by 2020: Measuring Success*'<sup>9</sup> comprises a range of milestones and targets covering four main policy areas, including Housing, which will enable the Assembly Government's progress to be measured over time.

### *Preventing Youth Homelessness*

- 2.12 The accommodation strategy ('Suitable, Sustained, Supported: A Strategy to Ensure Provision of Accommodation for Children and Young People who offend')<sup>10</sup> launched in November 2006 by the Youth Justice Board aims to develop work with national, regional and local partners to prevent homelessness among young people who have offended or who are at risk of offending, and to increase their access to suitable and sustainable accommodation. Supporting People and other



grant funding is being used in this area for specific projects throughout Wales. (see note 2 for examples)

Notes

2. Examples of projects include:

Partnership between Swansea Young Single Homeless, Fairbridge and the Council to meet the housing, support and training needs of young offenders is just being set up. Uses Supporting People funding and grants.

Agorfa in North Wales receive funding from Youth Offending Teams to top up private sector rents and then Supporting People funding is used to support young people in the project.

Llamau's Clive Street project supports young offenders exclusively with the purpose of reducing offending and providing support to maintain their housing. 66% achieved a reduction or cessation in their offending and the other 33% saw no increase in their offending behaviour. Developing move-on with floating support, which will become permanent if the tenant is successful.

## **The Role of Housing**

- 2.13 Anti-social behaviour is not restricted to social tenants, either as perpetrators or those affected by it. The Assembly Government therefore wants to see social landlords make appropriate links between Wales Standard provisions and other housing related strategies such as Homelessness and Supporting People. This will help ensure that anti-social behaviour prevention and response measures are accommodated widely within different strategies and plans which will help extend effective anti-social behaviour action in all housing tenures.
- 2.14 It is also important that private landlords act appropriately in responding to their tenants' anti-social behaviour and the Assembly Government is keen to see private landlords engaging with their local Community Safety Partnerships and Anti-social Behaviour Co-ordinators. This could be through the formation of a Joint Action Group comprising representatives from relevant local authority departments, housing associations, the police authority, youth offending teams and so on.

### *Housing Management*

- 2.15 Peoples' fears and concerns around crime and anti-social behaviour vary depending on their individual experiences. It is generally recognised that people living in social housing, often in some of Wales' most deprived areas, perceive high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour; they are more likely than other groups to say this is a serious problem.
- 2.16 Strong housing management therefore can make a real difference to the quality of lives of residents. Approximately 17% of the population live in social housing in Wales and many more live in neighbourhoods where social landlords are heavily involved in neighbourhood management.

- 2.17 Housing managers will often be the first to identify problems and the first agency people experiencing anti-social behaviour approach. An assertive response to problems combining support with sanctions where behaviour does not improve following initial endeavours to address, is critical to creating and protecting strong, inclusive, sustainable communities.
- 2.18 The Assembly Government wants people to feel empowered through raising confidence that anti-social conduct will be addressed which in turn builds trust and promotes shared values. Many social landlords in Wales have developed excellent initiatives for dealing with anti-social behaviour through engaging with communities and working alongside other agencies responsible for crime and disorder. This standard, in part, builds on their achievements. (See note 4 for some sources of good practice).

#### Notes

4. Assembly Government publication '*Anti-Social Behaviour: Policies and Procedures – Code of Guidance for Local Authorities and Housing Associations*' (2005) contains case study examples of different approaches to dealing with anti-social behaviour from across the UK.

Good Neighbour Agreements – these centre on community empowerment and facilitating local accountability. For further information see practice note '*Respect and Housing Management – Using Good Neighbour Agreements: Emerging Lessons from Research*' (DCLG, 2006) and is available via their website [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk).

## Chapter 3: About the Wales Standard

- 3.1 In July 2005 the Assembly Government issued statutory guidance '*Anti-Social Behaviour: Policies and Procedures – Code of Guidance for Local Authorities and Housing Associations in Wales*' (the Code)<sup>2</sup> for the purposes of s.218A(7) of the Housing Act 1996 (1996 Act).
- 3.2 Section 218A of the 1996 Act was inserted by s.12 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (2003 Act). It placed a new duty on social landlords to prepare an anti-social behaviour policy and procedures for dealing with anti-social behaviour, and to publish a statement and summary of these by 30 October 2005.
- 3.3 The aim of the Wales Standard is to establish a demanding benchmark to challenge the sector to strive for continuous improvements in services aimed at dealing with anti-social behaviour. It spans the prevention, support and enforcement agendas, placing a strong emphasis on engaging and empowering tenants. The next chapter outlines the provisions of the Wales Standard.
- 3.4 The Assembly Government is keen to ensure that residents are also clear about the level, scope and effectiveness of the services they have a right to expect while upholding their own responsibilities. The Assembly Government would expect landlords to identify and work towards such an agenda within their strategies and objectives for involving tenants. (See note 4)

### Notes

4. Assembly Government publication '*National Tenant Participation Strategy for Wales*' (2007) and the subsequent implementation guidance '*Developing Local Participation Strategies*' (2008) provides detailed guidance for social landlords on maximising the contribution of tenants as a service improvement tool. Social landlords are required to submit their strategies for tenant involvement to the Assembly Government for review by October 2008.
- 3.5 Landlords will be required to formally 'sign up' to the Wales Standard and in so doing will be making a visible commitment to tenants, residents and other interested parties to do all they reasonably can to provide excellent services to tackle anti-social behaviour through their housing management and broader community engagement roles. Those services should be outcome focused and shaped in accordance with the priorities of the local communities served by different landlords.

Landlords will be able to sign up on two levels:

- a) **working towards** indicating a public declaration of engagement and commitment to the standards whilst identifying key areas for improvement
- b) **meeting** where landlords are confident that they are able to demonstrate to their board of management or Council Members, tenants and the wider community that they meet the seven core components of the standard.

- 3.6 In making this commitment, the Assembly Government believes that landlords will be signalling their dedication to helping create, sustain and improve communities in which:
- people feel bound by shared values which is supported by a sense of community
  - pro-social behaviour is valued and encouraged
  - anti-social behaviour and disrespect for people and local environments are not tolerated
  - the decent majority are not fearful of using public space and are free to enjoy their homes without disturbance and/or harassment by the minority
  - people are confident they will have the full support of agencies in challenging unacceptable behaviour
  - people are kept informed of action taken to tackle anti-social behaviour and are encouraged to play an active part in their communities.

*The cost of implementing the Wales Standard*

- 3.7 The Assembly Government expects that many social landlords in Wales will already be delivering services to deal with anti-social behaviour that meet many of the provisions of the proposed Wales Standard. It is anticipated therefore that signing up to the Standard will not necessitate significant additional expenditure though additional costs may be incurred where landlords decide to review their services in light of the demands of the Wales Standard (for example through a self assessment). As a result of a self assessment social landlords may incur some costs if there is a need for increased resources to be allocated in order to meet the standard. There are a range of sources of good practise to assist landlords in assessing their anti-social behaviour services. (see note 5)

The Assembly Government will consider using the Social Housing Management Grant scheme ([HousingGrantsAdministration@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HousingGrantsAdministration@wales.gsi.gov.uk)) to assist with landlords' set up costs and to encourage adoption of the Standard throughout Wales.

Notes

5. Housemark and Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group provide information and advice to members on assessing and measuring services in relation to anti-social behaviour.

The Respect Standard for Housing Management : A Performance Improvement kit for Landlords was published by Communities and Local Government in September 2007. The toolkit is a definitive good practise guide to measuring anti-social behaviour performance and implementing anti-social behaviour service improvements. Whilst

reflecting the English policy and regulatory context on anti-social behaviour, the toolkit can be adapted for use by Welsh landlords.

### *A Broad Consensus*

- 3.8 We are mindful of the diversity of the social rented sector. It is not the role of the Assembly Government to dictate what the exact nature of a landlord's approach to tackling anti-social behaviour should be. The best solutions arise from developing local solutions to local problems. Consultation assisted in devising a broad consensus on what constitutes best practice, providing a framework through which the Wales Standard can be tailored to meet local contexts and priorities.
- 3.9 The Wales Standard describes activities a landlord may deliver as part of its housing management role and those activities which are dependent on the support of partners. Delivery will inevitably involve a wide range of agencies such as the police, local authority social services, youth offending teams, schools, health services, drug action teams and probation. The Wales Standard expects landlords to do all they reasonably can to build and contribute to partnerships, particularly local Community Safety Partnerships but acknowledges this depends on other agencies doing likewise. The guidance document for *'Community Safety Partnerships – Delivering Safer Communities – a guide to partnership working'* <sup>4</sup> should be referred to in relation to achieving effective outcomes.

### **Registration Requirements**

#### *Planning*

- 3.10 In considering signing up to the Wales Standard landlords will need to consider the level, quality and scope of services they provide and whether they meet the benchmark set by the Wales Standard. Landlords' self-assessment in this regard should be in line with Wales Programme for Improvement/Best Value principles.
- 3.11 It is proposed that tenants be given a central role in landlords' assessment processes. This might involve tenants being selected and trained to assess landlords' anti-social behaviour policies and procedures against the Wales Standard. The assessment process followed and outcome would form part of the registration application process. Only where tenant assessors agree there is compliance with the Wales Standard (to meet the standard) or where there are non-compliant areas but with firm proposals of how these shortfalls will be addressed and by when (to sign up to working towards), should applications be submitted for registration.
- 3.12 Landlords may arrange 'tenant assessment exchanges' so that tenants from other landlord organisations may be invited to undertake assessments of the anti-social behaviour policies and procedures of different landlords. This should be a mutual arrangement except in cases where landlords experience difficulty in securing the agreement of their own tenants to undertake this role.

- 3.13 Tenants should also be involved in landlord measures to monitor and review the application of the Standard.
- 3.14 Where landlords are confident that they are compliant with the Wales Standard they will need to make a public statement to residents and local communities that they commit to delivering a level of service in line with the Wales Standard. Others may decide to commit to 'working towards' the Wales Standard whilst working with residents to improve their services.

#### *Registering*

- 3.15 It is proposed that landlords formally sign up to the Wales Standard through completion of a simple form submitted electronically through the Assembly Government housing web-site. This will include details of the tenant assessment referred to at paragraph 3.11.
- 3.16 Following confirmation of receipt of applications landlords may brand themselves as signatories. The Assembly Government does not propose to follow a process of accreditation at the point of signing but rather monitor landlord's delivery against their commitments possibly through the housing inspection programmes (see paragraphs 3.21 – 3.24 for more information).
- 3.17 Once registered as meeting the requirements signatory landlords will be issued with a certificate highlighting their commitment to the Wales Standard. They will also be provided with an electronic file of the Wales Standard badge which they can use on stationary and publicity material. This may reflect tenant approval of the relevant landlord's policies and procedures.
- 3.18 The key to the Wales Standard is accountability to residents and when landlords have registered they should consider how they will let the community know about the action they have taken – for example by issuing a press release, organising a local meeting or event to publicise their commitment. Where they have signed up as meeting the standards landlords should ensure that residents are clear about the standards they have committed to – for example by displaying the Wales Standard certificate in prominent locations or disseminating the content through newsletters.

#### *Disseminating Good Practice*

- 3.19 The Assembly Government will request that signatory landlords provide good practice examples on a voluntary basis at regular intervals focusing on a range of themes. This will allow the Assembly Government to keep abreast of and share good practice.

- 3.20 Most importantly residents will legitimately hold the expectation that landlords will do what they say they will where they sign up to the Wales Standard, and should be able to challenge their landlords where performance falls short through standard complaints procedures.

### **Assessing Compliance with the Wales Standard**

- 3.21 Social landlord's regard for the Assembly Government anti-social behaviour Code of Guidance<sup>2</sup> is currently considered within current inspection arrangements in the following ways:
- 3.22 For housing associations, the Assembly Government includes compliance with the Code within its inspection arrangements. In addition, housing associations may be asked to 'self-certificate' their compliance within the annual self-assessment return which details their compliance with the Assembly Government's Regulatory Code<sup>11</sup>.
- 3.23 For local housing authorities, the Assembly Government will work with the Audit Commission in Wales, or any successor body, to ensure that compliance with the Code is fully tested via its inspection arrangements.
- 3.24 New regulatory arrangements are currently being formalised. These regulatory arrangements are likely to encompass monitoring of the standard.

## Chapter 4: The Wales Standard

- 4.1 The Wales Standard contains core commitments that the Assembly Government believes constitutes a comprehensive and effective response to anti-social behaviour.
- 4.2 The Wales Standard requires that services provided directly and/or in conjunction with partner agencies properly address the following core components:
1. Commitment, leadership, and accountability
  2. Empowering and reassuring residents
  3. Prevention and early intervention
  4. Support to tackle the causes of anti-social behaviour
  5. Tailored services for residents and support for victims and witnesses
  6. Protecting communities through swift enforcement
  7. Encouraging community responsibility
- 4.3 The following section provides detailed information on the core components of the Wales Standard. They are sub-divided to reflect elements which are likely to be, in the main, within the remit and control of the landlord and those elements which are likely to be achievable only in conjunction with relevant partners. These are expressed as '**building blocks**' and '**working with partners**' respectively the elements of which will contribute to delivery of the seven core components (see paragraph 2.4 for examples of partner organisations).
- 4.4 In order to be meeting the standards we would expect signatories to be able to demonstrate that they carry out all or many of these activities though it is recognised this will vary with local circumstances and a flexible approach is needed to this end. Some of the activities inevitably overlap given the synergies between the core components.
- 4.5 The range of activities are not intended to be exhaustive and in some instances landlords may be carrying out activities which do not precisely match with those activities listed but which are aimed at achieving similar outcomes.



## **Commitment 1 - Commitment, leadership and accountability**

### **Purpose**

Landlords should make public their commitment to dealing with anti-social behaviour so that tenants will know they will take incidents of anti-social behaviour seriously; are aware of what their landlord will do to deal with anti-social behaviour; and know what steps they can take if their landlord doesn't do what it says it will do.

### **Building Blocks:**

- demonstrable commitment to preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour and creating a culture of respect (e.g. developing a range of remedies which cover prevention, rehabilitation and support measures and capturing these within relevant strategies and plans)
- backing up commitment by aligning capacity and resources and providing value for money (e.g. cross organisational working arrangements where smaller organisations use the resources of larger ones with specialist services)
- assignment of responsibility within local partnerships so that everyone delivering services is clear about their role and what is expected of them
- seeking out good practice and developing new approaches
- using tenants to assess landlords' anti-social behaviour policies and procedures' compliance with the Wales Standard as part of the registration process
- delivering outcomes defined by measurable local targets (e.g. year on year increases in resident satisfaction by estate or neighbourhood as measured by regular surveys)
- continually reviewing performance to inform improvement planning and engaging residents and partners in this process (e.g. through Best Value or Wales Programme for Improvement measures)
- commitment to robust policies of zero tolerance towards abuse of staff, resident representatives and voluntary workers in delivering their functions

### **Working with partners:**

Working with partner agencies at strategic and operational levels including:

- developing and/or contributing to service delivery protocols where appropriate
- active and effective participation on local partnerships, including Community Safety Partnerships where feasible and neighbourhood level structures where they operate (e.g. regeneration partnerships)
- information sharing
- appropriate links between anti-social behaviour strategies and other strategies including local housing strategies, local homelessness strategies, Supporting People, BME Housing Action Plans, local resident participation strategies and other community safety/cohesion strategies or plans

## **Commitment 2 - Empowering and reassuring residents**

### **Purpose**

Effective responses to anti-social behaviour will involve the in-put and co-operation of local people – this will not happen if they are ambivalent or unsure about their landlord's commitment to dealing with anti-social behaviour. Landlords and the community need to work in partnership and with residents being given the opportunity to input into decisions which affect them and their communities. Engagement and effective communication will serve to reassure and empower communities.

### **Building blocks:**

- involving residents, including young people, in setting local priorities as part of social landlord local resident participation strategies
- delivering regular, meaningful and accessible feed-back sessions on issues of local concern involving partner agencies where appropriate (e.g. 'Face the People' sessions)
- engaging residents in developing and agreeing local standards of conduct (e.g. through Good Neighbour Agreements)
- facilitating 'community led audits' of anti-social behaviour hotspots and environmental problems (e.g. estate walks to identify graffiti and fly-tipping)
- providing residents with regular updates of actions landlords and partner organisations have undertaken to tackle anti-social behaviour (both positive activities and use of enforcement action) and how they might be involved in delivering solutions (e.g. leaflet drops etc).
- promotion of what is expected of the community in terms of tolerance, challenging, engaging in mediation, pro-actively seeking Estate Agreements, being effective witnesses and engagement in community projects
- publicise use of enforcement tools (general or specific uses where appropriate) so that the community is reassured and is aware of any terms so they can help report suspected breaches
- tailoring services to take account of barriers to participation so that no one is unduly excluded
- rewarding positive 'community minded' behaviour (e.g. sponsoring activities for young people who contribute to the community or who successfully address their behaviour and in recognition of residents who are prepared to take a stand and support action to tackle anti-social behaviour)

**Working with partners:**

- working with partner agencies and the local media to promote action/successes in tackling anti-social behaviour (e.g. encapsulated in a multi-agency communications strategy)
- linking tackling anti-social behaviour and broader area-based work on community capacity building and community cohesion (e.g. facilitating projects to foster inter-generational understanding or community wide mediation to resolve local issues that generate tensions within a neighbourhood)
- working independently or with partner agencies to engage young people in constructive and purposeful activities (e.g. volunteering, community clean ups, sports and the arts and activities during school holidays)

## **Commitment 3 - Prevention and early intervention**

### **Purpose**

Landlords can play an important part in introducing measures aimed at preventing anti-social behaviour from occurring. Where it does, addressing problems quickly often gets the best results.

### **Building Blocks:**

- ensuring tenancy agreements and leases meet Office of Fair Trading (OFT) guidelines and contain clear prohibitions on anti-social conduct – linked where appropriate with Good Neighbour Agreement
- running user-friendly sign-up meetings for new residents to include a clear explanation of landlords policies on anti-social behaviour, how problems will be addressed, what is expected of the resident and what they can expect of you in return
- undertaking full assessments of any potential problems that may require tenancy support when entering into new tenancy agreements and ensuring that the support needs are met
- regularly reviewing allocations and lettings policies to ensure issues of anti-social behaviour are accommodated (e.g. a balanced approach to lettings which takes account of the need to meet housing need and create sustainable communities) sensitive lettings to avoid potentially problematic situations)
- adopting introductory or starter tenancy schemes
- designing out anti-social behaviour through environmental gating schemes and improvements (e.g. alley gating, security lighting)
- using early intervention tools like Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (and Parenting Contracts if available) linked to provision of support where appropriate
- providing clear warnings backed up by evidence of past action taken against perpetrators of anti-social behaviour
- taking swift action on environmental damage (e.g. rapid removal of graffiti and clearance of fly tipping) to give a strong signal that action will be taken
- taking swift action in relation to harassment and hate crime

### **Working with partners:**

- developing common policies around restricting access to housing due to unacceptable behaviour and/or reflecting an agreed approach (including identifying support needs and how these may be met) in formal nomination agreements
- providing evidence to partner agencies and working with them to identify anti-social behaviour hotspots and areas where incidents appear to be emerging and contributing to the delivery of tailored strategies to address these problems
- working with partner agencies to provide a visible presence in hotspots (e.g. community support officers/police and wardens patrols)
- working closely with warden schemes where available including sponsoring schemes where possible
- working with supported housing organisations in cases where anti- social behaviour is the result of unmet support needs
- publicise / positively promote the good work / early intervention that takes place throughout Wales in tackling anti-social behaviour through partnership working

## **Commitment 4 - Support to tackle the causes of anti-social behaviour**

Provision of appropriate support can address unacceptable behaviour by tackling underlying causes. This leads to sustainable outcomes and gets people's lives back on track.

### **Building Blocks:**

- ensuring staff are aware of the range of support provision available and how to identify how each approach should be used
- ensuring staff have a clear understanding of how support provision should be linked with triggers (e.g. early intervention measures or use of enforcement action such as demotion)
- ensuring policies and procedures state how support provision will be accessed and provided and the triggers for same
- focusing on delivering support by linking support with enforcement at an early stage rather than crisis-based interventions where problems have escalated
- making it clear to residents that enforcement action may be considered where suitable offers of support are refused and their behaviour does not improve
- developing clear policies and procedures on dealing with vulnerable residents (e.g. people with mental health issues and drug and alcohol problems)

### **Working with partners:**

- using 'floating support' to help residents stop their anti-social behaviour and to maximise their chances of maintaining their tenancy
- where available and appropriate, referral to Family Intervention Programmes for residents with complex support needs who are causing anti-social behaviour in the community
- negotiating with local Supporting People teams to build on existing floating and residential housing-related support schemes to ensure that the appropriate support is available for those with complex needs. Where no support currently exists explore possible opportunities for Supporting People to fund a new support project

## **Commitment 5 – Tailored services for residents and support for victims and witnesses**

Success rests on people being prepared to report incidents of anti social behaviour and then give support to agencies in taking action. Every case and every person deserves a robust, tailored and sensitive response.

### **Building Blocks:**

- making sure reporting is easy by offering a variety of reporting methods (e.g. verbal reporting, telephone hotlines, email and reporting centres) and responsive to the range of needs. Services should be accessible to all using jargon free plain language available in a range of formats and appropriately sensitive (e.g. in reporting hate crime)
- ensuring that the first point of contact is helpful, courteous and sensitive to the stress reporting incidents of anti-social behaviour often involves – this is particularly important in reports around for example, racial harassment or domestic violence where more specialised responses are required
- ensuring all staff are clear about what procedures should be followed when they receive a complaint.
- delivering to achievable but challenging deadlines for each stage of the process and agreeing appropriate action with the complainant. On occasions where deadlines cannot be met explanations should be given
- providing complainants with regular updates of progress of their case from the point of complaint to resolution and beyond, including the outcomes of any court proceedings
- minimise burdens on complainants in collecting evidence (e.g. short focused use of diary sheets rather than prolonged use with no clear outcome)
- where attendance at court is required, full explanations of the procedures and pre-visits to court should be offered in advance and support offered throughout, including escort to court and mentoring

### **Working with partners:**

- carrying out assessments of the support needs of individuals who report anti-social behaviour or agree to provide evidence/act as witnesses
- systematically supporting victims either directly or in conjunction with specialist care and support agencies (e.g. witness support services and networks)
- prompt deployment of reassurance measures where appropriate including regular patrols (housing officers, wardens, police etc) and visits, provision of personal alarms, CCTV systems etc
- focus on 'target hardening' (e.g. fire proof letter boxes and wide angle spy holes) liaising with Crime Prevention services as necessary
- liaison with court services to minimise the stresses of a hearing (e.g. secure holding area)

## **Commitment 6 – Protecting communities through swift enforcement**

There are a range of tools available to landlords to help them tackle a wide range of anti-social behaviour. Where enforcement action is needed, landlords will need to understand how to apply the various measures and in what circumstances so that they can be used quickly to protect communities as required.

### **Building Blocks:**

- ensuring staff are fully aware of the range of tools available (as reflected in the Assembly Government's Code on Anti-Social Behaviour) and how to identify when each tool should be used either as a stand alone remedy or in conjunction with broader strategy initiatives
- produce detailed procedures on the application of the range of enforcement tools describing what each demands in terms of evidence gathering and consultation with other agencies and train staff on these
- making sure harassment is not tolerated by dealing with the problem quickly
- ensuring eviction is used as a last resort option through the use of other tools to tackle anti-social behaviour in situ (e.g. injunctions, tenancy demotion etc) and making sure suitable support is offered in the first instance
- ensuring robust case management procedures are in place which enable fast-tracking of legal action where required (e.g. systems which facilitate pursuing interim injunctions at short notice and enforcement of breaches)
- proactive evidence-gathering of anti-social behaviour from a wide variety of sources
- commitment to visibly upholding standards of behaviour in public space and challenging those who do not wherever possible
- monitoring use of different tools and outcomes to feed into broader reviews of performance and improvement planning.

### **Working with partners:**

- developing strong working relationships and strategic links with partners
- joint tasking of enforcement/evidence gathering from multi agency staff
- having robust procedures in place to seek enforcement of breaches as quickly as possible with action backed up by relevant agencies as appropriate



## **Commitment 7 – Encouraging Community Responsibility**

The creation of safe and strong communities will not stem from public agencies providing effective responses to anti-social behaviour alone. It will also rely on responsible and tolerant citizens who are aware of the impact their behaviour has on others.

### **Building Blocks:**

- promoting tolerance and diffusing situations where activities are misconstrued as anti-social behaviour (e.g. children playing in parks adjacent residential properties)
- making it clear to residents that they have responsibilities as well as rights
- making sure residents have a clear understanding that anti-social behaviour includes behaviour which is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to an individual(s) or the wider community
- making sure residents clearly understand the impact anti-social behaviour has on others
- promoting the use of mediation or conflict resolution at the earliest possible opportunity to prevent neighbour disputes escalating
- working with complainants, residents and the wider community to manage their expectations of the landlords anti-social behaviour service. Landlords should ensure that service users are clear about what outcome is realistic in each anti-social behaviour case and underline that eviction is unlikely in most cases and only used as a last resort
- encourage complainants (where appropriate) to use 'self-help' options to resolve low level / minor nuisance issues themselves by talking to the perpetrator and seeking to resolve the issue amicably without recourse to the landlord
- work with community groups and partners to promote tolerance and community responsibility amongst residents and the wider community

### **Working with Partners:**

- liaison with mediation services and Citizens' Advice Bureau
- liaison with community groups (youth clubs, church groups)
- referring to Welsh Assembly Government's Guidance entitled 'Living in Harmony: What to do about neighbour disputes'. This can be accessed via the following link:  
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/housing/publications/livinginharmonyleaflet?lang=en>

## Chapter 5: Consultation

### The following questions were consulted on:-

#### Questions for discussion and feedback

5.1 The Assembly Government is keen to learn landlords, tenants and other agencies views on the proposals set out in this paper. It has devised a set of questions to facilitate discussion about the potential for the Wales Standard which can be used to generate debate and inform feedback to the Assembly Government. Obviously, it is up to individual organisations how they respond and the basis for their responses – the important thing is that all those wishing to express a view can so that the Assembly Government can take an informed view regarding the promotion of the Wales Standard.

- a) Do you think that the Wales Standard will improve social landlords' responses to anti-social behaviour?
- b) What do you think the main barriers would be to social landlords adopting the standard? How might these barriers be overcome?
- c) The public commitment to tackle anti-social behaviour that landlords will be making by adopting the Wales Standard has lead some landlords to express concern around managing the community's expectations about what they can actually do to tackle anti-social behaviour. Do you think this is an issue for your organisation?

If you answered yes, please say how you feel this issue might be addressed/what your organisation has done to address:

- d) Public expectations may be wider than provided by the Wales Standard. Is there anything further Assembly Government can do to improve in terms of dealing with anti-social behaviour generally?
- e) Is the Wales Standard suitable for adoption by your organisation?
- f) Do the 7 commitments constitute an effective approach to anti-social behaviour?

If you answered no, what elements are missing?

- g) Do you feel that the balance between enforcement and support contained in the Wales Standard is right?

- h) What should the Assembly Government do to encourage the adoption and implementation of the Wales Standard by social landlords in Wales?
- i) Do you think it would be useful for the Assembly Government to produce a 'Wales Standard' guide for the general public?
- j) Do you have any other comments about the proposed Wales Management Standard including any practical implications you think it might have?

## References and Links

1. **One Wales**  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/27\\_06\\_07\\_onewales.pdf](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/27_06_07_onewales.pdf)
2. **Anti Social Behaviour: Policies and Procedures – Code of Guidance for Local Authorities and Housing Associations**  
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/housing/publications/antisocial?lang=en>
3. **Respect Standard for Housing Management (Respect Standard)**  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingmanagementcare/antisocialbehaviour/publicationsantisocial/respectstandard/>  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/landlordtoolkit>
4. **Delivering Community Safety : A guide to effective partnership working**  
<http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/partnerships/partnerships001.htm>
5. **All Wales Youth Offending Strategy**  
<http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/News/AllWalesYouthOffendingStrategy.htm?area=Corporate>
6. **‘On Track’ Phase Two National Evaluation – Reducing Risk and Increasing Resilience – How Did ‘On Track Work? (29 May 2008).**  
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RB035.pdf>
7. **Parenting Action Plan**  
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/publications/consultation/past/parentactionplan?lang=en>
8. **Child Poverty Implementation Plan 2006**  
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/dcrepos/40382/sjr/childpoverty/implementationphase1?lang=en>
9. **Eradicating Child Poverty by 2020: Measuring Success**  
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/departments/dsjr/publications/measuresuccess/?lang=en>
10. **Suitable, Sustained, Supported: A Strategy to Ensure Provision of Accommodation for Children and Young People who offend**  
<http://www.yjb.gov.uk/publications/Scripts/prodView.asp?idproduct=307&eP=>
11. **Assembly Government’s Regulatory Code**  
<http://www.ecoliquirywales.org.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/housing/publications/regulatorycodehas?lang=en>

## **ANNEX A - List of organisations/departments consulted**

### **External Agencies**

Local authority Chief Executives  
Local authority housing departments  
Local authority supporting people teams  
Registered housing associations  
Community Safety Partnerships  
Welsh Local Government Association  
Community Housing Cymru  
Tai Pawb  
Cymorth Cymru  
Shelter Cymru  
Tenant Participation Advisory Service Cymru  
Welsh Tenants Federation  
Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru  
Welsh Refugee Council  
Commission for Racial Equality Wales  
Mediation Wales  
Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group  
Police Forces in Wales  
Youth Offending Teams in Wales  
Youth Justice Board in Wales

### **Assembly Government Departments**

Community Safety Unit  
Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills  
Department for Health and Social Services  
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Services (Cymru)