

Thames Valley Housing Resident Auditors ASB Service Report Recommendations

Thames Valley Housing

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Recommendations.

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Thames Valley Housing Resident Auditors ASB Service Report Recommendations

Green traffic light – This is at or above the levels expected by residents.

Amber traffic light – This is acceptable to residents but minor alterations could improve the service, customer satisfaction and possibly provide a cost saving in some instances.

Red traffic light – This is below the level expected by residents, action on these points should improve the service and increase customer satisfaction.

TVH scored 18 green (64%): a very positive sign that TVH were performing at a very high level.

TVH scored 8 amber (29%): very encouraging and means that TVH are either meeting their own published standards or and meeting the expectations of their residents.

TVH scored 2 red (7%): the auditors feel that work needs to happen in these areas.

The results emphasise that the ASB service is undertaking positive work, not only working within the regulatory field but providing added value by developing a more positive service

Thames Valley Housing Resident Auditors ASB Service Report Recommendations

	Questions	Evidence	Traffic Light	Auditors Comments, Notes & Recommendations	TVH Response
Management Responsibility					
1	Can TVH demonstrate the effectiveness of the ASB process?	Regional Neighbourhood Manager and a Local Neighbourhood Manager REACT System.		<p>Yes, TVH use the REACT system to record incidents of anti social behaviour, the process prompts officers to move to the next stage of progression when required. Flags on this system allow staff to track incidents and provide an audit trail. All complaints also go onto Workflow. A typical method of contact would include a Neighbourhood Officer visiting both parties.</p> <p><u>MARAC (Multi Agency Response and Coordination) for serious cases there is the option of a multi agency response for cases of Abuse of drugs and alcohol and domestic violence. These multi agencies, meet up normally monthly depending on which authorities are required. These members could include The police, TVHA, social services LA's, sometimes the outreach team, and others.</u></p> <p>In Emergencies extra meetings can be arranged quickly.</p> <p>In cases of Domestic violence an Officer or manager will contact the relevant party within 24 hours. In certain circumstances Target hardening can be undertaken which could include extra door and window locks, sensor lights, or a move if it warrants it. If the tenant needs to move TVHA do not have emergency properties so they will work with the LA.</p> <p>Residents who have had a logged case are flagged up to staff when they give their address so that any special measures can be arranged and all circumstances taken into account: for example a customer who is aggressive may have</p>	

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				a marker on their account that indicates they should not be visited alone. If this was the case when TVHA visits the resident they will take another person with them like a colleague, police, case worker, social services or sometimes an outreach worker, depending on the case.	
2	What tools are used by TVH to prevent ASB?	Community Investment Manager		<p>We found that TVH use many different tools at their disposal for tackling ASB, and this multi pronged approach seemed to be very effective</p> <p>Many tools could be used including Mediation, ABCs (Acceptable Behaviour Contracts), parenting orders, ASBO (Anti Social Behaviour Order) or partnership working. Working with many partners such as police, local authorities, other housing associations, youth workers etc.</p> <p>The Housing management team look at areas where trouble has developed and examine changes that could be put in place such as extra lighting. The REACT system provides info and flags up critical points.</p> <p>Within new builds the responsibility would be with the Development team, who have an obligation to consider preventing ASB as part of any design brief.</p> <p>TVH has the community chest which sometimes contributes towards combating ASB both directly and indirectly; however no Monies are ring-fenced for schemes to combat ASB.</p> <p>In 08/09 £23,102 of the fund's spend can be said to have been put towards efforts to reduce ASB over 11 projects. £10,230 of this was provided for schemes directly dealing with ASB (targeted</p>	

Thames Valley Housing Resident Auditors ASB Service Report Recommendations

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				<p>youth work, ASB education etc) and £12,872 (diversionary activities, after-school clubs etc).</p> <p>In 09/10 to date, £17,096 has been pledged to 6 projects tackling ASB, with £10,096 on specific ASB schemes and £7,000 on those indirectly contributing to such work.</p>	
3	Are staff involved in the ASB process given relevant training?	Regional Neighbourhood Manager and a Local Neighbourhood Manager, Neighbourhoods Officer		<p>A new ASB co-ordinator has recently started which should help to give a more coordinated response to issues. The auditors feel that this new appointment may help to improve co-ordination and therefore communication to residents</p> <p>Yes, they are given relevant training. Domestic violence training, Customer Care, The Understanding of What Causes ASB, Data Protection Act, CIH level 3, Internal by Management, about policies etc.</p> <p>The auditors feel that the training given to the relevant staff is very comprehensive.</p>	
4	There was a broad criticism of TVH from residents in that everything, including ASB, was too centralised.	Resident auditors meeting. Neighbourhood Officer Speaking to residents		<p>Some residents preferred the previous style housing officer role as something they can relate to.</p> <p>Comment by Neighbourhood Officer – <i>80% of resident should know their NH Officer.</i></p> <p>Comment by auditors - <i>We took a very limited sample of 20 residents and only two could name their neighbourhoods officer, when we asked the auditors only 5 out of 11 could name them.</i></p> <p>Are there any initiatives that look at a more localised management?</p>	

Thames Valley Housing Resident Auditors ASB Service Report Recommendations

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5	What is the role CSC play in the ASB issues?	Customer Service Officer CSC Housing Services Manager Speaking to Residents		<p>The CSC is the first point of contact, they set up the REACT case, inform NHO, and sometimes arrange a visit, they are the first line of advice, depending on the severity of the complaint, This severity is defined by the Tier System, and in serious cases they can inform the police.</p> <p>CSC use the Tier System to define the level of ASB: Tier Three– violence, threat to life, domestic violence and threats Tier Two- noise nuisance, dog issues, children ball game complaints (where kids are not allowed to play) Tier one- minor and one off complaints The auditors felt this process in theory appears fully capable of handling ASB cases.</p>	
Effective Communication					
6	Can you show the methods of communicating the ASB Policy? Is the method of communicating with residents, accessible and understandable?	Two interviews were undertaken with a Regional Neighbourhood Manager and a Local Neighbourhood Manager: both of whom get involved in ASB cases. Speaking to residents		<p>There are many means by which TVH communicate with residents surrounding ASB which include: newsletters, website, probationary tenancy guidelines, community agreements and service promise Amongst others.</p> <p>ASB leaflets are sent out to residents who raise an issue. All this type of literature goes through a reader's panel prior to being adopted by TVH. All literature can be translated on request. TVH literature also carries brief information about translation and interpretation on the ASB leaflet in the main languages in the TVH area.</p> <p>The ASB process and policy were easily accessible on the TVH website. The auditor felt the evidence of good literature surrounding was</p>	

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				easily understood, and appeared accessible through various means.	
7	How do residents who do not have internet access get to see or know about or get informed about ASB policy, procedures or any changes?	Regional Neighbourhood Manager and a Local Neighbourhood Manager Speaking to residents Reviewing the last 6 issues of <i>Link up</i>		<p><i>Link up</i> is the chief method. Copies of other documents are sent out to residents on request also . When residents sign tenancy/leasehold agreements they are informed about their ASB responsibility linked to their tenancy or lease.</p> <p>Through the range of audits that we have carried out this year we have found that although the <i>Link up</i> magazine is sent to everybody; it is read by very few residents, the main reason being that residents feel it is a corporate magazine used only for the for the promotion of TVH, and not a residents magazine with issues that matter to residents, not very resident friendly.</p> <p>The auitors still feel there could be a gap in this area for non-internet connected residents.</p>	
8	How do residents involved in ASB perceive TVH's communication during the process?	Regional Neighbourhood Manager and a Local Neighbourhood Manager Speaking to residents		<p>There is a perception by the auditors about communication, reflecting the repairs audit that communication is perceived as poor. TVH perception is that the process works well and is adequate in line with the data protection act.</p> <p>Due to data protection we were not able to address this issue with residents, however speaking to residents off of the record it was felt that communication was poor and residents felt that they were often left in the dark and not updated regularly enough whether the perpetrator or victim. Also over 50 % of the residents involved with this audit felt that there was no closure.</p>	

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9	Are there local meeting with residents that are linked to ASB problems?	Resident Involvement Local Initiative Officer		Local meetings can and are arranged on sites that have ASB issues to try to find resolution and discuss ways of combating it. We felt that this is a good reactive way of dealing with large scale ASB problems.	
10	<p>The new ASB Procedure and Policy; check if residents were involved in drafting any of this?</p> <p>The new ASB procedure is it the one on the TVH website?</p> <p>When is it reviewed?</p> <p>Is the policy in plain English?</p>	<p>Regional Neighbourhood Manager and a Local Neighbourhood Manager</p> <p>Public Documents Procedure available on website. Policy available on the website.</p> <p>Staff Documents</p>		<p>It was not thought that residents were involved in producing the set that is currently being used, however they are currently being reviewed and residents are involved in this process.</p> <p>The resident auditors were shown the new policy along with the policy review group and changes recommended by residents were incorporated</p> <p>We also feel the policy should be dated and a responsible officer or management role named, especially if it is to be reviewed every year as TVH have suggested.</p> <p>It is reviewed when new legislation occurs, the target is for annual revision.</p> <p>We feel the policy is written from a TVH management view and is not really resident friendly.</p>	
11	The new service standards were published in autumn; how were the residents involved?	Customer Service Officer CSC Housing Services Manager		<p>The reader's panel look at the standard to ensure they are readable. They are not involved in the draft stage.</p> <p>How can the residents be involved with some consultation in drafting the policy next time it is reviewed?</p>	
12	Do resident have any	Speaking to officers		Changes in building design and redesign, this is	

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	involvement in design, especially designing out ASB and any other problems?	Speaking to the head of the development team Speaking to members of the Resident Design Group		<p>part of TVH's commitment and fundamental to all new designs that TVH have direct control over consultation with the residents design group.</p> <p>Residents need to be involved in all stages of design; this necessitate training for residents; this could be particularly interesting in the area of building design and sustainable construction.</p> <p>The auditors agree that residents should be involved at an earlier stage of the development process.</p> <p>The RDG exists which is a welcomed step to get residents involved in the area of development side of the TVH business, The reason behind the group is to take on board residents' ideas and concerns etc for future developments. We felt that the RDG is a token gesture from TVH to have residents included; the residents are in the main only involved once the development has been constructed and are then asked for feedback, not at the initial design stage.</p> <p>We are not suggesting that residents should be designing, buildings and changing specifications etc, just that they have the option to share concerns about pending schemes based on their experiences, which hap[pens now but only once they have been built</p>	
Performance					
13	Explain the performance figures on ASB and why it has risen?	Data from Business Information System (BIS) Customer Service Officer CSC Housing Services Manager Data from BIS		<p>ASB has never been a TVH kPI .</p> <p>A senior manager is looking into the development of measurements and targets.</p>	

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		ASB Cases 06-07 - 213 ASB Cases 07-08 - 244 ASB Cases 08-09 - 247 ASB Cases 09-10 – 282 so far -		<p>Policy Performance and Housing Directorate to meet and identify how the Business Intelligence System can assist in providing KPIs for TVH. Housing Management want ASB KPIs.</p> <p>Comment by TVH Manager, "We had no conclusion on this issue from TVH but feel that with ASB being such a serious issue to residents, perhaps there should be some form of KPI especially bearing in mind that the current percentage rate rise in ASB is higher than the current percentage rate rise in new properties which means statistically it is on the increase."</p> <p>What reason are there behind this year's rise in ASB?</p>	
14	ASB surveys feedback.	Performance and Policy Resident Involvement?		There has been minimum response from residents involved in the ASB process, mainly due to the restriction on the type of questioning the auditors were able to put forward to them and obviously the restrictions of any information that could be made available to us under the data protection act	
Resident & Staff Perception					
15	Can we meet residents who have been involved in the ASB process?	TVH senior management		<p>TVH do not think it is possible for the auditors to meet residents who are or have been involved in ASB due to data protection and the sensitive nature of ASB.</p> <p>Auditors have looked at the REACT system under staff supervision. The system is widely used in other organisations and is a lead system in the ASB field.</p>	

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				A very positive outcome has come from this however as we feel that TVH upheld fully their obligations and did not share any restricted or confidential data that related to individuals or schemes.	
16	On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate the effectiveness of the whole ASB process?	Customer Service Officer CSC Housing Services Manager Comparison, knowledge and experience Resident survey		Good. In comparison with other organisations – 7. Need to get higher. The limited feedback we were able to get from residents scored this lower, which indicates that possibly the residents perception of the procedure is different. We strongly feel TVH need to make sure there is closure, quicker in response, keep witnesses and complainants informed at all times wherever possible.	
17	How would you improve the ASB service?	Customer Service Officer CSC Housing Services Manager		It could be more tolerant and be better communicated. The auditors agree that better communication would improve the service offered to TVH's customers.	
18	Feedback to residents involved.	Because of the nature of looking at ASB it was impossible to interview many residents who had been directly involved. Two of the resident auditors who had experience of the ASB process commented.		The two resident auditors who have had experience of ASB commented on the lack of communication during the process and at the end of the process. Both auditors had a complaint against them and TVH was very quick to let them know this and the fact they were being investigated, and what could happen, however following on from this no further communication was received which can be very worrying, it was only through contacting TVH that they were told the cases were closed a long time ago with no further action.	

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				<p>The same thing was highlighted to auditors with other conversations with residents, this leaves residents worried, and upset and they feel that they have something hanging over them.</p> <p>TVH must ensure there is closure to the residents and that this happens as soon as possible, and that this is adequately communicated to residents.</p>	
19	The average satisfaction score we have received from the residents is 5.5; based on overall service relating to ASB. Is this what you would have expected?	Customer Service Officer CSC Housing Services Manager Resident Auditors who have had experience of ASB. Resident survey		<p>Staff are aware this needs to be raised.</p> <p>We could only gather limited feedback hence the orange and not red, however residents perception of how good the service is was lower than TVH's</p> <p>Which is dangerous because it indicates that staff believe the service is better than residents say it is which means they are potentially missing something.</p>	
Publicity					
20	What is the general theme and method of publicity and ASB?	PR & Marketing Manager Speaking to residents		<p>The tendency is to report only the good ASB outcomes and development.</p> <p>Quote from PR Manager - <i>We feature positive stories about ASB in Link Up, local residents' newsletters and Annual Residents reports where there is something significant to report. For example, in Link Up Spring 08 we talked about successful ASB raids in Reading as well as the results of a Berkshire Survey which ranked TVH first for our response to ASB cases. Our recent annual residents' report/calendar also had a page focusing on our approach to safer neighbourhoods/ASB. Our website also has detailed information about how we deal with ASB including our downloadable Policy. The Communications team does not publicise bad ASB.</i></p> <p>Should not the more complex side of ASB be</p>	

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				<p>seen? ASB with warts and all.</p> <p>The auditing team think that it is great that ASB is publicised but feel that more publicity should be made of this area with the last main link up feature 2 years ago.</p> <p>Residents want to believe that they are protected from ASB and this features heavily in satisfaction results, we would like to see more evidence publicised of the action taken against offenders, even evictions (obviously not name and shame)</p> <p>But we feel that this would act as the strongest deterrent, it is the residents perception that TVH is too soft on perpetrators.</p>	
Documents Checked					
21	Tackling ASB	<p>Checked by auditors Advice from RI Officer Guidance by Regional Neighbourhood Manager and a Local Neighbourhood Manager</p> <p>The document below were examined as hard copies, they were present with an explanatory pack by the Neighbourhood Manager and Local Neighbourhood Manager.</p> <p>In some instance the website was also examined to view electronic versions of documents'.</p>		<p>Good example of ASB info for Residents. It would be good to see the document dated and the Service Area responsible on the front page. This would help when auditing and referring to it and might prevent confusion. It would also help residents and staff in ensuring they have the most recent 'live' document.</p>	
22	Probationary Tenants	Checked by auditors.		Good document in plain English.	

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	Information document	Advice from RI Officer.		It would be good to see the document dated and the Service Area responsible on the front page	
23	Compass Point Community Agreement & Welcome Pack, Worcester Park Community Agreement	Checked by auditors. Advice from RI Officer.		Clear and well laid out, with information, images and good text.	
24	ASB Power Point info presented to the Board	Checked by auditors. Advice from RI Officer.		Data showed TVH performing well, with poor perception data between 3.20% & 7.40%. Working with partnership agencies was the the only eye-catching negative - scoring poor = 16.70%	
25	Starter Probationary Tenancy Procedure (Staff only document)	Checked by auditors. Advice from RI Officer.		A manual designed for staff. Can documents like this be dated?	
26	ASB Policy	Checked website, the process and policy are easily accessible.		The contact process and the basic process seem fairly straightforward; but the policy is written from a management perspective.	
27	ASB Procedure and Process Maps (Staff only document)	Checked by auditors. Advice from RI Officer.		Technical manual designed for staff. This should be dated to ensure that it is the most current document	
General					
28	Support for staff dealing with ASB.	Customer Service Officer CSC Housing Services Manager Regional Neighbourhood Manager Local Neighbourhood Manager. Staff can request to move from cases.		We realised by speaking with staff that some cases can be very traumatic and difficult to deal with and quite intensive for example, domestic violence, child abuse court appearances etc. We would question whether the support offered to staff was adequate; it is stressed that we found no evidence to the contrary suggesting anything was needed but with seemingly the only option for staff if it becomes too difficult is to move from the case, what is TVH doing in the long term?	

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Additional Recommendations
<p><u>Website</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We would welcome the ability to be able to report ASB online, via a link from the ASB pages. 2. The ASB out of hours hotline number is not displayed on the website. 3. We would like to see some negative statistics e.g.: TVH takes reports of ASB very seriously last year we took action against??? 4. The availability on-line of the Diary form to print off, so that residents do not have to make a complaint prior to gathering the information. <p><u>Communication</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is the main area that seems to have let down the audit and occurred also in the recent Repairs audit; we would like to see some form of tighter control to ensure that the communication that is in place and supposed to happen actually does. <p><u>Proactiveness</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The majority of TVH's work is reactive to ASB, we would like to see more efforts and resources put into being proactive in preventing ASB