



THE *ANTISOCIAL* SOCIAL LANDLORD

July 2024

A SHAC Report
on Social Landlord
Response to
Antisocial Behaviour
and the Impact on
Tenants and
Residents



Social Housing Action Campaign
WWW.SHACTION.ORG | [@HAWIRNET](https://twitter.com/HAWIRNET) | SHAC.ACTION@GMAIL.COM

CONTENTS

1. FOREWORD	2
2. Introduction	3
3. From Philanthropy to Corporate Psychopathy	5
4. The SHAC Antisocial Behaviour Survey	9
Survey Findings	10
Summary	16
5. Wilful Neglect	19
Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014	20
Equality Act 2010	21
Human Right Act 1998	24
Care Act 2014	25
Summary	26
6. Victim Stories	32
Life and Death with ASB	32
Case Study One:	35
Cassandra's Story: A Campaign of ASB Terror	
Case Study Two:	40
Southern Housing: A Tale of Corporate Sociopathy	
7. Conclusion	51

FOREWORD

We make no apology for the strength of wording used throughout this report. The issue of antisocial behaviour (ASB) in social housing is an extremely serious one which can be, and often is, a life and death matter. The impact on victims' lives is multifaceted and devastating, deeply affecting their mental and physical health, relationships, and ability to enjoy their homes and communities for the long term. Yet, ASB often elicits trite commentary and useless platitudes from those best placed to address it meaningfully.

Notwithstanding our passion, this report is not merely an emotive diatribe. We have been sure to ground it in rich data and factual references which reveal a stark, concerning picture of the true price that ASB victims are paying. This experience is costing them everything – their sense of safety, peace of mind, at times their livelihood, and overall quality of life. Most importantly, our report reveals that the behaviour of social landlords during ASB, which spans from neglect to abuse, adds significantly to these victim costs.

This report is not an attack on social landlords. While SHAC exists to create awareness of social housing issues, and to expose landlords where necessary, our preference is always to work side-by-side with landlords to facilitate change. However, in a climate where landlords are largely unaccountable, and thus free to ignore such offers of partnership, speaking out is often our only resort. Our report therefore seeks to lay bare the suffering of tenants/residents at the hands of antisocial landlords and to seek change.

Social Housing Action Campaign (SHAC)

Introduction

ASB in social housing is an issue that is broached widely and regularly amongst SHAC members. We know that our members unfortunately provide a snapshot of an issue that is pervasive amongst tenants/residents across the country. This presents a harrowing picture of ASB wreaking havoc on people's lives. While in many cases the cause of ASB is as simple as selfish individuals or families living without regard to those around them, in many other instances the reasons are much more complex.

ASB can be caused by socio-economic factors, mental health issues, family breakdown, or even poorly designed housing and insufficient soundproofing. Sometimes, positive neighbour relationships can deteriorate over disputes about communal spaces or some other misunderstanding. On occasion, both (or multiple) parties commit ASB against each other. Whatever the case, all the true victim ultimately wants is for the ASB to stop. This is where landlords come in, whose responsibility it is to assess the nature of ASB and its cause, and to intervene appropriately. Unfortunately, this very often does not happen.

When landlords fail to comply with their ASB policy and/or relevant legislation, this is a failure to fulfil their duty as a social landlord. This neglectful approach can take many forms, from the landlord failing to acknowledge the victim's initial or ongoing complaints, to failing to assess and respond to risk, and refusing to use the informal/formal tools available to them in accordance with statutory guidance. At times, landlord approaches can be more sinister. They may make false allegations that the victims are the cause or have contributed to ASB. Other times, they may downplay or deny the ASB, trivialising or dismissing the impact on victims' lives.

By such inaction or actions, these landlords themselves become *antisocial* by definition, which is to be contrary to law, averse to the society, hostile, and harmful. This report focuses on the **antisocial social landlord**, and the destructive impact of its behaviour on the lives of victims and wider culture of social housing. Despite

new social housing legislation¹ and a purported ASB action plan², both of which came into play in 2023, the government has yet to acknowledge and thereby address the antisocial conduct of landlords. Yet by the end of 2023, the egregiousness of ASB management failure was made all the more obvious by the following tragedy.

In November 2023, the story of Mark Pearce³ was released in the media. Over a period of nine months, Mark made over 20 noise complaints to Clarion, who was his landlord and is the UK's largest housing association. Mark suffered from anxiety and depression. As a vulnerable person, the impact of the noise from the flat above was so distressing that he had attempted suicide. Despite conveying his profound distress to Clarion, they accused him of 'whining', said that the noise was normal household sound, and told him that he could not live in London and expect silence. In the absence of proper intervention from Clarion, Mark took his life.

While the Housing Ombudsman publicly disapproved of Clarion's treatment of Mark, issuing it with a severe maladministration determination, it stopped short of saying that its behaviour was antisocial. But, of course, it was. Despite having the power to help Mark, Clarion disregarded the legal⁴ definition of ASB, ignored the associated statutory guidance⁵, and disregarded any possible obligations it had to Mark under the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998 or the Care Act 2014. Professional context aside, it was simply inhumane for Clarion to dismiss and victim-blame a vulnerable, suicidal tenant who was clearly suffering.

Clarion's behaviour can be reasonably described as contrary to law, averse to society, hostile, and harmful, and thus antisocial. Its conduct today is a considerable departure from its philanthropic origins and how all social housing began.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/36>

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1157028/Anti-social_Behaviour_Action_Plan_March_2023.pdf

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/nov/02/tenant-killed-himself-after-landlord-failed-to-resolve-repeated-noise-complaints>

⁴ Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Section 2(1)

⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6422a19b60a35e00120cae63/2023_Update_ASBS_Statutory_Guidance_-_FINAL_1.pdf

From Philanthropy to Corporate Psychopathy

‘The Clarion Story’⁶ features proudly on Clarion’s website, boasting of the housing association’s origins in the philanthropy of William Sutton, a Victorian entrepreneur. In his will, Sutton left a fortune of what today would be nearly £200 million for the purpose of creating housing for the poor in London and other populous areas in England. In the 19th century, Sutton was of like mind with other wealthy individuals, such as Edward Guinness, Octavia Hill and George Peabody. These benefactors responded to industrialisation by building houses for low-income workers.

Over time, the concept of Council housing became embedded in our governmental and societal infrastructures, as prime ministers sought to expand housing for war heroes and went on to build 1 million homes for those in general need. Fast forward to 1974 and the Housing Act allowed for public funding to be granted to housing associations for the provision of social housing. As Council housing building slowed and their housing stock became consumed by the 1980 Right-to-Buy scheme, housing associations became – and still are – the main provider of social housing. Throughout this report, the term ‘social landlords’ therefore includes Council housing providers and housing associations.

Housing associations are not-for-profit entities that tend to have charitable status. However, a curious provision in the Charities Act 2011⁷ allows them to obtain *exempt* charitable status. Therefore, while they do not have the legal structure of a charity, and are therefore not under Charity Commission governance, they can claim the status of charity through their declared charitable objectives.

Thus, even when a charitable landlord breaches the public benefit requirement⁸ of the Charities Act 2011 (to which all charitable organisations must comply), including the ‘benefit’ aspect which states that *‘any detriment or harm that results from the*

⁶ <https://www.clarionhq.com/about-us/who-we-are/the-clarion-story>

⁷ Charities Act 2011 Schedule 2 Section 26

⁸ Charities Act 2011 s4

purpose (to people, property or the environment) must not outweigh the benefit', there is no designated regulatory body to which the landlord is held accountable.

It is difficult to imagine more detrimental or harmful behaviour than that of Clarion's treatment of Mark Pearce, and even harder to understand how a charitable organisation with such philanthropic roots can become so antisocial. The simple answer is that Clarion is indicative of any organisation that conducts itself without impunity. Clarion, like other housing associations, knows that ASB victims have little recourse in the face of such uncharitable treatment.

As it stands, there is no legislation in the UK that explicitly requires landlords to respond to ASB, whether in accordance with the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 or at all. There is also no legislation that holds them liable for their tenants'/residents' ASB. Yes, an individual could potentially launch a civil ASB claim against their landlord for breaches of the Equality Act 2010 or the Human Rights Act 1998 for how it handles ASB. Alternatively, an individual could make application to the administrative court for judicial review in response to a social landlord's failure to adhere to its ASB policy. We discuss these options more later in this report.

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However, all the legal actions above are costly, time-consuming, and complex, thus exceeding the mental, emotional, and financial resources of most tenants/residents. Another problem with legal action is that it is reactive. ASB has to likely reach critical levels before it would be justified, and legal action cannot stop any ASB occurring in the interim of the proceedings. What tenants/residents need is ready, free access to a regulatory body that will exercise enforcement power and issue penalties against landlords failing to respond to ASB appropriately.

According to a 2022 survey mentioned in the government's ASB action plan, 1 in 4

(1 million) social households experienced ASB in the year prior. However, 95% of polled residents felt that landlord response was ineffective when they reported ASB or would be ineffective if they had. Despite this data, the government's action plan makes no enforcement proposal to address landlord ASB management. The plan only makes the following ill-defined promise:

'Housing associations and landlords: we will work to ensure that no one lives in misery with anti-social neighbours. We will support landlords to use the tools they already have, to respond to reports of anti-social behaviour, work closely with the police and other local agencies to deal with problems and, where necessary, swiftly evict tenants.'

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, which reached Royal Assent later in that year, also makes no provision regarding ASB enforcement and fails to grant such enforcement powers to the Housing Ombudsman or the Regulator of Social Housing.

According to statistics published⁹ in 2023 by Resolve, a prominent ASB awareness and training organisation, it is estimated that there are in fact 5 million incidents of ASB each year, the majority of which are reported to local authorities, housing providers, and community groups. Only 5.7% were 'very satisfied' with how their 'housing association/landlord' handled ASB; 23% were only 'fairly satisfied'. Nevertheless, the government has thus far ignored calls from Resolve to establish 'specialist "problem solving housing courts"'. While a court would be a reactive approach, as previously discussed, it could still provide a forum where ASB could be addressed specifically and expeditiously.

Collected data clearly indicates that social landlords are persistently ignoring their duties to tenants/residents in response to ASB. While the impact of ASB on victims' lives is acknowledged, it should also be widely recognised that its impact is compounded by the behaviour of an antisocial landlord. Yet, it appears that the

⁹ <https://www.resolveuk.org.uk/images/YouGov.pdf>

government has no appetite to address this behaviour. The government's belief that social landlords need 'support' rather than enforcement to respond to ASB appropriately ignores research findings and disregards the impact of poor ASB management on victims.

'In just under half the cases where we found maladministration (including service failure) or reasonable redress in how the landlord handled the noise reports, landlords had failed to comply with their own ASB policies. This varied from not invoking them when the policy states they should do so, to correctly identifying ASB as per their policy definition and starting the process, but then failing to follow through with actions such as risk assessments, action plans or acceptable behaviour contracts.'

**SPOTLIGHT ON:
NOISE COMPLAINTS**

Housing Ombudsman Service
October 2022

In the absence of enforcement, social landlords have shifted away from philanthropic ethics without consequence. With regards to ASB, they have morphed into a power unto themselves, responding arbitrarily to ASB complaints without any accountability to regulators or to the tenants/residents they are meant to serve. As such, social landlords frighteningly bring to life the famous words of English historian Lord

John Dalberg-Acton, which are, *'Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.'*

The definition of corporate psychopathy¹⁰ is *'a form of corporate conduct, which meets the psychiatric criteria for human psychopathy, that is, a failure to conform to social norms and the violation of accepted ethical standards without remorse.'* With regret, we cannot think of a better description for the supposedly charitable housing providers who ignore, mistreat, and actively re-victimise ASB victims.

Disappointingly, SHAC was not dissuaded from this view when we conducted our own ASB survey.

¹⁰ https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-642-28036-8_128

The SHAC Antisocial Behaviour Survey

According to the legal definition, ASB is –

- conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person,
- conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or
- conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

Government guidance¹¹ on ASB states that it can be criminal and non-criminal conduct and includes, but is not limited to, the following range of behaviours:

- noisy neighbours
- vandalism
- graffiti
- fly-tipping and littering
- discarding syringes or needles
- threatening, harassing or inconsiderate behaviour

In January 2024, SHAC conducted its own survey to understand the ASB experiences of its members and of any non-members who wished to participate. We had 137 respondents in total. There were 45 landlordsⁱ mentioned, the top five of which (in chronological order) were Clarion Housing Association, Peabody Housing Association, Southern Housing, The Hyde Group, and One Housing Group/Riverside and Notting Hill Genesis who tied in fifth place.

To ensure that we captured as wide a range of ASB as possible, we relied on the government definition of ASB but revised the wording to create more specific categories. Most of the categories are self-evident but for clarity the term ‘hate

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/how-report-antisocial-behaviour#:~:text=Antisocial%20behaviour%20is%20behaviour%20that,graffiti>

crime’ in this survey means ASB on the basis of an individual’s race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or transgender identity. The term ‘cuckooing’ refers to the act of taking over a vulnerable person’s home to establish a base for illegal drug dealing.

Survey Findings

The **types of ASB** we asked about and the percentage of those who experienced them are outlined in the following table. Please note the percentages in this table, and those thereafter, may not add up to 100% given the variability of responses. For example, on some questions respondents could choose more than one applicable answer. On other occasions, some questions may not have been applicable to the respondent.

TYPES OF ASB	PERCENTAGE OF VICTIMS
Noise nuisance	72%
Intimidatory behaviour	69%
Drug use	58%
Vandalism, graffiti, fly-tipping, littering	47%
Threats or acts of violence	45%
Drunkenness, harassment, loitering in public spaces	37%
Hate crime	32%
Cuckooing	10%

We asked respondents **how long they had experienced ASB**; 81% of respondents were still enduring ASB at the time of the survey in accordance with the durations below:

ASB DURATION	PERCENTAGE OF VICTIMS
Less than 1 year	8%
1 – 5 years	46%
5 years or more	42%

On the subject of **reporting ASB to their landlord**, 91% of respondents reported the ASB.

On the subject of **disability**¹², 74% of respondents stated that someone in their household had a disability; 61% of respondents advised their landlord of this at the time of reporting ASB. However, respondents said that 51% of landlords did not conduct a risk assessment upon learning of disability (7% of respondents were not sure if the landlord completed one). Also, respondents stated that 50% of the ASB cases involving victim disability were not treated as high-risk (9% of respondents were not sure of their cases' risk level).

Of those who reported the ASB, we asked how long their landlord took to respond to their ASB complaint:

LANDLORD RESPONSE TIME	PERCENTAGE OF VICTIMS
No Response	25%
Within 1 week	10%
Within 6 months	39%
After 6 months	12%

On the subject of **internal ASB policy**, 57% said that their landlord did not refer them to its ASB policy; 56% said their landlord did not comply with its ASB policy.

On the subject of **landlord action**, respondents stated that 56% of landlords failed to take any action against the ASB perpetrator (12% of respondents said they did not know if the landlord took any action.)

Of the landlords who took action, 56% of respondents stated that they did not know exactly what the landlord did; 27% of respondents reported that landlords used informal tools (i.e., verbal and written warnings, acceptable behaviour agreements). With regards to ASB Review (previously called Community Trigger), 66% of respondents said that their landlord did not refer them to this. With regards to formal tools (i.e., legal orders, rehousing/eviction), 20% of respondents stated that the landlord used these measures.

On the subject of **engagement with other agencies**, 47% of respondents said they did not know if their landlord interacted with other agencies in relation to their ASB case. Respondents said that 20% of landlords involved the police, 12% involved the local authority, 7% involved MPs/local councillors, and just 4% referred respondents to Victim Support.

On the subject of **satisfaction** with how the landlord handled their ASB complaints, the respondents replied as follows:

RESPONDENT SATISFACTION	PERCENTAGE OF VICTIMS
Very dissatisfied / dissatisfied	76%
Somewhat dissatisfied	4%
Very satisfied / satisfied	2%
Somewhat satisfied	1%

On the subject of the **impact of ASB on victims**, respondents reported the following:

IMPACT OF ASB	PERCENTAGE OF VICTIMS
Long-term mental and physical health problems	93%
Restricted enjoyment of my home	86%
Sleep disruption	77%
Restricted freedom to come and go from my home	60%
Restricted freedom to have visitors at my home	54%
Short term mental health problems	22%
Forced me to relocate from my home	22%
Short-term physical illness	8%

Additional comments from individual respondents regarding the impact of ASB included the following:

'Fear, unable to eat, sleep, wash, work or live'

'Loss of ability to work'

*'My partner tried to kill herself and almost lost her job;
I've had 2 mini strokes; we both have PTSD'*

'Now suicidal at times'

'Suicidal feelings'

'Heart palpitations and anxiety'

'Anxiety attacks'

'Trauma and intimidation'

*'I breath unidentified fumes daily from my neighbours below me; I get itchy
red eyes, and constantly worry about the effect on my health'*

'Much time spent reporting'

*'I'm constantly raising complaints on helpdesk of housing association
& the property'*

With regards to **how landlords treated ASB victims**, 42% of respondents said their landlord falsely alleged that they were to blame for the ASB; 31% of respondents said landlords took retaliatory action against them. Additional comments from individual respondents were as follows:

*'Stress trying to get the matter recognised & sorted by Hyde -
(the) property (is) rented & we own our home outright.
Almost go so far to say that we were being ignored'*

*'Anxiety to not knowing what I will have to deal with next;
landlord unwilling to assist'*

*'Daughter going missing and self-harming more, we are going through the
eviction process because I had a(n) ombudsman case up until last year
and 1 week later we were served with a Notice to Quit'*

'MTVHA accused me of wasting their time and I had to get the police involved'

*'The harassment and attempts to criminalise us are ongoing by
landlord and tenant collaborator'*

'The landlord is actually behind the ASB to get us illegally evicted'

'We the tenants have now been blamed'

*'The landlord is threatening us with huge court costs and prosecution /
harassing us because we are exposing them for the aforementioned'*

'Landlord harassment and framing for criminalisation and illegal eviction'

'I have a record for ASB unlawfully obtained'

'Living in terror and fear of attack and illegal eviction daily - dehumanised'

'All tenants involved were not contacted at all, no email response, no text response, no letter response from anyone, he was continually breaching it (injunction), at that point they could have removed his tenancy by taking it to court... they left all tenants alone... after all tenants had gone through, now it's been turned onto every tenant involved... with no recourse to action, and threatening tenancy'

*'This is still ongoing, and the housing is so deep in the sh** because they have harassed us with illegal false ASB accusations and harassment whilst supporting their goon and stooge to harass us with hate crime and stalking / daily threats'*

Summary

This survey is a self-report study providing insight into the respondents' beliefs, attitudes, and feelings regarding their ASB experiences. However, this does not mean the findings lack objectivity. While the data does not include input from landlords or other agencies, it should be assumed that the data is accurate for a few reasons.

Firstly, victims tend to have good recall of the violations they are subjected to. Victims are also usually required to keep a written ASB record, and they can recall how landlords and other agencies engage with the ASB details within this record. Our findings should therefore be trusted as much as the self-reported data used by the government and Resolve as aforementioned. Self-reporting provides an important starting place for further examination of patterns and themes evident in respondents' answers.

Our survey has confirmed much of what has already been established through other research about ASB in social housing. We have confirmed that most tenants/residents are unhappy with how their landlords manage ASB, and that the reasons for this are because, for the most part, landlords –

- fail to respond to ASB in a timely manner (if at all)
- fail to comply with their own ASB policy
- fail to communicate effectively with tenants/residents
- fail to take the impact of ASB on victims seriously
- fail to use the informal/formal tools available to them
- fail to engage consistently and meaningfully with external agencies

However, our survey went further to examine the nature of the relationship between landlords and tenants/residents when ASB occurs. Specifically, our findings indicate a disturbing trend of landlords abusing their power and punishing ASB victims. In particular, when tenants/residents seek to hold landlords accountable for failures in ASB management, we see landlords adopt a common method in abusive relationships called DARVO.

DARVO stands for ‘deny, attack, reverse victim and offender’. Landlords use DARVO both to deflect from their mismanagement and/or to absolve themselves of the responsibility of acting on behalf of victims. The unfortunate effect of this tactic is that it isolates the victim, who is helpless, compounding their experience of ASB. It also encourages the ASB perpetrator to persist in the absence of consequences from the landlord.

On another note, we see from our survey findings that landlords appear not to exercise any particular concern or responsibility for disabled and vulnerable ASB victims, failing to routinely assess risk and/or to respond according to their needs. It is apparent that landlords frequently disregard the impact of ASB on these tenants/residents, who are already substantially disadvantaged.

All of the substandard landlord behaviour made evident through our survey is antisocial, according to the government's own definition. Landlords – whether by omission or commission – are causing harassment, alarm, distress, nuisance, and annoyance to tenants/residents.

This is the *opposite* of being charitable organisations. In order for there to be any real change in behaviour, the government must consider landlord ASB to be just as malevolent and damaging as ASB perpetrated by tenants/residents – and the government should take action to stop it. Without this, all proposed ASB plans and current legislations have been – and will continue to be – ineffectual.

Housing law is complex, some would argue intentionally so as this makes it challenging for tenants/residents to understand and navigate. The housing legal framework is made up of a network of various legislations and their applications vary depending on the nature of tenancies that people have. And it turns out, as in the area of ASB, for example, the law is not always in the best interests of tenants/residents.

However, there are pieces of legislation that exist to protect tenants/residents, all of which landlords are fully aware. Most, if not all, landlords will refer to these pieces of legislation in their internal ASB and other policies. If landlords actually respected the law and took their obligations under it seriously, landlord ASB would be unthinkable and ASB from tenants/residents would be far better controlled.

It is important for tenants/residents to understand what their rights are from a legal standpoint so that they are empowered to challenge landlords wherever possible. It is also useful for them to know that legislation is often accompanied by statutory guidance. This guidance provides interpretation of law and instruction on how it should be applied. While guidance is not itself law, it has been determined by the courts that agencies '*must have regard*' to statutory guidance¹³. This means they should follow it, unless there is good reason not to.

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¹³ R v Islington LBC ex p Rixon [1998] 1 CCLR 119

Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

This legislation is most relevant to ASB. Since 2014, it has proffered a range of powers and tools to social housing providers to tackle ASB in various ways. The key takeaways from this legislation as outlined in the statutory guidance are as follows:

'Putting the Victim First'

'The legal tests that govern the use of the anti-social behaviour powers are focused on the impact that the behaviour is having, or is likely to have, on victims, communities and businesses. When considering the response to a complaint of anti-social behaviour, agencies must consider the effect that the behaviour in question is having on the lives of those subject to it. For example, agencies should recognise and consider the debilitating impact that persistent or repeated anti-social behaviour can have on its victims, and the cumulative impact if that behaviour persists over a period of time.'

'Vulnerabilities'

'The powers also strengthen the protection to victims and communities and provide fast and effective responses to deal with anti-social behaviour. Particular consideration should be given to the needs and circumstances of the most vulnerable when applying the powers to ensure that they are not disproportionately and unreasonably impacted upon, and local agencies must be satisfied that the behaviour meets the legal tests. Any use of these powers must be compliant with the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 (in particular the public sector equality duty pursuant to section 149) along with all other relevant legislation.'

'Assessing the Risk to Victims'

'It is good practice for agencies to assess the risk of harm to the victim(s), and any potential vulnerabilities, when they receive a complaint about anti-social behaviour. This should be the starting point of a case-management approach to dealing with anti-social complaints. The welfare, safety and well-being of victims must be the main consideration at every stage of the process. It is therefore

important to identify the effect that the reported anti-social behaviour is having on the victim(s), particularly if repeated incidents are having a cumulative effect on their mental or physical well-being. A continuous and organised risk assessment will help to identify cases that are causing, or could result in, serious harm to the victim, either as a one-off incident or as part of a targeted and persistent campaign of anti-social behaviour against the victim(s).'

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It is important to note that the core of this guidance is for users to have a **victim centred** approach. The landlord's starting point when receiving ASB complaints should thus be to **prioritise the impact of ASB on the victim**. Their duty is then to respond in accordance with tenants/residents' needs (which is particularly relevant to the issue of disability), and to ensure that risk is assessed so that the correct tools are

utilised. The guidance also goes on to stress a **multi-agency approach** to resolving ASB, i.e., working with local authorities, the police, and other relevant organisations, as well as emphasising **early intervention to prevent ASB escalation**.

Notably, the 'Vulnerabilities' section quotes the Equality Act 2010 with specific reference to the public sector equality duty (section 149). We will therefore examine this legislation next.

Equality Act 2010

With regard to 'vulnerability', disability is the most obvious and relevant type within the context of ASB.

There are five types of disability discrimination and any one of them can be committed by a landlord when failing to manage ASB appropriately. A tenant/resident could bring a claim to the civil court if subjected to any of these behaviours:

- **direct discrimination** – treating a tenant/resident unfairly because of their disability
- **indirect discrimination** – applying a policy, criteria, or practice that has a worse impact on disabled tenants/residents than on those non-disabled
- **failure to make reasonable adjustments** – refusing to make an adjustment to help tenants/residents access information, communication, or services
- **discrimination arising from disability** – treating a tenant/resident unfairly because of something connected to their disability
- **harassment** – treating a tenant/resident in a way that makes them feel humiliated, offended, or degraded because of their disability
- **victimisation** – treating a tenant/resident unfairly because they raised a complaint about discrimination (or helped someone to raise a discrimination complaint)

Although we are focusing on disability in this report, it is useful to note that the Equality Act 2010 lists other protected characteristics which can be included under discrimination in social housing. These are race, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sex, sexual orientation, and gender reassignment. A landlord who treats a tenant/resident unfairly because of any of these characteristics could be found liable for discrimination in a court of law.

All public organisations are legally required to fulfil the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) throughout every aspect of their operation, including ASB management. While this is a straightforward matter for Council housing providers, over the years there has been some debate before the courts as to whether housing associations are public bodies. However, when providing social housing to tenants/residents they are deemed as private organisations fulfilling *public functions* and are therefore obliged in that capacity to adhere to the PSED.

With regards to disability, the three main PSED responsibilities that social landlords have further to the PSED are to –

1. put an end to any unlawful conduct which is banned by the Equality Act 2010, which includes harassment, discrimination, and victimisation
2. advance equal opportunities between tenants/residents who are disabled and those who are non-disabled
3. foster good relations between tenants/residents who are disabled and those who are not

The High Court has provided guidance on how public bodies should demonstrate adherence to the PSED. These are called *The Brown Principles*¹⁴. Social landlords should therefore demonstrate adherence to the PSED as follows when managing ASB:

- The decision-maker must be made aware of the duty to have due regard to the identified goals at the time of the decision under consideration
- Subsequent attempts to justify a decision as being consistent with the duty when due regard was not had at the time, are not enough
- The duty must be exercised in substance and with rigour, albeit the terms of the statute do not have to be expressly referred to. It is not a box-ticking exercise.
- The duty is non-delegable
- It is a continuing one
- It is best practice to keep an adequate record showing that the equality duties have been considered conscientiously

A social landlord's failure to adhere to PSED in the management of ASB could entitle a tenant/resident with a protected characteristic to make application to the administrative court for judicial review, as this is the method to challenge decisions made by public bodies and private organisations fulfilling public functions.

¹⁴ R (Bracking) V Secretary of State for Work and Pensions [2013] EWCA Civ 1345

It is important to add here that in January 2024, the High Court¹⁵ ruled that a social landlord has the right to exclude individuals with a history of ASB from its housing list even if they have a neuropsychiatric disability. While this is a win for landlords, it does not entitle them to be discriminatory towards disabled people, nor does it absolve them of the requirement to comply with the PSED.

The Judge ruled that there is no evidence which proves a link between ASB and neuropsychiatric conditions. It is therefore essential for landlords to make distinctions between genuine behavioural manifestations of these conditions and ASB, or they could be liable for disability discrimination when accusing a disabled tenant/resident of ASB when they behave in ways which reflect recognised traits associated with their condition.

We also argue that this ruling should protect genuinely neurodiverse and mentally ill individuals, making a distinction between those with established traits of those conditions and perpetrators attempting to excuse their ASB on the basis of an alleged disability.

Human Rights Act 1998

Alongside the Equality Act 2010, the aforementioned ASB legislation refers to human rights legislation in its statutory guidance. Under section 6 of this act, it is unlawful for a public authority to act in a way that is incompatible with an individual's rights under the European Convention on Human Rights. Public bodies, or private

...public bodies
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in a way that
contravenes
(human) rights...

organisations fulfilling public functions, must therefore not conduct themselves in a way that contravenes tenants/residents' rights under the Convention.

The aspect of this legislation that could be deemed most relevant to ASB is Article 8 – 'Respect for Your Private and Family Life'. It is

¹⁵ <https://www.brownejacobson.com/insights/high-court-ruling-r-willmott-v-eastbourne-2024>

possible that a tenant/resident could bring a case¹⁶ against a landlord for failing to respond to ASB appropriately and thereby disrupting their private and family life.

Care Act 2014

This legislation forms part of the legal framework for adult social care. It outlines obligations that local authorities must fulfil and is applicable to adults receiving social care support from a local authority following a care needs assessment. According to this legislation's statutory guidance, local authorities have a duty to *'prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs'*, to *'stop abuse or neglect wherever possible,'* and to *'address what has caused the abuse or neglect'*.

Although not listed amongst the legislations in the 'Vulnerabilities' section of the ASB legislation, housing associations frequently rely on the Care Act 2014 for the framework of their safeguarding policy. In doing so, they often refer to themselves as *'alerters'* to local authorities on matters of risk, neglect, and abuse. However, notably, housing associations fail to acknowledge that the legislation's guidance refers to something called **organisational abuse**, which is –

'...neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.'

While recognising that they have safeguarding obligations to applicable tenants/residents under the Care Act 2014, housing associations are often guilty of **organisational abuse** by their failure to manage ASB according to legislation and statutory guidance. It must be noted that in relation to housing staff obligations under the Care Act 2014, the Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE)¹⁷ states that *'it*

¹⁶ Donnelly's Application for Judicial Review [2003] NICA 55; [2004] N.I. 189

¹⁷ [Safeguarding adults for housing staff | SCIE](#)

is important to intervene early to prevent escalation of problems that may result in crisis and a higher level of need'. The SCIE also lists 'failure to manage residents with abusive behaviour'¹⁸ as a type of **organisational** or **institutional abuse**.

Summary

Having outlined each of these legislations and their relevance to ASB, it seems that it should be an easy matter to hold social landlords liable for ASB management failures. However, unfortunately, it is not. There are a number of reasons for this.

Firstly, the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 fails to make it a legal requirement for social landlords to use the enclosed tools and attached guidance. The legislation simply proffers tools to landlords and other agencies and explains how to use them through the guidance.

Secondly, the scope of legislation that can be relied upon for ASB claims is ultimately narrow. For example, while the Equality Act 2010 provides protections for people being discriminated against based on a relevant protected characteristic, it does not provide protection for *everyone* affected by ASB. As such, if a tenant/resident is not experiencing discrimination as defined by the Equality Act 2010, the legislation has no relevance to them.

A similar truth emerges in relation to the Care Act 2014, which applies only to adults officially receiving support from their local authorities. Furthermore, while it is established that a local authority can be held liable for breaches of duty under the Care Act 2014, it is less clear as to whether this judicial determination is applicable to housing associations in the exact same way.

Thirdly, the Human Rights Act 1998 seems like a pretty straightforward avenue to justice. However, as stated earlier in this report, taking the landlord to court would be a retroactive process that is lengthy, costly, and not necessarily helpful in stopping ASB while it persists in the interim.

¹⁸ [Types of abuse: Safeguarding adults | SCIE](#)

Finally, it has been established in the High Court¹⁹ that ‘...a decision-maker must follow his published policy... unless there are good reasons for not doing so.’ We know that a majority of social landlords fail to adhere to their ASB and relevant other policies, and for no good reason. So, in theory, a tenant/resident could make application for judicial review because their landlord failed to comply with its ASB policy. But once again, the problem is how complicated and daunting the process of bringing a claim to the administrative court is.

While access to justice is difficult, we have nevertheless outlined the legal infrastructure relevant to ASB because we want to highlight exactly what landlords are meant to be doing and what interventions tenants/residents are entitled to. We also want tenants/residents to feel validated by the legislation and statutory guidance. After prolonged periods of being ignored by their landlord or made to feel like a nuisance because they asked for help, it is easy for tenants/residents to begin to believe that they are overreacting to the ASB or are being demanding by wanting the landlord to intervene. On the contrary, the legislation and statutory guidance prove that landlords are meant to intervene and how they are meant to do it.

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When ASB occurs, landlords should intervene early by prioritising the impact of ASB on the victim and assessing their needs. They are to use all the informal and formal tools available to them appropriately. They are not meant to be discriminatory; they are meant to take steps to prevent discrimination amongst tenants/residents, and they are to comply with the PSED whenever necessary. They are meant to respect tenant/resident human rights. They should work with local authorities (and other agencies where applicable) to manage and prevent abuse and must not be

¹⁹ R (Lumba) v Secretary of State for the Home Department (JUSTICE intervening) [2011] UKSC 12, [2012] 1 AC 245)

organisationally abusive. This is the standard stipulated to all social landlords and they have no right to operate below it.

The problem is that despite all of these legislations, tenants/residents are left to enforce them through legal proceedings. This is unreasonable given the mammoth nature of this task. It is especially unfair considering that a high number of social housing tenants/residents have a disability. According to the Office of National Statistics, 76% of social renters report a disability within their household²⁰ and our own ASB survey indicated that 74% of tenants/residents reporting ASB had someone with a disability in their home. This is the reason why we focus on disability in our report.

In June 2023, the Housing Ombudsman made a call for evidence on social injustices in housing, namely the experiences of tenants/residents with disability and vulnerabilities. The Housing Ombudsman intended to scrutinise landlord conduct with regard to equality and human rights legislations. After evaluating the evidence, a report was published in January 2024²¹. On the matter of complaint handling, which includes ASB complaints, the Housing Ombudsman received 1,216 cases during the period of the report. The Housing Ombudsman made 171 findings, 73% of which were of maladministration in complaints handling. Approximately 40% of the tenants/residents who raised complaints were disabled or otherwise vulnerable, meaning that they were substantially disadvantaged by poor complaints handling.

Research outlined in the government's ASB action plan acknowledges that ASB has a greater impact on disabled/chronically ill individuals:

'Those with a pre-existing physical or mental health condition were significantly more likely to experience a significant impact from ASB compared with overall (24% compared with 21% overall). Additionally, those who said that this condition causes them to have a reduced ability to conduct their daily lives were

²⁰ As quoted on the HO Equality Impact Assessment: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/O3.-Equality-Impact-Assessment.pdf>

²¹ <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/ARRRoE-22012024-FINAL.pdf>

significantly more likely to have experienced a significant impact from ASB on their quality of life (26% of those who had a condition that reduced their ability compared to 21% overall). These existing vulnerabilities appeared to increase these individuals' risk of experiencing more severe ASB impacts...

Qualitative participants with mental health conditions said that ASB could act as a trigger for the escalation of their mental health conditions. This was further intensified when physical health conditions were also present. For example, physical health conditions that made participants less mobile reduced their ability to respond to ASB happening around their homes. This included reducing their ability to report ASB to relevant agencies while it is occurring, taking part in monitoring and investigation, and in some instances trying to stop incidents while they were occurring.'

Sadly, the impact of ASB on disabled people, and the public organisations who fail them, is not a newly identified issue. Over 10 years ago in 2011, the Equality and Human Rights Commission published a report entitled '*Hidden in plain sight: inquiry into disability-related harassment*'²².

The findings of this inquiry confirm a persistently poor response from public authorities at the time, including social housing providers, with regard to disability-harassment and ASB:

- The evidence that suggests that social landlords use possession proceedings for ASB sparingly is compelling. There are nearly 4 million social households in England, but it is estimated that there are only approximately 3,000 eviction orders made by the Courts annually against social tenants for ASB. Many housing providers include ASB within tenancy agreements but eviction of perpetrators for breaching these clauses is rare.

²² Hidden in Plain Sight: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/ehrc_hidden_in_plain_sight_3.pdf

- Disabled people are disproportionately affected by ASB – they are more likely to experience it than non-disabled people and more likely to be harmed by it.
- Disabled people often do not report harassment, for a number of reasons... they may fear that the police or other authorities will not believe them. A culture of disbelief exists around this issue.
- Some respondents were living in social housing that had become a local focus for repeated ASB.
- Some of the issues that exacerbate disability-related harassment in and around the home relate to poor or inadequate social housing.
- The PSED should be a helpful tool for public authorities to demonstrate that they are engaging with their equality obligations and implementing policies accordingly... public authorities are not meeting their (PSED) obligations.
- There is a systemic failure by public authorities to recognise the extent and impact of harassment and abuse of disabled people, take action to prevent it happening in the first place, and intervene effectively when it does.
- Public authorities were often aware of earlier, less serious incidents but had taken little action to bring the harassment to an end. In some cases, no effective action was taken to protect the disabled person even when public authorities were aware of allegations of very serious assaults. This left the disabled person at risk of further harm.
- There was little evidence of well-developed prevention strategies, without which public authorities have little chance of eliminating harassment... preventing harassment was not a priority for most authorities.
- Agencies do not tend to work effectively together to bring ongoing disability-related harassment to an end.

...public authorities
are not
meeting their
PSED
obligations...

- Public authorities were also sometimes criticised for a ‘box ticking’ mentality and an overriding concern with targets and appearances at the expense of genuine action, which respondents said undermined their confidence in reporting harassment.

In addition to all of the statistics about disability, our SHAC survey shows that over 90% of respondents developed long-term mental and physical problems from ASB.

To expect ASB victims to fight their antisocial landlords while also experiencing such severe impacts from ASB is wholly unreasonable. It is therefore imperative that a regulatory body enforce landlord compliance with proper ASB protocols, and issue strong sanctions as a deterrent to antisocial landlord behaviour. This is necessary in order to alleviate the impact of ASB on victims and to redress any power imbalance between landlords and tenants/residents.

This issue of power imbalance is a huge one that needs to be rectified. The findings of our survey show that landlords readily use the tactic of bullying tenants/residents into silence when challenged about their substandard ASB management. Some victims report that their tenancies are being threatened for speaking out. ‘Charitable’ organisations should not be allowed to conduct themselves in this manner and the freeness with which they do speaks to a sinister confidence that they know they can.

It is evident that landlords know what they should be doing because they make sure to include their legal obligations in their policies. They are nevertheless wilfully neglectful of these duties because of the absence of regulatory enforcement. Such behaviour is entirely deserving of descriptions such as ‘antisocial’ and ‘corporate psychopathy’. There are those who have even died because landlords benefit from this lack of accountability. A review of victim stories and case studies will provide insight into how destructive landlord behaviour can be during ASB. However, it is important to note that these are only those we know about. Many more people are suffering, and dying, without their stories ever being told.

An 'us vs. them' attitude is often evident in social housing, where staff/managers treat tenants/residents with contempt and immediately take an oppositional rather than a customer service-centred approach. A pervasive cultural ideology within social landlords is that 'they should be grateful they've got social housing' and/or that 'they're all scroungers on benefits'. This mindset creates an arrogant expectation that tenants/residents should be grateful no matter how poor the housing services are that they receive.

The reality is that a reciprocal relationship exists between social landlords and those who live in their homes, and it should be respected. Firstly, tenants/residents pay for these staff/managers' salaries; they could not pay for their own homes without this wage, whether it comes from tenant/resident income or from their benefits. Secondly, tenants/residents have legal rights and landlords are obliged to adhere to them. Therefore, any sense of superiority from social landlords is not rooted in reality but based on delusional ideas of self-importance and power.

We point out this social housing stigma because it contributes to the lack of empathy shown to ASB victims, fuelling dismissal of their complaints and a propensity to ignore their needs. It leads to dehumanisation of tenants/residents, whose cries for help become mere noise to staff/managers rather than a call to action. For some tenants/residents, it leads to death.

Life and Death with ASB

Because of the recognised impact of ASB on those with disabilities and/or 'pre-existing conditions' (as described in the government's action plan), we will start with the stories of vulnerable individuals who died following landlord ASB mismanagement.

- Mark Smith, a 48-year-old man in Chingford, Waltham Forest, was murdered after being subjected to 'cuckooing'; his (unnamed) housing

association ignored repeated requests to change his locks to prevent his flat being overrun by local criminals²³. (2019)

- Lee Irving, a 24-year-old man with a learning disability, was sedated and beaten to death following multi-agency safeguarding breaches, including from his social landlord²⁴. (2015)
- Michael Gilbert, a 26-year-old vulnerable man, was killed by his abusers after multi-agency safeguarding breaches, including from his social landlord²⁵. (2010)
- David Askew, a 64-year-old man with learning difficulties, suffered a heart attack after experiencing ASB, which he had endured for 40 years without proper intervention from Peak Valley Housing Association, the police, and the local authority²⁶. (2010)
- A woman, who is a leaseholder in Hackney, endured ASB including loud music and an intrusive smell of drugs for an extended period from the resident above her (also a leaseholder). The Housing Ombudsman determined that *'the landlord failed to take the initial steps with the resident which its policies and procedures call for, i.e. creating an action plan, part of which would ...agree the frequency and manner of updates.'*²⁷ (2023)
- A woman and terminally ill husband were left to endure ASB and noise nuisance for a prolonged period, during which the husband died from his condition. The woman ended up ending her tenancy to escape the ASB. The Housing Ombudsman determined that Peabody *'lacked professionalism with critical failings against core legislation and its own procedures'*.²⁸ (2023)
- A disabled woman became suicidal after being left to live over a year in a home where she felt unsafe. She was targeted by neighbours after raising a noise complaint shortly after moving to her residence. A joint ombudsman

²³ Mark Smith: <https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/agencies-failed-to-work-together-to-save-disabled-man-murdered-by-friend/>

²⁴ Lee Irving: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/dec/02/lee-irving-murder-james-wheatley-jailed-life-newcastle>

²⁵ Michael Gilbert: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2012516/Michael-Gilbert-Kept-slave-sexually-abused-finally-beheaded.html>

²⁶ David Askew: <https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/the-death-of-david-askew-police-forces-total-failure-on-hate-crime/#:~:text=David%20Askew%2C%20who%20had%20learning,on%20the%20edge%20of%20Manchester>

²⁷ <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/decisions/hackney-council-202203358/>

²⁸ <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/2023/06/27/years-of-asb-failings-led-to-peabody-resident-terminating-her-own-tenancy-to-escape/>

determination was made against Nottingham Council and Nottingham City Homes for the way her ASB complaints and her request to move were handled.²⁹ (2023)

- A man suffering from multiple mental health conditions (OCD, anxiety, morbid depression, insomnia) and dyslexia was failed by Sandwell Council. The Housing Ombudsman determined that the Council must review its Reasonable Adjustments policy and that it *'failed to act appropriately'* in response to the tenant's ASB complaints under the Equality Act 2010³⁰. (2023)
- A woman endured ASB and gang behaviour over a period of 5 years. Her mental health declined as she worried about her own safety and that of her children. The Housing Ombudsman determined that *'the landlord did not demonstrate that it took ownership of the case, referring the resident continually back to the police whilst failing itself to identify the risks presented to her through a risk assessment or agree an effective action plan'*.³¹
- A woman experienced domestic violence for years. Neighbours, who owned a nearby property, complained about the noise coming from her flat. Without a proper investigation, her landlord told her not to disturb her neighbour, and she was made to sign a 6-month agreement to desist from ASB. It was only after the domestic violence resulted in her having to receive 8 stitches in her head that her landlord believed her. (SHAC member)

²⁹ <https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/council-failed-disabled-woman-over-anti-social-behaviour/>

³⁰ <https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/housing-law/397-housing-news/54703-council-failed-to-act-appropriately-under-equality-act-during-anti-social-behaviour-case-finds-ombudsman>

³¹ <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/decisions/waltham-forest-council-201900229/>

Case Study One

Cassandra's Story – A Campaign of ASB Terror

Cassandra³² resides in a flat with her two young children which she leases from Notting Hill Genesis (NHG). From 2015 – 2023, she endured a nightmare of ASB that completely disrupted her and her children's lives.

In 2015, a Council tenant and her young child moved next to Cassandra. The child had special needs and it later became apparent that the mother was mentally disturbed. The tenant played loud music, slammed doors, screamed at 'Satan', and could be seen by Cassandra smashing furniture and children's toys in the back garden.

Cassandra reported the ASB to her landlord and to Children's Services. In response, she was invited by Children's Services to meet with the tenant herself to resolve the issues. Cassandra explained the futility of that suggestion given the tenant's erratic and volatile behaviour. She felt that intervention was necessary from appropriate agencies under the circumstances.

Cassandra also contacted Environmental Health, who advised her to contact the Reactive Witnessing Service whenever noise disturbance occurred. When Cassandra contacted them, she was told she would receive a call back. This never happened.

Sometime later, an Environmental Health officer installed noise recording equipment in Cassandra's home, albeit while speaking quite loudly despite Cassandra's requests that he lower his voice so the tenant could not hear. Notably, the tenant remained quiet for several days after installation. When Cassandra attempted to use the equipment once noise restarted, the equipment malfunctioned.

³²SHAC member: name changed to protect identity

Cassandra was contacted by a housing officer who advised her that the tenant felt victimised but would agree to mediation. Cassandra attended the mediation session where another neighbour who was concerned about the ASB was present. The tenant attended with her father, who claimed that his daughter had schizophrenia – which she denied.

Nevertheless, by the end of the session all parties agreed that Cassandra would put a note through the tenant's door to advise of any future disturbance. The tenant stated that she did not want notes from the session to be shared with NHG. In the absence of these notes, a housing officer later alleged to Cassandra that no concerns about the tenant's mental health were raised during mediation.

A few months transpired, after which Cassandra was woken in the middle of the night by a loud recording of the tenant's voice shouting offensive and aggressive comments, seemingly at Cassandra. Cassandra responded by placing a note through the tenant's door the following day asking her not to do this again. A period of relative calm ensued, only for Cassandra to suddenly be subjected to a ferocious and lengthy ASB campaign from the tenant and her associates that lasted for years.

In early 2017, an empty cat food container was pushed through Cassandra's letter box and a corrosive substance was applied to her door which damaged the paintwork and her floor mat. For her safety and peace of mind, Cassandra relocated to her parents' home with her children. She returned to her home intermittently, during which she was subjected to a number of ASB incidents, much of which was witnessed by her children and other neighbours. These included –

- Further recordings played loudly with repetitive, nonsensical phrases, and more rants about 'Satan'
- Further damage to Cassandra's door, damaging paint and woodwork
- Repeatedly banging on Cassandra's front door at all hours
- Repeatedly gluing Cassandra's front door locks, which had to be replaced
- Verbal abuse (at times sexually explicit) and profanity at Cassandra

- Loud music and television
- Dumping rubbish and waste on Cassandra's front doorstep and in the back garden, as well as trespassing
- Threats and acts of violence – threatening to kill Cassandra; throwing shoes at her son and water over her guests; after initially refusing access to a workman attending Cassandra's property, shaking his ladder and endangering Cassandra's mother's safety who was present
- Smashing, obstructing, and removing Cassandra's security cameras, which captured both ASB and drug-dealing on the tenant's doorstep
- Repeatedly blocking the accessway and fire escape
- Encouraging ASB from male associates, who came and went from the tenant's flat at all hours, to harass and intimidate Cassandra; they also destroyed her garden plants
- Numerous unsubstantiated allegations of ASB against Cassandra and her son to Environmental Health and the police; also retaining a solicitor to threaten Cassandra

Although the tenant was later convicted of criminal damage for the smashed camera and window in 2021, and ordered to pay various costs and compensation, Cassandra ultimately received nothing. In that year, Cassandra also launched an ASB Review (known then as Community Trigger), and a number of multi-agency risk assessment conferences took place. Victim Support encouraged NHG to rehouse the tenant and to take out a civil injunction with power of arrest, which it eventually did by the middle of the year.

The tenant went on to breach the injunction repeatedly, continuing to make various threats of violence and unsubstantiated accusations of racism towards Cassandra. The tenant also incited both male and female friends to do the same. They made verbal threats and intimidating hand gestures of graphic violence, harassing Cassandra both in the street and from the tenant's back garden. The landlord nevertheless failed to enforce the injunction. At one point, a meeting was scheduled

with an NHG staff member and Victim Support to discuss a Notice of Seeking Possession for the tenant, although this was mysteriously cancelled by NHG at the last minute.

In 2023, the tenant was convicted of racially aggravated fear of violence by words, and racially aggravated assault by beating. She was sentenced to prison for 4 weeks, which was suspended for 12 months. An uplift was applied due to racial aggravation. The tenant was also ordered to pay Cassandra compensation of £100.00; in the end she paid Cassandra only £17.00. By July that year, she was rehoused.

Cassandra was repeatedly failed by her landlord. NHG downplayed the seriousness of ASB and were often dismissive of Cassandra's concerns about the tenant's mental health. In meetings, housing officers were ill-prepared, unaware of evidence that had been submitted in advance of their attendance. Communication with NHG throughout the case was poor. Housing officers were frequently slow to respond to Cassandra and at one point they discontinued communicating with her completely. Moreover, the landlord failed to enforce the injunction once it was in place, forcing Cassandra to proceed down a more complicated legal avenue in which it would be more difficult to prove ASB to the court.

Cassandra was not helped at all by Environmental Health, who failed to engage with her when she contacted the Reactive Witnessing Service. In addition, Cassandra should not have had to ask the equipment installation officer to lower his voice, which alerted the tenant to his presence. The nature of what he was doing meant he should have known to be discreet. And of course, the equipment was of no benefit to Cassandra because it was faulty, making the entire installation process a pointless exercise.

Cassandra was also horribly let down by police. They were ill-informed regarding the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, being unaware of what Community Trigger even was and incorrectly questioning the validity of the

injunction against the tenant because of its wording. They failed to affirm Cassandra's rights as a victim, instead discouraging her from seeking prosecution and advising her to move home on the basis that the situation 'will never be resolved'. Additionally, despite Cassandra's repeated requests, the police failed to help her transfer video evidence to the police station. Perhaps most dangerously, the police persistently categorised the ASB as a mere 'neighbour dispute', ignoring its seriousness and failing to recognise its long-term and escalating nature.

Cassandra remains aggrieved that while the tenant was found guilty of specific crimes in court, the penalties in no way reflected their severity. And ultimately, the tenant was never held responsible in court for her extensive harassment campaign and multiple nefarious acts. While the civil court provided some remedy in principle, it provided little justice for everything Cassandra and her family endured. Perhaps more unjustly, NHG, the Council and the police were never held to account for their wrongdoing either.

Overall, Cassandra's ASB terror was exacerbated by a landlord who left her, and her children, isolated and vulnerable. While the landlord took some steps to intervene, they were slow and inadequate, allowing the ASB to persist far longer than it should have. Ultimately, Cassandra was forced to pick up the slack to fight the ASB in ways that NHG was best equipped to do. While externally the situation appears to be over, Cassandra and her children continue to live with the long-term trauma of ASB at the hands of her former neighbour and her current landlord.

Case Study Two

Southern Housing – A Tale of Corporate Sociopathy

We focus on Southern Housing (SH) for a few of reasons. Firstly, SH is a member of Resolve, the ASB organisation mentioned earlier in this report. SH is identified on Resolve's website as being part of its 'influential collective of 200 organisations'. However, it is difficult to see the purpose or benefit of that membership when SH was the third most complained about landlord in our ASB survey, indicating significant dissatisfaction amongst respondents with its handling of ASB. Beyond our survey, SH's ASB management is so poor that it has hit the news on occasion:

- Tenants/residents in Wandsworth block complain of being abandoned by SH to persistent ASB and disrepair³³ (2024)
- Kent woman suffers frightening ASB after SH fails to secure flat entrance despite repeated requests.³⁴ (2023)
- Residents complain of SH's poor management of ASB and disrepair in Reading flats.³⁵ (2022)
- SH ordered to apologise after ignoring serious ASB suffered by disabled wheelchair-bound man and his terminally ill wife.³⁶ (2020)

The second reason we feature SH is because in 2016 SH signed up to the government's Disability Confident scheme, which is designed to support employers in making their workplace environments accessible and disability supportive. It would be reasonable to expect this disability 'confidence' to extend to SH's treatment of its tenants/residents but as seen in one case above and in the next case study, SH's status as a 'Disability Confident' employer has sadly not extended to its approach to dealing with disabled tenants/residents who are ASB victims.

³³ <https://www.wandsworthswf8.com/#/pages/shared:common:ldrswandshousing032>

³⁴ <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/medway/news/mum-traumatised-after-stranger-tries-to-kick-down-door-281788/>

³⁵ https://www.getreading.co.uk/news/reading-berkshire-news/reading-flats-homeless-wee-under-24394255?int_source=amp_continue_reading&int_medium=amp&int_campaign=continue_reading_button#amp-readmore-target

³⁶ <https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/housing-association-ordered-to-apologise-after-hate-crime-ordeal-failings/#:~:text=The%20report%20concludes%20that%20it,case%20and%20follow%20its%20policy>

Thirdly, SH is highlighted in our report because its organisation in particular has drawn the public ire of politicians and the Housing Ombudsman for a variety of reasons. In late 2022, it was named and shamed by then Housing Secretary Michael Gove for letting tenants down³⁷. This was later followed by Vicky Foxcroft (then Shadow Minister for Disabled People) in 2023, who named SH in the Commons for choosing profit over repairs³⁸.

However, most relevant to this report is that in June 2023, the Housing Ombudsman launched a special investigation into SH due to a marked increase in maladministration determinations. The purpose of the investigation was to look into SH's complaints culture and management. In May 2024, the findings of the investigation were released. While the findings were damning in every area of SH that the Housing Ombudsman investigated, we highlight press release summaries³⁹ from three categories relevant to our ASB report:

***'Risk management** - The landlord needs to improve its risk management processes across the front-line services where we investigated complaints. This was particularly evident in complaints about anti-social behaviour (ASB) and damp and mould. This included not identifying resident vulnerabilities and the risk of further harm, or not acting on the outcome of its risk assessments'*

***'Reasonable adjustments** - In many of the cases we examined, the landlord had appropriate records of resident vulnerabilities. However, there were several examples where the landlord did not, and various cases where they were not appropriately acting on that knowledge when they had it... This links to the recommendations in the Ombudsman's Spotlight report on attitudes, respect and rights, with it being important to have all the R's - recognise, respond and record when dealing with vulnerabilities. Overall, the landlord records vulnerabilities appropriately, but should focus on the other two to produce an effective service.'*

³⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/housing-secretary-shames-three-more-failing-social-landlords>

³⁸ <https://www.vickyfoxcroft.org.uk/in-parliament/2023/07/10/housing-questions-norfolk-house/>

³⁹ <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/2024/05/14/special-report-into-southern-housing/>

‘Knowledge and information management - ...Where the report found poor record keeping in complaint handling, this had had a detrimental impact on resolving residents’ complaints once brought to the Ombudsman. Whilst some mitigations have taken place, the landlord has still not merged its systems, which will cause significant challenges in acting as one organisation.’

Inside the report⁴⁰ itself, Housing Ombudsman goes on to say the following regarding SH’s ASB management:

‘We found a pattern of the landlord either not identifying resident vulnerabilities and the risk of further harm, or not acting on the outcome of its risk assessments. In many of these cases the resident reporting the ASB was vulnerable, and in some cases the ASB evidenced was serious... We found significant and detrimental delays in the landlord’s handling of noise nuisance cases, and further evidence of its failure to manage risk appropriately.’

These findings are extremely vindicating for Leah⁴¹ who has been an SH tenant for some time. Leah has endured ASB from two families for 12 years of her tenancy. Her story reveals SH to be an antisocial landlord in both cases. While we previously used the term ‘corporate psychopathy’ to describe antisocial landlords, in Leah’s case we describe SH as a **‘corporate sociopath’**. We consider this fitting because this term describes *an antisocial personality that consistently shows no regard at all for right or wrong, and is persistently unempathetic, ignoring the feelings and rights of others.*

Leah lives in a family home with her husband and children. Two family members are neurodiverse, including her husband – both with autism diagnoses. One child also has health problems and other learning difficulties. Leah shares her ASB experiences as follows:

⁴⁰ <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2024-05-13-Southern-Housing-P49-FINAL.pdf>

⁴¹SHAC member: name changed to protect identity

'We were accepted as tenants by SH because of the disabilities in our household so SH knew about us from the beginning. Initially, the tenancy was fine. SH even made an adaptation to our property for one of our children, so they understood they had a duty to us as a family with disability. Unfortunately, this understanding went out of the window when it came to ASB.'

A couple of months after we moved in, the neighbour next to us moved out. She was lovely and I was sad to see her go. I worried about who would move in next. My worst fears were confirmed when a woman moved in with her two small kids. We quickly realised that this woman was not neighbourly at all. Within days, she would blast music so loud day and night that it made my walls shake.

She would scream and beat her kids; we even heard things crashing against the wall. She would let them stay up all hours both weekends and weeknights. So, we were constantly disturbed by banging and shouting throughout the night. This was especially hard because one of our children has epilepsy and good sleep helps to manage the condition. Once, after loud music played all day well into the night, my child had such a bad seizure that she ended up in hospital. We also kept finding rubbish and random items in our back garden.

One day, I approached her as nicely as possible asking her to keep the music down, but this made no difference. She ignored the notes I put through her door asking her to stop. So, I was forced to report her to SH. At first, an SH customer service rep said, 'Oh, she's allowed to play music,' but I wouldn't accept that. Her music was so loud that I couldn't hear my own TV! Besides that, it wasn't just music - it was all the other disturbance day and night. And what about the vulnerability in my household? Didn't that matter?

I kept contacting SH about the ASB, which no one seemed to take seriously. After a while, a manager visited both our properties and confirmed that the music was too loud. The manager was meant to follow up after that, but she disappeared and

the ASB went on with no support from SH. The case continued like this, with me constantly making reports, asking for help and being ignored.

In the meantime, neighbour relations worsened; one day she came out of her house screaming because I told her kids to move out of the road as they blocked me from driving back to my house. Sometimes she had rowdy gatherings. Other times she would leave her bedroom window open in the daytime and have loud sex, which we could hear from our back garden. There was no escape! Another time the wife of a guy she was sleeping with arrived at her front door early one morning, banging, shouting, and waking up the neighbourhood about her husband being inside. Honestly, we couldn't make it up.

At some point, I launched a formal complaint about SH's response to my ASB complaints and its lack of consideration about our disability and vulnerability. It had been so hard for me as carer, to deal with the ASB but to also keep chasing SH while also taking care of my disabled child. Eventually, failings were acknowledged by an excellent and compassionate SH manager who sadly left the organisation soon after.

We were compensated £500.00, and the neighbour signed an Acceptable Behaviour Agreement. This didn't resolve the ASB completely and relations remained tense. But it was significantly reduced, and we tolerated it. After 5 years she and her kids moved away. We thought that was the end of our ASB experience. But sometime later, we experienced ASB beyond our worst nightmare which lasted for several years.

After living next door to a lovely family for about two years, we very unfortunately ended up next to a really dysfunctional family made up of a married couple and adult relatives – the kind you see on 'The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door'. It was immediately obvious that they were troubled and other neighbours who knew them told us that they had a long history of ASB. They were known to police, who were always at the house.

The noise was constant. It was mainly screaming matches with extremely vulgar language between everyone. But after a while, loud, bassy music - that once again shook our walls - happened, too. The smell of drugs filled our house whenever we opened our windows; we would be sweltering inside during the summertime to keep the smell out. We could see drug deals happening on their doorstep. They would also constantly obstruct accessways.

Soon enough, they became aggressive and threatening. They would glare at us when we were coming and going from our house, and we could hear them shouting rude comments at us from inside their home. Like the last time we experienced ASB, we tried to deal with it ourselves. We approached them and initially things calmed down a bit. They were still noisy, but they became more pleasant for a short time. And then suddenly without explanation, they became hostile again. At that point, we had no choice but to ask SH to help us.

When I made the ASB complaint to SH, I immediately reminded them about our disability and vulnerability. I stressed that we didn't want to be left alone to deal with ASB like before. We knew this case was different; there were men involved who were harassing us. I was concerned for our safety, and particularly worried about the impact of this ASB on my autistic husband. I kept telling them that I was really worried about how he would respond if he felt threatened and I was concerned about his mental health.

SH didn't care about any of this. When they first opened the case, no risk assessment was done, and our case was not classed as high risk. SH showed urgency at all; none of the decisions about the case were made on the basis of our disability and vulnerability. They didn't follow their ASB policy; communication from SH was clunky and slow. There would be long gaps before I would hear from anyone, and no action plan was in place. An SH rep eventually attended the neighbours' home and issued verbal and written warnings. The neighbours were asked if they would attend mediation; they refused. They also wouldn't sign an Acceptable Behaviour Agreement.

I had begun an ASB diary as instructed. I also made ongoing recordings of the noise and took images when necessary. I kept sending all of this to the housing officer but would never get any feedback about it. Despite how horrible the recordings were, SH ignored the seriousness of the ASB and showed no interest in how it was affecting our family. In fact, SH unexpectedly closed the case after only 5 months.

After an incident one day when my husband was threatened with all kinds of violence, I filed a formal complaint against SH about their ASB management, and demanded that they reopen the case, which they did. This is when I began to insist that SH get an injunction with power of arrest which included all the ASB we were experiencing. And this is when SH embarked on a very twisted power struggle with us that endangered my husband's life and damaged the wellbeing of our entire family.

It became obvious quickly that every verbal and written warning from SH to the neighbours made things worse. Informal methods weren't working, and we needed stronger intervention especially because of our vulnerability. The shouting, insults, and intimidation had increased. We would hear them making up ridiculous stories about us to other neighbours, trying to turn them against us. They made false allegations about us to SH, too, which SH never investigated or penalised us for. However, conveniently, whenever we presented SH with evidence of threats and acts of violence that justified an injunction, SH would turn against us, using whatever we said or did to defend ourselves to allege that we caused the ASB.

SH knew this was a complete lie. They had over 100 noise recordings, which not only proved the level of noise disturbance but also how aggressive they neighbours were. Even the SH staff experienced this aggression. SH had video evidence of my husband being attacked. They knew the neighbours had a criminal history. SH ignored our diary which showed all our CAD numbers proving how often we had to call the police. But the collection of our evidence was a sinister game to SH. It eventually became clear that they were never going to use any of it.

We were under nonstop pressure to prove the legitimacy of our ASB case. We constantly sent evidence to SH, which they would completely ignore. But if we went through any periods when we stopped sending evidence – because it was absolutely exhausting – SH would say that we failed to provide evidence for them to act on. On other occasions, SH would tell us the quality of our noise recordings weren't good enough, which was false. But if we used their noise app, SH never acted on that evidence either. It didn't matter what we did; SH always had an excuse to disregard our evidence.

Simply put, SH was spiteful. They hated that we were exposing their incompetence. The more we did that, the more hostile they became. My formal complaint against them was successful and SH accepted multiple service failures. They offered us money, but we refused. It was almost nothing anyway; what was that going to do? What we wanted was to enjoy our home in peace.

We asked for Community Trigger and SH claimed it attended a meeting with our Council and the police. The Council was meant to advise us of the outcome within a month but never did. We chased the Council for months, which eventually decided that SH had handled our ASB case appropriately. Of course, this was not true because SH had admitted multiple service failures following our formal complaint. So, we challenged the Council's outcome, which it rejected.

So, we took the Council to the Local Authority and Social Care Ombudsman. The investigation revealed that there was no evidence that a Community Trigger meeting even took place, and it determined that the Council failed in its handling of our request. It was ordered to apologise and compensate us.

We also reported SH to the Housing Ombudsman for how it was handling our ASB case. The Housing Ombudsman initially made a determination of maladministration but reduced it to service failure after SH challenged it by saying it had offered us compensation. This was so desperate on SH's part but either way the determination proved that SH failed us. SH was ordered to compensate us

£250.00 for failures in handling of risk assessment, management of action plans, communication, and premature closure of the ASB case. But SH ignored the Housing Ombudsman and refused to change its behaviour towards us.

Over the course of our case, SH received three letters from my husband's consultant psychiatrist. Each one explained in detail how much the ASB was devastating him as an autistic person. His anxiety was through the roof. He was constantly looking over his shoulder; he would go out to run errands and have to fend off the neighbours' friends who kept threatening to kill him. At times he was overcome with depression, and other times he had suicidal thoughts.

The letters also explained how the rest of us were affected. We were anxious, terrified, and our sleep was affected. I had palpitations. Our daughter's seizures got worse, and she even collapsed in school. My other child developed anxiety and became terrified of sleeping alone. We told SH all of this but SH never at any point acknowledged these letters. I suppose it was naïve to expect SH to treat us better when it had told us - in writing - early in the case that it had no duty of care to us.

It was Capsticks that SH used to tell us that it had no duty of care. Throughout our case, SH used Capsticks quite a lot to bully us and to lie on its behalf. Capsticks told lie upon lie to justify SH's failings. They lied and said the reason SH hadn't taken out an injunction is because we refused to provide a witness statement. The truth is that while SH eventually agreed to take out an injunction, it was for noise only and with no power of arrest. This was not enough.

We wanted everything we were experiencing to be included in the injunction because the ASB wasn't just noise. SH was fully aware that there were repeated threats and even acts of violence against us. The power of arrest was essential because the police refused to act every time we called them, telling us it was only a neighbour dispute, and it was the landlord's responsibility to deal with. We had always agreed to provide a witness statement for an injunction but needed the injunction to protect us from the neighbours' retaliation once it was in place. Every

time SH said anything to them, the ASB got worse. SH's response, through Capsticks, was that if we wanted the injunction that we requested, we should get it ourselves.

Capsticks also lied that other neighbours made complaints about us. We made two Subject Access Requests and asked SH to substantiate these claims. All requests were ignored. After a particularly serious assault against my husband, Capsticks then lied that the police concluded that he shared guilt with the neighbour. This was rubbish. First of all, the police investigation was not even complete when Capsticks said this and when it was complete the police never told us any such thing. What the police did do, after I made a formal complaint, was confirm that it failed to provide us with an appropriate police service. The police issued a formal apology for this and for subjecting my husband to indirect disability discrimination.

Speaking of discrimination, our MP wrote SH expressing concerns that they were subjecting us to disability discrimination. We had asked SH repeatedly throughout our case to evict or rehouse the neighbours. Of course, SH refused. So, after the serious assault our MP, along with the Safer Neighbourhood Police, asked SH to rehouse us instead. SH refused that, too, without explanation - even though ASB was included as a reason for management transfer in their policy at the time.

To be honest, the ASB we experienced from SH actually exceeded that of our neighbours. SH is literally drunk with its own power and seemed to take pleasure in trying to crush us to prove some psychotic point. SH didn't care if our neighbours made good on their threats to kill my disabled husband. They didn't care about our collapsing, epileptic, autistic daughter or the anxiety that crippled our other child. They didn't care about the inordinate pressure I was under fighting them while being subjected to ASB. They didn't care that we couldn't enjoy our home or that we were scared to come and go. SH cared about one thing - proving that they were in control and could do whatever they want, whatever the cost to our family.

Things are mostly peaceful now but only because some of the ASB perpetrators have gone away. After they left, we went on a rent strike and threatened to sue for disability discrimination, human rights breaches and more if SH did not deal with the remaining ASB. So far, this has worked. We had made two previous unsuccessful attempts to sue SH and issued one letter before action. Now that we have a better grasp of our rights, we are totally confident if we had to sue again.

Predictably, after our latest threat to sue, SH whipped out their attacker dog Capsticks to return the threat, accusing us of vexatious litigation which is hilarious. We took no notice of this at all. We only desisted from legal proceedings because the ASB significantly reduced. But there currently remains no injunction or action plan in place to protect us, and SH have refused to answer our specific questions about whether any decisions have or will be made in relation to our disability and vulnerability should the ASB start up again.

As the threat of violence had lessened over time, we finally agreed to the noise nuisance injunction without power of arrest. But, surprise, surprise, SH didn't obtain it. As we said before, SH never intended to help us. The injunction issue was only ever a bullying show of force, and the offer of an injunction was mere empty words. But unlike SH, our words aren't empty. Should the ASB start up again, we will make good on our threat, and will absolutely sue.

In the meantime, we will keep speaking out through SHAC, which have found to be the most effective way to be heard. We want everyone to know how SH treated us. Up until we became SHAC members, we thought we were the only ones who suffered this way. We are so sad to know we are not alone, but so happy to be part of a movement of people like us fighting back.'

Conclusion

There can be no defence for social landlords like Notting Hill Genesis and Southern Housing, who behave the way they do to the near demise of people like Cassandra, Leah, and their loved ones. Their stories are examples of how bad the ASB experience gets under the management of antisocial landlords. Cassandra's story also demonstrates that leaseholders do not necessarily fare any better than social renters when ASB occurs.

Horrifically, Cassandra and Leah's stories are only a couple in a sea of similar tales from our ASB survey and across the country, where all tenants/residents are driven to despair, some are driven from their homes, and others are driven to their graves. This is **antisocial** housing facilitated by **antisocial** landlords.

Other guilty parties include the police and local authorities, who seem desensitised to ASB complaints and the plight of victims. We understand that ASB can be complicated and that it can sometimes be difficult to distinguish between the victim and the perpetrator. In cases like Cassandra's, where the perpetrator attempted to exploit the status of vulnerability to justify her behaviour, it can be hard to proceed without fear of breaching the perpetrator's possible equality rights.

However, none of this is an excuse for failure to act. Police, local authorities, and housing staff need to be properly acquainted with all necessary policies, procedures, and legislation in order to respond appropriately. The ignorance and confusion of these service providers only delay effective ASB management. This worsens the impact of ASB on victims, who are forced to endure the devastating effects of incompetence and ASB at the same time. All agencies must work together to investigate ASB complaints thoroughly and to determine its cause and the roles of those involved. For the best outcomes, this must happen expeditiously to extinguish the sparks of ASB before they consume victims' lives.

Housing workers must understand that their one-to-one engagement with ASB victims is crucial. The encounters that Cassandra and Leah had with staff was also damaging. The words workers say and how they say them have a huge impact on ASB victims, as sadly evidenced in the case of Mark Pearce's suicide following the comments and conduct of Clarion staff.

A harsh word by phone, a dismissive email, failing to update tenants/residents about their cases, failure to implement an appropriate action plan – any and all of these actions can result in poor victim mental/physical health or, at worst, their death. Housing workers should remember that even though the social landlord is their employer, they are personally responsible for the choices they make as human beings. They have a moral obligation not to contribute to the harm of tenants/residents.

If housing workers decide to go along with the decisions of their manager, however illegal or unethical, they share in their guilt. Perhaps one solution for universal change in ASB management is housing workers demanding more from their employers – more training, more resources, more support, and improved workplace culture so they do not succumb to poor ASB management practice. Change can begin with the efforts of staff who speak up.

The need for change could not be more urgent than at Southern Housing. Despite the glittering promises of improvement following its merger with Optivo Housing in December 2022, over a year later its reputation and service standards are in tatters. At a bloated size of 77,000 homes, its organisation has grown into a monstrous malignancy that seems intent on consuming the lives of its tenants/residents, as evidenced by a range of serious failings identified by the Housing Ombudsman's special investigation.

Our ASB findings and Leah's story are entirely in keeping with Southern Housing's complaints handling maladministration rate of 92%. This landlord shows how dysfunctional and destructive a housing provider can become without sufficient

regulatory controls. No social landlord should be so powerful as to freely disregard its own policies, relevant legislation, the Housing Ombudsman, an MP, and the Safer Neighbourhood Police, all at the expense of its tenants/residents lives – and then call itself a charitable organisation at the same time. But SH did this in Leah's case, and that's because our government allows it to.

We refer to Southern Housing as sociopathic for good reason. The ferocious use of DARVO against Leah and her family as they begged for help is indication of a social landlord that has lost its way. The misuse of housing finance for a solicitor to bully them rather than manage their perpetrators is obscene. While the Housing Ombudsman's investigatory findings are welcomed, retrospective observations cannot undo the damage done to Leah, her family, and other tenants/residents treated this way by Southern Housing.

The Housing Ombudsman was right to investigate social injustices. Southern Housing's treatment of Leah's family is the worst way a social landlord should conduct itself when ASB victims are disabled. Such behaviour is a violent breach of equality legislation. In our view, there should be criminal charges applicable to landlords like Southern Housing, who appear to have far more in common with the thugs on their estates than with charitable organisations.

Yet, Southern Housing wants the world to know much good it's doing. It was keen to declare wins at the G15 Ethnicity in Housing Awards, with one winner in 2023⁴² and three in 2024⁴³. Southern Housing claims that these successes reflect its 'dedication to diversity'. But this dedication evidently does not include disability. While we do not wish to take away from the hard work and achievements of the award winners, we can only look at Southern Housing's parading of them as a cynical distraction from the rot within its organisation.

⁴² <https://www.southernhousing.org.uk/latest-news/2023/southern-housing-colleagues-win-at-the-g15-ethnicity-in-housing-awards>

⁴³ <https://www.southernhousing.org.uk/latest-news/2024/triple-win-at-the-g15-ethnicity-in-housing-awards>

As for CEOs and senior staff who sit atop other antisocial landlords, preening and self-congratulatory at 'housing awards' while tenants/residents' lives are destroyed by ASB failures, a message from SHAC to you:

It is no longer possible to prop up your organisation's reputations by feigning good customer service. Superficial memberships with professional organisations and virtue-signalling alignment with social causes no longer conceal the toxicity within your organisations. Tenants/residents are speaking out and fighting back. Social housing is not the place to build one's wealth and career at the expense of those in need and vulnerable. That is a leadership style based on the world's worst tyrants and heads of criminal organisations. Nothing you do will be worthy of positive recognition until you steer your organisations back to their charitable purposes - **in culture and action.**

A return to the original philanthropic objectives of social housing will go beyond proper ASB management to the implementation of initiatives that can prevent ASB. ASB will never be fully eradicated but landlord investment in social infrastructure is certain to be a catalyst for community change. Such initiatives may include –

- Community groups and centres
- Play spaces and children's activities
- Street markets and fairs
- Skill sharing and neighbourhood watch schemes
- Employability and training courses

These all provide opportunities for landlords to inspire positive interactions amongst tenants/residents. Managing ASB does not have to be a reactive process. With creativity and intentionality, social housing can and *should* include mechanisms that reinforce communities against the disillusionment and lack of resources that often contribute to ASB.



We close by challenging the government to stop sitting idly by while antisocial landlords ruin lives. ASB plans and legislation absent of enforcement is a complete waste of time. ASB will never be tackled effectively without swift and pronounced regulatory action and sanctions against landlords failing to properly manage it. Nothing will improve for tenants/residents until our government accepts its responsibility to hold antisocial landlords to account.

CONTACT SHAC:

Social Housing Action Campaign

Email: shac.action@gmail.com

General Enquiries: Suz Muna (Secretary)

LIST OF LANDLORDS NAMED IN SHAC ASB SURVEY:

Accent Housing
Anchor Hanover
Camden Council
Cheltenham Borough Homes
CHISEL Housing Association
Clarion Housing Association
Dorchester Housing
East Midland Homes
Gentoo Housing
Great Places
GreenSquareAccord
Guinness Partnership
Havebury Housing
Hexagon Housing Association
Home Group
Hyde Housing Association
L&Q Group
Leeds Jewish Housing Association
Lincolnshire Housing Partnership
LiveWest
London Borough of Hounslow
London Borough of Lewisham
Longhurst Group
Moreland Estates
Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing Association
Notting Hill Genesis
Octavia Housing
One Housing Group / Riverside
Orbit Group
PA Housing
Peabody Housing Association
Places for People
RMG Living
Southern Housing
Southway Housing
Sovereign Network Group
St Andrew Street Housing Co-Operative Limited
Stonewater Housing Association
Together Housing Association Ltd
Torus Housing Association
Town & Country Housing
Westminster City Council
Women's Pioneer Housing
Your Housing
(Survey included 1 private unnamed landlord)