

# HARASSMENT AND RACIAL HARASSMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

## Aim of the Policy

- To eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good race relations between different racial groups.

## Objectives of Policy

- Explanation of how the Group will deal with harassment and racial harassment.
- Definition of Harassment and Racial Harassment (**Appendix 1**).

## Statement

1. Sentinel Housing Group condemns all forms of harassment including racial harassment and will work towards eliminating this behaviour within our homes by:
  - Encouraging victims to reported incidents of any form of harassment and providing an immediate and effective response to all reports.
  - Adopting a victim centred approach to support the victims of racial harassment to find solutions with which they are satisfied.
  - Adopting a no tolerance approach towards perpetrators of racial harassment, taking action where there is supporting evidence.
  - Recognising the negative impact that such incidents can have on people and so work with other agencies to seek to create sustainable communities where anti-social behaviour and racial discrimination crimes are not tolerated.
2. We will comply with all relevant legislation and regulatory guidance in relation to racial harassment.

## Policy

At Sentinel we have a no tolerance approach towards perpetrators of racial harassment and our objective is to be responsive to all reports of harassment, taking action where appropriate and treating everyone fairly. We will do this by a balanced approach of preventative and enforcement measures working closely with partner agencies and our residents.

### Being Responsive

- We will make an initial assessment of any report of anti-social behaviour, harassment or domestic violence within 3 working days, or 24 hours where reports include violence or threats of violence.
- If violence has taken place or there is a risk of violence being used we will take immediate action to minimise this risk.

### Taking Action

- Where appropriate, all parties involved in a dispute will be encouraged to use mediation as a first step in resolving their case.
- Where we are able to gather enough evidence, we will take legal enforcement action where reported cases represent a serious breach of our tenancy agreement.
- We will work with partner agencies, such as the local authority, police and groups offering mediation to help resolve cases and put in place preventative measures.

### Being Fair

- We will provide people with a written summary of our investigation into their case, including details of any conclusions we reach and action we may take.
- We will tell people straight away if we feel that their complaint has no basis or cannot be pursued due to a lack of evidence.
- We will respect the anonymity of residents who report cases, although this may limit our ability to take action.
- We will measure all reports of harassment made on the grounds of race, religion, sexuality and regularly report these to the Board.

### **Performance**

The number of racial harassment cases will be collected monthly and reported to the Board every 6 months.

### **Policy Review**

The Operations Director in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Services Manager and Tenancy Manager will review the Harassment and Racial Harassment policy on an annual basis. The review will seek to involve those who have been victims of harassment during the proceeding year to ensure that the service is appropriate to their needs. Amendments to the policy will be taken to the formal residents' groups for consultation. Substantial amendments will be brought to the Board for approval.

**Approved by: Sentinel, Hart and Oakfern Boards. 16 June 2005 (SHG.122/05)**

## Reference Documents

Information Sharing Protocol - BDBC

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Report of an Inquiry by Sir William MacPherson of Cluny (1999)

Code of Practice on reporting and recording racist incidents in response to recommendation 15 of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (2000)

Race Equality Code of Practice for Housing Associations (2002)

Tackling Racial Harassment: code of practice for social landlords (2001)

Sentinel Housing Association Racial Harassment Procedure (2005)

Housing Corporation Good Practice Notes 4 and 8 (2002) and (2004)

Definition of Racial Harassment

Sentinel adopts the definitions of "racial harassment" and "racist incident" as provided by the MacPherson Inquiry Report 1999:

**Racial harassment** "is an incident or a series of incidents intended or likely to intimidate, offend or harm an individual or group because of their ethnic origin, colour, race, religion or nationality".

**Racist incident** "A racist incident is any incident that is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person".

We have adopted this definition so that if anyone, including the victim, a witness, a Police Officer or Neighbourhood Co-ordinator, believes an incident is racist it will be recorded as such. A racist incident is racist unless subsequent investigations prove otherwise. By using this definition, the likelihood of recording all racist incidents is increased.

The Group recognises racial harassment as a distinctive and different form of intimidation and has developed specific procedures for responding to reports of racial harassment which includes identifying the support available to victims.

Definition of Harassment

Harassment is a personalised form of anti social behaviour specifically aimed at particular individuals. Harassment includes hate crimes which are offences motivated by hatred or prejudice towards particular social groups including those who are elderly, disabled or because of their sexual orientation, sex or religion.