



Anti-Social Behaviour When We Can Help

Anti-Social Behaviour - When We Can Help

What level of anti-social behaviour can we become involved with?

If you need an immediate response to anti-social behaviour or harassment you should contact Dorset Police on **101**. If you, your family, your community or your property are at immediate risk you should dial **999**.

If the behaviour consists of loud music or barking dogs please contact Public Health on **01202 795185**.

The Community Safety Team at Christchurch and East Dorset Councils has a responsibility alongside our partners, for tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) in our area. We work to legislation in the ASB, Crime & Policing Act 2014. However, we cannot deal with every complaint that is reported to us and the team is not an active 24 hour response service as we are generally only available during office hours. The Team's focus and priorities are:

- Behaviours and circumstances that cause the greatest threat, harm and risk to individuals and communities.
- Protecting and supporting the most vulnerable victims of anti-social behaviour and those who suffer repeatedly.

Due to its very nature ASB cannot be prevented and tackled by just one agency. It needs a joined up, partnership approach by residents, the council, police and housing providers, including working with others such as Children or Adult Services to deal with the issues.

If we decide we cannot take your case forward we will explain why and signpost you to where you may get alternative help or advice.

Where complaints relate to tenants of a housing provider, the complainant will be directed to report the problems to their housing officer.

After an initial assessment we will then decide if we can accept anti-social behaviour complaints from residents, businesses and visitors, and referrals from partner agencies, based on the following criteria:

- Where the victim or victims are identified as vulnerable and at the greatest risk of harm, or the victim is being personally targeted.
- Where a person is repeatedly a victim of anti-social behaviour or harassment.
- Where locations and communities are identified as vulnerable and at the greatest risk of harm or where repeated anti-social behaviour regularly occurs.
- Where bullying, verbal abuse, threats, harassment or intimidation is a key feature of the anti-social behaviour.

- Where property and possessions are vandalised, or such threats are made. Criminal damage is an offence and the police should be informed.
- Where the anti-social behaviour is driven by hate and prejudice associated with the victim's ethnicity, disability, religion, sexuality, gender or age. Hate crime is a serious offence and we advise you to tell the police.
- Where there is drug dealing and associated disorder in a specific property or location, then we will work with Dorset Police to tackle it.
- Where individuals or groups of people are causing a persistent or targeted nuisance in a specific location or community.

In many of the above cases a criminal act may have occurred or the threat of one been made. Sometimes the anti-social behaviour is so serious, or the risk of harm is assessed as high that we need to involve the police. In such cases we will work closely with Dorset Police to develop plans to tackle these behaviours to protect and support victims and make them feel safer.

What is not anti - social behaviour

Some examples of the types of behaviour that we are not able to accept are:

- Where no council tools and powers exist to deal with the issue.
- Loud music and noise.
- Children and young people playing in open spaces, the street, their home or garden.
- Poor parenting or shouting and swearing within a private dwelling, including the garden.
- Entrenched neighbour disputes.
- Neighbours or friends gossiping about each other, including on social networks.
- Varying lifestyles and everyday family living noises.
- ASB based on a belief or perception that is not supported by evidence or witnesses.
- Residents running a business from their home.
- Car repairs at home.
- Inconsiderate vehicle parking.
- Matters to do with planning or building control.
- Noisy consensual sexual activity in a private home.
- The smoking of cannabis or tobacco within the confines of a private dwelling, its garden or any shared communal areas.
- Untidy gardens or property disrepair.
- Overhanging shrubbery, foliage or trees.
- Neighbours throwing garden cuttings or litter onto your property.
- Dogs barking and other animal related complaints.
- Certain issues related to private land, including trespass and parking.
- Formal complaints against another service or organisation.
- Malicious or anonymous complaints.
- Complaints about others making a complaint against you.

- Tenant/leaseholder/landlord relationships.

If there is another service available with Dorset Police, the council or voluntary sector that may be able to help resolve some of the above matters we will advise you about contacting them or refer your complaint.

Working together with you

Only by working together with victims and communities can anti-social behaviour be successfully prevented and tackled. We need the communities' support, help and co-operation in our joint efforts to protect victims, gather evidence and successfully resolve the anti-social behaviour.

When we accept a complaint of anti-social behaviour we enter a mutually agreed, unwritten contract that we will do all in our power to help resolve the anti-social behaviour using whatever tools are available. In return victims are expected to do all that they can to assist us in this aim.

To successfully resolve ASB we need proof – definitive evidence of what is happening. We need victims to help us gather it, but it is not their job alone to do this. The allocated Case Officer will explain the different ways in which victims can gather evidence and record incidents, including:

- Diary sheets;
- Mobile phone;
- DAT (noise) recorder;
- Photographs or video;
- CCTV

Victims need to co-operate with us when we need to see them or their family. We will need to understand what is happening, to assess threats and risks and identify vulnerabilities. We can meet at any convenient location. At some point we will have to visit the neighbourhood to improve our understanding of the layout, or to assess if any protective measures are necessary. We will also need the victim's consent to challenge the perpetrator(s) of the ASB.

We would also ask that victims co-operate with us in completing any assessments. These are designed to help us gather information, decide what else we need to do, or to signpost to any additional help. At times people may find our questioning and information gathering intrusive or tiresome, but it is necessary if we are to have a chance to resolve the anti-social behaviour or harassment and understand the impact.

In the early stages of the investigation the Case Officer will develop a case plan. We need the victim's help to complete this and for them to undertake any actions they have agreed to.

Sometimes anti-social or nuisance behaviour may be resolved through mediation where the victim and the other party/parties discuss the issues that affect them. This takes place under the guidance of a third party and again

we would ask that you seriously consider mediation if we recommend it as a possible solution. Failure to accept mediation may result in your case being closed.

A resolution to a case may be achieved by the intervention of another agency, social services for example. Due to confidentiality we may not be able to give you any details. The main aim is for the anti-social behaviour to stop.

We need victims to work with us to build a case against the perpetrator(s) of ASB. We aim to protect and support them, their family and the community and bring the ASB to a successful resolution. Without victim's involvement, co-operation and support we may not be able to resolve the ASB. We will either refuse to accept the case in the first instance, or will close it due to lack of engagement. Victims will be informed of our decision and where other assistance may be available.

Cases will be closed when:

- The ASB has stopped;
- There is a lack of evidence;
- Upon assessment the problem is deemed not to be ASB;
- One of the parties refuses mediation in a neighbour dispute;
- Every possible tool or power has been tried for a given behaviour;
- The victim fails to engage.

We strive to make a positive difference but sometimes disputes between neighbours are so deep-rooted, with counter claims following allegations, that they may not ever be fully resolved and our involvement may have little or no impact. These cases will be closed when every avenue has been explored. At all times we will be honest and realistic with you.

Data protection and information sharing

Christchurch Borough and East Dorset District Councils operate under the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and we will protect any personal or sensitive information that is gathered during the course of an investigation. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 allows us to share appropriate information with relevant partners in our efforts to support and protect victims and to prevent and tackle crime and disorder. We gather, store, share and destroy personal data to strict guidelines.

Where other help or advice might be available

If the Community Safety Team cannot accept your complaint or we have closed your case further help, support or advice may be available elsewhere, here are some suggestions.

The Dorset for You website provides information relating to services provided by Christchurch and East Dorset Councils and Dorset County Council.

<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/> or 01305 221000

Christchurch and East Dorset Councils

Customer Services 01202 795000
All general enquiries

Public Health and Protection 01202 795185
publichealth@christchurchandeastdorset.gov.uk
Loud music, animal related issue i.e. dogs barking, bonfires, licencing.

Dorset County Council

Dorset Trading Standards <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/>
Consumer/business advice, animal health

Dorset Waste Partnership <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/>
Flytipping, abandoned vehicles

Highways <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/>
Highways (potholes etc), on street parking

Dorset Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 01202 228866
Children's safeguarding neglect and abuse

Adult Social Care
Dorset Adult Access Team 01305 221016
Out of Hours Service on 01202 657279
(Safeguarding, carer's support, self-neglect)

Stour Valley & Poole Partnership 0345 034 4569
Housing benefit, council tax and benefit fraud

Shelter 0344 5151400
Advice about poor housing condition or threat of eviction, risk of homelessness

Health

Talk to your **GP** if you are feeling low, anxious or depressed.

Steps2Wellbeing East Dorset 0300 1231120

Anxiety and depression Christchurch **03007900542**

REACH (EDP) 0800 0434656
Advice about drug and alcohol services in the area

General
RSPCA **0300 1234999**
Animal welfare and cruelty

Help & Care **0300 1113303**
Support and advice for older people

Mediation
Mediation Dorset **01305 257717**
Relate **01202 311231**
Restorative Dorset **01202 223106**