



## REVIEW OF ASB

<b>Objective:</b>	To look at ways of improving Anti Social Behaviour Procedures and communication between Rosebery and Customers
<b>Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) To increase communication between Rosebery Housing Association and victims/perpetrators of anti social behaviour</li> <li>(ii) To improve methods of dealing with anti social behaviour</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations To Rosebery Executive team.</b>	See attached appendix for snapshot of recommendations and recommended timescales. More detailed analysis is contained within the report
<b>Context</b>	<p>This is the third report conducted by the Residents Panel.</p> <p><u>Choosing a topic</u></p> <p>When deciding upon the first review, the Panel looked at the Key Performance Information (KPI), satisfaction and benchmarking data. Customers are still indicating that communication is very important to them. As communication covers a large area, it was decided when choosing the initial report that this be broken down and that for our third report we would look at communication between RHA and Customers in relation to how they feel anti social behaviour is handled.</p> <p><u>Survey Information</u></p> <p>From the rated by residents service, we noted that the satisfaction levels are extremely poor in relation to Customer satisfaction for anti social behaviour. The panel are unable to ascertain correct percentages for overall satisfaction due to the information only being captured since September 2012.</p> <p>However we are concerned that satisfaction surveys are exceptionally low with drops as much as 60% for how well Customers were kept up to date with what was happening throughout their case and how Rosebery kept to the agreed action plan. Customer satisfaction also had a large drop of 40%.</p> <p>Capturing this kind of information can be difficult due to the nature of anti social behaviour being a highly emotive area and different perceptions of what is classed as ASB.</p>

<p><b>Methods &amp; Documents</b></p>	<p>In this review a variety of methods were used to test the objective. The following methods were used to ensure all areas were covered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Desk top review to familiarise ourselves with Rosebery’s policies, procedures and standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Housemark ASB Benchmarking survey 2009/10</li> <li>○ KPI’s</li> <li>○ Rosebery Procedure and Guidance Manual dated November 2006</li> <li>○ Fact sheets</li> <li>○ Other Housing Associations’ policies</li> <li>○ Case studies</li> <li>○ Voluntas statistics (Rated by Residents)</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ After the desk top review had been carried out, the desk top highlighted key areas for further exploration and questioning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Interviews with Customer Services Team</li> <li>○ Interviews with Customer Services Manager</li> <li>○ Interviews with RHA Neighbourhood Officers</li> <li>○ Interviews with RHA Neighbourhood Office Management</li> <li>○ Surveys with victims of anti social behaviour</li> <li>○ Examination of new software for recording anti social behaviour complaints</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Findings</b></p>	<p>This section includes what the panel found whilst carrying out their investigations.</p> <p>The recommendations from the findings can be found in the next section. (Appendix 1 details a snapshot of recommendations).</p> <p><u>Benchmarking Survey</u></p> <p>ASB Benchmarking is more popular than ever. More Landlords are inputting data in 2010 than ever before. In fact it has doubled. 94% of benchmarking social landlords are engaged with partnerships with other agencies to tackle ASB. Landlords are becoming more sophisticated at recording ASB, with 2/3<sup>rd</sup> now using specialist ASB software or have integrated with their housing management software. Rosebery has taken on board a need for this and has implemented a new software system in recording ASB which will be discussed later on in the report.</p> <p>The number of cases taken on by landlords has remained stable at around 70 cases per year for every 1,000 properties. Looking at the statistics, organisations based in London and the South record fewer cases of ASB than those in Central and North regions. The average number of days to resolve ASB has decreased slightly the median dropping from 68 days in 2009 to 65 days in 2010. It would be of use to have more up to date information as to whether those figures have increased or decreased.</p> <p>Noise continues to be the main cause of ASB complaints showing a year on year increase in most quarters. ASB does differ from regions, the North tend to have the biggest proportion of garden nuisance</p>

compared to London which has the largest share of loiterers.

Early intervention by Landlords continues to be the most effective method of stopping ASB such as mediation. 76% of cases in 2010 were resolved with this method.

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts have resolved nearly 10 times as many cases as ASBO's did in 2010.

Demotions are rarely used resolving only 0.1% of cases in 2010. Eviction is the ultimate sanction used in around 1% of cases.

82% of residents were satisfied with the way their complaint was handled however they were less happy with the time it took for their case to be resolved with only 68% satisfied.

There is a very weak correlation between costs and satisfaction but in general organisations spending a lot more money on ASB do not see it translate into satisfaction. It very much depends on how the Landlord deals with the ASB.

#### Rosebery Procedure and Guidance Manual

The procedure and guidance manual is a very large document consisting of over 58 pages. It is a very detailed and comprehensive report. It is very clear from the manual that Rosebery is to adopt a zero tolerance approach towards abuse to staff by Customers and that it will provide on-going training to appropriate staff in order to support them with dealing with anti social behaviour.

The manual also is clear in that they will support victims of anti social behaviour and work with Customers and other local agencies such as Police, Local Authorities etc to provide support and rehabilitation to deal effectively and swiftly with the problem. To do this Rosebery will use any number of means including the use of preventative measures where appropriate and enforcement action against perpetrators of anti social behaviour in the community to achieve this aim.

The manual also states that it will deal with anti social behaviour in as fast and effective way as possible and to keep the victim involved/informed of all steps when are where appropriate. It does state that they may not be able to provide this for reasons of confidentiality.

The manual provides legislative sources and regulatory context for staff so that they have full knowledge of how to deal with anti social behaviour.

The manual clearly set outs the different categories of anti social behaviour and there are tables giving timescales for when tasks are to be completed by. Prior to the Rosebery implementing a new data base to record ASB cases, all cases were logged on a spreadsheet. Although this captured and recorded target and closure dates it was not as accurate as the data base that has now been put in place.

Currently, staff are not issued a copy of this manual when they join the organisation. Although new staff receive ASB training to allow them to

carry out their day to day tasks, Rosebery should consider introducing a more comprehensive training session that staff have to complete within 6 months of their start date. This should include them confirming that they have read and are fully aware of the manuals contents.

The manual does not take into account the fact that Rosebery are now using a new software package. It could therefore be updated to reflect this.

#### Fact Sheets

The fact sheets are relatively new. They are clear and informative but are not clearly identifiable on the Rosebery website. The relevant fact sheet should be sent out for every report of ASB. No feedback has been received about the factsheets from residents so it may be useful for a Voluntas question to be added to ask for feedback on the sheets.

#### Other Housing Associations' Policies

With regard to the other Housing Association policies the Panel have managed to obtain, many seem to have their own ASB Team that deal exclusively with this. This could be because the Housing Associations are a lot larger than Rosebery. It could be of benefit for Rosebery to consider employing someone exclusively to deal with antisocial behaviour so that Neighbourhood Officers can manage their caseload without letting ASB issues fall by the wayside.

Rosebery's policy is shorter and concise. This can be found on Rosebery's website. However not much is mentioned in terms of mediation which is now a more popular method of resolving ASB and has a high success rate. Mediation needs to be more prominent as an effective tool for dealing with ASB. Rosebery does not mention behaviour contracts this is a tool that Rosebery should consider adopting with consequences attached to it.

#### Rosebery's website

There is no mention of anti social behaviour on Rosebery's home page on the internet. It is the fourth item on the tabs under the "forms & feedback" near the bottom of the page. Other Housing Associations' web sites all have ASB on their home page which is clearly sign posted. ASB needs to be clearly identified on the home page.

#### Case Studies

A case was activated on Monday 24th September 2012. A brief synopsis of the case is that the victim and his wife have suffered harassment in the form of pictures and videos being taken and receiving verbal abuse by the perpetrator over the course of a year. The perpetrator's mother was also involved and escalating the situation by parking on their drive and blocking their entrance. The situation is further compounded by the fact that the perpetrator has mental health problems. Surrey Police are involved and have spoken to the perpetrator and the perpetrator's CPN. The police have advised they cannot take this any further because of the perpetrator's mental health issues. It is noted no other support agencies have been contacted

such as Social Services.

The panel's immediate thoughts are would more be achieved by having more conversations with the relevant parties over the phone and in person. Should Rosebery have been more active with the perpetrator's CPN rather than relying on just the Police? It seemed like Rosebery just handed the reins over so to speak rather than dealing with the situation head on such as asking the perpetrator and the mother with the CPN and entering into a behavioural contract. Just because someone has mental health issues this should not exclude them from any ASB remedies.

With regard to the other cases, at the time of writing this report it does not appear matters have moved forward much. For example, with regard to the perpetrator who bangs their door late at night etc, the last action was an interview of a neighbour who collaborated with the victim and implied it was affecting his health. This was on 9<sup>th</sup> November. It appears no further action has been done since this date or if it has, has not been recorded appropriately. To keep satisfaction levels high, it must be followed through within specified time periods and recorded on the system. It is very important communication is maintained at all times; especially in this highly emotive situation..

#### Voluntas Statistics

The Panel were not able to get a clear picture from the Voluntas statistics because this has only been recorded since September. However, alarmingly it does show high dissatisfaction with how Rosebery deal with ASB and being kept informed at all stages.

It appears from the statistics that Rosebery is failing with important issues such as communication. However this would need to be assessed in a year's time once we have more data available to be able to give a proper synopsis.

#### Interviews with Customer Services Team (including management)

The Customer Services Team felt they needed more training to deal with ASB effectively. As ASB is very emotive, with people under stress, sometimes the Team felt out of their depth to be able handle some of the situations as you are required to be empathetic, professional and knowledgeable at all times. Some Customers feel Rosebery are not doing enough but it is more managing their expectations and being trained to be able to do that. The team felt that honesty is paramount in what Rosebery can and cannot do and that Rosebery need to be more transparent.

With the new system the team do feel it is covering more of what they need to do.

The team feel it is important that the Neighbourhood Officer follows up once a report is made with either a telephone call or visit as the team get the irate phone calls if they do not hear. It is important to build up trust.

You do need to have the correct training in order to deal with difficult calls/visitors and training needs to be sooner rather than later.

### Interviews with Neighbourhood Officers Team (including management)

The Neighbourhood Officer believes there is a very robust policy in place. However they also believe more training is required as there is always room for improvement.

Rosebery do come across false allegations of ASB which is a breach of tenancy. In these cases, the person making the false allegation would be issued with a formal warning letter and a breach of tenancy letter. Further action may also be taken depending on the severity of the case. It could lead to legal action being taken in severe cases.

Communication between Rosebery and outside agencies such as the Police, Social Services, Local Authorities and Mediation is very important. There are times when outside authorities such as the Court or the Police take a long time in dealing with a case which can reflect badly on Rosebery. As long as the Customer is kept well informed this could alleviate some of the tension/stress.

On average there are about 6 cases of ASB reported per *month*. Two to three of these are serious and three to four are less serious. Keeping in contact with the victim depends on the case.

Neighbourhood Officers have to work with the perpetrator as well as the victim, and some of them are classed as vulnerable. Depending on the circumstances and the type of vulnerability, Rosebery may refer them for support (for example drug & alcohol support or support from Social Services). They may also nominate them to CIAG (Community Interaction Action Group). Mental Health would not be seen as a barrier to taking ASB action but we would try to refer them to support where needed.

Reports of ASB are received in a number of ways such as letters, phone calls or e-mails. The neighbourhood team work closely with the Customer Services Team as the Customer Service Team need to keep them advised of all up-dates and new cases etc. The neighbourhood team also need to up-date them as to what is going on with regard to certain cases. Communication between both teams is vital to ensure that we keep the balance right. The reporting of ASB could be improved and hopefully the software system will be able to deal with this.

Rosebery is not a large enough organisation to have someone exclusively dealing with ASB as there are not enough cases to warrant their existence.

### Surveys

In a recent ASB case which involved the eviction of a Customer, the Police with the assistance of other Customers and Rosebery spent a long arduous time building up a case. When it was finally taken to Court there was a considerably long wait (*around 10 months*) before it went before the Judge. Unfortunately some of the Customers felt they were not kept informed it was only because of enquiries made by themselves that they found out what was happening. Another Customer felt they were not fully informed about the Court process and

were not fully aware of what was expected of them, and they felt they were coerced into it.

It was also noted by another victim involved with the above case that they felt Rosebery did not initially do much. They commented "it was only until another victim was physically attacked in the street did Rosebery finally sit up and take notice. It took well over two years before an application was made to Court. For people living in this stressful situation, and them feeling nothing is being done, this provides quite a low level of satisfaction". There was differing information between the Police and Rosebery. The Police complained diary sheets were not being properly completed making their job more difficult. No one was shown how to complete the diary sheets properly.

However the victims were extremely satisfied with the result of the Court case leading to the perpetrator being evicted from their property.

Most victims felt it was very easy to contact Rosebery with regard to ASB via e-mail or telephone. However they felt that the member of staff dealing with the complaint was occasionally helpful, this may be because training needs to be given as a priority to increase knowledge. It is also noted that sometimes perpetrators do not reply to Rosebery making Rosebery's job difficult in remedying the situation. Should a tougher stance be taken by Rosebery so as to ensure they receive a response.

#### Software

Rosebery have recently had new software installed dealing exclusively with ASB to run alongside their case management system. However, the two systems are not currently linked. When someone telephones or visits for example a log is made onto the system. The person who receives the call/visits takes detailed notes from the victim. The system then generates an e-mail which gets sent to the Neighbourhood Officer Team. They then assess the ASB case and then depending on the category contact the victim within the specified time. Prompts are sent to remind the Neighbourhood Officer to action it so it is not put to one side and then forgotten about. The Officer will need to complete a number of prompts such as referring the victim to another agency. Each action has an "action date" and "completion date" and the system will generate a further e-mail a few days before each action is due to ensure they complete them.

As the software is new, it will need to be run for at least a year before the Panel is able to decide whether it is working effectively or not.

However it was noted that a low priority ASB case took about 10-12 weeks to close. Some members of the panel felt this was too long. However looking at the benchmarking statistics this does seem the average time for a case to close.

It was also noted that serious cases of ASB, are logged as normal by the customer services team and then copied to the relevant neighbourhood officer for action. Again there are different perceptions of what is classed as serious or normal. Could a checklist be drawn up so that the Customer Services Team can determine what ASB is serious/normal/low priority.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, the panel have made recommendations to the Executive team at Rosebery to improve.

### Benchmarking

KIPS need to be continually logged at all levels. There was minimum up to date KPI's information and the panel had to work from a 2010 report.

### Rosebery Procedure and Guidance Manual

Manual needs to be up-dated to take into account the new software package that Rosebery is currently using.

The condensed version needs to be more accessible on the website with clean sign posting. It was not easy to find. ASB should have its own navigation links with the condensed version of Rosebery's procedures as well as the fact sheets. Attached to this report are examples of other Landlords website's showing a clear signposting of ASB (Appendix 2\_

Rosebery needs to clearly reinforce the message that ASB will not be tolerated.

### Fact sheets

Fact sheets need to be placed on the website immediately. Everyone reporting ASB should be sent a letter confirming the logging of their case, who it has been assigned to, the reference number of the case, contact details, and the relevant fact sheet, diary sheets if appropriate, and the target date for when they can expect to hear from us.

### Staff/Rosebery

Training needs to be giving as a priority in dealing with ASB especially for all front line staff.

Could Rosebery learn from someone else (Raglan have just had a revamp)

Staff need to embrace the complaint however big or small. They need to be able to determine easily what is serious/normal or low priority.

Expectations needs to be managed on all sides and deadlines/time scales need to be adhered to

Rosebery staff and contractors should be supported in identifying and reporting incidents of ASB where they have been subject to or witnessed ASB.

Staff should create action plans for every reported ASB case, setting out what we will do, what we would like the tenant to do, offering signposting or mediation where appropriate and listing other organisation that are involved. This should be attached to the ASB

system and communicated to the customer.

The appropriate Neighbourhood Officer should contact everyone who has an open ASB case once a week and record on the ASB system that this has been attended to. When their case is closed, reasons need to be set out for this, giving resolution and an opportunity to reopen and explain that we will attempt to contact them to survey for feedback and improvement.

Rosebery need to continually monitor ASB cases, victims and perpetrators to ensure that marginalised/minority groups are not formed or that there needs are being addressed.

Rosebery also need to be clear in their approach as to what we will do to protect victims and witnesses who are vulnerable.

Rosebery also need to ensure that incoming tenants from other HAs have a not got a history of ASB. That they have no current ABCs, enforcement orders, ABOs or similar attached to the household. If they do, the tenant should immediately enter a behaviour contract and also be put on a starter tenancy. Should they breach this, then Rosebery should follow through and not enter into a short hold tenancy with them. Rosebery need to be tougher in tackling ASB.

Consider introducing an ASB check at sign ups which clearly set out the standards of behaviour we expect of all tenants and the sanctions that we may apply to those who behave in an anti-social manner

#### Website

There needs to be a clear signpost to ASB on Rosebery's website. Please see appendix 2 as to an example of one Housing Association's website on. Suggestions on what to add to the website is as follows:-

- A quick link along the lines of our "Report a Repair" facility which could be titled "Information on Anti Social Behaviour & How to Report".
- The ability to access and print out diary sheets to enable residents to collate evidence.
- Under Frequently Asked Questions, "How do you report Anti Social Behaviour?" should be added.

#### Case studies

There needs to be less reliance on email unless the victims have stated that this is their preferred means of communication and more emphasis on telephone conversations and meeting the parties in person.

A joint meeting involving all parties i.e. the victims, perpetrators, Surrey Police & Rosebery Housing Association only if the victim feels comfortable with this course of action.

Endorse Surrey Police's recommendation of bringing on board

	<p>professional mediation.</p> <p>Encourage victims to complete the diary sheets which are crucial should the situation escalate. Show victims how to complete diary sheets so that if the police do become involved then the diary sheets produced will not delay any evidence gathering.</p> <p><u>Software</u></p> <p>A timeframe needs to be established and adhered to with dealing with cases rather than leaving them in abeyance</p> <p>The Neighbourhood Manager has the ultimate responsibility for closing these cases and therefore it may be of assistance if the Manager also receives the reporting e-mailing in the first instance. This will ensure that the Manager is kept fully abreast of the situation.</p> <p>Rosebery needs to improve the link between ASB software and IBS so that diary notes and key actions are recorded on the diary pages. People with open cases could also be flagged on IBS.</p> <p>The ASB system needs to be improved to make it more prescriptive in terms of common actions and to enable more e-mail alerts to highlight when these actions are required</p>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p>Rosebery are clearly committed in trying to deal with ASB effectively. They have introduced a new software package to tackle ASB. However this needs to be reviewed in a year's time so that appropriate training is given to staff and that all cases are recorded properly.</p> <p>Communication again seems to be of high priority to residents. Many residents feel that if they are kept abreast of any situation they are happy it is being attended to. Rosebery does have to be tougher in dealing with perpetrators and not letting a situation escalate before it is handled appropriately. No one wants to see someone lose their home but if that is the last course of action available after mediation etc has been attempted then this must be attended to more swift.</p> <p>Attached in Appendix 1 is a list of recommendations.</p>

## **APPENDIX 1**

### ASB Recommendations

#### Communication

- Continue to report KPI's on ASB at all levels of Rosebery including customers and the Panel.
- Everyone reporting ASB should be sent a letter confirming the logging of their case, who it has been assigned to, the reference number of the case, contact details, any relevant fact sheet, diary sheets if appropriate, and the target date for when they can expect to hear from us.
- Those asked to fill in diary sheets must be shown what information they need to include.
- A guidance sheet should be produced that outlines what happens if you have to go to court as a witness and the possibility of having to attend court should be made clear to all victims at the earliest opportunity.
- Action plans should be created for every reported ASB case, setting out what Rosebery will do, what we would like the tenant to do, offering signposting or mediation where appropriate and listing other organisation that are involved. This should be attached to the ASB system and communicated to the customer.
- Contact everyone who has an open ASB case once a week, where appropriate, and record on the ASB system.
- Write to all tenants when their case is closed, setting out the reasons for this, giving resolution, giving opportunity to re-open and explaining that we will attempt to contact them to survey for feedback and improvement.
- Explore avenues for promotion and to re-enforce the message that ASB will not be tolerated.
- Gain some resident feedback on the ASB guidance sheets by adding a voluntas question.
- Offer more meetings and increased communication throughout the ASB case.
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#### Website

- Improve and highlight the ASB reporting tool on the Rosebery website. This should include a quick link to information about ASB and how to report it. Diary sheets should be accessible on the website and a question should be added to the FAQ's that asks 'how do you report ASB?'
- Include the ASB guidance sheets on the Rosebery website as well as the condensed version of Rosbery's ASB procedure.

#### Staff & Training

- Ensure that Rosebery staff and contractors are supported to identify and report incidents where they have been subject to or have observed ASB.
- Aim to ensure that all new frontline staff receive ASB training within 6months of starting at Rosebery. This should incorporate setting expectations and dealing with difficult calls/visits.
- Consider introducing refresher training for all staff at least every two years.
- Provide frontline staff with a checklist for when they receive an ASB call. This should include ways for them to check the type and severity of the case.

## Procedure and Process

- Ensure that ASB policy and procedure is up to date and revised every three years. This should include updating the ASB manual and incorporate the new software.
- Mediation and Behaviour Contracts should become more prominent tools for dealing with ASB. More signposting to mediation should be available.
- Set up and promote an ASB hotline where reports and occurrences can be recorded 24/7.
- Monitor ASB cases, victims and perpetrators to ensure that marginalised/minority groups are not formed or that their needs are being addressed
- Have a clear and communicated approach to what we will do to protect victims and witnesses who are vulnerable.
- Ensure that incoming tenants from other HAs have not got a history of ASB. That they have no current ABCs, enforcement orders, ABOs or similar attached to the household.
- Consider introducing an ASB check at sign ups which clearly set out the standards of behaviour we expect of all tenants and the sanctions that we may apply to those who behave in an anti-social manner.

## Software and Systems

- Improve the link between ASB software and IBS so that diary notes and key actions are recorded on the diary pages. People with open cases could also be flagged on IBS.
- Improve the ASB system to make it more prescriptive in terms of common actions and to enable more e-mail alerts to highlight when these actions are required. This should also include a process for monitoring the progress of cases.
- Include management in the email alerts that are sent when ASB cases are raised.
- Review the new ASB data base in 1 years time so that the panel can determine whether it is effective.

## Appendix 2

<http://www.penwithha.org.uk/>

<http://www.waterlooha.org.uk/main.cfm?type=DMRES>

<http://www.family-housing.co.uk/>