Support for Victims and Witnesses of ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Services available in Caerphilly county borough

MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES EVEN SAFER

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Contents:

Introduction 3
What is the Community Safety Partnership? 4
What are our priorities 4
What is anti-social behaviour? 5
Why should I report anti-social behaviour? 6
How can I report anti-social behaviour? 6
What should I do to report anti-social behaviour if I am a council tenant? 7
What are we doing to tackle anti-social behaviour? 8
Where does support for victims and witnesses of anti-social behaviour fit in? 9
What services are available from the Victims Champion? 10
What support services are available if I need to attend court? 10
Beat the Jargon 11
Useful contacts 12

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Introduction:

Experiencing persistent anti-social behaviour can have very damaging effects on local communities. It can leave people feeling alarmed, harassed and distressed and can have a real negative impact on people’s quality of life.

The Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership is committed to tackling incidents of anti-social behaviour by intervening early on, as soon as the behaviour becomes an issue.

There is also a comprehensive support package available for those who experience or witness anti-social behaviour in Caerphilly county borough.

This handbook helps guide you through the various stages of the anti-social behaviour process, from initially reporting the anti-social behaviour through to the support services available should you be required to attend court.

This handbook also details the support services that you are entitled to as victims or witnesses of anti-social behaviour.
What is the Community Safety Partnership?

The Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership is a multi-agency partnership, comprised of Caerphilly County Borough Council, Gwent Police, Gwent Police Authority, Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and Wales Probation Trust. Our aim is to work to reduce levels of crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, and to build levels of public confidence within Caerphilly county borough.

What are our priorities

The Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership (SCCSP) has identified three key priorities that will be the focus of its work over the period 2011-2014.

These were identified through a detailed Strategic Assessment, which analysed partnership data, including crime analysis and several forms of community engagement. This helped to identify the main issues that are of significant concern to members of our communities.

The three key priorities are to:

1. Reduce anti-social behaviour and improve the street scene
2. Reduce the harm caused by alcohol
3. Partnership Development
What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour can be defined as ‘any behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause alarm, harassment or distress’, or put more simply, ‘low level nuisance to serious harassment which can damage the quality of life and interfere with the ability of people to use and enjoy their home or community’.

This type of behaviour can include issues such as:

- Rowdy, noisy or inconsiderate behaviour
- Threatening behaviour
- Vandalism, graffiti and fly-posting
- Litter and fly-tipping
- Anti-social drinking in the street
- Abandoning cars in the street

Unfortunately, anti-social behaviour remains an issue that continues to blight many of our communities, and is an issue that features heavily in community meetings such as PACT (Partnerships and Communities Together) as being the issue that people would most like to see resolved in their communities. The Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership takes a tough stance on dealing with those responsible for causing anti-social behaviour, and offers a comprehensive package of support for victims and witnesses affected by this behaviour.
Why should I report anti-social behaviour?

Quite simply if the situation isn’t reported, it cannot be rectified. We understand however, that some residents may feel reluctant to report instances of anti-social behaviour to us as they may fear the repercussions if they do. Measures can be put in place to protect the anonymity of victims’ identities if necessary. Others may think that even if you do report anti-social behaviour to us, nothing will be done about it. It is our job to challenge this perception and encourage members of the public just like you to report issues to us.

How can I report anti-social behaviour?

In the first instance, incidents of anti-social behaviour should be reported to the relevant organisation for investigation. For example, if the complaint is about noise nuisance, your first port of call should be to Caerphilly County Borough Council’s Environmental Health team.

The various departments will then decide whether or not to involve the anti-social behaviour coordinator, depending on whether the complaint can be easily rectified.

In order to provide information to the relevant agency or department, you should record some basic information regarding the type of behaviour you are experiencing, such as:

- The date and the time the incident started
- The type of behaviour displayed, e.g. “Mr Jones was shouting and screaming at me, telling me to piss off” – it is important to include the actual language used, even expletives.
- Where it happened, e.g. “Outside my house at 4 Main Street.”
- How did this behaviour make you feel? e.g. “It woke me and my children up. I was very upset and couldn’t get back to sleep and I woke up late for work the next day.”
- What happened next? e.g. “I called the police and they came and arrested Mr Jones.”
There are a number of enforcement options available to the group, including:

- Applying for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO).
- Applying for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order upon conviction of a criminal offence (CRASBO).
- If the behaviour is tenancy-related, applying for a Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP) or an Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction (ASBI).

In the most serious cases of anti-social behaviour, the process can be accelerated. An Interim Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) application can be made to the court in less than 48 hours if necessary.

What should I do to report anti-social behaviour if I am a council tenant?

In order to make a complaint against a council tenant:

- Any complaint of anti-social behaviour should, in the first instance, be reported to your local Area or Neighbourhood Housing Office. This can be done in person, by telephone, by letter, by email at tenancyenforcement@caerphilly.gov.uk or online at www.caerphilly.gov.uk and follow the housing links.
- The Area Housing Office will then complete a referral form and send all details of the complaint to the council’s Tenancy Enforcement Section.
- The complaint will then be logged; an acknowledgement letter sent, and the complaint will be graded before being referred to the appropriate officer for investigation.

For further information, visit www.caerphilly.gov.uk or contact your local Area or Neighbourhood Housing Office.
What are we doing to tackle anti-social behaviour?

We have in place a well established ‘Four Strikes’ process for dealing with anti-social behaviour, which works on the basis that intervening as early on as possible, when the anti-social behaviour initially becomes a problem, is the key to solving the issues. The process looks to moderate anti-social behaviour through the use of intervention measures, with enforcement action where necessary. Once a referral has been made to the process, a chain of interventions begins in an attempt to lead the perpetrator away from committing anti-social acts.

**Strike 1**

When a referral is received for anti-social behaviour, a warning letter is issued to the individual responsible. This letter states the consequences if the behaviour continues.

**Strike 2**

If a second referral is received within six months of the first, a second warning letter is sent in a similar vein to the first, again illustrating the consequences if the behaviour continues.

**Strike 3**

If further reports of anti-social behaviour are received within six months of the second referral, the individual is referred to the multi-agency Strike 3 Intervention Meeting. This meeting examines the various interventions available to the group for each individual case. These interventions may include inviting the person to a face-to-face meeting to discuss their behaviour, the signing of an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC), and/or a referral to the Youth Offending Service (YOS) depending on their age.

**Strike 4**

In cases where further referrals have been received despite repeated intervention attempts, cases are then discussed at a further multi-agency meeting, the Problem Solving Group. The purpose of this meeting is to gain a multi-agency perspective of whether to pursue enforcement action.
Support for Victims and Witnesses of Anti Social Behaviour

Residents of Caerphilly county borough who have been victims or witnesses of anti-social behaviour can benefit from a service, which provides support and guidance on dealing with anti-social behaviour and moving forward.

The service, which provided by Victim Support, is free and confidential.

Local Police Officers, Caerphilly County Borough Council staff including Community Safety Wardens and Tenancy Enforcement Officers as well as other Community Safety staff have also been trained on how to provide support and guidance to victims of anti social behaviour.

When an anti social behaviour referral is submitted against an individual (as part of the Four-Strike process), the victim or witness in each case will have the opportunity to work with Victim Support, who can provide professional, confidential support and guidance to those that require it.
What services are available from the Victims Champion?

The Victims Champion, who is based with us at the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership, aims to promote the needs of anti-social behaviour victims and witnesses and coordinate local services to help ensure that victims receive the support and information they want and need.

The service can also offer support through acting as a single point of contact for victims and witnesses of anti-social behaviour, providing professional, emotional guidance and support. The Victims champion can provide practical advice on issues such as crime prevention and target hardening, i.e. making homes and property more secure.

What support services are available if I need to attend court?

Should you be required to attend court, the Victims Champion will also be able to:

- Help to fully inform the victim of how the courts work.
- Offer a pre-trial visit to allow the victim to become familiar with the court surroundings.
- Provide support throughout the duration of the trial, and even accompany victims into the court room if required.
- Offer practical support throughout the hearing such as help filling out the necessary paperwork.
- Talk over the case with the victim when the case has ended and offer further guidance and emotional support.
Beat the Jargon:

So many abbreviations, but what do they all mean? Find out using this useful ‘jargon buster’:

- **ABC**: Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) – is a voluntary agreement between the individual and the Community Safety Partnership. The ABC provides a set of guidelines that the perpetrator must abide by while in the community.

- **ASB**: Anti-Social Behaviour – is any kind of repeated behaviour that is likely to cause alarm, harassment or distress.

- **ASBI**: Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction – can be used against council and registered social landlord tenants or any other person causing problems at the address or surrounding area. The Injunction prohibits certain behaviours and where there has been use or threatened use of violence or if someone is at significant risk of harm, the court can attach a power of arrest.

- **ASBO**: Anti-Social Behaviour Order – is an order imposed by the court that sets out prohibitions, which may include exclusions from an area and prohibition of certain actions to protect the community.

- **CRASBO**: Anti-Social Behaviour Order upon the conviction of a criminal offence. An individual subject to a CRASBO will have a set of prohibitions unique to their case to prevent the anti-social behaviour re-occurring and protect the community.

- **ISO**: Individual Support Order – ISO’s are court orders available to 10-17 year olds, which can be attached to an Anti-Social Behaviour Order. The aim is to address the underlying causes of the behaviour that led to the ASBO.

- **NOSP**: Notice of Seeking Possession – if anti-social behaviour is perpetrated by a tenant, a NOSP can be served which declares the landlord’s intention to begin legal proceedings to reclaim the tenancy.

- **YISP**: Youth Inclusion Support Panel – YISP aims to prevent anti-social behaviour and offending by 8 to 15 year olds who are at high risk of offending.

- **YOS**: Youth Offending Service.
Useful Contacts:

To report anti-social behaviour:

- To report noise nuisance, abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping, fly-posting, dog fouling, litter, graffiti etc call Caerphilly StreetPride on 01443 866 566 or visit www.caerphilly.gov.uk/streetpride for more information.

- To report youth annoyance, harassment, aggression, violence or threats of violence, call Gwent Police on 101. In an emergency dial 999.

- To report underage/illegal sales of goods including alcohol and tobacco, call Trading Standards on 01495 235 291 or visit the website www.caerphilly.gov.uk for more information.

If the anti-social behaviour is more generalised, i.e. in a wider area around your home, and is being caused by more than one person you are not able to identify, you can:

- Contact the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership on 01443 864374 (during office hours) or visit the website www.caerphilly.gov.uk/saferccb

- Attend your local PACT (Partnerships and Communities Together) meeting to report your concerns to representatives from Gwent Police and Caerphilly County Borough Council. Details of forthcoming PACT meetings can be found at www.gwent.police.uk. Also look out for meeting dates in your copy of Caerphilly County Borough Council’s community publication Newsline.

Local Area/Neighbourhood Housing Office contacts:

- Upper Rhymney Valley Area Housing Office: 01443 873 535.
- Eastern Valleys Area Housing Office (Blackwood branch): 01495 235 661.
- Lower Rhymney Valley Area Housing Office: 029 20 849 838.
- Eastern Valleys Area Housing Office (Risca branch): 01633 600 950.
- Gilfach Bargoed Neighbourhood Housing Office: 01443 875 530.
- Lansbury Park Neighbourhood Housing Office: 029 20 860 917.
- Graig Y Rhacca Neighbourhood Housing Office: 029 20 853 050.
- e-mail: housing@caerphilly.gov.uk

Support services:

- Victims Champion - 01495 235441.
- Victim Support - 0845 6121 900.