

Key information sheet

Harassment and Hate Crime



What makes harassment different from other anti-social behaviour?

Harassment is any deliberate attack suffered by an individual or group because of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability. The type of behaviour may range from unpleasant remarks to physical violence.

Harassment can occur as an isolated incident or a series of incidents. However, legal action against most types of harassment can usually only be taken where there has been a series of incidents.

What are hate crimes?

A hate crime is any form of harassment that is also a criminal offence. Some examples of behaviour that can be classed as hate crime are:

- verbal and physical abuse
- assault
- criminal damage
- vandalism
- hate mail
- violence and threats of violence

The police can take legal action against hate crime after only one incident.

Tackling harassment and hate crime

We work closely with our community partners, such as the police and local council, to tackle harassment and hate crime. Together, we can take a range of actions, which will depend on the situation and nature of the case. Some of the actions include:

- mediation
- verbal or written warnings to the perpetrator
- Acceptable Behaviour Agreements
- Injunctions
- Restraining Orders
- Criminal Prosecution
- In the most serious cases, we may start possession action to evict the perpetrator from their home.

How can I report harassment and hate crime?

Whether you are a victim or a witness, you can report harassment by phoning, emailing, writing or visiting us at one of our offices. Our contact details are shown below. We can and will help you. If the situation is serious or potentially dangerous, you should report it to the police straight away by calling 999.

Confidentiality

We will treat all reports of harassment confidentially in line with our data protection policy. Interviews and conversations with customers about personal and sensitive matters will be carried out in private. We reserve the right to make a referral to social services or to the police without the permission of the complainant where the situation justifies it.

How we will support victims and witnesses

We believe that any form of harassment or hate crime is completely unacceptable. We are committed to working with our community partners to prevent and tackle harassment and

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Email: contactmph@circle.org.uk

www.mertonprioryhomes.org.uk



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hate crime.

We take the safety and perception of safety, of victims and witnesses seriously. Where appropriate, we will work with the police or local council to provide additional safety measures and support, and refer victims to specialised support services.

We will invite you to a meeting where you can present your complaint to an independent panel. You may bring someone along to the meeting to support you.