



Living in your neighbourhood

Although most residents are responsible and thoughtful, it is good to know what you can do if you experience nuisance or harassment in the community. Remember that you are responsible for the behaviour of your family, friends and visitors, sub tenants and pets. Your lease will usually include a clause which states that you must

'not use the property or any part thereof for any illegal or immoral purpose or do or permit or suffer to be done on the property or any part thereof anything which may be or become a nuisance or annoyance or cause damage or inconvenience to the Landlord or the occupiers of any adjoining or neighbouring premises.'

If you have a complaint against another leaseholder or tenant and you ask us to enforce such a covenant against them, we may do so if we consider the complaint to be valid and there is enough evidence to support legal action. However, in some cases where action is against another leaseholder, you would have to pay the costs of any such enforcement action.

Anti-social behaviour

Sometimes you may find that neighbours are causing a nuisance or there are people in the area whose behaviour you find unreasonable. Occasionally this behaviour may be serious or even criminal. A leaflet is available which sets out Bracknell Forest Homes' approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB); please contact us for a copy or get one from our website - www.bracknellforesthomes.org.uk A form for recording incidents of anti-social behaviour is also available to download from the website.

Anti-social behaviour will commonly involve the following types of behaviour:

Nuisance	Recommended course of action
Noise – loud music, shouting, animals, cars, burglar alarms, door slamming	Keep a diary detailing the day, date, time and duration of any noise for at least a month. Diary sheets are available from our website. If the noise is coming from a Bracknell Forest Homes' tenanted or leasehold property, contact us. If the noise is coming from anywhere else, contact the Environmental Health Department at Bracknell Forest Council. The number is available in the useful contacts in section 1.
Harassment, bullying or intimidation including racial, homophobic and hate crime	These issues are essentially for the Police to deal with. However, if the person causing the problems is a Bracknell Forest Homes' tenant or leaseholder, please contact us.
Criminal damage and criminal acts – vandalism, arson, damage to property, graffiti, assault	These issues are essentially for the Police to deal with. However, if the person causing the damage is a Bracknell Forest Homes' tenant or leaseholder, please contact us.
Environmental – animal fouling, fly tipping, abandoned vehicles, litter and dumping rubbish	These issues are essentially for the Environment Department of Bracknell Forest Council to deal with. However, if the person causing the problems is a Bracknell Forest Homes' tenant or leaseholder, please contact us.
Alcohol, drugs or substance misuse and dealing	These issues are essentially for the Police to deal with. However, if the person causing the problems is a Bracknell Forest Homes' tenant or leaseholder, please contact us.
Animals – uncontrolled dogs, unsuitable or dangerous pets	These issues are essentially for the Police, RSPCA or the Dog Warden at Bracknell Forest Council to deal with. However, if the owner of the animals is a Bracknell Forest Homes' tenant or leaseholder, please contact us.
Sexual – indecent exposure, sexual acts in public	These issues are essentially for the Police to deal with. However, if the person causing the problem is a Bracknell Forest Homes' tenant or leaseholder, please contact us.
General nuisance – gangs, begging, repeated or prolonged vehicle repairs in the street.	These issues are essentially for the Police to deal with. Vehicles on the road are dealt with by the Police, vehicles in car parking bays on our property are dealt with by Bracknell Forest Homes. However, if the individuals are Bracknell Forest Homes' tenants or leaseholders, please contact us.



If you are experiencing ASB, please consider the following actions:

- If you feel safe and comfortable doing so, talk to the person causing the problem. This often helps to solve problems at an early stage
- Listen to the person; they may tell you about things that cause them annoyance
- If the problem continues, contact us, by telephone, letter, email, online or by visiting our offices. We will give you advice about your next course of action
- We may provide you with an incident diary to fill in as incidents occur
- We may need to do repairs or remove graffiti if it is on our property
- We will offer you support, help and advice
- Where appropriate, we may offer to organise impartial mediation between the parties involved.

Abuse of staff

Your lease may say that you must not cause a nuisance to the landlord and this includes our staff and contractors. This also applies outside normal office hours and to staff working in your home. In the same way, our staff and contractors should always act in an acceptable way towards you. We will take appropriate legal action, including the possibility of forfeiture, if you abuse or assault our staff or contractors who are carrying out work on our behalf.

Parking

Please be considerate to other residents when you park your car. Car parking is restricted, and on most estates there is no allocated parking. You may not drive or park

on any open spaces, grass verges, shared gardens or similar pieces of land in your area. If you cause damage, we may charge you for the repair. All vehicles parked on Bracknell Forest Homes' land and driveways must be taxed and roadworthy or displaying a Statutory Off Road Notice (SORN). We may remove vehicles if they appear abandoned, unroadworthy or unsafe.

We may have a number of garages available for rent; please contact us for more information.

Rubbish and waste disposal

Please dispose of your rubbish properly. The refuse collectors from Bracknell Forest Council will only collect refuse which is in the correct bins, not items left on the floor of the bin area. If your block is provided with recycling bins, please use them for the correct items. If the caretaker has to move items which have been left on the floor of the bin area, in the wrong bins or in the common areas, we may have to make a charge to all residents in the block, if we cannot identify the culprit. There is CCTV in some of our blocks which sometimes helps us to identify individuals who have dumped rubbish.

Contact Bracknell Forest Council if you need to dispose of large items such as furniture. They can collect and dispose of it for a small charge. You can take bulky items and garden refuse to the Civic Amenity Site in Longshot Lane, Bracknell. Please tell us if someone has dumped rubbish on your estate. We will move the rubbish and charge the person responsible, if they can be found.

If rubbish is dumped in communal areas of flats, and we have to clear it, we will charge the person responsible. If no one can be identified, the charge for the clearance may have to be shared amongst all residents in the block.



Pets

We expect you and your sub-tenants to look after your pets in a responsible way. Please remember it is not always appropriate to keep a pet in a block of flats. You should ensure that you always clean up any mess a pet may cause. If we find there is a problem with animal fouling in a block of flats, and we cannot establish which animal is the cause of the fouling, we may have to charge all residents in the block for the costs of additional cleaning. The pet must not cause a nuisance to your neighbours. We may ask you to re-home a pet that causes nuisance.

Pests, vermin and infestations

Infestation caused by pests like rats, ants, wasps, mice or even squirrels, can be a common problem. If you have a pest problem, you should contact the Council's Environmental Health Department. They will be able to put you in touch with an expert to deal with the problem. You will usually have to pay for this service. Bracknell Forest Homes can arrange to remove pests from the communal areas of flats, and we can repair any structural damage after the pests have been removed (any costs for this work may be reflected in the service charge).

Communal or shared areas

If you share facilities outside your home such as hallways or staircases with other people, you are responsible for keeping the area free from obstructions, such as bicycles and prams. Keeping communal areas and estates clean and tidy requires co-operation between Bracknell Forest Homes and yourself.

Fire safety regulations require that stairways, landings and hallways are kept clear at all times. Please ensure that you

do not leave any items in the communal areas which may obstruct the exits in case of fire. It may become necessary for the Caretakers to remove anything left in the common areas after warnings have been issued.

Balconies

Your lease is likely to state that nothing may be hung off the outside of the property, and that you cannot hang washing on a balcony. For health and safety reasons and fire prevention reasons, you should not store any items on balconies, as this may prevent access to or from the property in the event of fire.

Fire Safety

Fire safety in your home is very important. The main areas of concern are electrical appliances, cookers, cigarettes and candles. You are strongly advised to fit a smoke alarm in your property and check regularly that the battery is still working. Residents and Bracknell Forest Homes have a shared responsibility to care for the communal areas, and there may be fire alarms and fire extinguishers in the communal areas of most blocks. If you are aware of any fire risks in the communal areas, you should report your concerns to us immediately. Additional help, advice and resources are available at www.direct.gov.uk/firekills or you can contact the local Fire Service on 0118 945 2888.

Bracknell Forest Homes carries out Fire Risk Assessments on all its blocks and has a programme of work to ensure that blocks are kept safe at all times



Cleaning

If you live in a block with seven or more flats in it, Bracknell Forest Homes usually provides a cleaning service to all the communal areas. You will find a cleaning specification on the notice board in your block. The cleaners will not remove rubbish sacks from outside individual flats. All residents must help keep the block clean and tidy and are responsible for disposing of rubbish in the correct way, not dropping litter or cigarette ends. If you spill anything in the communal areas, please clean it up immediately.

If you live in a block with six or fewer properties, Bracknell Forest Homes does not provide a cleaning service at present. All residents are expected to take responsibility for cleaning and help keep the block and the communal areas clean. For example, many residents organise their own cleaning rota to ensure that everyone in the block takes their turn.

To provide a new service to a block, such as cleaning, Bracknell Forest Homes will consult all residents of the block to obtain their agreement to pay the costs of the service. If all residents (including tenants) agree to pay for the service, consideration will be given to starting the new service. If your lease does not currently allow for a cleaning service, you will have to agree to a lease variation to include cleaning in the list of service charges, before the service can be provided.

Neighbourhood Estate Action Team (NEAT)

The Neighbourhood Estate Action Team (NEAT) is a team comprising Estate Officers, Mobile Caretakers and a Handy Person. The aim of NEAT is to keep all our estates in Bracknell Forest clean, tidy and safe. The NEAT visits all

estates and land owned and managed by Bracknell Forest Homes. The team identifies vandalism, graffiti and other forms of anti-social behaviour, and liaises with the Police and the Council to tackle problems. The NEAT also deals with illegally dumped rubbish, abandoned trolleys and untaxed or abandoned vehicles. The Mobile Caretakers and Estate Officers carry out regular estate patrols and Health and Safety inspections, as well as providing caretaking services to flats and communal areas. Our Handy Person also carries out minor repairs in communal areas.