



Hate Harassment Support Pack



community cohesion

**Housing
Executive**

Building Safer Communities Through Housing



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This Hate Harassment Support Pack has been produced by the Community Cohesion Unit of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive with the support of the Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Forum, the Community Safety Team NIHE and the PSNI.

Please note that this document is available on request in Braille, Large Font and DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System), Audiocassette or Computer Disc and a range of main Minority Ethnic Languages. A PDF version is currently available in Polish through the District Offices or the Housing Executive website.

All Housing Executive District Offices and hostels have access to a telephone interpreting service 24 hours a day and/or face to face interpreters. The Housing Executive can also offer a loop system at each District Office for people with a hearing related disability.

Housing Executive Main Number 08448 920900 or 028 90240588

Repairs and Emergency services Number 08448 920 901





Introduction

Introduction

The Housing Executive aims to provide a safe environment within our estates where residents, their families and visitors can live in peace and quiet, free from the effects of harassment, intimidation and anti-social behaviour.

This support pack has been developed to help those who are experiencing or know someone who is experiencing harassment, and in particular hate harassment. That is, harassment, intimidation or abuse on the grounds of their actual or perceived ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, political opinion or disability.

Examples of harassment, intimidation or abuse include

- Assault, ranging from pushing through to physical attacks and grievous bodily harm
- Verbal abuse such as offensive remarks and insulting comments
- Abusive or insulting graffiti
- Objects being thrown at people or their property
- Arson.

The Housing Executive is committed to dealing quickly and positively with any hate harassment within our estates whether it amounts to a crime or not. We will use the full range of remedies available to take action against perpetrators.

Members of the general public experiencing harassment but not living in Housing Executive estates, may also be able to use Housing Executive services such as the provision of temporary accommodation and advice and assistance if they are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Taking a stand against hate harassment

Each individual has a personal responsibility to treat everyone with respect and tolerance.

The Housing Executive is committed to improving the quality of life on our estates, but we cannot do it without your help and support. If your quality of life is being adversely affected by hate harassment and you have had enough, work with us to take action.

If you have a specific complaint about anyone causing harassment in your area, contact your local District Office as soon as possible.





Disability

Types of hate harassment - harassment based on disability

The Police Service of Northern Ireland defines a disability related incident to be:

'any incident perceived to be on the grounds of a person's physical or mental impairment by the victim or any other person'

People who have a physical or mental impairment can be more vulnerable to victimization than others in society. People with a mental impairment can be less able to recognise and avoid danger and people with a physical impairment can be less able to protect themselves or escape harm. Furthermore, victims of crime who have a disability can be less able to contact someone for help.

As with all forms of hate harassment the Housing Executive will respond to all harassment reported to us, whether or not this amounts to a crime.

See end of booklet for contact details of some support organisations.





Race

Types of hate harassment - harassment based on race

The Housing Executive has adopted the definition of a racist incident as being

'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'

Racist victimisation is a particularly sinister crime. It attacks the beliefs and identities of those who are perceived as being "different" because of their ethnic, national or cultural origins. Racist crime is especially corrosive in a society. Although anyone can be a victim of racist harassment, members of visible minority ethnic groups are far more likely to be victimised.

The Housing Executive is committed to identifying those who commit racially motivated harassment within our estates and, if at all possible, taking appropriate action against them.

Reporting racist harassment provides essential information which may enable the prevention of further harassment and the identification of those responsible.

The PSNI Minority Liaison Officers at each police station can provide support and advice.

The PSNI have copies of their leaflet on Racial Incidents on their website in Urdu, Hindi, Arabic, Italian, Portuguese, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese
www.psnipolice.uk

See end of booklet for contact details of some support organisations.





Sectarian/Political

Types of hate harassment - harassment based on sectarian/political opinion

The term sectarian, whilst sometimes not clearly defined, is broadly understood to describe incidents by one individual or group against another on the basis of that individual or group's perceived religion or political opinion. These groups or individuals are generally regarded to be from within the two main groupings within Northern Ireland i.e. Catholic/Roman Catholic or Protestant, Nationalist or Unionist, Loyalist or Republican.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland define a sectarian incident to be:

'any incident perceived to be sectarian by the victim or any other person'

Incidents may also be perceived to be on the grounds of a particular person's religion but not Sectarian.

These incidents are defined as:

'any incident perceived to be on the grounds of the religion or faith by the victim or any other person'

See end of booklet for contact details of some support groups.

As with all forms of hate harassment the Housing Executive will respond to all harassment reported to us whether or not this amounts to a crime.





Sexual Orientation

Types of hate harassment - harassment based on sexual orientation

The Housing Executive recognises the impact that any level of homophobic or transphobic harassment can have on the victim and the wider community. We will therefore respond to all harassment reported to us, whether or not this amounts to a crime.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland defines a homophobic incident as:

'Any incident which is perceived to be homophobic by the victim or any other person'

The Police Service of Northern Ireland defines a transphobic incident to be:

'Any incident which is perceived to be transphobic by the victim or any other person'

These can include incidents perpetrated on those perceived to be lesbians, gay men, bi-sexual or transgendered. There are a range of support organisations which can provide support if you have been a victim of harassment based on your perceived sexual orientation. The PSNI Minority Liaison Officers at each police station can also provide support and advice.

See end of booklet for contact details of some support organisations





Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-Social Behaviour on our estates

The Housing Executive is committed to tackling all forms of anti-social behaviour wherever it occurs on our estates. Anti-social behaviour is when the behaviour of households or individuals in a neighbourhood adversely affects other people's use and enjoyment of their home.

The Housing Executive will treat any racist or sectarian harassment or harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation, political opinion or disability as a form of nuisance or annoyance likely to cause alarm or distress.

The Housing Executive has specific powers to take actions against its tenants which can include possession and injunction proceedings and Anti-Social Behaviour Order applications.

The statutory definition of anti-social behaviour is;

“Conduct by any individual which causes or is likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to a person residing, visiting or otherwise engaging in a lawful activity in the locality of the dwelling house.”

**Housing (Northern Ireland)
Order 2003**

We can also take a range of actions against any individual who is causing a nuisance on a Housing Executive estate even if they are not Housing Executive tenants. A range of further information is available from the Housing Executive relating to Anti-social Behaviour.

Obligations of Housing Executive tenants

The tenant is responsible for the behaviour of every person, including children, living in or visiting the tenant's home including responsibility for their behaviour in the home, on surrounding land, in communal areas (stairs, lifts, landings, entrance halls, paving, shared gardens, parking areas) and in the locality of the dwelling house.

By reporting harassment, you are helping us to help you

If you report harassment we will be able to;

- a) Respond in a sensitive way and take appropriate action, taking your wishes into account
- b) Refer you to organisations which can provide further support and advice for harassment that has already occurred
- c) Seek to take appropriate action to stop the harassment and to deal with the perpetrator
- d) Gain a better understanding about the way harassment is affecting those living on Housing Executive estates and so plan further prevention or support strategies
- e) Work in partnership with other agencies to create an environment which encourages community cohesion and racial harmony and prevents further harassment.

Even reporting low level harassment that is not a crime allows us to identify underlying trends and to spot tensions early on. This information can be used to prevent further harassment or further escalation in the local area.





How To Report It

How to report it and what details will help

A report of harassment occurring in any of our estates can be made at any Housing Executive District Office in writing or verbally. The report can be made in person by visiting the office, over the phone or via email. All District Offices have telephone translation facilities available so reports can be made in many languages and alternative formats.

Housing Executive tenants, private tenants or owner occupiers or any other people visiting or engaging in lawful activity within the locality of our property can report experiencing harassment. As well as the individual who experienced the harassment; a family member, neighbour, friend, witness, political representative, or a representative from the voluntary/ statutory sector may also report harassment.

The member of staff dealing with the report will complete an Anti-Social Behaviour record sheet and will record the following information:

- Your details (unless you wish to remain anonymous)
- Nature of the harassment
- Who is affected
- Who initiated the harassment (if known)
- Where and when the harassment took place

What happens next?

Depending on the circumstances of the harassment reported, the Housing Executive can start a range of actions aimed at supporting the victim, stopping the harassment and dealing with the perpetrator.





Damage To Property

Damage to property through hate harassment

If there has been physical damage to your property through hate harassment the Housing Executive may be able to provide some support through our District Offices. There are a range of practical support schemes operating across Northern Ireland so contact your local District Office for current information. There may also be support available for non-Housing Executive tenants and owner occupiers.

Housing Executive properties

Housing Executive tenants requiring emergency repairs following hate harassment may contact the Repairs and Emergency Out of Hours Service at any time. Some forms of help can only be provided if the caller has a PSNI issued Crime Reference Number or if the Housing Executive can request this from the PSNI. Tenants should report less serious repairs the normal way. To be treated as an emergency, the fault must carry the risk of immediate injury to people or major damage to property.

**Repairs and Emergency
Out of Hours numbers**

08448 920 901

Text phone 0845 6504381

Staff will assess your repair and, if necessary, will arrange for a contractor to call with you.

Graffiti

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive, as with other public authorities, is responsible for removing hate motivated graffiti from its properties. Complaints in relation to graffiti on Housing Executive property should be made to the local District Office. In other cases, it is the property owner's responsibility to remove offensive graffiti from their own property.

Physical Injuries

If you have been physically injured and require emergency treatment you should go to your nearest Accident and Emergency Unit or phone an Ambulance (999). An interpreting service should be available.





Homelessness

Homelessness

If, due to harassment, you have no home or are in danger of losing your home or you are afraid to go home because someone has been violent to you, or because of threats of violence likely to be carried out you should seek help at your local Housing Executive District Office.

The level of help the Housing Executive can give you depends on your particular circumstances – some people will require safe temporary accommodation, others may require permanent alternative accommodation, or perhaps advice and assistance on finding somewhere to live.

The Housing Executive will have to make enquiries to establish what its responsibilities are in your particular case and so we will have to ask you questions about your circumstances.

It is very important that you tell us all the facts, and if possible, bring with you all relevant documents, so that all of your circumstances can be taken into account.

Homelessness Information

Further information on homelessness is available at all Housing Executive District Offices and the Homeless Advice Centre (Belfast). Information, leaflets and letters can be made available in a range of languages, Braille, large print and DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) or audio on request. Interpreter services (such as through telephone translation, interpreters or sign language interpreters) are available at all District Offices.

If you have a housing problem you can also access free online advice at www.housingadviceNI.org.

Outside normal office hours

If you become homeless outside normal office hours (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm) you should contact your local After Hours Team.

Belfast and South East Areas

Inner Belfast, Greater Belfast, North, Mid and East Down areas 028 9056 5444

South Area

Newry and Mourne 028 3083 5000, Armagh & Dungannon 028 3752 2381,
Banbridge & Craigavon, 028 3833 4444, Fermanagh 028 6638 2000, South Tyrone 028 8772 2821

West Area

Magherafelt/Cookstown 028 9446 8833, Omagh 028 8283 3100,
Londonderry, Limavady, Strabane 028 7134 5171

North East Area

Co. Antrim and East Londonderry Antrim 028 9446 8833





Renting Privately

Renting privately - advice on harassment and illegal eviction

All private tenants (non Housing Executive tenants) have within current law certain basic rights including the freedom from harassment and illegal eviction.

What is harassment?

Harassment will occur where the landlord or agent commits acts which are likely to interfere with the peace and comfort of the tenant or the persistent withdrawal or withholding of services, such as interfering with water or electrical supplies.

What is an illegal eviction?

All landlords are required to give their tenant a period of four weeks notice to quit the property. If the tenant does not leave at the end of this period the landlord must apply to the court for an order. If the landlord does not follow this procedure, for example by changing the locks, it is likely that they have carried out an illegal eviction.

If you are a Licensee of a property different rules apply, if you are unsure of your position you should seek advice on your rights (see below for who to contact).

What should I do?

If you believe that you have been the subject of any action by your landlord or their agent which may be harassment or have led to an illegal eviction you should report the matter to the local district council who will investigate and can prosecute the landlord or agent concerned.

You may seek further advice on these issues from the following:

- Environmental Health Officer at the local district council
- Any Housing Executive District Office
- Housing Rights Service,
Middleton House,
10-12 High Street,
Belfast BT1 2BA,
Tel 028 9024 5640.
www.housingadviceNI.org





PSNI

What to do if you are the victim of a hate incident

You can call your local police station and ask to speak to the Minority Liaison Officer of the area where the incident occurred. These officers have been specifically trained to support victims of hate incidents and they will record and respond to harassment, intimidation or abuse on the ground of an individual's ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, political opinion or disability. Minority Liaison Officers can be spoken to in confidence; they offer a sympathetic service and respond appropriately to the individual needs of the victim. They can also provide information on crime prevention, police powers and procedures and appropriate support groups.

The Minority Liaison Officers will record and respond to all hate incidents reported to them, whether or not they amount to a crime. The police are committed to dealing with your complaint in a professional, confidential and sensitive manner. Even if you do not wish the police to investigate the incident, it is important to report it for information.

If you do not wish to contact the police directly, you may do so through a third party, such as one of the organisations detailed in this pack. The Police Service Minority Liaison Officer will be advised. This officer will contact the victim to provide advice and support, unless they have been asked not to.

Further information, including contact details for all Minority Liaison Officers is available at www.psni.police.uk

The police have an extensive database of local interpreters and 24 hour access to multilingual telephone translator services.

You can phone the Police Exchange and ask for your local station on 028 9065 0222

The Police non-emergency number is 0845 600 8000

The Minicom number is 028 90901246

Crimestoppers 0800 555 111





Housing Community Network

Housing Community Network

The Housing Executive has always been keen to involve tenants and their local community associations in discussing and developing their local services, and addressing housing issues locally.

To achieve this, the Housing Community Network has been established and the Housing Executive, together with the Department for Social Development, funds **Supporting Communities NI (SCNI)** (formerly known as N.I. Tenants Action Project), an independent body which champions community participation by developing groups, supporting active citizenship and building cohesive communities.

Members of the Housing Community Network can be nominated to sit on the Inter Community Network (ICN) which was established to consider Good Relations issues from the tenant's perspective. The Intercommunity Network provides a consultative forum and continues to work and assist the Housing Executive Community Cohesion Unit in shaping and directing good relations through a community led approach by the provision of increased understanding and awareness of the cultural differences within and outside their communities and assisting to create opportunities for members to work on good relations issues.

The Housing Executive will give a range of support to the development of projects which offer a community based approach to victim support and a community led response to challenging hate based behaviour and reducing prejudice in a co-ordinated manner.

Local District Office representatives will seek to work on a multi-agency basis to address community involvement and participation. We will also consider initiatives that help to educate perpetrators of hate crime in the devastating impact of their attacks.

Contact your local District Office for information on how you can be involved or contact SCNI.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES NI
34-36 Henry Street
Harryville
BALLYMENA
BT42 3AH

Tel 028 2564 5676
Fax 028 2564 9729

Email info@supportingcommunitiesni.org





Complaints

Complaints

If you are not satisfied with the service you have received from the Housing Executive following a report of hate harassment - we want to hear from you. Any complaint received will be investigated and we will try to remedy the situation and take action to improve our service.

The Housing Executive wants to sort out problems quickly and locally. If you have a problem please telephone or write to your local office where staff will try to help. Your local office staff will try to settle your complaint straightaway.

If your local office has not been able to put things right for you, you can then use our formal Internal Complaints System. If you want help with making your complaint you can telephone the Information Officer in your Area Office.

Our Complaints Procedure is explained in a leaflet, available from any office or you can request the leaflet or download a copy from our website leaflets page.





Support Organisations

Support Organisations - Working in Partnership

This pack has been produced in consultation with a range of voluntary organisations, public sector bodies and support organisations that deal with minority interests. The following organisations can offer a range of support for victims of any type of hate harassment. The local Library or Citizens Advice Bureau may also be able to provide some information.

Victim Support Northern Ireland

Victim Support Northern Ireland is the charity which helps people affected by crime. It is a completely independent organisation, offering a free and confidential service, whether or not a crime has been reported and regardless of when it happened.

Each year Victim Support Northern Ireland offers help to almost 50,000 people who have been affected by crime.

Help for victims

They provide help through a network of local branches across Northern Ireland. Staff and volunteers in these branches offer emotional support, information and practical help to people who have suffered crimes ranging from burglary to the murder of a relative, in confidence.

They can provide:

- information on police and court procedure
- liaison with other organisations on your behalf
- advice and information on compensation and insurance matters
- contact with other sources of help.

Details of Victim Support offices and branches are available on their website at www.victimsupport.org.uk Victim Support can also arrange for a volunteer to accompany you to the police station and to court. You can contact Victim Support's national telephone supportline - Victim Supportline - on 0845 30 30 900.

Victim Support

Annsage House
70/74 Ann Street
Belfast BT1 4EH
Tel: 028 9024 4039
Fax: 028 9031 3838
www.victimsupport.org

The list of support organisations is only a small sample of those operating across Northern Ireland. District Office staff may be able to provide contact details for other support groups.



Support Organisations

Harassment based on sexual orientation

Cara-Friend Cathedral Buildings 64 Donegal Street, Belfast BT1 2GT Telephone: 028 9089 0202 www.cara-friend.org.uk	Cara-Friend is an umbrella organisation for Gay Helpline 028 9032 2023 Belfast Lesbian Line 028 9023 8668 www.gayhelplinebelfast.org.uk www.lesbianlinebelfast.org.uk and Gay and Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland (GLYNI) www.glyni.org.uk
LASI (Lesbian Advocacy Services Initiative) PO Box 3 Ballymena BT42 9AA Telephone: 028 27641463 Email: info@lasionline.org	The Rainbow Project (Derry/Londonderry Office) 12A Queen Street BT48 7EG Derry/Londonderry Telephone: 028 7128 3030 (Counsellor available) www.rainbow-project.org
COSO Cathedral Buildings 64 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2GT Telephone: 028 9089 0201 www.coso.org.uk	The Rainbow Project (Belfast Office) 2-8 Commercial Court Belfast BT1 2NB Telephone: 028 90319030

Harassment based on race

Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) Also Asylum and Refugee Support 3rd Floor Ascot House 24-31 Shaftesbury Square Belfast BT2 7DB 028 9023 8645 www.nicem.org.uk	Indian Community Centre 86 Clifton Street, Belfast, BT13 1AB Tel: 028 9024 9746 twastree@iccbelfast.com www.iccbelfast.com
Chinese Welfare Association 133 - 135 University Street BELFAST BT7 1HP Tel 028 9028 8277 www.cwa-ni.org	An Munia Tober (Traveller Community) 12 / 2 Blackstaff Complex 77 Springfield Road Belfast BT12 7AE Tel. No: 028 9043 8265 E. Mail: mail@anmuniatober.org





Support Organisations

Harassment based on race

The Multi-Cultural Resource Centre (NI) 9 Lower Crescent Belfast BT7 1NR Tel: (+44) 028 9024 4639 Fax: (+44) 028 9032 9581 Email: info@mcrc-ni.org www.mcrc-ni.org	Northern Ireland Muslim Family Association 7 Rugby Road Belfast BT7 1PS Tel: 028 9031 5784 www.nimfa.org
Afro Community Support Organisation NI (ACSONI) P.O. Box 920, Belfast BT1 9AJ Admin@acsoni.com members@acsoni.com	Omagh Ethnic Communities Support Group Omagh Community House 2 Drumragh Avenue Omagh BT79 1DP Telephone: 028 8224 9750 Email: oecsg2@yahoo.co.uk
Ballymena Inter-ethnic Forum Glendun Drive, Ballymena Also Romanian Self-Support Group For details, contact: 02825 648822;	Belfast Islamic Centre 38 Wellington Park, BELFAST BT9 6DN Tel: 028 9066 4465 Email: info@belfastislamiccentre.org.uk www.belfastislamiccentre.org.uk
Polish Association Northern Ireland Stowarzyszenie Polskie w Irlandii Polnocnej 129 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 1SH Tel: 07840695181 www.polskibelfast.pl	North Area Migrants Workers Project BME Floating Support project 32 High Street, Ballymoney Co Antrim BT53 6BG Tel: 028 2766 9149 www.bmefloatingssupport.org.uk
S.T.E.P. Supporting People Project (Portadown) Unit 6, Mayfair Business Centre Garvaghy Road, Portadown BT62 1HA Tel: 028 3839 9595 E-mail: edel@stepni.org www.stepni.org	S.T.E.P. Supporting People Project (Dungannon & Cookstown) Unit T7, Dungannon Business Park 2 Coalisland Road, Dungannon BT71 6JT Tel: 028 8772 9002 E-mail: margaret@stepni.org www.stepni.org
SEEDS One World Centre, Foyle Street, Derry Tel: 028 7137 0989 E-mail - irishseeds@hotmail.com www.seeds.ie	Belfast Jewish Community Centre The Wolfson Centre 49 Somerton Road Belfast BT15 3LH Tel: 028 9077 7974





Support Organisations

Harassment based on disability

Disability Action, 189 Airport Road West, Belfast BT3 9ED Telephone : 02890 297880 www.disabilityaction.org	Royal National Institute for Deaf People Wilton House 5 College Square North Belfast BT1 6AR Telephone/Textphone: 028 90239619 Videophone: 028 90438354 www.rnid.org.uk
Action Mental Health Mourne House 19 Knockbracken Healthcare Park Belfast BT8 8BH Telephone: 028 90403726 www.amb.org.uk	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Equality House 7-9 Shaftesbury Square Belfast BT2 7DP Telephone: 028 9050 0600 Text phone: 028 9050 0589 www.equalityni.org
Royal National Institute for the Blind 40 Linenhall Street BELFAST BT2 8BA Telephone: 028 90329373 www.rnib.org.uk	Rethink Wyndhurst Knockbracken Healthcare Park Belfast BT8 8BH Telephone: 028 90402323 Mental health membership charity www.rethink.org

Additional support organisations

Samaritans 5 Wellesley Avenue, Belfast BT9 6DG National Support Line: 08457 909090 Telephone: 028 90664422 Telephone: 028 71265511	NICCY Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People Millennium House 17-25 Great Victoria Street Belfast BT2 7BA Telephone (028) 9031 1616 listening2u@niccy.org
ChildLine Northern Ireland 1st Floor Queens House 14 Queen Street Belfast BT1 6ED ChildLine 0800 1111	Community Relations Council 6 Murray Street Belfast BT1 6DN tel 028 9022 7500





www.nihe.gov.uk
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