

SP61 Hate Crime Policy



Scope of policy

This policy sets out Soha's approach to addressing hate crime across all its services and properties. It applies to all residents, staff, contractors, and visitors, covering incidents occurring on or in connection with Soha owned or managed premises. The scope extends to any hate crime reported by or affecting residents, regardless of where the incident takes place if it impacts the resident's right to feel safe in their home or community. The policy applies to all Soha residents.

Soha Housing takes a **zero tolerance** approach to all Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to establish a **victim-centred response** to hate crime, ensuring those affected receive appropriate support and that hate crime is addressed through early intervention, prevention, robust enforcement, and ongoing support. We strive to create a safe and inclusive environment for all residents and colleagues. Soha will always investigate reports of Hate Crimes.

Hate crimes are criminal offences and Soha will work alongside the police in protecting victims of hate crimes while enforcing our tenancy agreements / leases under the Anti-Social Behaviour Procedure.

Policy Statement

Soha does not tolerate hate crime in any form. We are committed to tackling hate crime proactively and will take robust action against perpetrators. All hate crime incidents will be treated seriously, with the victim's perception of motivation being central to our response. Our staff will deliver a non-judgemental, focused service, supporting victims in a sympathetic and sensitive manner according to their needs.

A Hate Crime is any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility, prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.

A hate incident is any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them based on their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender. Not all hate incidents will amount to criminal offences, but it is equally important that they are reported. Soha will always pursue **early intervention** in tackling hate incidents.

Use of Flags & Symbols

We recognise that national flags and other symbols can hold deep personal and cultural significance. However, we are also aware that such symbols may be misused to intimidate, harass, or target individuals or communities, particularly in contexts where their display is intended to provoke fear or reinforce hostility. Soha will treat the deliberate use of flags or symbols to threaten or marginalise others as a potential hate incident and respond accordingly, in line with our commitment to fostering safe and inclusive communities. At the same time, we respect the right of individuals to display flags or symbols peacefully and appropriately, and we will assess each situation sensitively, considering context, intent, and impact.

Tackling Stigma against social housing residents

Soha will treat any act of anti-social behaviour (ASB) that is motivated by stigma or prejudice against social housing tenants as a hate incident. We have a zero tolerance approach to stigma directed at social housing residents and will respond robustly to any such behaviour, ensuring that those affected receive the support and protection they deserve. Our commitment is to challenge and address all forms of discrimination, fostering a respectful and inclusive environment for everyone.

Implementation

We will address hate crime through a combination of early intervention, preventative measures, enforcement of policy, and tailored support for victims. All incidents will be managed in line with our Anti-social Behaviour Policy and procedures. Staff will receive appropriate training to ensure consistent and effective responses.

Victims of hate crimes & incidents will be able to report them in a broad variety of ways such as in writing, over the phone, by email, and through the website & app. We will allow anonymous reporting of hate crimes and incidents while accepting that our powers of enforcement may be limited without specific evidence.

Incidents believed to be motivated by hatred or prejudice directed against any person or group of people based on any of the identifying factors will be classified as a high priority for investigation purposes, irrespective of the nature of the actual behaviour reported. Although the following is not an exhaustive list, incidents of hate crime may comprise, for example, one or more of the following:

- physical attacks on people or property;
- intimidation;
- graffiti;
- arson or attempted arson;
- abusive or threatening language or behaviour; and
- deliberate and targeted acts intended to deter residents from living in their home or to force them to leave.

We will always offer a victim focused approach and will offer property security improvements, management transfers, and legal interventions (such as injunctions) where appropriate and supported by the local police.

Soha will remove all offensive graffiti and remedy hate crime vandalism as a priority, normally aiming for two working days.

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our colleagues. We will provide colleagues with role appropriate training so that they understand their roles and responsibilities in dealing with hate crime. Any unreasonable behaviour towards our colleagues will be dealt with in line with our Challenging Behaviour and ASB policies. If any of our colleagues are victims of a hate crime Soha will support them to report this to the Police and take tenancy / lease action where appropriate.

Any Soha resident found guilty of a Hate Crime (in a criminal prosecution) will be subject to Ground 7a mandatory possession proceedings (Housing Act 1988 as amended by Anti-Social Behaviour Crime & Policing Act 2014). Soha will have a zero tolerance approach to Hate Crimes that are proven in a criminal court.

Resident Involvement

Residents are encouraged to report hate crime and will be supported throughout the process. We will seek resident feedback on our approach to tackling hate crime and involve residents in the review and development of related policies, ensuring their voices inform continual improvement.

Appeals

Residents who are dissatisfied with the handling of a hate crime incident or the outcome of any action taken may appeal through Soha's standard complaints procedure. Full details of the process are available on request.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the Director of Housing & Communities. Day-to-day management is delegated to the Neighbourhoods teams, who are expected to act in accordance with this policy and associated procedures.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored through regular reporting on hate crime incidents and outcomes. It will be reviewed at least every three years, or sooner if required by legislative or organisational changes, to ensure ongoing effectiveness and compliance with best practice.

Context

This policy links with other key Soha policies, including SP03 Lettings Policy and SP21 ASB Policy. It should be read in conjunction with these documents to ensure a comprehensive approach to tackling hate crime and related issues.

[SP61 Hate Crime Policy, December 2025]

- Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Anti-terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Housing Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation

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