

Customer Scrutiny Panel - Review of anti social behaviour services

May 2022

The following report is a review of the management and delivery of anti social behaviour (ASB) at mhs based on customer experience feedback.



Report approved by:
**June Patey Chair & Kate Roberts Customer Scrutiny Panel, May
2022**

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Acknowledgements

The Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP) recognise and appreciate the support from residents, mhs staff, including Scrutiny Champion Louise Humphrey and their Independent Mentor Oonah Lacey for their support to complete this review. A special thank you on behalf of the CSP must be given to June Patey (Chair) and Kate Roberts (Vice Chair) for leading the review and ensuring that opportunities for participation with the review were open to all members and used the Focus Group opportunities to recruit new members for the CSP and Friends of CSP.

1. Executive summary

1.1. The Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP) decided to review anti social behaviour (ASB) because it was primarily identified in the CSP survey develop for the Tenancy Services review as a service area that 90 % of respondents requested that the CSP review. In addition, this is a service area that is of interest to every resident, and feedback indicated from officers and residents that ASB is a growing problem. Some CSP members themselves had also experienced individual difficulties with accessing and using the service. The CSP were also aware that mhs as part of their post transformation programme are keen that all services are subjected to an independent review by the CSP.

1.2. The review from a ASB perspective considered:

- Service standards
- Relevant documentation (policies and procedures)
- Monitoring and performance reporting of anti social behaviour
- Customer satisfaction
- Management and delivery of the service
- Management and resources (staff and financial)
- Staff training and support
- Reporting and information sharing with partners
- Communication channels
- Collection and use of learning outcomes

1.3. The review was carried out from April to May 2022, and the report was completed in May 2022.

1.4. The scrutiny methodology ensured that a comprehensive review was undertaken as detailed and illustrated in the methodology (section 3).

1.5. The key recommendations include:

1.1.1 Improving technology REACT to facilitate operational management and monitoring of cases.

1.1.2. Consider specialist dedicated ASB staff resources to bring effective knowledge and experience to handle the increasing number and complexity of ASB cases

1.1.3. Develop renewed external partnership working with external ASB support service providers

1.1.4. Tracking and management of individual anti social behaviour issues are being hindered by the lack of sharing of case management

information between officers/teams and external partners due to use of excel spread sheets and failure to ensure that technology is used effectively, although it is expected from 18 May that a new ASB module on REACT will be set up to address these issues.

1.1.5. Communication standards, methods and approaches need to be reviewed and updated so that victims are informed on progress through telephone calls/text or letter showing empathy and giving reassurance.

1.1.6. Silo working and lack of ownership of customer cases is still affecting levels of customer satisfaction and evidence that procedures are not embedded so that there is no guaranteed consistency of service delivery- personal approach rather than a corporate agreed approach.

1.1.7. Information sharing and use of tenant profile information needs to be improved to raise customer experience levels- this may involve ensuring that information around reporting and handling of ASB is covered as part of the new tenancy sign-up process and promoting compliance with Tenancy Agreements etc.

1.1.8. Procedures to manage ASB to be the same whether living in a general needs home, supported/sheltered Living, or as a homeowner or Foyer resident.

1.1.9. Training around ASB awareness to ensure that residents can be signposted to receive help and support at the first point of contact.

1.1.10. There is concern by some, especially the caretaking team that they will be seen as the people responsible for reporting anti social behaviour, and yet they are not trained and advised not to get involved- messaging needs reviewing.

1.1.11. Residents affected by ASB are keen to look at ways of engaging and providing local intelligence to support officers, and more could be done to make this a useful role for identifying and reporting.

1.1.12. Learning from cases needs to be improved and successful outcomes communicated to residents. There is a perception that mhs will not take enforcement action but this is not correct, so messaging and reporting on outcomes needs to be used more effectively which will help generate confidence that there are consequences for poor behaviour.

1.1.13. Use of the website to promote awareness and providing access to information is improving but the format and content of information is not easily understood by residents.

1.1.14. Residents and staff need to be kept up to date with reviews of policies and given an opportunity to participate when shaping services for the future. If mhs is going to truly embrace co-production promoted by the Housing Regulator.

1.1.15. Look at opportunities to generate additional income by charging other housing providers for ASB advice and support where there is mixed landlord presence involved with cases and finding remedies.

1.1.16. Have a set standard policy for CCTV cameras so that images are clear and consistently able to be used for prosecutions- monitor actual impact to reduce ASB activity.

1.1.17. Changing of working practices to focus on efficiency and effectiveness is critical but there is a need to remember that personal needs and support of residents is not forgotten.

1.1.18. The financial cost of handling ASB cases is high and accountability for the cost of legal services and additional resources needs to be reviewed.

1.1.19. Reporting of ASB needs to be better co-ordinated as those reporting to the Council /Police teams receive victim support which is not open to those being handled by mhs officers.

1.1.20. Provision of a 'self-service' online service offers benefits to those that are able but it is essential that the responsibilities of being a landlord and vulnerability of customers entering social housing be protected.

1.1.21. Working practices are still driven by staff need and not customer need, which includes office-based workdays, presence in the community- face- to- face etc.

1.1.22. There is concern that the split of frontline ASB housing functions between Customer Services reduces impact on the ability to offer a 'one stop shop' although the CSP recognise that changes are being made to address these concerns.

1.1.23. Provision of relevant ASB customer satisfaction data requires review, as currently no relevant data is available.

1.6.

- a. The CSP have identified a number of recommendations that they would like the Board/ Executive to consider.
- b. The CSP are keen that any ASB improvement implementation plan based on their recommendations is developed and agreed in conjunction with them.
- c. The CSP would also like a summary report to be made available to all staff and residents.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The CSP has used intelligence gathered from the Tenancy Services Review and the on-line survey to shape the scope of the ASB review.
- 2.2 The subject area of ASB was selected in January/February 2022 based on the feedback received that customers considered that ASB was a significant issue and that it would be beneficial for the CSP to look in depth at how ASB services are delivered and identify opportunities for service improvements.
- 2.3 The review commenced with an overall introduction to the service.
- 2.4 The CSP carried out 4 focus groups with a wide range of residents on ASB, seeking views on the service and suggestions for improvement.
- 2.5 The CSP also carried out interviews with around 20 members of staff from all levels across the business. Individual interview questions were developed using a more strategic approach for senior management and a more operational approach for front-line staff and middle management. The CSP also interviewed 2 Executive officers.
- 2.6 The CSP completed some mystery shopping activities recording their own and other resident experiences of ASB throughout the duration of the review.
- 2.7 The CSP collated all the feedback received and have included the findings and recommendations in this report (section 4 refers). The CSP wish to emphasise that their findings are based totally from a customer perspective and recognise that some or part of the solutions or recommendations detailed may not be possible to be implemented. The CSP do however consider that the findings offer significant opportunity to enhance the service provided.
- 2.8 The review set out to review the following key points:
 - 2.8.1 **Patterns and incidents and resolution** - the CSP have noted that specific estates do report higher levels and types of ASB. Details of resolution and impact have not been considered in detail, as this information was not available.

- 2.8.2 **Performance assessment** (nature of ASB, repeat statistics, actions taken escalation and resolution) - Outcomes for ASB were not provided as not currently collected and reported
- 2.8.3 **Process assessment** - procedures were not reviewed or tested against actual cases because no copy of the ASB policy was made available to the CSP until 5 May. It was also stated that GDPR prevented sharing of case histories and applied also to work shadowing so not allowed.
- 2.8.4 **Customer satisfaction and feedback** - There was no specific ASB satisfaction reported – will be collected but not current.
- 2.8.5 **Service standards relating to ASB** - The targets and response rates differ relating to who is handling case and function, and there are additional services such as victim support offered to those whose case is handled by the Council (obtained from residents).
- 2.8.6 **Strategies, policies and procedures relating to ASB and their effectiveness** – New policy issued to CSP 5 May only- despite requests and still in draft format.
- 2.8.7 **Information and advice relating to ASB (leaflets and website)** - There needs to be a quick users guide and leaflets that can be downloaded or provided in hard copy but there were not available, although the website ASB section has been updated and is a helpful source for residents.
- 2.8.8 **How customer expectations are managed with regard to tackling ASB** - These are not being met as feedback indicated through the scrutiny survey confirmed high levels of dissatisfaction. Focus Groups provided additional feedback and it is clear that there needs to be a bespoke approach based on individual needs, because one size does not fit all- vulnerability assessment key to shaping service delivery required.
- 2.8.9 **ASB forms completed by residents** - There are no forms to be completed to report ASB activities - but no forms were provided to the CSP to review, which may indicate that there is not a set reporting form but may differ on which officer is supporting the victim.

- 2.8.10 **Resident Involvement with ASB** - The resident engagement officer stated that residents do not bring ASB issues to her because she cannot deal with individual cases, however, should be a listening ear to help pick up where the service is failing.
- 2.8.11 **How ASB varies across different geographic areas** - No GIS mapping of ASB cases and type recorded but there is an understanding that those residents living in tower blocks often experience higher levels of ASB.
- 2.8.12 **Who is responsible for handling ASB, structure, management and staffing** - details regarding staff and resources have been reviewed and it is considered that a detailed time recording exercise needs to be instigated to determine activities and time.
- 2.8.13 **Staff training on ASB** - feedback was sought through staff interviews to test the level and frequency of training which confirmed that there needs to be more training – especially around prevention etc.
- 2.8.14 **Joint working with Medway Council and other partners** - partnership working has been adversely affected by cutbacks to the police, social services etc. This may account for some cases taking so long to be resolved. It was not possible to get a full list of named contacts and services for the CSP to meet at a dedicated Focus Group. It is clear that generic ASB working is not helping to build the working relationships that existed when there were only dedicated ASB officers.
- 2.8.15 **How different levels and types of ASB are handled** - working approaches were looked at and feedback from the residents survey and Focus Group provided valuable intelligence- it was clear that ASB needs a revised and enhanced support to be embedded in the business – the service provided is based on the officer supporting rather than a policy/procedure being followed.
- 2.8.16 **Support for complainants and witnesses** - feedback received through the residents survey, Focus Group and resident interviews. Publicity about support needs to be increased, as many residents are too afraid to report ASB. There was a consistent view- nothing ever happens and I do not have the time to be chasing mhs all the time etc.

- 2.8.17 **Support for perpetrators** - There is a feeling that those committing the ASB are treated better than the victims but that is customer perception.
- 2.8.18 **Prevention** - the work of HFH was reviewed and improvements noted.
- 2.8.19 **Customer Experience of ASB** - No formal data from mhs but the CSP has gained insight from survey and Focus Groups and interviews with staff. The CSP take is that ASB is "work in progress struggling due to demand and generic working- jack of all trades and master of none was frequently stated.

3. Findings and solutions

3.1 Key issues and needs

3.2 Medway Council ASB services Service Level agreement (SLA): (source: staff interviews)

3.2.1 General:

- 3.2.1.1 Mhs Executive/senior management stated they have an SLA with Medway Council ASBAT to provide ASB services. This is termed a partnership and not a contractor relationship.
- 3.2.1.2 The SLA would act as a guideline and framework to deliver in partnership and co-operation an ASB service that meets the needs of Medway residents. Supporting local landlords to deliver effective ASB services is key to providing communities where residents feel safe and are proud to live.
- 3.2.1.3 The CSP requested but have not seen a copy of the SLA so cannot confirm its existence and date etc. Any SLA would require sharing of performance information, producing reports with qualitative and quantitative analysis, identifying outcomes of actions and initiatives taken. In addition, must keep mhs and the Council jointly informed of legislative changes and policy.

3.2.2 Positives:

- 3.2.2.1 There was some feedback from senior mhs staff that there is an effective and open working relationship. The Council and local councillors according to feedback from active residents is that there was a positive working relationship and that requests are always welcomed but there is less partnership working now than when mhs had dedicated ASB officers.

3.2.3 Negatives/issues:

- 3.2.3.1 When mhs staff were questioned about legislative changes and it is clear that the level of training offered, and awareness is not adequately spread across all those involved in delivering ASB services. This is where there is a lack of clarity about who is overall responsible for ASB, and delivering training?
- 3.2.3.2 The SLA will require detailed performance information to be provided so that outcomes and effectiveness of initiatives will be monitored and shared. The lack of ASB Performance information gathered and provided does not allow for proper and effective monitoring of the service internally or as part of any SLA. Key Performance indicators should focus on % of stage ASB cases completed in 3 months etc. There needs to be a complete review of performance reports required so that they deliver operational and management information that is understandable and able to shape the service. Additional performance information has been requested as part of this review and was not available for the mhs service. Mhs officers confirmed that performance management information is not regularly used to look at learning outcomes, however, senior management stated that there were monthly meetings with their teams to look at customer feedback etc. Those that were interviewed at officer level did not substantiate this. The reasons provided for lack of data analysis included, not enough time, the level and quality of information recorded is not consistent.
- 3.2.3.3 Mhs have over the last few years increased the level of funding provided to meet the increasing demand for CCTV and meeting the shortfall experienced by the Council as external funding sources have ceased. It is understood that the quality of CCTV cameras varies and that this is due to not all being procured through an agreed single supplier. Having cameras that will provide high-resolution pictures is critical for identifying individuals/groups that need to be prosecuted. Mhs needs to be looking at with

- 3.2.3.4 the Council an agreed specification and procurement process for cameras. Both residents and Councillors have indicated that they do not understand how the service now operates and there needs to be clearer definition on when a mhs case is handled by other service providers, the Council, police and other specialised local charities etc. The trigger points for escalation should be clearly defined so that there is not the opportunity to 'dump' work on either side. If there was a centralised service, then there would not be any opportunity for misunderstanding but offer a smarter working approach.
- 3.2.3.5 There was feedback that mhs and Council/police is often more reactive than proactive when it comes to tackling ASB issues. A frequent comment made at interviews was, "we used to do more preventive and awareness work but we do not have the time and financial resources to buy promotional items and have literature that can be given out". All partners have confirmed that the limited attendance at resident events/incidents is a resource problem and that case management levels make this work more limited.
- 3.2.3.6 The SLA needs to found and reviewed so there is a great opportunity to look at how the service overall is delivered and identify where resources should be focused. It may be the time to look at consolidating and having a central mhs service and due to the generic working model in mhs it may be more appropriate that the service not just for mhs but the Borough is provided by mhs. The CSP would like to see a couple of residents involved with the review of the SLA/policy as they can provide resident intelligence and feedback that would have a positive impact. The CSP should appoint CSP member monitors to each review completed and would recommend that this may be helpful bearing in mind they have carried out this review.

3.2.4 Recommendations:



- 3.2.4.1 That there is a complete re-look at performance data and monitoring so that information is provided regularly to facilitate effective management of the service. The key performance indicators do not provide adequate information and cannot just focus on speed of contact but consideration of long-term solutions being achieved, and learning outcomes being used to support preventative solutions.
- 3.2.4.2 There is need for a complete business appraisal of the ASB service that is based on the best way to deliver this critical but expensive service that maximises value for money
- 3.2.4.3 The SLA needs to be found and ensure it is outcome/solution driven, and it is suggested that residents should be invited to be part of the process of review.
- 3.2.4.4 Ensure that procurement of CCTV cameras does deliver the quality of images that will facilitate prosecution. There needs to be an agreed specification and use of appropriate monitoring equipment so that the service is more responsive. Look at a CCTV loan option with the Council to save investment in purchasing cameras. Mobile cameras were suggested as the best option by estate services because they offer flexibility on use.
- 3.2.4.5 Focus on preventative as well as current case management but ensure that there is collective buy in from all involved.

3.3 Customer Services Level1 (source: resident survey, resident focus groups, mystery shopping, website)

3.3.1 General:

- 3.3.1.1 Telephone is still the most commonly used method of getting in touch with mhs regards ASB. ASB can be reported on My Account but there is no confidence yet that there is an effective process in place to pick up ASB reports in a timely manner.

3.3.1.2 The Customer Service Centre level 1 staff are currently being trained to handle stage 1 ASB issues. There was feedback from residents that they did not feel that all level 1 officers had the skills, knowledge and expertise to support customers with ASB.

3.3.2 Positives:



- 3.3.2.1 Mystery shopping confirmed that those handling calls were friendly and were able to take and record ASB messages.
- 3.3.2.2 There is a commitment to develop level 1 staff to be able to have a career rather than just a job with mhs.

3.3.3 Negatives/issues:



- 3.3.3.1 Waiting time to get through to Customer Services can vary in length and there had been issues around abandoned calls.
- 3.3.3.2 There is no dedicated ASB telephone number to give to callers to triage the call - this may help to prevent the need for initial reporting of ASB or chasing follow up calls to take up time that may affect the speed of other calls to be handled.
- 3.3.3.3 There was no mention of using the website to get more information.
- 3.3.3.4 There is no case number issued, or the call noted on React.
- 3.3.3.5 It is clear that the Customer Services team are keen to keep call time to a minimum but this must not be at the expense of the caller not being provided with an opportunity to explain their query and receive the advice and information that may prevent having to call again.

3.3.4 Recommendations:



- 3.3.4.1 Provide a dedicated ASB reporting number as a press option or ensure that all callers are provided with the dedicated number.
- 3.3.4.2 Promote having an online referral form on My Account for residents wanting to report ASB

- 3.3.4.3 who may find it easier to complete than calling the Customer Services team.
Ensure that the information on the website is highlighted to callers.

3.4 Estate Services/supported housing (source: resident survey, Focus Groups, staff interviews)

3.4.1 General:

- 3.4.1.1 There is anecdotal evidence from staff that fewer people are using reception at Broadside to report issues including ASB. However, residents do see estate caretakers out and about on estates that are there to offer a listening ear and ensure that estates are maintained to a high standard.
- 3.4.1.2 The Scheme managers in Supported Living plays a key role ensuring that sheltered schemes are safe and have appropriate security to keep residents safe and be on hand to deal with ASB issues.

3.4.2 Positives:



- 3.4.2.1 Mhs staff are hardworking and when they are able to be contacted show understanding and provide a listening ear to residents' concerns.
- 3.4.2.2 The presence of scheme managers is seen as offering additional security and point of contact for residents concerned about ASB.
- 3.4.2.3 Estate services officers provide a valuable contribution to safety on estates and as a source for reporting ASB.
- 3.4.2.4 Scheme managers will deal with any ASB which is usually around, noise, parking problems, smoking or residents that have mental health issues, and if there is continued ASB then it is escalated to the overall manager or Level 3 Customer Services Officer.
- 3.4.2.5 All sheltered schemes have door entry, and CCTV.

3.4.3 **Negatives/issues:**



- 3.4.3.1 There is concern by residents that many officers do not have the capacity to deal with ASB cases. However, this was not confirmed by senior management who consider that the new patch areas and work level is acceptable and should offer no barrier to managing ASB.
- 3.4.3.2 Residents are unaware of the role and work of the Customer Services Officers and the process they can use to identify and develop initiatives to combat ASB. There is a need to ensure that their role offers opportunity for more resident liaison.
- 3.4.3.3 Although residents will share ASB information they are afraid to formally report incidents and as soon as there is a need to make a statement they stop.

3.4.4 **Recommendations:**



- 3.4.4.1 Look at promoting the work and roles of all the staff working to prevent and handle ASB through the residents' newsletters.
- 3.4.4.2 Officers need to be recognised for their achievements and new initiatives to fight ASB should be appraised and the results shared with all staff and residents.

3.5 **Customer/resident engagement** – (source: resident survey, interview, focus groups)

3.5.1 **General:**

- 3.5.1.1 The Resident Engagement function is in a key position to listen and feedback on ASB issues that may be picked up at community events and Resident meetings. The new Resident Engagement approach needs to clarify the role of resident involvement as a source for feeding

back resident intelligence, highlighting new initiatives and promoting a positive perception of ASB.

3.5.1.2 Some residents have suggested that mhs bring the community and partners together to focus on prevention and reporting of ASB. A resident shared that previously there has been arrests and a drug problem has been removed through joint working. Residents proposed at a Focus Group to bring their residents together to focus on ASB and appointing resident ASB monitors. They need to develop a reporting and monitoring process that still encourages residents to directly report their cases to mhs.

3.5.1.3 The establishing of a resident engagement function in mhs has seen the focus shift from reliance on more traditional engagement mechanisms e.g. surveys to a need for new approaches and working closely with all mhs teams and residents.

3.5.2 Positives

3.5.2.1 'Engagement' is the new word for involvement and is seen to be clearer in terms of people understanding what it means. Through the work carried out to develop the new Resident Engagement role it is positive that new ways of working are being considered.

3.5.2.2 Community initiatives and events may offer excellent opportunities to invite the mhs Tenancy Support (ASB) officers and partners to show case their work to a wider audience of residents. The local Councillors according to residents have spoken positively about attending estate events and bringing together partners and residents. It was confirmed that often residents carry out ASB, as they do not know how to use services such as removal of bulk items of rubbish. So these estate events have a key role to play in helping residents know how they can be helped and how they can help themselves and others in the community.

3.5.3 Negatives/issues:

3.5.3.1 Residents have stated that there are very limited if any engagement activities. The Resident Engagement function needs to move from silo working and look to how they can support colleagues and identify opportunities to play a significant role in making sure that residents have confidence to report ASB.

3.5.3.2 Resident engagement is not seen as an integral part of all officers' roles. Every team needs to have a commitment to engage, monitor and report on issues and support required by residents. It has been suggested that everyone needs to have resident engagement targets and play a role to support the one resident engagement officer.

3.5.4 Recommendations:



3.5.4.1.1 That the Resident involvement officer works with the ASB Tenancy Support officers and residents to develop and put in place ASB Resident monitors and monitor the effectiveness and impact of having such a group.

3.5.4.1.2 Actively take on the role of supporting and signposting residents to report and resolve ASB in their communities.

3.6 Communication and feedback

3.6.1 **Communication and feedback** (source: staff interviews, Focus Groups, resident survey)

3.6.2 **General**

3.6.3 As with all Scrutiny Reviews to date we have identified communication as a key requirement for delivering effective and quality services. Communication is not always effective, timely and appropriate resulting in dissatisfaction with service delivery.

3.6.4 Having generic working around ASB makes it difficult to ensure that there is consistent approaches/resolution and relevant information sharing and decision- making.

- 3.6.5 There has been no evidence of regular senior management meetings to look at current ASB cases and monitor performance.
- 3.6.6 The (ASB) Tenancy Support Officers Level 3 at interview confirmed that there is limited working across other mhs services like Estate Services.
- 3.6.7 ASB cases are not recorded on the CRM system but React (from June 2022).
- 3.6.8 The CSP has discussed with residents the best way to communicate important information including ASB. There is an acceptance that one method does not suit all and that although the website has improved it is not interactive and always easy to find information. The CSP has identified communication as a future review topic because there is a need to get this right following an in-depth review.

3.6.8.1 Negatives/issues:



- 3.6.8.1.1 There is no mhs communication strategy for ASB.
- 3.6.8.1.2 Case studies are not included on the website or in newsletters which could highlight success and raise awareness to give residents confidence to report ASB. No examples could be identified.
- 3.6.8.1.3 There is no detail of performance of ASB including achievements with legal cases reported. It is likely that reporting on prosecutions may act as a way of preventing people committing ASB.
- 3.6.8.1.4 Estate service officers etc. confirmed that they receive very little feedback from those handling ASB and in order to find out what has resulted from an investigation they have to request the feedback. There needs to be an automatic case bulletin sent to all front line officers detailing the outcomes and measures that have been taken to tackle and hopefully resolve an issue. They need to have the information to share with concerned residents.

3.6.8.2 Recommendations:



3.6.8.2.1 Work with staff and residents to develop an ASB communication strategy for the organisation, there has to be a cascading of information to front line staff so that they can promote and share the positive work of taking enforcement action. This could be easily done by email or texting.

3.6.8.2.2 Provide clear and detailed information about case studies and performance that will inspire residents and confirm the good work that is being done.

3.7 Resident feedback (source: resident survey, case studies, resident interviews)

3.7.1 General:

3.7.2 Case studies provide helpful feedback from a resident perspective.

3.7.3 The on-line resident survey was sent out to tenants and homeowners and was facilitated by the Governance/ Communications Team.

3.7.4 Resident interviews were provided where residents felt that they needed to talk about their experience, and this was helpful to share with other residents.

3.7.5 The Feedback indicates that mhs are operating in an environment where ASB is prevalent, common, wide ranging, serious in nature and dealt with in an unsatisfactory manner from the perspective of the complainant.

3.7.6 Interviews with residents and hearing their concerns confirm that residents are not convinced that the handling of ASB is customer focused.

3.7.7 Positives:

4.7.5.1 Mhs is committed to resolving ASB but they have more work to do around convincing residents that this is the situation.

4.7.5.2 It is highly positive that residents have participated to provide a range of feedback even

though it has been highly emotional for many. The CSP understood that sharing of ASB incidents and experiences heightened residents' anxiety in a number of cases. Knowing the CSP was reviewing ASB was welcomed and

3.7.8 Negatives/issues:

- 3.7.8.1** With 90 % of respondents being concerned or very concerned suggests that ASB is a significant issue.
- 3.7.8.2** 70 % state that ASB has increased and 30 % say that it has not increased means that ASB is still a key issue for many residents.
- 3.7.8.3** Respondents cited serious ASB as being, noise, abuse, harassment, bullying, drunkenness and drug dealing as a big problem.
- 3.7.8.4** Drugs seem to be a particular problem and there are considerable concerns that this is not being dealt with in a proactive manner and many residents having to endure drug selling and use in communal areas in their blocks.
- 3.7.8.5** It is disheartening for mhs to see that aspirations to provide a swift, effective, consistent, customer focused, fair and solution-based service is one that is categorically and consistently not shared by residents.
- 3.7.8.6** The age groups that appear to be causing the most ASB are from 18 to 34 and 55-70. However, there were incidents shared that in supported housing there is some confusion by residents between what is ASB and a breach of tenancy, this was highlight by the reporting of a resident letting a family member and child stay when the designated resident is not being on site as ASB, but this is a tenancy breach. There is also a need to differentiate between what is normal living behaviour that is acceptable such as noise through normal living activities. Also we know many homes have poor noise insulation as well – so there is a need to educate and

inform residents so that expectations can be fairly managed.

3.7.8.7 33% of respondents stated that they did not report ASB, and the reasons given were, being worried about repercussions (42%), nothing would happen (38%), did not know how to report it (27%). These are disappointing results but emphasise the need for improved communication and publicity around the work and success of ASB handling.

3.7.8.8 It is clear from meeting residents experiencing long term issues that ASB has a negative impact on individual health and well being. Some have had to resort to medication, afraid to leave their home, and feel trapped, as they cannot move.

3.7.8.9 There is a negative feeling that there is no visible community policing and that mhs officers are not highly visible out on estates.

3.7.9 Recommendations:



- 3.7.9.1 Respondents to the survey have indicated that the reality is that the service is not meeting the needs of residents and there needs to be a reality check of why the service is failing from the resident perspective. The CSP would like to support that moving away from the use of excel spread sheets for recording ASB cases to using REACT and making ASB case data able to be reviewed by all Tenancy Support Officers.
- 3.7.9.2 Look at ways to increase the number of visits and presence of officers on the estates.
- 3.7.9.3 Being pro-active with taking action and keeping complainants/victims informed.
- 3.7.9.4 Look at encouraging late night patrols on estates by the police.
- 3.7.9.5 Install more CCTV cameras in areas where ASB is increasing
- 3.7.9.6 Visible partnership working with the police.
- 3.7.9.7 Looking at enforcement opportunities.
- 3.7.9.8 Develop a prevention strategy for ASB.
- 3.7.9.9 Differentiate between victims and complainants

- 3.7.9.10 Publicising that complainants will be protected, and the support offered.
- 3.7.9.11 Expectations by residents on outcomes needs to be better managed and support provided to help understand the limitations of enforcement that can be applied. This is especially important where there are repeated ASB incidents.

3.8 Resident Focus groups (source: Resident feedback, resident Focus Group survey)

3.8.1 Positives:



- 3.8.1.1** The Resident Focus Groups were well attended and included a cross section of involved and not involved residents from all tenures.
- 3.8.1.2** All were pleased with the opportunity to participate with the review and felt that the CSP would feedback their views in an honest way.
- 3.8.1.3** There was no personal attack on individual staff regarding ASB but there is a feeling that resident understanding and expectations are not being met.
- 3.8.1.4** The Survey was completed by all those that attended
- 3.8.1.5** There is an understanding that officers have a large workload and they are concerned that recent staff changes may be at fault.
- 3.8.1.6** Residents did know to use the website to get ASB information but they felt that it could be easier with a step- by step guide.
- 3.8.1.7** Limited ASB around sheltered schemes and minor resident issues are well handled by the Scheme Managers.

3.8.2 Negatives/issues:



- 3.8.2.1** Residents feel that the use of CCTV cameras is excellent but their personal experience of getting access to footage has not been

successful. They have heard that some cameras are broken and that the images produced are so poor that it is impossible to identify individuals.

3.8.2.2 Where residents collectively have made ASB complaints there is no feedback provided on the outcomes. Hence, residents and community groups do not feel that their feedback is valued. They think that the operating procedures only cater for individual ASB complaints and not group ones. This was particularly highlighted by residents in supported housing who felt that, as ASB is not supported/ managed outside of their scheme that they are reliant on their scheme manager to deal with ASB issues, which has not been consistently successful according to residents.

3.8.2.3 Those who have been victims to ASB activity collectively felt that they were not treated with the understanding and respect that they felt was required. This was supported by their feelings that details about the case investigations were not shared with them. Keeping victims up to date is key to prevent residents thinking that they have been abandoned and ignored.

3.8.2.4 Residents overall had a negative perception of the ASB service stating that they felt ignored and timescales for action were slow. Verbal performance feedback indicates that initial contact to report ASB is in the main successful, it is more likely that the issue is around once the investigation has commenced.

3.8.2.5 Residents felt that those handling ASB are not sharing their learning from cases with other officers within the organisation as repeat incidents occur. There were questions around the need to publicise where enforcement has been used and resolved an issue/s so that there is confidence that reporting ASB is not to be seen as a waste of time but can result in positive outcomes.

3.8.2.6 Those attending were asked to rate the ASB service on its effectiveness between 1 and 10

- with I being the lowest score. The residents all rated the service as poor scoring 1.
- 3.8.2.7** CCTV camera footage when requested by residents to be viewed was not provided. They complained that cameras had been removed without consultation and notification to those in the community. There was frustration expressed that residents have no idea around the mhs CCTV policy regarding use and monitoring of impact. Questions were raised around the use of mobile CCTV devices, with a number confirming the personal installing of recording devices on their doors etc. There are some concerns that residents may intrude on the privacy of others unintentionally as no general advice has been provided to residents on the personal installation and use of image recording devices.
- 3.8.2.8** One resident confirmed that they had given a specific date, location and time and was still not able to have the footage checked. There needs to be a process detailed that allows residents to access footage for reasons that are approved by the ASB professionals.
- 3.8.2.9** Residents would prefer to contact mhs to view CCTV footage and make their requests. With ASB increasing and the fear of escalation of crime due to the economic environment increased assurance that safeguarding and duty of care is a key priority especially to the elderly and those with particular health/mobility issues.
- 3.8.2.10** There was considerable concern about roaming dogs and dog fouling on estates. They consider that nothing is done to make the estates safer and ensuring that residents are prosecuted for allowing their dogs to foul communal and grassed areas. It was recognised that the majority of dog owners clean up after their pets and ensure that their pet behaviour contributes positively to the community. It is recognised that pet ownership has a positive impact on wellbeing and encourages greater community interaction between dog walkers.

- 3.8.2.11** Confusion about who to contact to report ASB. The CSP heard that initially residents wanting to report ASB preferred to have a conversation with mhs rather than write or complete a form. Having a dedicated ASB contact number was suggested and supported by residents and needs to be open to all –not excluding homeowners and supported housing/living residents.
- 3.8.2.12** There is a concern that Tenancy Agreements are not being enforced and this had lead to an escalation of ASB. There were examples provided where residents have been moved as a result of ASB issues and then continued to cause problems at their next home. A CSP member provided photographic evidence of communal corridors having urine regularly found and that the caretaking service should be taking action to remind all residents living in the block that this type of behaviour is unacceptable and breaches the tenancy agreement. It was suggested that notices need to be put up warning residents that inappropriate behaviour may result in their tenancy being lost and encouraging confidential reporting of those that behave in this way.
- 3.8.2.13** Those residents present who had reported ASB through the Customer Service Centre did not receive a case reference number. This meant that they were unsure whether the issues were just recorded or were officially given a case reference number.
- 3.8.2.14** Some residents stated that they do not bother to report ASB to mhs as nothing happens. Unfortunately this point was raised by a number of residents and that they felt that is was up to them as residents to take action. It would be helpful if a case plan of action is agreed with the victim so that they know the agreed steps for resolution being planned and target timescales for feeding back. Having a named contact person was considered important with many stating that they do not have a housing officer to call and speak to who knows them. Despite

assurances given that there are housing officers it is clear that the new job titles are confusing and there is a preference for traditional plain English function based officer titles.

- 3.8.2.15** The Police were reported as being good when they do visit sites, but they are slow to respond because they have higher priorities and reduced resources. They would like to see a visual profile of the police and Enforcement officers out on the estates patrolling. There was feedback of having to deal with potentially violent situations for which they are not trained and could result in escalating the incident and even being attacked. Examples included removing youths from buildings that did not live there and those participating with substance misuse. There is a need to advise residents not to put themselves at risk, record the incident with evidence if this can be safely done and call the police if there is a risk to individuals and property, and let mhs know.

3.8.3 Recommendations:



- 3.8.3.1 It is clear that resident awareness even amongst involved residents is confused regards the process for reporting and handling ASB and this does support the strong feeling by residents at the Focus Group that the teams should be joined together so service is consistent, and information is not lost. Improved publicity and a guidance fact sheet may be helpful to address this issue.
- 3.8.3.2 The residents suggested that mhs should take advantage of the Government's initiative that all dogs have to be chipped. The Tenancy Agreement would have to be updated to record the details but at least dogs that are found roaming or fouling can be traced back to residents. It is felt that this may act as a way of making owners more responsible. There are free chipping services available that could be accessed to make it affordable for residents.

- 3.8.3.3 Publicise the work of Neighbourhood Watch schemes on the website and have articles in newsletters and encouraging joint meetings with partners and community groups to tackle community ASB issues. Ensure that estate services staff are trained and supported to deal with ASB because at the moment they have confirmed that they are told to ignore and not speak to residents. They should be trained to report and deal with low- level cases.
- 3.8.3.4 Consider consulting in partnership with the Council with residents about new shops and licences to be issued in local communities, as some outlets are encouraging ASB. This is outside the remit of mhs but could be raised at partnership meetings that ex-estate champions have reported not currently being attended. It is felt that preventative activities are being dropped because there is not a dedicated ASB team.

3.9 Complaints (source: staff interviews, document review, mystery shopping, Residents Focus Groups)

3.9.1 General:

- 3.9.1.1** Complaints information about ASB was not provided for this review as it was stated by management that there had not been any complaints received. However, other staff members stated that mhs needs to use feedback from customers, especially from complaints but also from compliments (using as good practice). It is hoped that going forward there will be an open sharing of complaints related to ASB.
- 3.9.1.2** A number of residents at the Focus Groups and interviews stated that the only way they got a result was by 'going to the top' or their MP/Councillor. This feedback suggests that if there are no ASB complaints that perhaps recording may be an issue.

3.9.2 Positives:




- 3.9.2.1** mhs staff did say that they would like to get more feedback on their performance collected from users satisfaction surveys and be able to learn from what has worked well and mistakes. There was no evidence provided of post case reviews being formalised and only high profile cases. A review and learning log would be helpful so that skills and knowledge is shared.
- 3.9.2.2** It is reported that the number of informal complaints is low and in the main are associated with either party being unsatisfied with the case outcome.
- 3.9.2.3** mhs was able to confirm that ASB behaviour contracts had been signed to deal with youth issues.
- 3.9.2.4** There was a discussion about the response speed by the Police which was considered too slow. The police noted all the issues around drugs, and threats to residents and according to mhs are very responsive to calls to support mhs officers. The CSP agreed to propose having 2 trained/volunteer resident ASB monitors for each estate to help residents report ASB and keep everyone informed, but this would have to be shared with residents to see if there was interest. It was stated that previously estate monitors performed this role so there must be learning outcomes to review to determine if this may be worth taking forward. There would have to be an agreed process to follow based around raising awareness to prevent ASB and not get involved in resolution that must be a role for trained ASB officers.

3.9.3 Negatives/issues:



- 3.9.3.1** No customer satisfaction forms are sent out to residents after an ASB case is completed. It is suggested that there be feedback on four key parts of the service, ease of contact, being kept informed, case handling and outcome. However, there is no data provided to show which if any of the service areas surveyed are receiving positive or negative information. There was assurance provided that from June

- 2022 a new feedback process will be included as part of the new REACT module
- 3.9.3.2** We were not able to ascertain whether any goodwill gestures/ compensation had been paid to complainants regarding the ASB service.
- 3.9.3.3** The response rate to residents completing and returning their ASB service satisfaction survey is low nationally, and incentives need to be looked at to try and increase return rates.
- 3.9.4 Recommendations:** 
- 3.9.4.1 There is no measuring of overall Customer satisfaction of users of the ASB service. It is recommended that data received for each category proposed above is recorded and reported so that monitoring of the service is clear and can identify any areas for improvement.
- 3.9.4.2 All ASB service complaints should be reported to mhs and there should be a joint review of the case to identify learning outcomes.
- 3.9.4.3 Residents should use their role in the community to help identify and report ASB. Bringing all the key service providers together will result in a positive outcome

4. Recommendations

Key themes

- Improving communication with all residents and staff
- Ensuring access to services is centralised and has a variety of approaches
- Engaging with residents in more effective ways to encourage confidence to report and feedback on ASB
- Improving the organisational structure for service delivery by centralising the service and maximising opportunities to generate income to invest in the service
- Using feedback from residents to improve services
- Ensuring residents are more centrally involved in decision-making, monitoring and developing measureable effective performance indicators
- Case studies and success to communicate outcomes to residents
- Ensuring all information sources for both staff and residents are kept up-to-date
- Ensuring all staff are kept fully trained in all necessary aspects of dealing with ASB
- Offering opportunities for improvement to residents, e.g. training, advice, support

Table of recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Priority to residents	Priority to business
1	Review ALL SLA AGREEMENTS (external organisations supporting ASB) to include more detailed performance information, clear roles and responsibilities, full service costs including overheads, agreeing an equipment specification for CCTV and involving residents in service monitoring and review	M	H
2	Reporting ASB -Review how Customer Services Level1 handles ASB, procedures for handling ASB calls, telephone process- look to include a press function option for ASB, all calls to the dedicated ASB number, ensure case reference numbers are used	H	M
3	Neighbourhoods - review role and responsibilities of Estate Services staff, offer training to overcome fear of reporting ASB promote role and work around ASB preventative estate improvements	M	H
4	Resident engagement - promote and raise awareness of impact of ASB on residents and their communities through a range of engagement opportunities, including development of resident ASB monitors	H	H
5	Communication - develop a joint ASB Communication Strategy- produce a quarterly ASB case bulletin to share with staff and residents	H	H

No.	Recommendation	Priority to residents	Priority to business
	(on-line), Promote case studies and outcomes on the website and newsletters, provide information on ASB going to the Board, promote the on-line ASB reporting template and fact sheet to assist accessing and using the service		
6	Resident feedback- on a six monthly basis use case studies to review processes and procedures through a workshop, review resident ASB satisfaction, develop an ASB prevention strategy that is impact assessed on an annual basis, develop a step by step users guide	H	H
7	Complaints- look at how complaints are recorded as it is stated by mhs that they have not received any ASB complaints.	H	H
8	Staff training and Performance management: Look at training to be provided and agree an annual schedule of ASB knowledge and skills training, look at including residents in awareness training, use 'lunch and learn' to keep all staff aware of ASB, hold annual refresher training on policy, procedures, outcomes and enforcement, look at data collection REACT system and ensure CRM system will provide enhanced performance information, add ASB to staff induction	M	H
9	CCTV- look at requirement to update surveillance equipment and develop a camera specification.	H	H

No.	Recommendation	Priority to residents	Priority to business
10	Estate improvements - look at impact assessing estate improvements to identify impact on ASB, and feedback to residents,	M	M

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The review has identified that from a customer perspective that the service is failing to meet expectations and aspirations of residents and the business.
- 5.2 The CSP does feel that centralisation of the service supported by dedicated trained staff is essential to simplify operating procedures, maximise use of staff skills and give clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- 5.3 There is a need to continue investing in technology and resources that will have a positive impact on service delivery
- 5.4 ASB is not going to go away but as performance information is inadequate it is very difficult to understand the full scope of the issues and where priorities should be allocated. Important to manage additional service delivery costs and ensure value for money.