

## Progress on Scrutiny Review recommendations Anti-social behaviour (ASB) service: January 2025

### Cottsway's Scrutiny Group explained...

We are a small group of customers who meet regularly and work with other residents and staff to review Cottsway's services and performance to help make improvements.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a problem that can blight the lives of individuals and communities so it's important that the service Cottsway offers to combat this is valued and fit for purpose.

### Our original service review

After noticing that customer satisfaction with Cottsway's ASB service was low in 2019-20, we carried out a service review in autumn 2020 to find out why and see where improvements could be made.

To help us understand why customer satisfaction was so low we:

- Reviewed all the ASB cases that were reported and closed during the year.
- Asked customers who had used the service to complete an ASB satisfaction survey so we could identify any reoccurring issues.
- Interviewed staff and willing customers to find out their thoughts and experiences of the service.

We also:

- Reviewed Cottsway's ASB policy and procedure, complaints satisfaction and performance benchmarking.
- Compared Cottsway's approach to ASB to other social landlords in the same area as part of a desktop study; and
- Reviewed an auditor's report from 2019 to see if progress had been made on its recommendations.

You can read our original Anti-social behaviour scrutiny review: 2020 at:

[www.cottsway.co.uk/scrutinygroup](http://www.cottsway.co.uk/scrutinygroup)

### Summary of our key findings

We found that:

- The number of ASB complaints Cottsway received was quite high compared to a group of similar-sized landlords, and customer satisfaction was in the lowest 25% compared to the same group.
- Although customers found it easy to report ASB to Cottsway, few used the website to do so. They also felt that Cottsway didn't:
  - Understand how ASB affects them
  - Carry out a risk assessment for complainants.
- Cottsway's ASB policy followed best practice in many ways but the ASB procedure did not follow a structured format so there was no ownership or review dates.
- Cottsway's Board received quarterly ASB satisfaction results, but action plans were not used consistently, and satisfaction results were not analysed by the case manager.
- The Community Trigger (ASB Case Review) for cases of repeated ASB was not publicised.

## Summary of our recommendations

This work helped us to identify a list of 20 recommendations that we wanted Cottsway to consider implementing as we believed these would bring about improvements to the ASB service for customers and the staff involved. As of December 2022 all of these were reported as complete.

No.	Recommendation
ASB01	Provide annual ASB training: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>twice per year for Customer Service Advisors (CSA).</li> <li>for Neighbourhood Housing Officers (NHO).</li> </ol>
ASB02	Relevant NHO to monitor customer satisfaction with ASB case(s).
ASB03	Review and update the ASB Policy to include reference to the Community Trigger (now known as an ASB case review) and vulnerability risk assessments.
ASB04	Review and update the ASB Procedure.
ASB05	Complete a vulnerability risk assessment for all complainants.
ASB06	Give complainants a flow chart of the ASB process so they can better understand what's happening.
ASB07	Ensure complainants receive a copy of an agreed action plan.
ASB08	Schedule regular case reviews and update the complainant with progress.
ASB09	Offer complainant at least one face-to-face online meeting with the NHO at the start of the case.
ASB10	Always send a letter when closing an ASB case, either by post or by email.
ASB11	Once a case has been closed for 3-6 months, follow up with a courtesy call.
ASB12	Promote the Community Trigger (now known as an ASB case review).
ASB13	Improve the level of information about ASB: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on Cottsway's website.</li> <li>in the tenancy starter pack.</li> </ol>
ASB14	Develop and implement a communications plan to increase awareness of ASB and the actions Cottsway takes to address it with a focus on building confidence in their processes.
ASB15	See if complainants can upload photos to the website and buy product to enable this on Noise App.
ASB16	Develop the customer portal, if possible, so the progress of an ASB case can be tracked and any supporting information uploaded.
ASB17	Review all cases, feedback and satisfaction each quarter and produce a short summary report to identify learning opportunities.
ASB18	Trial a 24-hour answerphone dedicated to ASB and/or an ASB hotline for 1 year, then review further.
ASB19	Consider treating low level and high level ASB differently and making this clear in the policy and on the website (as per Peabody report)
ASB20	See if Cottsway can make more use of technology such as CCTV when addressing ASB.

## What's happened since

In September 2024, we decided to revisit our recommendations and see what improvements had been brought about for customers and staff.

We were pleased to find that there was evidence that 75% (15) of our recommendations continued to be actioned and vulnerability risk assessments are now built into the ASB processes - both for customers reporting and those accused of perpetrating ASB.

However, five actions needed further investigation and, working with Cottswoy's Communities Manager, we were able to ascertain the following:

No.	Recommendation	Status at January 2025
ASB01b	Provide annual training plan for NHO's.	NHO's have received training on the ASB app recently, but there is no evidence of a specific and ongoing training plan.
ASB02	Relevant NHO to monitor customer satisfaction with ASB case(s).	Since autumn 2024, the Head of Housing has been reviewing ASB cases with the NHO's each quarter. However, there is no evidence that this had been happening as a matter of course beforehand.
ASB09	Offer complainant at least one face-to-face online meeting with the NHO at the start of the case.	We have been unable to evidence this is routinely offered and it is not specified as a step in the ASB Procedure.
ASB11	Once a case has been closed for 3-6 months, follow up with a courtesy call.	<p>In April 2022, it was reported that The Respect ASB Hotline will be able to carry out this service moving forward and that an action will be added to the Cottswoy Customer Insight Group (CIG) Action Plan 2022-23 to check this happened.</p> <p>However, we have been unable to find evidence of this being added to the CIG Action Plan and the manager of the Respect ASB Hotline has confirmed they do not automatically carry out a courtesy call after a case has closed, although they are able to if requested.</p>
ASB16	Develop the customer portal, if possible, so the progress of an ASB case can be tracked and any supporting information uploaded.	Currently ASB case progress is included on the Cx housing system's 'cases and tasks' workflow, but this is not as a standalone objective. This means that this information cannot easily be pulled through on to the My Cottswoy customer portal at this time. However, this recommendation will be considered as part of the ongoing development of the customer portal.

## Conclusion

Due to significant changes in the housing team, we recognise that it has been difficult to evidence progress with all of these recommendations. However, the new Neighbourhood & Tenancy Manager should review these outstanding recommendations and report back to a future CIG meeting with:

- Any further evidence that may be available; and
- A view on whether these are still valid recommendations that should be implemented.