



Scrutiny Panel Project – Review of how SYHA deals with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).

Executive Summary:

- **Customers expect to be shown empathy and understanding as soon as they get in touch about ASB.**
- **It is important for customers to be given clear expectations about both the level and method of contact throughout an ASB case.**
- **There should be a consistent approach across all areas of the business when dealing with ASB.**
- **Sharing case studies and learning from feedback would help customers to feel reassured and understand the ASB process.**
- **It is important to consider how vulnerabilities can affect customers experiencing ASB.**

Introduction:

Who we are

We are a group of customers from different areas of SYHA. Some of us are tenants, some of us have been on the Good Work programme. We've got various life experiences, and this brings different perspectives to the scrutiny panel. We are a diverse group who vary in age, are different genders, have different religions and are from different ethnic and racial backgrounds. We live across all areas of South Yorkshire.

As a group, we've been running for over 4 years, but some members have considerable experience of scrutiny in its different forms at SYHA for over 12 years.

I want to use my spare time to help people and use my ideas to do something about the issues people are facing. It's my contribution to life.

Why we are involved in Scrutiny...



Why did we choose to review ASB?

We were interested in the ASB process because all of us have experienced ASB, either directly or indirectly and we want to understand how SYHA deals with ASB and review the process. **We want to ensure customers have the right level of support during, what is often, a difficult and stressful time.** We want to improve customer satisfaction with how ASB is handled. We realise ASB can impact on people both mentally and physically and we want to help improve the lives of people that are experiencing ASB.

We looked at SYHA's performance in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) 23/24 for question TP12 Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour.

The satisfaction was 61.4% the second lowest out of all the measures and we thought there was some work SYHA could do to improve their approach to ASB.

We were aware of The Regulator of Social Housing's new consumer standards and that one of the standards stated:

2.2 Anti-social behaviour and hate incidents

2.2.1 Registered providers must have a policy on how they work with relevant organisations to deter and tackle ASB in the neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.

2.2.2 Registered providers must clearly set out their approach for how they deter, and tackle hate incidents in neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.

2.2.3 Registered providers must enable ASB and hate incidents to be reported easily and keep tenants informed about the progress of their case.


2.2.4 Registered providers must provide prompt and appropriate action in response to ASB and hate incidents, having regard to the full range of tools and legal powers available to them.

2.2.5 Registered providers must support tenants who are affected by ASB and hate

What were the aims/objectives of the exercise?

We were keen to ensure all customers:

- felt understood and heard from the initial contact
- had clarity and transparency about the ASB process
- were kept well informed about what was happening
- had the opportunity to give feedback, so their voices are heard
- felt reassured and safe



We feel it is important to be inclusive when dealing with ASB and want to make sure SYHA are reaching people with different needs.

What we did – our methodology

We wanted to fully understand the ASB process and the customer journey and in order for us to do this we reviewed:

- A presentation from the Neighbourhood and Mixed Tenure Manager, the Head of Landlord Services and a Team Leader from Customer Connect to help understand the ASB process
- A presentation from a Neighbourhoods Officer explaining their role
- 2 anonymised ASB case studies
- The draft ASB policy
- The ASB satisfaction survey
- Anon customer data from ASB satisfaction surveys (insight)
- Comparison of the SYHA ASB webpage to other Housing Associations
- Feedback from engaged customers

We decided not to carry out an independent survey to ask customers about their experiences with ASB as we felt the satisfaction survey SYHA already uses is sufficient at present. We also felt that ASB is a difficult and sensitive subject for some people to talk about and didn't want to be intrusive.

We discussed everything we had researched and used this to form our key question: Is the ASB process easy for customers to understand, and do they feel supported throughout?

The outcome we wanted to achieve was that there is a clear and transparent ASB process for all customers and that they feel supported throughout the process.


Findings:

Presentation and Policy

The presentations about ASB gave us a much better understanding about how SYHA deal with ASB and what the customer experience should be. The case studies helped us to understand how complex ASB cases can be and that they are not always easily resolved. **We were keen to explore ways in which we could help other customers reach the same level of understanding**, which we hoped would improve the relationship between SYHA and customers and therefore increase their level of satisfaction with how the ASB was handled.

During the presentation, data and insight from satisfaction surveys were shared with us, however this was only from General Needs customers, not Livewell and we were told that although ASB may be being addressed in Livewell, **not all ASB complaints were taken through the same process as General Needs**, including the

opportunity to answer a survey once the case was closed. We were concerned to hear this as we understand Livewell customers can often have complex needs and be vulnerable, and we feel it's even more important to monitor the ASB and also identify any wider problems in that area.



We were told that some customers had made complaints about the handling of ASB involving Livewell and this concerned us.

The satisfaction survey questions were shared with us, and we were surprised to find out that there may be instances when a customer isn't invited to complete a survey, and that this **contradicted the ASB policy where it stated:**

'We will make sure all customers are given this opportunity to feedback and that their views are listened to carefully.'

More detail was given explaining why it sometimes isn't appropriate to carry out a survey **"A key reason not to survey complainants is when we feel it would be inappropriate or insensitive to do so or potentially cause offence to the customer. Examples of this would be when a customer has already expressed their dissatisfaction with the ASB case handling and is going through our complaints process."** **"Other examples include where a new case has been opened when the ASB has continued, or for cases where the complainants are anonymous, and we don't have a named person to survey"**

While we understand there may be instances where it isn't appropriate to carry out a survey we want to ensure there is a fair, transparent and robust system in place to police this.

We thought the satisfaction survey questions were thorough and covered all points and gave customers the opportunity to share valuable feedback and we didn't think it necessary to change the questions.

We further read in the policy:

'We collect feedback on ASB to show how we are performing; that we do not discriminate against anyone; how satisfied customers are and where to improve our services by identifying hotspots and specific problems. This allows us to target our resources most effectively.'

We asked for more detail around this, and we were told **"The Neighbourhood and Mixed Tenure Manager looks for patterns in the feedback and he will contact customers directly who are dissatisfied with our approach to ASB. We feel this helps to close the loop and gain greater insight. Best practice is fed back via team meetings to reinforce positive interventions."**

We were given an example of where they had targeted resources **"This year we have created a separate budget to fund safety features. This is a targeted intervention to protect our most vulnerable customers facing ASB, harassment or abuse."**

We are reassured to hear this and believe SYHA should be telling customers how they are using the feedback from surveys and that this could help to demonstrate to customers **SYHA are learning from feedback and making service improvements and this should help customers feel heard and build trust.**

The policy also stated:

(i) What impact is the anti-social behaviour having on you and other members of your household?
(ii) Do you consider you or anyone in your household to be vulnerable or disabled?

We believe it is important that customers with vulnerabilities receive extra support during the ASB process, if needed, and were pleased to read in the policy that 2 questions to identify vulnerabilities were going to be introduced when reporting ASB:

It was explained **"The new additional questions are being asked to understand if we need to put in place additional support due to a risk of harm or vulnerability. For example, we might consider some additional safety features, we might make a**

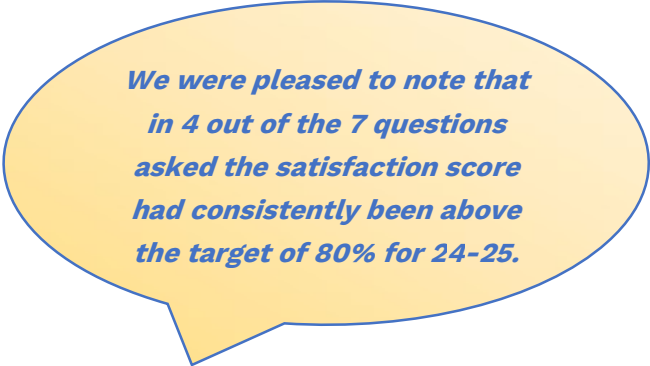
referral to another agency to offer additional support, or we might discuss re-housing as a potential solution if the accommodation is not suitable (e.g. noise)."

Based on customer insight, where some people mentioned needing extra support due to vulnerabilities we agree these questions are important and should be asked. When we asked whether these questions would be asked at first contact or by the Neighbourhoods Officer dealing with the case, we were told it would be the Neighbourhoods Officer. We think these questions should be asked at first contact whether this be an advisor, or a Neighbourhoods Officer and we think it is important that staff feel comfortable asking these questions and receive appropriate training, if needed. **We want to ensure that any vulnerabilities are assessed and recorded and the seriousness of these are recognised as early as possible.**

Customer Insight from Satisfaction Surveys

When looking at the anonymised insight from the satisfaction surveys we were interested to understand the customer journey from initial contact to when the complaint was closed. **We were told that SYHA aimed to score 80% and above across all questions in the survey.**

Customers shared lots of positive feedback saying they **felt their Neighbourhoods Officer had a good understanding of their issue** and that **they felt reassured and supported.**



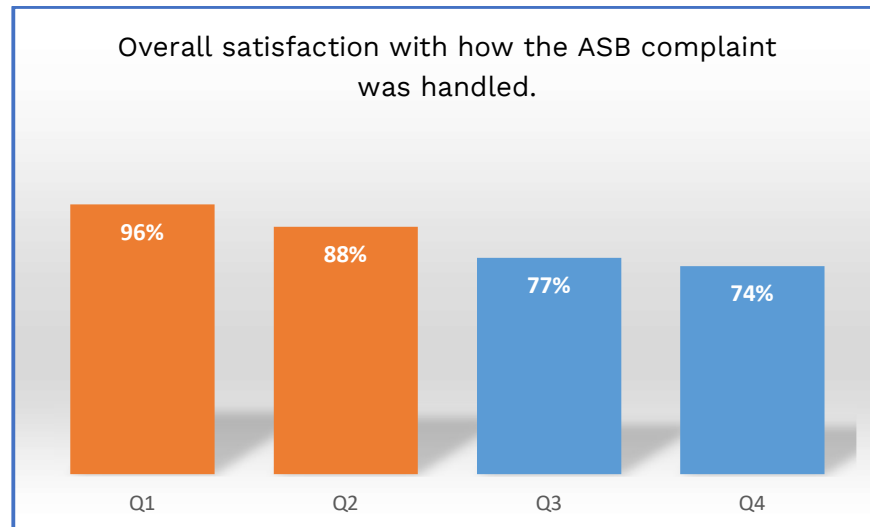
We were pleased to note that in 4 out of the 7 questions asked the satisfaction score had consistently been above the target of 80% for 24-25.

However, we were concerned to find that 2 of the questions had started off above target at the beginning of the year and fallen below in the last half of the year and we wanted to understand why this was.

The 2 questions were:

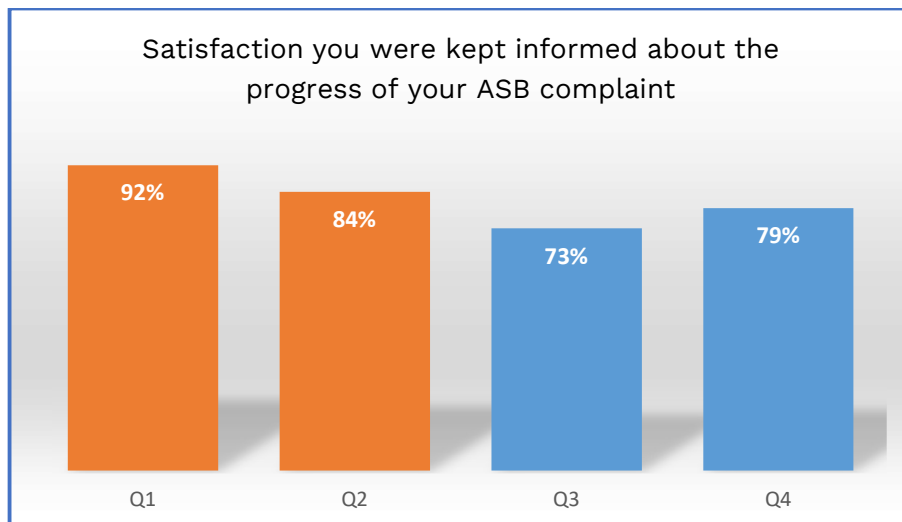
- On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied, what score would you give for **the way your ASB complaint was handled overall by South Yorkshire Housing Association?**

- On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied, what score would you give for **How you were kept informed about the progress of your ASB complaint?**



When looking at customer comments from the question **about overall handling of the ASB complaint**, we found some of them felt they **weren't taken seriously** when they first got in touch or that there was a **lack of sympathy** from the person taking the call and that they **hadn't felt understood**. Although we understand this is only a small percentage of cases, we still think it's important that everyone should feel listened to, and **we want customers to feel better at the end of the call than they did at the beginning**.

We would like to see this monitored throughout the coming year and if there are still cases where this is happening that investigations are conducted to identify if individual training is required. **If there is a wider issue, we would like the organisation to consider using a quality checking survey to give the customer the opportunity to give feedback immediately after the call.**



When looking at customer comments from the question **about being kept informed about the progress of their ASB**, we found there were some customers who were satisfied with the amount of contact throughout their ASB complaint, saying they were **kept informed at all times**, and they were **given regular updates**. Equally though we noticed there were customers saying they felt their Neighbourhoods Officer **didn't update them properly** and they would have **liked more regular contact**. Some customers also felt they hadn't been communicated with in their preferred way saying **they hadn't received phone calls, just emails** and **they had received emails when they even didn't use emails**. We had read in the policy that we would:

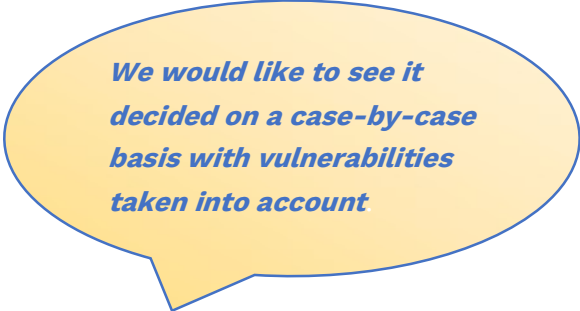
'To effectively work in partnership and to tackle and deter ASB we will do the following:

Responding

- **communicate with customers in their preferred method.'**

We think it is important all customers feel they are kept informed in a way that works for them and would like to see this agreed at the start of the case, so all customer have clear expectations, and a consistent approach is adopted, e.g. agree contact weekly by telephone, or fortnightly by email etc. **There may be some customers who, for whatever reason would like the reassurance of more frequent contact and this should be considered.** As a panel some of us use phone messaging frequently in everyday life and although we know it may not be an appropriate method to use for long, detailed ASB updates we think it should be considered for an option to check if everything is ok.

It was highlighted in the insight that some customers had received follow-up calls from their Neighbourhoods Officer, after the case was closed and they appreciated this saying **I have had a couple of follow-up calls...to check how things are which is good, and he got in touch after to follow up and make sure it was still ok.** While we can see why some customers would benefit from this we don't feel this is necessary for every case as it may take away important resource for dealing with current ASB.



We would like to see it decided on a case-by-case basis with vulnerabilities taken into account


SYHA Website

We had recently reviewed the SYHA website and made a recommendation to include a page dedicated to ASB and were pleased this has already been actioned.

<https://www.syha.co.uk/anti-social-behaviour/>

We think the page contains a lot of information that wasn't on there before and **we like the fact that customers can see exactly what ASB is and isn't and is clear and easy to understand.**

We are pleased there are separate links to take people to information about Domestic Abuse and Hate Crime. We discussed that these were often the most difficult type of ASB to report through fear for safety. We knew from the presentation the number of these cases was low and this may be because people are too scared to report it.



We feel reassured that if customers are experiencing Hate crime or Domestic Abuse they can now find out how to get help on the website.

When we compared our page to some other Housing Associations pages we found some of them used videos to give an overview of the ASB process and we thought this was a good idea, particularly for customers who may find it difficult to read lots of information.

We found some websites used case studies and frequently asked questions to give examples of ASB and we thought this would be helpful for customers, particularly those who hadn't experienced ASB before and who may be worried.

The case studies we heard helped us to understand the process, including the need for evidence and we know from the insight shared some customers were frustrated when asked to supply evidence so believe it would help for them to understand the importance of this is and also to explain the different methods we use to gather evidence e.g. sound level monitoring equipment for recording the level of sound and that this doesn't record conversations. **Customers will then feel more reassured and be more willing to provide evidence.**

An engaged customer told us more could be done to prevent ASB, particularly fly-tipping and that we should consider how we can educate people. We agree this is important and could have a knock-on effect by encouraging other people in the area to take pride in where they live.



We think it's important to reach communities and to educate customers on how to better look after their neighbourhood.

We would like customers to be directed to recycling facilities, litter picking groups be warned about illegal waste handlers and the importance of using licensed ones.

This concludes our review of how SYHA deal with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). We found this exercise very enlightening, and we were surprised at how complex ASB cases can be and we feel confident, as a panel, that if ASB is explained clearly customers satisfaction will improve.

Recommendations:

Based on your findings from researching ASB what do you recommend that SYHA do to improve the situation?

- 1. Ensure there is a consistent approach to recording ASB in both General Needs and Livewell.**

2. Clarify in the policy the instances where we wouldn't attempt to carry out an ASB satisfaction survey. Ensure there is an open, transparent and robust process in place where we choose not to survey someone.
3. Ensure vulnerability questions are asked at 1st contact and all staff are confident and suitably trained to ask the questions.
4. Share with customers how customer feedback is used to improve services.
5. Ensure it is established at the beginning of the case how much contact the complainant expects and by which method. This should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
6. Ensure all staff dealing with ASB are trained to show empathy and understanding, especially at the initial contact stage. Monitor customer insight to see if satisfaction is improving and quality check calls.
7. Where a customer has given negative feedback about a lack of empathy and understanding investigate why this happened to determine if individual training is needed. If a wider problem is identified consider an automated telephone survey immediately after the call.
8. Ensure both the Neighbourhood Officer and person surveying considers if extra support is needed after a case is closed and offers a follow-up call, if appropriate.
9. Consider how to be more inclusive with information about ASB, in particular:
 - Known vulnerable groups
 - Elderly customers
 - Less digitally able customers
 - Non-English-speaking customers

Insight and website research:

10. Take into consideration customers who may find it difficult to read lots of information and consider the use of a video showing key points of the ASB process.

11. Give examples of ASB cases by either showing case studies or FAQ so customers have a better understanding of the ASB process, including the need for evidence and the different types they may be asked to provide.

12. Educate about litter and fly tipping, concentrating on prevention and include useful links on the Website.

How does the scrutiny panel want to follow this up?

- A yearly review, looking at customer insight and TSM data to monitor satisfaction levels and see if there has been an improvement.
- Monitor the action plan and ask for updates.

How do you want to communicate changes to customers?

- SYHA website and social media

Is there anything you've learned from this process that you will use for future scrutiny projects?

- If our meetings are held more frequently it improves the flow of the exercise.
- Case studies and presentations help to clearly explain processes and helped us to gain a better level of understanding.
- It is useful to speak with a wide variety of staff involved in the ASB process.
- We were able to carry out the exercise faster as we already had the insight data from the satisfaction surveys, and although it is sometimes helpful to use Viewpoint to carry out surveys it can also delay the exercise.

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SYHA Customer Scrutiny Panel May 2025

Appendices

- ASB Scrutiny Presentation.pptx
- ASB and Harassment Policy Draft V3 - SP.docx
- ASB survey questions.docx
- ASB insight data
- Engaged customer feedback ASB policy and website.xlsx
- Comparison of the SYHA ASB webpage to other Housing Associations
 - Berneslai Homes
 - Yorkshire Housing
 - Sanctuary Housing
- ASB Timeline.docx