

Policy name	Anti-Social Behaviour
Policy date	August 2020
Authorisation	General Manager, Operations
Policy owner	National Manager, Housing Services
Policy type	Mission Australia Housing Operational Policy
Policy setting	

1 Purpose

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 This policy outlines:

- Actions that may be taken by Mission Australia Housing (MAH) to address and prevent anti-social behaviour occurring at properties and offices; and
- Consequences for tenants where they or their household member/s become involved in serious and/or repeated episodes of anti-social behaviour.

1.2 Coverage

1.2.1 This document is a national policy and covers both Mission Australia Housing (MAH) and Mission Australia Housing Victoria (MAHV). All references to Mission Australia Housing, MAH and Housing include both MAH and MAHV unless specifically stated otherwise. Where state based variations exist in policies and procedures, these will be identified in the document.

1.2.2 This policy applies to all forms of housing provided by MAH including social, affordable and transitional housing.

1.3 Information on procedures and other related policies

1.3.1 This policy focuses on why certain things need to be done. It is supported by procedures that provide more detail on the “what” to do.

1.3.2 Other MAH policies as well as relevant legislation and agreements also need to be considered in managing anti-social behaviour. To assist you, these are identified where relevant in this policy and supporting procedures.

2 Scope

2.1 Parts of Mission Australia that this policy covers

- 2.1.1 This policy applies to MAH staff responsible for working with MAH clients, tenants and properties.

2.2 Definitions

- 2.2.1 Key terms used in this policy are defined in the following table.

Term	Definition
Anti-social behaviour	Behaviour which violates the right of another person to security and quiet enjoyment. These behaviours range from nuisance to criminal conduct.
Breach of tenancy	Where a tenant, household member or visitor fails to comply with one or more of the terms the tenant agreed to abide by in the lease or rooming accommodation agreement they signed at the start of their tenancy.

3 Policy

3.1 Guiding principles

- 3.1.1 MAH is focused on the needs of tenants and their families:

- MAH takes action to address serious and/or repeated anti-social behaviour in the interest of tenants, staff and the community.

- 3.1.2 The MAH approach is fair and transparent:

- MAH informs all tenants of the expected standard of conduct, and of their rights and responsibilities.
- MAH supports tenants to manage issues which may place their tenancy at risk.
- MAH upholds accountability and transparency through its record keeping practices.
- MAH respects the privacy and confidentiality of all tenants and community members.
- Tenants are given the opportunity to appeal organisational decisions in order to ensure fair and transparent outcomes.

- 3.1.3 MAH complies with relevant laws and procedures.

3.2 MAH approach

3.2.1 MAH does not tolerate anti-social behaviour directed towards staff, tenants, neighbours or property. Staff are required to take action where they witness, are advised of or get evidence of, anti-social behaviour occurring in offices and properties managed by MAH. Anti-social behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- Written abuse;
- Verbal or physical abuse;
- Threatening behaviour;
- Deliberate property damage;
- Intimidation;
- Sexual harassment; and/or
- Excessive noise.

3.3 Housing applications

3.3.1 Housing applicants who direct anti-social behaviour towards staff, tenants or property may have their housing application cancelled as per the **Housing Applications Policy**.

3.4 Start of tenancy

3.4.1 All tenants will be informed of the expected standards of conduct towards staff, other tenants, neighbours and their property when they sign a lease or rooming accommodation agreement for their property, as per the **Starting Tenancies Policy**.

3.5 During the tenancy

3.5.1 Anti-social behaviour falls across a spectrum, from low-level anti-social behaviour through to serious criminal behaviour that may threaten the safety of staff, tenants or neighbours, or result in the destruction of property. The MAH response to anti-social behaviour will vary depending upon the nature of the behaviour.

3.5.2 Tenants are responsible for any anti-social behaviour involving their household members and visitors, and may be subject to action because of the behaviour of a household member or visitor where warranted.

3.5.3 For lower-level anti-social behaviour:

- Tenants identified to have been involved in anti-social behaviour at an office or property will be in breach of tenancy, and staff will remind them of their responsibilities as per the **Breach of Tenancy Policy**.
- Staff will work with tenants where appropriate to address behaviour which may put their tenancy at risk. This may include making referrals to appropriate services and support agencies.

- 3.5.4 Where support has been ineffective, or where tenants become involved in repeated and/or serious anti-social behaviour, MAH may:
- Issue notice to end their tenancy as per the **Ending Tenancies Policy**;
 - Support victims or witnesses of anti-social behaviour to report incidents to the police or other authorities;
 - Employ special security measures in offices and when undertaking tenancy management functions such as inspections;
 - Charge for any repairs or maintenance work required at a property where deliberate or negligent property damage has occurred, as per the **Arrears Management Policy**; and/or
 - Phone the police or other emergency services as required.
- 3.5.5 Staff will be required to exercise discretion in the strategies they use to manage anti-social behaviour, depending on its severity/frequency and the individual needs of tenants and affected parties. A combination of strategies may be required in high-risk situations.
- 3.5.6 Where appropriate, staff may engage Community Development and other support staff for assistance in developing strategies to manage anti-social behaviour.
- 3.5.7 The associated procedures provide detailed guidance to staff on the management of anti-social behaviour, including the associated risks.

3.6 Cooperation and collaboration

- 3.6.1 MAH is committed to supporting tenants who have experienced anti-social behaviour in their neighbourhood and those who have been the target of anti-social behaviour.
- 3.6.2 MAH is committed to working with the police and other community partners to address and prevent anti-social behaviour.

3.7 Staff wellbeing

- 3.7.1 It is important for all People Leaders to recognise the ways in which anti-social behaviour may have an impact on staff. Team Leaders and Regional Managers will arrange debriefing meetings, and additional support or training for affected staff.
- 3.7.2 Any staff members who are distressed over such a situation are encouraged to discuss the matter with their Team Leader or Regional Manager. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is also available to staff and their family 24/7, as is the staff chaplain.
- 3.7.3 The **Staff Safety in the Workplace Policy** provides further information on the measures staff should take to protect their own safety, and that of tenants.

3.8 Appeals

- 3.8.1 Staff will inform tenants of their right to appeal organisational decisions and to complain about the services of MAH, as per the **Appeals and Complaints Policy**.

3.9 Record keeping

- 3.9.1 Staff will ensure that all incidents and actions are properly documented in the tenancy management system.

Responsibilities

3.10 Housing staff including Housing Officers and Client Service Officers are responsible for:

- Informing tenants of their rights and responsibilities in accordance with this policy.
- Working with tenants in accordance with this policy.
- Issuing notices where required in accordance with this policy.
- Advising police and Mission Australia Group Legal Services of incidents where required.
- Preparing relevant risk and incident reports when required.
- Keeping records of the process in the relevant systems.
- Recommending improvements to this policy and associated procedures.

3.11 Team Leaders/Regional Managers are responsible for:

- Assisting housing staff to implement this policy.
- Ensuring good management of evidence in the tenancy management system.
- Incorporating this policy and associated procedures into staff induction and training.
- Ensuring staff are aware of and have access to this policy and associated procedures.
- Escalating feedback about this policy to the policy owner and/or policy writer.

3.12 The National Manager, Housing Services is responsible for:

- Ensuring that MAH complies with this policy and associated procedures.
- Authorising any changes to this policy and associated procedures.