

Tenants Panel Subgroups –
Housing Anti-Social Behaviour, Neighbourhoods and Rents
7th April 2026 2pm – 4pm

Whitelaw Room, Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton on Sea

In Attendance	
Panel Members	
Carol McDougall (Chair), Chris Gill & Helen Dodridge	
TDC Staff	
Heidi Foster (Senior Tenancy Management Officer) & Jessica Woods (Senior Tenant Involvement Officer)	

1. Welcome and introductions

Heidi welcomed everyone.

2. Apologies for Absence

Jane Dunne, Matt Wicks & Kim Mayhead.

3. Communal cleaning:

- **share the consultation on communal cleaning contract award**
- **breakdown of the communal cleaner's week and spec for cleaning**

Heidi asked that this agenda item be moved to the next meeting as her meeting to collect this data was cancelled. Matt Wicks to present at the next meeting, panel members agreed.

4. Questions from members re 'spotlight' document

Carol asked about the noise app, and whether their initial reaction when they are told there has been an allegation would only to be quiet for a period of time. Heidi agreed that this can happen however we are obligated by law to tell them they are being monitored.

Heidi explained that we are looking at implementing a noise app, but it would not be used for amplified noise, these have to be dealt with by environment health as they have to use appropriate law for the issues being raised. Whereas, not reasonable noise, we can listen through the app and then make a judgement. The officer assigned to the case has to make the judgement, mediate and help change behaviour on how to manage and understand the issues.

Chris asked has the policy changed on mediation. Heidi explained that it was more neighbourly to go to your neighbour and approach them yourselves, or a letter if not confident, and we would ask first to have you had spoken to your neighbour.

With the Decent Homes two coming out we are looking at making sure that our properties are sound efficient, so as we are updating our homes and/or taking on new homes, they will have improved sound insulation.

Chris Gill suggested that we should leave carpets in and get new tenants to sign to take them on if they are in good condition. Jessica said we could explore this further when we begin void inspectors later in the year.

Anti vibration mats under washing machines. Chris suggested that this would be hard to manage as people may remove it. Chris suggested that we lay the lino over the top of the anti-vibration mat so that it is still in use, but the tenants will not know that it is there so cannot be removed.

Heidi explained that if officers could hear evidence of the noise disturbance whilst they were in the area they would knock and tell them to be aware of the noise disturbance they are making. This ASB information is retained for 7 years.

Heidi explained that we are in the process of developing new tenancy videos to welcome new tenants to their home and responsibilities.

Chris asked if we work closely with environmental services. Heidi explained that yes, we would work with them and that after the diary is filled out, we would send to Environmental and be assessed. Environmental have their own services and process so once it is passed to them, we refer and talk with them, but they follow their own procedure. If they do not follow up on the complaint, then we will close our case too.

Chris asked how evidence would be presented to a court. Heidi explained that all evidence would be passed to Environmental Services, who would use appropriate monitoring equipment and recordings. As this is a housing-related complaint, Environmental Services would advise us on the status of the monitoring and may serve an abatement notice with ASB support. Housing are likely to seek possession of the property at the same time, and breaches of an abatement notice would allow for possession action, this is something that will be reflected in the new tenancy agreement.

5. How do we improve the statistic 'makes a positive contribution to area' from TSM's

Communication: concerns raised that residents may feel reluctant to contact the Council, with a perception that raising issues does not lead to action.

Waste contract and collection: general discussion regarding the new waste contract. Investigations take longer when the individual responsible for fly-tipping is known, as evidence is gathered to support potential recharges. The new waste contract and HIT team commenced on 1 April and are experiencing initial teething issues. The team will also be supporting estate walkabouts, litter picking, and related activities.

Street cleaning and estates: general discussion regarding street cleaning on sloped areas and litter picking. Heidi will liaise with the waste team to establish how resident groups can be set up and to identify any existing groups. Additional recycling provisions will be introduced under the new waste contract.

Fly-tipping: members mentioned that soft furnishings cannot be collected with hard waste, as they must be transported separately causing delays for fly tipping to be collected. The use of “Council Aware” signage for waste issues, similar to “Police Aware” signage, was discussed, Heidi said she would look into this.

Hoarding and support: spoke about cases where hoarding is linked to mental health concerns, a supportive approach is taken alongside enforcement, involving fire safety checks and partnership working with support agencies. Where necessary, notices of possession may be issued to encourage engagement with support, with court action as a last resort. Officers are required to report properties that pose a safety risk.

Communal areas: Heidi asked members to suggest ways to prevent items being left in communal areas. Suggestions were that refurbishment budgets for internal communal spaces are currently limited, with funding redirected to essential property improvements. Members expressed that it would be better if we surveyed tenants in the blocks on preferred decoration themes and could ask local artists to donate their time to work on murals on the walls. Concerns were also raised about contractors leaving communal areas dusty or marked, limiting cleaners’ ability to maintain standards. Jessica said that with Block Champions rolling out this month this is something that could be brought to attention in those meetings with leads from the communal cleaning contractor and the repairs contractor.

Members also suggested having a session where tenants could come and talk to Officers face-to-face, both explained that this already exists with drop ins being held around various locations in the district.

6. Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

Members asked about the process for accessing properties where entry is refused. Heidi explained that a warrant of entry must be obtained from a court judge. Once granted, access is carried out by two officers, accompanied by a locksmith and a bailiff.

Helen asked whether officers would liaise with any social worker or support services involved with the individual beforehand. Heidi confirmed that this would be the case and emphasised that all reasonable steps would be taken to work with the tenant and support agencies prior to taking formal action.

Heidi said once the policy has been finalised through management team, she will bring them a new draft.

7. Housing Neighbourhood Management Policy

Heidi explained that a more proactive approach will be taken to managing properties and blocks, with a focus on improving resident satisfaction and neighbourhoods. It was noted that increased investment in these areas is likely to lead to greater resident engagement. As not all issues are appropriately managed under Anti-Social Behaviour, neighbourhood management policies were separated in 2024. We have had separate policies and ways of recording data/systems since then. Members mentioned that not all neighbourhoods are Council-owned and that issues affect private residents as well as TDC tenants. Heidi agreed and such, the policy is intended to have a district-wide focus, rather than applying solely to Council housing. Chris asked about communal Gardens and dogs being off leads. Heidi explained that under everyone's Tenancy Agreement no animal should be in the communal area unless it is on a lead.

Chris asked about breeding and selling puppies in council properties. Heidi explained that this is managed by working across departments for example Fraud, Licencing and breach of tenancy through Housing.

Heidi expressed that she was open to ideas and suggestions on how to improve and asked that they brought their suggestions of what they think will work better as you are in these positions next time.

8. Cuckooing

ECC has approached the Council about participating in a county-wide cuckooing initiative, aimed at supporting individuals who may have additional needs and are vulnerable to others exploiting their homes for criminal activity. While there is an indication that cuckooing is occurring, the full extent is not yet known.

The proposal involves adapting the initiative for Council tenants by developing a clear procedure. ECC has been asked whether personal safety devices could be provided, as funding is not currently available. The initiative will be reviewed and revised before being brought back to the group, subject to Council approval. This was viewed as a positive step in supporting vulnerable tenants as part of an Essex-wide approach.

Chris asked if there will be support for those who are reporting this?

Heidi explained that they can use closure orders, which closes the property completely where no one can access the property, if it is affecting the neighbours. Or partial closure orders, resident and initial support can access but no one else can which is facilitated with police support.

Establishing this arrangement now will support the transition to the future unitary authority. ECC has asked the Council to lead on this work where it relates to Council-managed housing stock, as this is an area where the initiative could be particularly beneficial. Where private housing stock is affected, ECC will liaise with the Police and ASB Community Safety teams.

ECC has also provided a cuckooing toolkit, including a checklist of key questions to be asked, which is a practical and straightforward resource to support officers in identifying and responding to cases.

9. Any other Business, topics to discuss next time & Actions

Meeting	Action	Lead	Status	Notes
April 26	Add communal cleaning to next meeting agenda.	Lorraine		
April 26	Looking at keeping carpets in voids and new tenants signing to take on responsibility – Void Inspectors.	Jessica		
April 26	Heidi will liaise with the waste team to establish how resident groups can be set up and to identify any existing groups.	Heidi		
April 26	The use of “Council Aware” signage for waste issues, similar to “Police Aware” signage.	Heidi		
April 26	Draft of the Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy brought to the group once finalised and written.	Heidi		
April 26	Add questions & Suggestions for Neighbourhood Management Policy to next meeting agenda.	Lorraine		
April 26	Add questions & Suggestions for Housing ASB Policy to next meeting agenda.	Lorraine		
April 26	Add vandalism, damage to property & Hoarding (Concern for Welfare) to next meeting agenda.	Lorraine		
April 26	Add suggestions for positive contributions towards the area to next meeting agenda.	Lorraine		

10. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 19th May w/Matt Wicks

Appendices

Appendix A – Cuckooing Tool kit



This tool has been designed to help frontline practitioners identify those at risk of cuckooing victimisation, and to consider if further support or safeguarding referrals are required. Before completing this form, we would advise you read the educational resources that feature in the Preventing & Disrupting Cuckooing Victimisation Practitioner Toolkit.

Risk is dynamic and can change very quickly. It is good practice to review the checklist at regular intervals.

Please note, this tool is not:

- A full risk assessment for children. If risk towards a child is highlighted you should consider what referrals you need to make to obtain a full assessment of the child's situation.
- A substitute for professional curiosity and judgement. The results from the checklist are not a definitive assessment of risk. They should provide you with a structure to inform your judgement and act as prompts for further questioning, analysis and safeguarding.

Once completed, this form should be stored securely, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR.

Client Name:
Client Address:
Client Contact Information:
Practitioner name:
Date:

PRACTITIONERS' NOTES

Please use this comment box to expand on any answer. It is assumed that your main source of information is your client. If this is not the case, please indicate this in the right hand column of each category.

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Source of Information
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VULNERABILITIES

Has previously been cuckooed				
Lives alone				
Is elderly				
Suffered a recent bereavement				
Is socially disconnected and/or lonely				
Is a single parent or carer				
Has a history of being in the care system or is a health care leaver				
Is currently, or has previously been, neglected or abused				
Struggles financially and/or is in debt				

HEALTH

Has a mental health condition				
Has a learning disability and/or is neurodivergent				
Has a physical disability				
Is dependent on prescription and/or non-prescription drugs				
Is dependent on alcohol				
Is in recovery from drug and/or alcohol addiction				
Regularly collects prescriptions from a pharmacy				

HOUSING

Lives in a disadvantaged area				
Lives in an area where County Lines activity is known to be taking place				
Lives in a property rented from a social or private landlord				
Lives in a property that can easily be accessed in the back (e.g. an alleyway)				
Lives in a block of flats				
Lives in an area where cuckooing has been suspected or reported				

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Source of Information
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NETWORK

Is involved in sex work				
Has known connections to the drug-user community				
Has known connections to organised crime, including County Lines operations				
Has known connections to those who are homeless or experiencing housing precarity				

Total 'Yes' Responses:

Do you consider this person to be at risk?

Low Medium High

OUTCOMES

Actions Taken:	
Wider Organisations/Agencies Consulted:	
Concerns Raised:	
Safeguarding Raised:	
Other :	

The Cuckooing Safeguarding Process

If you suspect that an individual is being cuckooed, you will need to consider what you should do to support them. Below is a list of suggested actions. In all instances, you should alert your line manager and follow local safeguarding procedures.

The Cuckooing Risk Identification Tool is a useful tool to support frontline practitioners, we would advise you to read and complete the Cuckooing Risk Identification Tool to help you identify those at risk of cuckooing and to consider if further support or safeguarding referrals are required.

1

Immediate Risk to Safety

- Call 999 if there is an immediate risk to your client's safety, or a crime is happening now. Be ready to provide information about the address, victims, offenders, vehicles, and if there are likely to be weapons involved
- It may be necessary to arrange out-of-area emergency accommodation or your client via a Local Authority Housing Options Teams. See 7.1 for Local Authority Housing contact details.

2

Intervention

- Ensure that your client's basic needs are met – e.g. that they have access to food, water, energy, healthcare and trusted others (such as family members)
- Refer your client to support services, including substance misuse treatment providers, Peabody Floating Support, others where appropriate
- Provide your client with Shelter's helpline for legal advice (0808 800 4444)
- Arrange for all locks to be changed at the property and for windows to be secured
- Offer your client a personal safety device, access to Hollic Guard and/or a new SIM card. Support should be in the first instance via the police, but Peabody Floating Support may be able to support too.

- Arrange a safety word for your client to give to you/your colleagues if police need to attend immediately
- If appropriate, encourage your client to change their routine and the routes that they take to reach locations
- If your client wishes to relocate, explore if they would prefer this to be a short-term or permanent measure, and encourage them to think carefully about the impact that displacement may have on their wellbeing. Relocating should be done in liaison with the local Housing Authority Housing and Homelessness teams, contact details can be found below
- If your client has been coerced into any service, criminality of sexual activity drugs, they may qualify as a victim of modern slavery and could be supported via the National Referral Mechanism. For advice call the 24/7 Modern Slavery Helpline (0800 0121 700).

3

Submit Intelligence

- To submit any intelligence on Cuckooing contact the Police on 101, access 101 online or complete the [Community Partnership Intelligence form](#). When completing the form ensure you tag [Operation Trespas](#) for cuckooing related intelligence. Non-urgent intelligence is information that doesn't need an immediate response or meet the crime-reporting threshold but is relevant to safeguarding, crime prevention, or early risk identification. Your input helps build a fuller picture for better decisions. Information is securely recorded, access is restricted to those that require it for policing purpose, and sources can be protected unless disclosure is legally required or to prevent serious harm.
- To provide information anonymously, call Crimestoppers (0800 555 111) or submit a report online. Include the victim's name, address, your concerns, descriptions of the suspected perpetrators, and the date/time of any observations
- Trust your instincts – if something does not feel right, it generally isn't so report it.

- Steel doors
 - A door spy hole, deadlock, door chain and anti-arson letterbox
 - A video doorbell
 - Smoke alarms and fire extinguishers
 - Temporary/mobile CCTV cameras around the perimeter of the property
 - Cocoon Watch
- Undertake regular welfare checks and request that professionals from other agencies meet with your client regularly
 - Request that high-visibility Neighbourhood Policing Teams regularly patrol the local area
 - Consider distributing cuckooing awareness leaflets to surrounding properties and/or displaying cuckooing awareness posters in areas with high footfall. To request cuckooing awareness leaflets and posters contact Karen Osbourne at Essex Police by emailing karen.osbourne@essex.police.uk
 - Where appropriate, ensure that your client has access to adult life skills support and seek to build their resilience. It may be beneficial to talk to them about how to answer the door safely; healthy relationships; asking for assistance; overcoming loneliness; and assertiveness.

7

Appendices

7.1 Local Authority Housing Options Teams Contact Details

District	Name	Job Title	Email	Telephone
Braintree	Donna Goodchild	Housing Options Manager	Donna.Goodchild@Braintree.gov.uk	01376 552525 Ext. 2147
Basildon	Phil Warren	Housing Solutions	phil.warren@basildon.gov.uk	01268 208197
Brentwood	Marie Gentall	Housing Needs and Delivery	marie.gentall@brentwood.gov.uk	01277 312500
Castle Point	Veronica Jackson	Housing Options Manager	V.Jackson@castlepoint.gov.uk	01268 882324
Chelmsford	Alison Hawkins	Housing Solutions	Alison.Hawkins@chelmsford.gov.uk	01245 606336
Colchester	Syed Rizvi	Acting Housing Options Manager	syed.rizvi@cbhqmes.org.uk	
Epping Forest	Jo Barclay	Homelessness Team Manager	jbarclay@eppingforest.gov.uk	01992 564347
Harlow	Lisa Whitting	Housing Options & Advice	Lisa.Whitting@Harlow.gov.uk	01279 446371

4

Safeguarding Processes

- Raise a safeguarding alert with Adult Social Care online - [Report a Concern about an Adult](#)
- If there are doubts about your client's capacity, request an assessment under the Mental Capacity Act
- If the person has no appropriate support to foster their involvement in the safeguarding or MCA process a referral for a Care Act or Independent Mental Capacity Advocate should be considered
- If children or young people are living at the property, contact Children's Social Care online - [Report a Concern about a Child](#). Consider sharing information with schools or youth workers as they may have additional intelligence

5

Multi-Agency Working

- Ask to be present at all multi-agency meetings. Those in attendance should decide which professional is responsible for coordinating risk management, support and progress updates. This professional should be sufficiently senior to agree actions on behalf of the agency that they represent, and hold partner agencies to account for delivering agreed actions within agreed timescales
- Multi-agency responses should be person-centred. Your client should be consulted throughout the safeguarding process, and their views should be reflected in any actions taken as much as is practicable.

6

Protection and Disruption

- Consider the benefits to the victim of a Closure Order or Partial Closure Order via the police or local authority. See 7.3 for contact details and guidance.
- At the cuckooed property, explore the possibility of installing:
 - Window alarms or window bars

7.3.2 How to Support Victims

- Encourage victims to contact the Tendring Council Anti-Social Behaviour/Community Safety Team:
 - Tel: 01255 686792
 - Email: ASB@Tendringdc.gov.uk
 - Website: <https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/content/report-anti-social-behaviour>
- The Community Safety Team will usually require:
 - A witness statement detailing the impact on the victim and/or neighbouring properties
 - Evidence of ongoing anti-social behaviour or criminal exploitation.
- Once evidence is gathered:
 - A Closure Notice can be served
 - The Council will apply to the Magistrates' Court within 48 hours of serving the notice.

7.3.3 Additional Support for Social Workers

- Risk Assessment: Ensure the victim's safety and wellbeing are prioritised. Consider safeguarding referrals if necessary
- Housing Options: Discuss alternative accommodation if a Full Closure Order is likely
- Multi-Agency Working: Liaise with police, housing officers, and adult safeguarding teams to coordinate support
- Aftercare: Victims may need ongoing support to prevent repeat exploitation and address trauma.

Maldon	Helen Hawkins	Senior Specialist Co-ordinator	Helen.greengrass@maldon.gov.uk	01621 857373
Rochford	Marie Gentgall	Housing Needs and Delivery	marie.gentgall@rentwood.rochford.gov.uk	01277 312500
Southend on Sea	Olivia Westberg	Head of Housing Policy &	oliviawestberg@southend.gov.uk	01702 534144
Tendring	Cathy Low	Housing Solutions &	clow@tendringdc.gov.uk	01255 686435
Thurrock	Abim Mabadeje	Housing Solutions &	abimabadeje@thurrock.gov.uk	
Uttlesford	Ross Hefford	Acting Housing Options Manager	RHefford@uttlesford.gov.uk	

7.2 Guidance on mobile phones/SIM cards for victims

In the first instance a mobile phone should be requested from the police. If the police are not currently involved in the case or are unable to assist then Peabody Floating Support may be able to help. Peabody provide mobile phones to customers who are receiving support, with the primary purpose of enabling them to maintain contact with Peabody and other relevant agencies. This is funded through the Peabody Customer Involvement Fund; therefore, customers must be engaged in support with Peabody to qualify. Individuals are considered "in support" as soon as their referral has been accepted.

7.3 Closure Orders: Supporting victims of Cuckooing

7.3.1 What is a Closure Order?

Closure Orders are legal tools under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. They can help protect victims of cuckooing by restricting access to a property being exploited.

- Partial Closure Order**
A Partial Closure Order limits who can and cannot enter the property. It allows the victim to remain in their home while preventing access by individuals causing harm.
- Full Closure Order**
A Full Closure Order closes the property completely for up to three months (extendable to six months). This is usually considered when the property cannot be made safe for the victim to remain.

Important Considerations
Closure Orders are rarely used and should be considered only when other interventions have failed or are not appropriate. They are a last resort due to the significant impact on the victim and their housing situation.



Developed from original tool authored by the Cuckooing Research and Prevention Network. With thanks to: Dr Laura Bainbridge and Dr Amy Loughery, University of Leeds, Horton Housing, Leeds City Council, West Yorkshire Police, and Safer Leeds