

Harassment

Harassment is violence which may be physical or verbal and which includes attacks on property as well as persons, suffered by individuals or groups because of their race, nationality, religion, gender or sexual orientation, where the victim believes the perpetrator was motivated by such considerations.

Arcon will not tolerate the harassment of any individual or group and has developed policies and procedures with a two-fold aim: to provide protection and support for victims and to take speedy action against perpetrators.

Arcon's policy on Harassment

General principles and approach

- This policy has been drawn up in the context of racial harassment but is designed to be used in all circumstances where harassment has been alleged.
- Arcon condemns all forms of harassment and will not tolerate such acts whether perpetrated by its tenants, employees, agents or by third parties. It will ensure that every step is taken to eliminate racial harassment.
- Arcon has inserted clauses into its tenancy agreements and employment contracts stating that racial harassment is a serious breach. The Association will not hesitate to take legal action where it believes racial harassment has occurred.
- The Association's definition of harassment incorporates a victim-centred approach. This means that where a victim believes an act to be racially motivated, it will be investigated as a case of racial harassment.
- Detailed guidelines on the investigation and allegations of harassment have been produced for staff. All staff will be trained in racism awareness, equal opportunities and appropriate interviewing techniques.
- All reported cases of harassment are centrally monitored at Director level and reports are presented to Arcon's Board.
- Where there is damage to property as a result of racially motivated acts, the Association will take care to ensure that this is recorded. Repairs and the removal of graffiti will be carried out as speedily as possible. The Association will charge to known perpetrators the cost of any damage caused during the incident.

- Where there is physical injury or damage, the Association will encourage the victim to report to the police and if the tenant is so willing, will take positive steps to ensure that the police prosecute on the victim's behalf.
- The Association will take action as far as possible against the perpetrators of harassment rather than the victim affected by it. This will include the use of injunctions and/or possession proceedings as appropriate.
- The Association recognizes that a transfer of the victim can be seen as a victory by perpetrators of harassment. Where, however, full consideration of alternative options leads the Association to believe that a transfer would be in the best interests of the victim, this will be arranged as a matter of urgency.
- All tenants will be fully informed of our policy on harassment. Contact your Housing Officer for details of other agencies offering advice and assistance to victims of such acts.

A more detailed copy of our policy and procedures for tackling racial and other forms of harassment is available from our office.