

Racial Harassment Support Pack

The Housing and Property Services Department values racial equality and condemns all forms of racial harassment and intimidation. The Department recognises the effects of racial harassment, both on the victim's quality of life and on the wider community as a whole and is therefore committed to tackling the problem thoroughly and effectively. We will make use of all available resources at our disposal to eliminate racial harassment at its root.

In line with the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, we have adopted the following definition of a racist incident.

“ A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or by any other person”. This may therefore include both criminal and non-criminal incidents.

The use of the above definition in an investigation does not judge the perpetrator's intentions. After a thorough investigation of an incident, it may be clear that the harassment is not racially motivated, but using the victim-centred definition for report taking and investigation will ensure that assessing any racial motivation is a key factor throughout the investigation process.

Our Aims

- ◆ To stop the harassment and/or attacks
- ◆ To support anyone being harassed by both practical and emotional means
- ◆ If the harassment persists, to take action against the perpetrator

What You Can Expect From Us

- ◆ To be believed and taken seriously
- ◆ To be dealt with sympathetically
- ◆ To be supported and advised appropriately
- ◆ To be kept informed
- ◆ To find an effective solution to stop the racial harassment
- ◆ To send out a clear message that the Department will not tolerate racial harassment.

The Department will take action against reported cases of racial harassment when:-

The victim-

- ◆ Is a TDC tenant, leaseholder or a member of their household
- ◆ Is a visitor to a TDC property as a member of staff, contractor, family or friend of the resident.

The perpetrator-

- ◆ Is an TDC tenant or leaseholder or a member of their household
- ◆ Is a tenant of another landlord
- ◆ Is an owner occupier
- ◆ Is unknown to the victim or Council.

It is possible that victims and perpetrators may both be tenants of the Council.

The Reporting and Investigating Procedure

- ◆ On receipt of a complaint of racial harassment, a standardised **Racist Incident Reporting Form** will be completed by a Council Officer. This form will be forwarded to Customer Services, who will log the incident and raise it with the appropriate service, contractor or member for future action.
- ◆ The incident will then be investigated. You will be offered the opportunity of being interviewed at home or in the privacy of Council offices. Confidentiality will be core to this process. If you agree, neighbours may also be interviewed to establish whether they would be willing to support the complaint.
- ◆ If it is believed that the incident could reoccur and affect other members of the community, consideration will be given to reporting the incident to the Police. Your details will only be forwarded with your consent, and where this has not been granted, your anonymity will be protected.
- ◆ If there is any evidence that this may be an ongoing problem, we will ask you to keep an incident diary. This will be invaluable as a form of evidence if the case goes to Court. All interviews, telephone calls and completed diaries will be documented and kept on file.
- ◆ Damage or graffiti related to the incident will be removed as a matter of urgency.
- ◆ Where deemed necessary, the department can arrange for target hardening measures, such as fire proof letter boxes to be put in place.
- ◆ Applications for a transfer on the grounds of racial harassment will be considered fairly and sympathetically where it is not possible to resolve the problem. While the victim remains in a Council tenancy other housing options will be pursued to help present choices to the victim, e.g. temporary accommodation may be used to help the tenant in accommodation for the short term.

- ◆ Where appropriate, complainants will be referred to specialist advice and support agencies such as Victim Support, the local Race Equality Council and mediation. Mediation will only be suitable where the complainant has consented and the alleged incident did not involve violence.
- ◆ The Housing Service will arrange access to telephone and or face to face interpreters in the appropriate community language

Legal remedies

The Council's tenancy agreement specifically prohibits harassment on grounds of race or ethnicity. If tenants or persons for whom tenants are responsible, perpetrate racial harassment they are in breach of their tenancy agreement. Action for breach of tenancy can lead to eviction (under Ground 1 and/or 2 of Schedule 2 of the 1985 Act as above).

In addition to possession proceedings, other legal remedies include:

- ◆ Injunctions
- ◆ Anti Social Behaviour Orders
- ◆ Prosecution under the Criminal Justice, Public Order and Protection from Harassment Acts.

Where violence or threats of violence are involved, an urgent referral will be made to the Legal Department for an ex-parte (without notice) injunction prohibiting further harassment.

Useful Contacts

◆ RACIAL INCIDENT REPORTING LINE

Victims or witnesses of racial harassment can now get help from a freephone number offering a message recording service in ten different languages. Callers can leave a message in complete confidentiality, or if they wish, leave their contact details and the relevant agency will get back to them. Where necessary, messages will be translated. The process of reporting involves three simple steps:

1. Dial 0800 1381624 (Freephone)
2. Select your language (from Kurdish, French, Albanian, Turkish, Farsi, Mandarin, Russian, Hindi or English)
3. Record your message

◆ THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL

Thanet District Council

PO Box 9, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent. CT9 1XZ

Tel: 01843 577000 Fax: 01843 290906

Housing 01843 577000

Email: housing@thanet.gov.uk

Community Safety team Tel: 01843 577602

Email: community.safety@thanet.gov.uk

◆ **THANET COMMUNITY HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

Foy House

27-29 High Street

Margate

Kent

CT9 1DL

Tel - 01843 231680

Fax - 01843 231937

[Email - info@tcha.co.uk](mailto:info@tcha.co.uk)

◆ **THANET POLICE**

Emergencies should be reported by phoning 999 where:

life is threatened, people are injured, crime is in progress or offenders are nearby.

Otherwise, please phone the main switchboard on 01622 690690 or ring Thanet police on:

01843 231055

Police stations in Thanet

All post should be sent to Margate police station

Margate police station

Fort Hill, Margate, Kent CT9 1HL

Opening hours: Monday-Saturday 8am-8pm, Sunday 10am-6pm

Ramsgate police station

26 York Street, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 9DS

Opening hours: Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, Saturday 10am-2pm, closed Sunday

Broadstairs police office

54 High Street, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 1JT

Opening hours: Monday-Saturday 10am-2pm, closed Sunday

◆ **CRIMESTOPPERS**

Independent charity which works to stop crime by providing an anonymous crime reporting phone number

0800 555 111

◆ **KENT FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

In case of emergency please phone **999**

Thanet District Fire Station and Safety Office

Thanet Fire Station

Margate Road

Broadstairs, CT10 2QD

Tel: 01843 863015

Fax: 01843 871021

◆ **VICTIM SUPPORT**

Victim Support National Supportline: 0845 3030900

Victim Support Thanet

Pierremont Hall

High Street

Broadstairs

Kent CT10 1JH

Tel: 01843 601160

Email: thanet@vskent.co.uk

Victim Support Kent:

County Office

Suite 5

Caxton House

Wellesley Road

Ashford

Kent TN24 8ET

Tel: 01233 647253

Fax: 01223 650408

Email: area.office@vskent.org.uk

◆ **CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU**

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The Old Town Hall

Market Street

Margate

CT9 1EU

Tel: 01843 225973

Fax: 01843 228643

Email: thanetdccab@aol.com

Pierremont Gardens

High Street

Broadstairs

CT9 1EU

CT10 1JH

Phone: 01843 869350

Website: www.cabsites.org.uk/Thanet District Council

◆ **THANET MEDIATION SERVICE**

1 Cecil Street

Margate

Kent CT9 1NX

Tel/fax 01843 294771

Email: mediation.thanet@btopenworld.com

◆ **MEDWAY RACE EQUALITY COUNCIL**

2nd Floor, Municipal Building

Canterbury Street

Gillingham, Kent

ME7 5LA

Tel: 01634 333 880

Fax: 01634 333 889

Email: mrec51@hotmail.com

Chairperson: Mr Janardan Sofat, Director: Mr Azhar Mahmood