



Community Safety Strategy 2011 to 2013

July 2011

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Foreword

We are pleased to introduce the second Wakefield and District Housing (WDH) Community Safety Strategy that we have developed since our formation in 2005.

We feel that the WDH Community Safety 2011 to 2013 will provide a framework around which we can all contribute towards reducing crime, disorder and anti social behaviour within the Wakefield district and ensure that our residents can enjoy the best quality of life in a safe, fear-free and tolerant housing community.

Due to the very hard work of WDH and our partner agencies, Wakefield has achieved significant success over the past five years in reducing crime levels. In particular burglary to people's homes, thefts of motor vehicles and criminal damage have fallen sharply, making the district a safer place to live than ever before.

However, we know that tackling crime and disorder remains a top priority for residents of WDH neighbourhoods and it is only through working in partnership that significant reductions in crime can be achieved and long term solutions can be found.

There is a very strong relationship between all the agencies that make up the Wakefield District Community Safety Partnership and each recognise the contribution they need to make to ensure Wakefield remains a safe district.

This strategy details our own commitment to this partnership approach and how we will continue to work together to effectively tackle crime, disorder and increase people's sense of community pride and safety as we continue to meet the ambitions of our Vision.

Chief Executive
Wakefield and District Housing

Board Chair
Wakefield and District Housing

Community Safety Strategy 2011 to 2013

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1. Introduction and Summary

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended by the Police Reform Act 2002) placed a duty on Police and local authorities to consider crime and disorder, and community safety in all their activities.

Working closely alongside each other, and key partners such as health and fire authorities, social landlords, voluntary sector, local residents and business, the act requires each local authority area to take a close look at crime reduction and community safety potential within all service provision, policies, budgetary provision and other decision making frameworks.

In line with the Crime and Disorder Act, there is a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership for each local authority in the UK.



The 'Wakefield District Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership' is committed to engaging with communities to improve the quality of life of the districts citizens and working towards sustainable approaches to achieving a safer, cleaner and a greener district.

Wakefield and District Housing (WDH) are a key partner of 'Wakefield Together' and share the same ambition of creating a safe, healthy and confident Wakefield for current and future generations.

In 2005, we developed our first Community Safety Strategy, working in partnership with many agencies and organisations within the district to help create neighbourhoods where people wished to live.

Through this partnership working, we aimed to reduce both the fear and actual reality of crime and disorder, whilst also offering support to the more vulnerable members of our community.

Our exciting and ambitious home modernisation programme to the 'Wakefield Standard' was also just beginning, helping to help make tenants feel safer and secure in their homes.

Community safety has remained fundamental to everything that we aim to achieve and is at the heart of our work to sustain strong and vibrant housing communities.

As we now begin our second Community Safety Strategy, we can therefore celebrate some key achievements. Working together has been vital to our success and the range of organisations we are involved with have reduced crime more effectively than any single organisation working alone.

Since 2005 we have:

- Invested over £492 million to improve properties to the 'Wakefield Standard' making more homes safe and secure.
- Invested over £13 million in environmental developments to create estates where people wish to live.
- Provided 'Care Link' to over 15,400 people who are vulnerable or who have been the victim of crime such as burglary or domestic abuse.
- Developed five local visions which provide a framework for area development and cohesiveness that underpins the WDH vision of creating confident communities.
- Fully supported and worked closely alongside the new Wakefield Neighbourhood Policing Programme which sees dedicated policing teams working in local areas and enabling residents to have a greater say in how crime is tackled in their area.
- Invested in seconded Police (Tenancy Support) Officers and an additional eight Police Community Support Officers to help tackle nuisance behaviour and increase high visibility policing in neighbourhoods.
- Worked with the local community on key estates to tackle area specific antisocial behaviour issues. We have also proactively used the various legal tools and powers available to us to challenge nuisance behaviour such as Antisocial Behaviour Orders, Injunctions, Possession Orders and property closures.
- Delivered the Home Office 'Safer Homes' project during 2009/2010 which improved the home security of over 1,203 households across the district.
- Provided improved home security measures for victims of domestic abuse as the approved contractor for the 'Wakefield safe@home' service.
- Engaged with over 54 resident groups and invested over £553,000 in local community projects to develop the potential and skills of people living within WDH neighbourhoods.
- Developed all service access points as 'Hate Incident Reporting Centres' to help victims or witnesses of hate crime.
- Developed Wakefield's first independent Mediation Service to help resolve problems for neighbours in dispute.

Our success in improving community safety is measured by how our tenants and residents feel about their neighbourhood and how satisfied they are with the work we do in partnership.

Following our 2010 tenants' survey, 89% of tenants are satisfied with WDH as a landlord and 85% are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live. This represents a rise of 10% in the last three years, reflecting our efforts to provide key services that help people enjoy their homes and environment.

However, big challenges still lie ahead, particularly in this current time of budgetary pressures, cuts in service provision and welfare reforms.

Our aim for 2011 to 2013 is to continue to help reduce crime and disorder and respond effectively to incidents of antisocial behaviour within our neighbourhoods.

We must further develop our local environments to be clean, green and safe, where community pride is the biggest challenge to those who wish to abuse them and continue to make sure that WDH neighbourhoods are places where people wish to live.

Together with our partners, WDH must also continue to help and support the most vulnerable people in our communities whether they be the actual victims of crime, or those who may be considered to be susceptible to crime through issues such as poor physical or mental health and increased dependency on others.

2. Wakefield and District Housing's Corporate Vision and Values

Our **Vision** is to create **confident communities** throughout the district and beyond. People in confident communities feel safe where they live, trust the services they receive and are confident about their future prosperity and opportunities.

We have a challenging **mission** statement to achieve our Vision to **inspire, transform and promote excellence**. We will **inspire** our tenants and residents, employee, partners and the housing sector to deliver a transformation of the communities we serve. To do this we are committed to delivering a three star service, ensuring excellence runs through all aspects of our work, and judging ourselves through the eyes of others.

Our values are to be **creative, inclusive and work with integrity**. Working to these **values** will help us deliver excellence and become an employer of choice.

Our **strategic objectives** are to:

- be a landlord of choice by putting the customer first;
- adopt best practice in good governance to be a well-managed business;
- be a positive force through leadership and influence to develop the potential of our people; and
- be a partner of choice to create better places to live.

Our Vision recognises that we will need to **explore new ways of working** and that this will be driven by a process of **opening up ourselves to both external and internal challenge** in the way that local services are provided to ensure that local **communities receive appropriate high value services**. Our Vision sets down these expectations will be carried out **honestly with total transparency** and that our decisions will be made **professionally and with integrity**.

Our efforts as a social enterprise and our ability to raise the bar and make significant social impacts by 2020 will depend to some extent on how successful we are at delivering services for the optimum cost whilst maintaining quality and customer satisfaction.

We will look to maximise the impact of the strategy overall by working with others where appropriate, investing our resource in local innovation to develop skilled workforces for the future.

All of our Vision expectations will require some form of investment and through this strategy we will be able to direct resources and actions so that **choices for modern living are achieved.**

The second Community Safety Strategy states how this will contribute to meeting the overall vision, mission and values and how WDH work in the wider community for the benefit of the whole community.

It builds on what WDH has already done and sets out WDH's objectives and actions for further improving community safety in the future.

Strategic Objective	Strategy Aims
Be a landlord of choice by putting the customer first.	To reduce the fear of, and actual crime and disorder by working closely with partner agencies and supporting those who are most vulnerable
Adopt best practice in good governance to be a well-managed business.	Make sure that WDH fully adhere to all legislative and regulatory obligations in dealing with community safety issues and be at the forefront of service improvement.
Be a positive force through leadership and influence to develop the potential of our people	To instill confidence through knowledge and awareness in our employees and local communities, to be able to challenge behaviour that is detrimental to the success and quality of life of those we serve.
Be a partner of choice to create better places to live.	For community safety services to be provided from within a robust partnership, all working towards the same aims and purpose of improving quality of life and eliminating fear.

3. Background to Strategy

Community safety is about feeling safe, whether at home, in your neighbourhood or at work.

It relates to quality of life and being able to pursue and obtain the fullest benefits from your domestic, social and economic lives without fear or hindrance from crime and disorder.

WDH therefore understands that community safety is a means of developing sustainable, safe and confident housing communities where crime, disorder and the fear of crime is reduced.

As already outlined, community safety is best achieved through partnership working.

A list of key community safety partners for WDH includes:

- tenants and residents;
- West Yorkshire Police;
- Wakefield Council;
- West Yorkshire Fire Service;
- NHS Wakefield District;
- Jobcentre Plus;
- Victim Support;
- Mediation Yorkshire;
- local schools, colleges and academies;
- WDH strategic partnership;
- Groundwork Wakefield; and
- Sodexo and ISS Landscapes.

This Strategy does not stand alone in relation to community safety and links with other WDH strategies such as:

- independent living
- skills and enterprise
- communications
- young people
- resident involvement
- financial inclusion

In addition, the WDH Community Safety Strategy also aims to be consistent with current government policy on community safety issues and national strategic objectives.

In particular, key documents that reflect central government policy are:

- **A New Approach to Fighting Crime (Home Office – March 2011):**
Proposals to create greater flexibility for local CDRP's, allowing police forces to focus solely on reducing crime, and for local authorities to increase range of partnership working.
- **Drug Strategy (2010):**
Placing new emphasis on recovery from dependency and proposals to change benefits and employment programmes to encourage people to get treatment and support for their recovery.
- **Breaking the Cycle: Effective punishment, rehabilitation and sentencing of offenders (2010):**
Green Paper proposing radical reform to criminal justice, increased reparation to victims and communities, better rehabilitation for offenders and to reform the sentencing framework.
- **More Effective Responses to Antisocial Behaviour (February 2011):**
Proposals to streamline range of enforcement actions to tackle antisocial behaviour and allow a more efficient use of such tools by front line agencies.

- **Review of Counter Terrorism Powers and Legislation (July 2010):**
Review of powers and processes used to combat terrorism and violent extremism with particular reference to overhaul local authorities use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA).
- **Localism Bill (December 2010):**
Wide Ranging reform that aims to devolve greater power and freedoms to councils and neighbourhoods, establish powerful new rights for communities, revolutionise the planning system, and give communities control over housing decisions.

The impacts of a number of initiatives will come together in 2013 creating a new operating environment for social housing. This strategy therefore will be revised by 2013 when the full impact of these challenges can be fully applied.

4. What Have We Learned?

Over the years, community safety has become an increasingly important national and local priority. The causes of crime and disorder are complex and the gap between reality and perception remains a challenge not only for WDH but for all partner agencies in the district.

In working closely with our tenants and residents on a daily basis, we know that crime is still a key concern, although a greater number now claim to feel safer both during the day and at night compared with previous years.

Each year, a Joint Strategic Assessment (JSA) is produced within the Wakefield District Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership that provides information and analysis on key community safety issues.

This aims to inform and enable partners to understand patterns, trends and changes occurring within the district so as to develop services and deploy resources effectively.

Since our first Community Safety Strategy, recorded crime has fallen in Wakefield although the district remains a high volume area and so community safety firmly remains a top priority.

The Wakefield JSA for 2010 showed that over the last 10 years, crime reductions in the district have outpaced those seen nationally. Car thefts and vandalism have dropped markedly and levels of public confidence and satisfaction of key partner agencies has improved. Overall, there have also been reductions in re-offending and levels of arson.

However, WDH and our partners are also aware of a significant degree of under-reporting across issues such as domestic abuse and hate crime which can have a damaging effect on people's quality of life.

Also over recent years, the Wakefield Together Partnership has identified that despite the efforts of many partner agencies, Wakefield has a significant number of local communities characterised by high levels of unemployment, below average educational attainment and skills, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour and poor health and wellbeing. These have now been deemed as '**Priority Neighbourhoods**' and are areas which require additional support and more intensive partnership working in order to improve quality of life.

WDH are a key agency in this programme and will be at the forefront of 12 Priority Neighbourhood Teams that will develop and implement Neighbourhood Delivery Plans based on local needs and expectations.

Overall, there have been many successes within Wakefield since 2005 both in terms of falling crime levels and a better understanding of the causes of local crime.

As WDH moves into the period of our second Community Safety Strategy, then a summary of key lessons learnt from all areas of community safety include:

- good communication, consultation and resident engagement is vital;
- solutions to local problems need to be long term and sustainable with great emphasis placed on early intervention;
- intelligence, analysis and information sharing between partner agencies is essential; and
- a joined up approach to tackling youth crime is necessary with all agencies playing a role in co-ordinated services.

5. Aims of the Strategy

Crime and the fear of crime have a debilitating impact on the quality of people's lives.

Despite the success of the work of community safety partners in Wakefield over the last few years and although recorded crime has been falling overall, the district continues to experience crime that is typical of an area of its size.

Community safety is consistently one of the top concerns of Wakefield residents both for adults and young people and so communication and effective engagement with local people is at the heart of this strategy. Our tenants have also clearly communicated that tackling antisocial behaviour is one of their top priorities and therefore this Community Safety Strategy is a central element in meeting tenants' priorities.

Being effective in tackling crime and antisocial behaviour and its causes requires understanding the drivers of crime such as drugs, alcohol abuse, self esteem and poor environmental conditions. It also requires evidence-based action, and responding to the needs and views of the community. This strategy is WDH's plan to help ourselves and support others to achieve this.

We will continue to focus our activity on effective enforcement action against those proven to be responsible for criminal and antisocial behaviour as well preventative interventions.

Action against perpetrators will be led by applying our policies and enforcing our tenancy agreements to ensure that all residents fully understand the value of a WDH tenancy and how important it is for this to be successful.

Preventative action will continue to involve WDH always working visibly within our communities, actively participating in partnership days of action and working with specialist support agencies for those that need help the most. Proactive work in engaging with housing communities and previous partnership 'action days' have had a direct and visible impact on reducing crime in the district.

However, the most important aspect of this strategy is that the WDH community wants to be involved in the solutions to making the district safer and it is residents who work with us, either individually or collectively who are pivotal to its future success.

Therefore, the WDH Community Safety Strategy has four main objectives to ensure community confidence continues to grow and our neighbourhoods become even better places to live. These are:

- tackle antisocial behaviour
- help victims and vulnerable people
- help reduce property (acquisitive) crime
- improve neighbourhoods

Tackle antisocial behaviour

Tackling antisocial behaviour such as neighbour nuisance, youth disorder, drug abuse, graffiti and street drinking, remains one of the top concerns of Wakefield residents.

WDH will take firm action to deal with antisocial and nuisance behaviour in whatever form it takes. We aim to address those behaviours that cause harassment, alarm or distress to our communities by targeted intervention and appropriate measures working closely with our community safety partners.

Our commitment is therefore:

- to investigate all complaints of antisocial behaviour promptly;
- to attempt to resolve all disputes between neighbours through early intervention;
- to instigate legal action against any tenant or household member who continues to behave in an antisocial manner;
- to support witnesses and complainants by all possible means;
- to work with the police through our Tenancy Support Team at all times; and
- to work with residents to make their neighbourhood a safe place to live

We also aim to improve communications with our residents, to help provide more information on actions that have been taken in their neighbourhood as well as strive to improve resident satisfaction with how we deal with their nuisance complaint.

Help victims and vulnerable people

In any community there will always be individuals who are more vulnerable than others, whether this is because of their age, their health, or their home circumstances. In addition, where there is a crime there is a victim and where there is nuisance behaviour there is often someone suffering as a result.

WDH is fully committed to the support of victims of crime and to those who fear crime, disorder and harassment. We understand that being a complainant or witness to crime or antisocial behaviour can be very traumatic and arouse feelings or anxieties which can be difficult to cope with.

WDH will offer a victim centred approach when dealing with individuals in these circumstances and will work closely with specialist support providers in the district such as Victim Support and Wakefield 'safe@home' (domestic abuse) to help make people feel safer in their homes.

Help reduce property crime (acquisitive crime)

Acquisitive crime includes domestic burglary, robbery and theft from or of vehicles.

These types of crime are a priority to WDH as they cause a great deal of distress to those who find themselves a victim and can create insecurity within neighbourhoods.

It is also a crime people hear about often and although the numbers of actual crimes in the district are relatively low, it still causes people to feel unsafe.

Raising public awareness and encouraging preventative activity is key to reducing this type of crime as many people are unaware that there are often simple precautions that everyone can take to hugely reduce the chances of being a victim.

Therefore, WDH aim to make our residents aware of these measures as often as possible and to offer additional support to those who may need extra help.

Additionally, more and more WDH homes are becoming increasingly secure as we move towards the later stages of our huge property improvement programme. Secure by Design windows and external doors are a common feature of this programme helping people to feel safer in their homes.

WDH also understand that much of this type of crime is caused by a minority of people, who often also commit more than one offence. By working closely with the Police, we aim to identify those who are linked to our property and who may be involved in offender management programmes. The value of a WDH tenancy will be a central factor in the success of such programmes, with action taken if the individual continues to commit crime.

Improve neighbourhoods

WDH are creating neighbourhoods where people want and are proud to live.

Through this second Community Safety Strategy we will continue to invest in the environmental upkeep of our neighbourhoods to help keep them clean and tidy. In return, we encourage our tenants and residents to do the same.



WDH fully support the Keep Britain Tidy, 'Love Where You Live' programme which aims to further encourage the long term involvement of individuals and local community groups in preventing their local areas being blighted by littering and fly tipping or similar.

Again, working closely with partner agencies such as Wakefield Council, environmental services will target the more challenging areas to make sure resources are maximised and areas are kept safe, clean and green.

WDH will also continue to invest in new environmental developments working alongside Groundwork UK and with our residents in order to rejuvenate previously neglected areas of land and to help sustain community pride in their upkeep.

6 Plans for Change

WDH will continue to work closely through the life of our second Community Safety Strategy with all our partners to ensure the services we provide are helping people to feel safer in their homes and neighbourhoods.

WDH will continue to ensure that our tenants and residents are at the heart of decision making that affects their community safety and that local solutions are provided to solve local issues. This will be underpinned by WDH's five Local Visions which clearly recognise the important contribution WDH can make through its landlord role to people's physical health, mental well-being and safety in local communities.

To help achieve success against each of the community safety objectives, then a cross departmental action plan will be developed and reviewed on a regular basis.

WDH will also continue to be at the forefront of delivering best practice in community safety services, be a major partner within the Wakefield 'Together' Partnership and ensure full compliance with all regulatory and legislative requirements.

7. Expected Outcomes

Making our communities safe for everybody is a top priority for WDH. Tackling nuisance, antisocial behaviour, harassment and crime is a vital part of our work to make our neighbourhoods sustainable and successful.

Our second Community Safety Strategy sets out our commitment to continue engaging with our residents to reduce the fear of, and actual crime and disorder by working closely with partner agencies and supporting those who are most vulnerable.

In aiming to enhance community safety and create safer communities, WDH will deliver a range of services against each of the four community safety objectives. We judge quality of life by what our tenants and residents tell us and so satisfaction with how we deal with nuisance behaviour and how people feel about their local neighbourhood will be closely monitored through this second strategy.

Our targets for 2015 are to have 95% tenant satisfaction with WDH as a landlord, our neighbourhoods as places to live, accommodation that people live in and with services that we provide.

WDH will also closely monitor the outcomes of annual JSA that are developed within the Together Partnership to further understand crime levels and their trends.

From our position of being the largest registered provider of social housing in the district then our work in delivering community safety to the neighbourhoods which we serve will also aim to make significant contribution for Wakefield to be a safer place to live, work and play.

8. Diversity and Inclusion

We will ensure that in delivering services we continue to be inclusive and representative. We want all tenants and residents to be involved regardless of age, ability and background and will provide the support needed to enable this.

To be effective we will encourage wider involvement and, to achieve this we will research the needs of communities within the district so that services can be tailored to meet diverse needs.

Information will be available in a variety of formats, including different languages, on audio cassette and large print, by newsletter, leaflets, information in service access points and the website. This will help all tenants and residents have access to up to date information.

9. Monitoring Review

The Wakefield District 'Safer and Stronger Communities' Partnership will receive a quarterly report at executive level regarding crime levels and trends through the life of our own Community Safety Strategy 2011 to 2013.

This will help determine shifts in crime patterns both district wide and at local level. The ability to respond to changing trends in activity and locations of disorder will also be underpinned by Neighbourhood Tasking arrangements where WDH are represented.

However, the second WDH Community Safety Strategy aims also to be self defining and is a strategy that should be in tune with the needs of our local communities. As the needs change, so should the strategy and what are priorities now, might not be so in the future.

WDH will therefore review and monitor progress of its success against a range of factors that are centred around our commitment to resident engagement. These include but are not limited to:

- tenant surveys;
- tenant challenge days
- review of Local Visions;
- learning from complaints;
- tenant talkback;
- community consultations;
- tenant led inspections; and
- tenant and resident group feedback.

WDH is looking to continually improve all services that have an impact on Community Safety and supports more effective multi-agency working to reduce crime and disorder in the district and taking forward the work of this Strategy.

Each action plan that relates to the community safety objectives will be annually reviewed to make sure that the key milestones and targets are being met and delivered.



Vision

to create confident communities

Mission

to inspire, transform and promote excellence

Values

to be creative, inclusive and work with integrity

delivering promises, improving lives