

harassment policy

objectives of this policy

The objective of this policy is to determine what the co-op considers to be harassment and what actions the co-op will take if a case of harassment is reported to the co-op.

- 1 Harassment is behaviour committed by a person or persons who want an individual or group of people to suffer, possibly because of their racial origin, their religious beliefs, their sexuality or for some other reason.

People may be harassed for many different reasons and harassment can take many forms. Acts of harassment often include violence or threats of violence, verbal abuse and threatening behaviour, damage to property and abusive or threatening graffiti. There may also be more subtle but no less damaging forms of harassment that are very difficult to prove.

Particular distinguishing features of harassment can be that it is motivated by the fact of someone belonging to a particular group; it is often premeditated; it is often not carried out by immediate neighbours and it is more likely to recur over a long period of time. However, even if none of these features are present, it is important that all cases where a tenant feels harassed are reported to the co-op.

'Harassment' includes, but is not limited to:

- violence or threats of violence towards any person
- abusive or insulting words or behaviour
- damage or threats of damage to property belonging to another person including damage to any part of a person's home
- writing threatening, abusive or insulting graffiti
- any act of omission calculated to interfere with the peace or comfort of any other person or to inconvenience such a person.

- 2 The co-op aims to prevent all forms of harassment, stop it when it does take place, support members or third parties who are being harassed, and take action against perpetrators.
- 3 All new members will be informed when they sign their tenancy agreement, that harassment by them or members of their families or by visitors to them is a breach of tenancy conditions which will be dealt with severely.
- 4 The co-op will investigate all allegations of harassment and will deal with them according to its complaints and disputes policy. Warning letters may be sent on the first occasion of a minor offence, but injunction and/or eviction action will be considered for serious offences and for persistent cases.
- 5 The co-op will support the victims of harassment by:
 - responding to any report of racial harassment by visiting within 24 hours
 - repairing any damage to the property within 24 hours
 - helping the victim to find other agencies which can provide support or assistance
 - keeping in close contact with members who are experiencing harassment
 - consideration of whether the co-op will pay for the installation and rental of a telephone
 - the course of action will be guided by the expressed wishes of the person being harassed, the seriousness of attacks, the effect of harassment on the member
 - the co-op will do what it can to ensure that a victim of harassment should not be put through the inconvenience of having to move – however, in some cases, it may be necessary that the co-op takes whatever action is necessary (e.g working with other housing organisations) to rehouse the victim.

harassment