



RACIAL HARASSMENT POLICY

1 Introduction

Solon has adopted the definition of racial harassment shared by both Bristol City Council and SARI (Support Against Racist Incidents): -

“racially motivated action is a physical, verbal, written, or psychological attack on an individual or group, or their property, by another person or group of people, for which there is no reasonable explanation other than their race, culture, religion, ethnic origin, or personal relationship with an ethnic minority person, where this is the view of the person receiving the report, or the person reporting it”.

This definition incorporates the recommended definition of racial harassment from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report.

As a Housing Association working in minority ethnic communities, Solon has a responsibility to prevent racist incidents, support those at risk and take action against the perpetrators to the satisfaction of the individual, family and community involved.

The Association’s Tenancy Agreement states that one of the tenant’s obligations is: -

“Not to commit or allow members of his/her household or invited visitors to commit any form of harassment on the grounds of race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation or disability which may interfere with the peace and comfort of, or cause offence to any other tenant, member of his/her household, visitors, neighbours, employee or contractor of the association”
(Clause 3.5)

2 Objectives

A victim-orientated approach will be maintained at all times and any action taken will be with the agreement of the victim.

Effective action will be taken against perpetrators using appropriate legal remedies.

Solon will work in partnership with other agencies including the Local Authority, Police and appropriate community and voluntary groups to ensure adequate support for victims and effective action against perpetrators.

3 Key Commitments

As soon as a report of racial harassment is received, an offer will be made to interview the victim at a location of their choice. This interview will take place within two working days of the incident being reported unless otherwise agreed with the victim or unless there is an immediate risk to the victim's safety.

Solon will arrange for an interpreter to be present should this be necessary.

Repairs/ maintenance issues arising from racial harassment (particularly removal of graffiti and reglazing) will be clearly marked as an emergency priority. Additional security will also be given priority.

If the perpetrator is proven to be a Solon tenant, then with the agreement of the victim, a written warning will be issued. It will be made clear to all involved that the Association is prepared to proceed with Possession Proceedings as well as other forms of legal remedy (including injunctions) should it prove necessary.

If the perpetrator is not a Solon tenant then every assistance will be given to the victim to enable effective action to be taken through civil proceedings.

The Association will ensure that appropriate referrals are made to local agencies able to provide support and assistance to the victim and that, with the victim's agreement, the incident is reported to the Police.

Requests for rehousing will be dealt with in line with Bristol Common Register's emergency rehousing policy and the appropriate policies in each other Local Authority area. Victims who are Solon tenants will also be given priority on the Association's internal transfer list.

All incidents of racial harassment must be investigated and recorded by the appropriate Housing Officer and will be monitored by the Head of Housing Services and reported to the Board of Management on a quarterly basis. In addition, an annual review meeting will be held with SARI to assess Solon's performance, and monitoring forms will be issued to all cases.

Solon will continue to act as a Reporting Station for incidents of racial harassment and maintain its membership of the Bristol Partnership against Racial Harassment.

All front line staff will receive regular training to ensure they are equipped to deal with cases of racial harassment and are aware of the Association's policy.

This policy is a working document to be reviewed regularly in order to ensure that the Association responds quickly to the introduction of new guidance and best practice as well as locally agreed multi-agency protocol.