Street Hub Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan

Version 3

Beyond connection

BT are working to reduce digital inequality and help make communities better connected. From the iconic red phone boxes to the modern glass units, we've always been at the forefront of technology that brings people closer.

In today's digitally enabled world, many phone boxes are sitting unused making them prime sites for anti-social behaviour and vandalism. Following the success of our Street Hub programme where we brought free digital services to high streets across the UK, we're further transforming our legacy payphones into state-of-the-art, fibre-connected digital community hubs by continuing our rollout through our partnership with Global.

Not only does this remove old payphones, freeing-up space and reducing anti-social behaviour, but each Street Hub gives entire communities access to an unprecedented suite of essential free services. This includes ultrafast Wi-Fi, phone calls, and public messaging capabilities. It's also a platform for future technologies – air quality monitoring, emergency messaging, 4G /5G mobile coverage and more.

Since June 2017, over 900 Streets Hubs have gone live in cities throughout the UK, connecting over a million unique devices to Wi-Fi every month, with tens of thousands of free calls each week.

Wherever a Street Hub is installed we work with local stakeholders like councils and the police to ensure they're a positive contribution to the area. We're committed to addressing the few users in limited locations who abuse this service.

Automatic anti-social call restriction

The advanced nature of Street Hubs and ourinvestment in quality systems means we can quickly identify and solve issues.

Working with local stakeholders has already led tosignificant technical and process advances that further help each Street Hub contribute positively to the local area.

A small number of locations drew attention to local drug issues, with those involved misusing free call services. Following this we invested significantly in developing call restriction capabilities. These were first used to prevent calls to mobiles on select Street Hubs in problem areas – identified with the help of police and council community safety teams.

The automatic recognition of misuse and blocking of identified numbers is based on a proprietary algorithm and technical process developed in consultation with the police and councils from across the UK. These consider a range of factors, including but not limited to the frequency of attempted and connected calls, thelength and distribution of such calls, and insights provided by relevant stakeholders.

Once numbers are identified, their call data is continuously assessed, and our algorithm always applied. When a blocked number is flagged by the algorithm this restriction is permanent. In somecases, on request, we may restrict numbers over aset period.

Should someone believe a number has been wrongly flagged, they can contact our team at who will consider the case, consulting with the police and local council where appropriate. This option will be shown on the StreetHub screen as part of the warning notification when a restricted number is dialled.

This automatic anti-social call restriction technology is a dynamic feature of Street Hubs that can be adapted over time as further insightsare gained or as patterns of misuse change.

Identification of anti-social behaviour issues

We take our responsibility towards community wellbeing and anti-social behaviour seriously, as evidenced by our above investment. Where possible we address any concerns before (or as part of) the planning application process which every Street Hub must go through.

Unfortunately, this is not always possible, and pre-existing or emerging concerns around misuse may need to be addressed once a Street Hub is active.

In deciding the best course of action, advice from police, other emergency services and local authorities will always take precedence, followed by feedback from other government bodies and input from residents and businesses.

To best identify issues and how to address them, we need:

- a description of the issue and when it occurred(s)
- the location of the Street Hub(s) involved and how they contributed.

Supporting evidence is also important, where legally possible, to help us understand the issue (i.e. data or images) so that the appropriate action can be considered.

Each Street Hub is remotely monitored for service compliance 24 hours a day 7 days a week, and physically inspected and cleaned at least every two weeks. As such, any issues are likely to be quickly reported to us directly.

Where a police officer, member of the public or council officer identifies a possible anti-social behaviour issue, we can be contacted in several ways to take appropriate action.

Sending an email to [redacted] is the main method for reporting an anti-social behaviour issue associated with a Street Hub. This will automatically raise a ticket on our system, which is actively reviewed and managed by the Street Hubs team.

Emails sent from police.uk or .gov email addresses will be treated as priority.

Technical issues like display screen failures, graffiti, etc. should be reported to streethub@bt.com.

Should it not be possible or convenient to send an email, the Street Hubs helpline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on [redacted].

Although we are committed to working closely withcommunities to address concerns around anti-social behaviour, suspected criminal behaviour may need to be managed through official police channels by contacting 101 or 999 in an emergency.

Assessment and determining the suitability of technical changes

After receiving a police crime risk assessment or report from a local authority suggesting a Street Hub may be contributing to crime or anti-social behaviour, we will assess the technical solutions available to minimise / reduce this.

The location of each Street Hub means the way they are used and experienced varies, and so the solution will need to be bespoke.

Where a temporary or interim technical change to a Street Hub may be considered, we work with the local council and police wherever possible to gather timely evidence and information, so we understand what is happening and how best to respond. This could include:

- reviewing the information provided from any previous tickets
- visiting the location and meeting with local stakeholders
- speaking with the local police and council to understand any reports they have received and what they are already doing to tackle similar issues in the area
- collating relevant media reports, historic records, and similar
- assessing Street Hubs data such as anonymised call information, Wi-Fi usage, etc.

Implementing available technical changes

Street Hubs are actively monitored and adaptable, with a range of temporary and interim technical measures available to help manage anti-social behaviour issues. These were part of the original design or developed as part of our dedication to community wellbeing.

These include but are not limited to:

- using the displays to include warnings and relevant information
further reducing the Street Hub's call speaker volume
- preventing calls to types of phone numbers, such as mobile, landline or freephone
- blocking calls to specific numbers (only when agreed with the police, in addition to those captured under automatic anti-social call restriction).

We prefer to make changes in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to minimise any unintended social impact. For example, a local council or police command providing additional street teams in the area.

Our anti-social behaviour portal has many useful features to combat anti-social behaviour. As well as our algorithm, the portal now lets us block suspicious behaviour in real time so we can tackle any anti-social behaviour request without delay. We also have greater insight into reporting and numbers where thresholds are exceeded. These technical advances help reduce crime and allow us to work better with the police and community.

Sign off and implementation

Any change made to how a Street Hub is configured at a hardware or software level will require our agreement.

As an OFCOM-designated Universal Service Provider of public call boxes for the provision of a publicly available telephone service, any decision to restrict provision of phone calls will need to be made exclusively by us. This will be based in part on detail provided by the police and local authority and pay due regard to the evidence presented.

We would always seek to balance any requirement to restrict Street Hub services to manage anti-social behaviour with the desire to make them available to all, as part of our work to help make communitiesbetter connected and reduce digital inequality.

Review process

Our approach to addressing anti-social behaviour associated with a Street Hub is to be collaborative. The success of any intervention relies on the police and / or councils taking reasonable steps to help address the underlying issues and the review process being tailored to each local situation.

In the small number of cases where the need for an operational change has been identified, it will be considered temporary and applied for a limited period (typically three months but up to twelve months in high-risk locations). This temporary period allows police and the local council to investigate and take appropriate action.

Further information

We want each Street Hub to provide the best possible experience for users and the communities around them, and will continue to work with councils, police and the wider community to make sure they do.

For more information on Street Hubs and how they are managed contact streethub@bt.com.

Offices Worldwide

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