



## Unacceptable behaviour policy

<b>1. Aim of policy</b>
This policy sets out the approach we will take in response to actions and / or behaviours from customers towards staff that are considered unacceptable.
<b>2. Scope of policy</b>
<p>Unacceptable behaviour refers to any actions, language, or conduct by customers, their household members, or visitors that causes staff or contractors to feel threatened, abused, distressed, or unable to carry out their duties effectively. This includes, but is not limited to, aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands, and persistent or disruptive communication that impacts service delivery.</p> <p>This policy applies to all tenancies and defines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The unacceptable customer behaviour that we will not tolerate towards staff and / or contractors.</li><li>• The actions that may be taken if staff / contractors are faced with unacceptable behaviour</li></ul> <p>It is important that staff feel empowered to deal appropriately with unacceptable behaviour so that this doesn't have an adverse effect on their ability to carry out their duties or the provision of services to other customers.</p> <p>All customer facing teams need to be aware of this policy.</p>
<b>3. Policy statement</b>
<p>We understand that our customers may experience frustration or distress, particularly during challenging circumstances. Our staff and contractors are trained in resilience and committed to providing support with professionalism, empathy, and respect.</p> <p>However, while we recognise heightened emotions, we do not tolerate behaviour that is abusive, threatening, or violent. This includes verbal abuse, intimidation, or any actions that compromise the safety, wellbeing, or dignity of our team.</p> <p>We will take appropriate action to manage such behaviour which has been grouped under two headings, 'aggressive or abusive behaviour' and 'unreasonable demands'.</p>
<b>4. Policy</b>
<b>4.1 Aggressive or abusive behaviour</b>
<p>Aggressive and abusive behaviour is not restricted to acts that may result in physical harm. It includes behaviour or language that may cause staff to feel afraid, threatened, distressed or abused. The following list, which is not exhaustive, contains examples of aggressive/ abusive/ unacceptable behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Threats - Statements or actions indicating intent to harm or intimidate others</li><li>• Sexual contact or innuendo - Unwanted physical contact or suggestive comments of a sexual nature</li><li>• Physical violence - Any act causing or attempting to cause physical harm</li><li>• Personal abuse - Targeted, harmful behaviour aimed at an individual's character or personal life</li><li>• Verbal abuse - Use of harsh, offensive, or demeaning language</li></ul>

- Derogatory or discriminatory remarks - Offensive comments based on race, age, religion, disability, gender, sexuality, or other protected characteristic
- Rudeness - Disrespectful, impolite, or discourteous behaviour or language

We also consider inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations to be aggressive behaviour

#### **4.2 Unreasonable demands**

Customers may make what we consider unreasonable demands if they impact substantially on our work through the amount of information they seek or provide, the nature and scale of service they expect, or the frequency of approaches they make.

The following list, which is not exhaustive, contains examples of unreasonable demands:

- Excessive telephone calls, e-mails or letters which are disproportionate to the issue being raised
- Refusing to speak with, or allowing appropriate members of staff to deliver services, without providing sufficient evidence or justification. This could include seeking to escalate to more senior staff or seeking to discriminate against staff based on gender/ race etc.
- Demanding to speak to particular staff, who are not responsible for areas of queries
- Unrealistic expectations for responses which are disproportionate to the issues being raised
- Persistent refusal to accept what services we can and cannot provide
- Repeatedly changing the substance of a complaint or raising unrelated concerns
- Persistent refusal to accept a decision made by us by continually pursuing a case or requesting multiple complaint investigations without presenting any new information

Any of these may be considered unacceptable and unreasonable, in isolation or collectively, if they start to impact substantially on our capacity, by adversely affecting staff's ability to carry out their duties or in providing services to other customers.

#### **4.3 Managing behaviour**

How unacceptable behaviour is managed, will depend on the nature and extent of it. Any staff member faced with unacceptable behaviour may ask their line manager to approve a decision to take one or more of the following steps:

- Restricting contact in person, by telephone, letter or electronically or by any combination of these
- Reporting extreme behaviour to the police, getting people removed from our premises where necessary
- Restricting the frequency of contact
- Contact by appointment only
- Designated member of staff only to be contacted
- Replies to contact by designated member of staff – only at agreed times and/ or frequency
- Limit number and range of issues in a given period
- Action for breach of tenancy or lease agreement
- Taking other reasonable steps not listed here.

Any restrictions placed on a customer's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be appropriate to their needs and will demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. For example, we would assess a customer's needs using the information on our housing management system, vulnerability markers, support in place or protected characteristics, and this must be reasonable and proportionate to ensure we treat all customers, staff and contractors fairly, respectfully and without discrimination.

Protected characteristics include – Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The customer will be informed of which of the steps are being taken, the reasons why and the length of time it will be in place.

Information on the arrangement will be added to the customer's account to enable all relevant staff to manage ongoing contact to best suit the business and customer's needs.

This will normally be for a year when it will be reviewed by the line manager together with any 'Visit In Pairs' status which will normally be attached to any of the above actions.

Actions we may take include;

- Verbal or written warning
- Formal written notice with explanation
- Contact restrictions (e.g. limiting communication to written form)
- Review and escalation, possibly involving legal action.

#### **4.4 Supportive measures**

**Customers:** We are committed to supporting our customers where possible and will ensure customers are signposted to the relevant agencies where necessary. We will advise customers of what support may be available to them both internally and externally. We will consider customers vulnerabilities and reasonable adjustments before implementing any Unacceptable Behaviour action.

**Staff:** We will ensure staff have relevant training to be able to manage such situations the best they can and will review cases where necessary. Staff have access to our Employees Assistance Programme (EAP) for counselling and their line manager.

**Prevention:** We will consider mediation, welfare checks and support before taking enforcement if both parties should be in agreeance.

#### **4.5 Timescales**

Action taken against Unacceptable Behaviour will remain on the customer's account for 12 months and will be reviewed by the Team Leader towards the end of that period.

#### **4.6 Appeals**

A customer can appeal a decision that has been made within 10 working days via email, text, phone, in writing, in person or through an advocate. Appeals will be reviewed and a response provided within 20 working days by a Head of Service.

### **5. Statutory requirements**

This policy should be ready in conjunction with the following Statutory Requirements:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety Regulation 1999
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Equality Act 2010

<b>6. Related policies</b>	
<p>This policy should be read in conjunction with the following VIVID policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Safety Policy</li> <li>• Lone Working Policy</li> <li>• Data Protection Policy</li> <li>• Complaints Policy</li> <li>• Appeals procedure</li> <li>• Anti-Social Behaviour Policy</li> </ul>	
<b>7. Monitor and review process</b>	
<p>This policy will be reviewed every 3 years to ensure it remains effective and compliant. It will include feedback from staff/contractors and customers.</p> <p>Staff must incident log and report appropriately and ongoing support and training will be provided to help staff deal with difficult situations.</p> <p>Any concerns should be raised immediately to the staff members line manager.</p>	
<b>8. References/appendices</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality Impact Assessment</li> <li>• Customer consultation</li> </ul>	

Author	Owner	Date approved	Review date
Lauren Parrett	Beth Holmyard	August 2025	August 2028

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