



TUNTUM HOUSING ASSOCIATION

DOCUMENT CONTROL	
Policy name:	Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy
Version:	1
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Approved by:	13 March 2024 Customer Experience Committee (CEC)
Effective date:	01 April 2024
Date of next review:	01 March 2027
Customer facing:	Yes

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our services are centred around the needs of our customers, providing good quality homes and excellent services for diverse communities.
- 1.2 All customers will be dealt with fairly, honestly, consistently and appropriately when handling customer enquiries or concerns. We would not normally limit the form or amount of contact a customer can have with us, though sometimes the nature of customer contact can place a strain on our time and resources, reducing our ability to provide excellent services to our customers.

2. Policy statement and aims

- 2.1 There are times when customers may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a customer approaching us for help and we will always take an empathetic and supportive approach.
- 2.2 There are occasions when the behaviour or actions of our customers make it very difficult for us to deal with their enquiry. This can impact the service we provide to other customers. This policy explains how we will approach these situations and applies to all methods of contact.
- 2.3 This policy aims to address these issues in a fair and respectful way. We will consider each situation carefully, taking into account each individual circumstances ensuring that we are applying this policy fairly.
- 2.4 We will publish this policy on our website so that it is available to all tenants and provide a printed copy upon request.

3. Legislation or regulatory requirements

- 3.1 The laws and regulations that apply to this policy are:
 - Equality Act 2010
 - The Regulator of Social Housing
 - General Data Protection Regulation
 - Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code
 - The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to current and former tenants, licensees and leaseholders, including named household members. In addition to all other customers who have reason to interact with us.
- 4.2 Customer contact becomes unacceptable behaviour when it starts to, or when complying with the request would, impact substantially on the work of our services placing a strain on our time and



resources. This would then put the level of services we are able to offer all our customers at risk of falling below the service level agreements we set.

4.3 We understand that customers can feel upset and angry about the issues they have raised with us. However, should that anger escalate into aggression towards our officers, we consider this to be unacceptable behaviour. Any violence or abuse towards staff will not be tolerated.

4.4 Examples of unacceptable behaviour include but are not limited to:

- unreasonable demands (e.g. requesting large volumes of information, asking for responses within a short space of time, refusing to speak to an individual or insisting on speaking with another)
- unreasonable persistence (refusing to accept the answer that has been provided, continuing to raise the same subject matter without providing any new evidence, continuously adding to or changing the subject matter of the complaint)
- verbal abuse, aggression, violence (this is not just limited to actual physical or verbal abuse but can include derogatory remarks, rudeness, inflammatory allegations and threats of violence)
- overload of letters, calls, emails or contact via social media (this could include the frequency of contact as well as the volume of correspondence received as well as the frequency and length of telephone calls).

4.5 We will judge each situation individually and appreciate individuals who contact us about a range of issues may feel upset. While we accept that those who contact us may feel angry, it is not acceptable to shout or swear at our staff.

4.6 Threats against staff will be taken very seriously and if staff feel scared or threatened at any point during a conversation with a customer, the interaction may be politely ended by the officer at any time. We may decide to inform the Police or consider legal action.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 All staff have a responsibility to deal with customers enquiries fairly, honestly, consistently and appropriately.

5.2 The Customer Excellence Leader is responsible for reviewing this policy.

5.3 Staff should notify the Customer Excellence Leader of any contact in breach of the restrictions used so that further steps can be taken to manage future contact. This should also be recorded on the system.

5.4 The Director of Operations will monitor performance, oversee how we handle customer contact, and lead on how we can improve our customer journey.

5.5 The Board will monitor overall performance.

6. Reasonable Adjustments

6.1 Tuntum Housing Association is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and will make reasonable adjustments to the policy to recognise, accommodate and support individual needs, where needed.

This Policy adheres to the Associations approach to Equality and Diversity. All staff members will take a proactive approach to ensure that no individual or group is discriminated against or treated differently as a direct or indirect result of this Policy.

7. Monitoring, including audit and review



7.1 Performance related to this policy will be reported to the Director of Operations.

7.2 The board will be provided with assurance against this policy.

8. Procedure

8.1 We understand that some of our customers require support and may find it difficult to express themselves or communicate clearly, especially when they are anxious or upset. To help, we ask that customers try to explain what adjustments they're looking for and how this will ensure they can access our services.

8.2 We will attempt to deal with unacceptable behaviour informally in the first instance by providing the customer with due notice, which may be verbal or written, that outlines why their behaviour is unacceptable along with what needs to change.

8.3 We may take a number of the following restrictions when handling queries from customers who are demonstrating unacceptable behaviour:

- providing a single point of contact
- limiting contact to a single form i.e. to writing, email or telephone only
- limiting contact to certain times or to a limited number of times per week or month
- declining to give any further consideration to an issue unless any additional evidence or information is provided
- only considering a certain number of issues in a specific period.

8.4 Once we have implemented these restrictions they will remain in place until reviewed every 6 months from the date of implementing.

8.5 All relevant staff should be made aware of the restriction that is in place so that it can be adhered to and there is a consistent and co-ordinated approach across the Association.

8.6 A customer may log an appeal to this by requesting that the case be reviewed by a more senior member of staff.

8.7 Our customer will be written to, explaining what restrictions we have taken in response to their unacceptable behaviour, when it will be reviewed, and how they can appeal this restriction. A copy of this policy should be included with this letter.

8.8 The decision to implement the policy must be recorded on the housing management system and must be supported by the following information:

- grounds for applying the policy
- any restrictions to be applied, including scope and detail
- date for review – typically after 6 months though should not be longer than 12 months. In exceptional cases this may be extended.

8.9 Records will be kept of the name and address of each customer who has a restriction on their contact in place due to unacceptable behaviour:

- when the restrictions came into force and end
- what the restrictions are

9. How to appeal a decision to implement this policy

9.1 A customer can appeal against restrictions and or changes to contact up to 6 months from the date they have been implemented. The appeal will be considered by a senior member of staff who was not involved in the original decision.



9.2 A response to an appeal will be provided no later than that 20 working days from receipt.

9.3 They will advise the customer in writing whether the restrictions or changes to contact arrangements still apply or a different course of action has been agreed.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

10.1 We will always consider making reasonable adjustments for a customer if we are asked to do so.

Examples of adjustments we can consider are:

- using different methods of communication
- providing written communication in large print, coloured text, or translated.
- giving clear and polite warnings if conversations become unproductive, allowing customers an opportunity to modify their behaviour before the officer ends a call or meeting.

10.2 Should a complainant need support to raise concerns, we will consider the request and, where possible, act to aid them by making reasonable adjustments to suit their needs. We keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments are kept under active review.

11. References

RELATED EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS	
Reference	Link to reference
RELATED INTERNAL DOCUMENTS	
Reference	

12. Contacts

If you have any queries on this policy, please contact our Customer Excellence Leader.