

Unacceptable Behaviour Policy

Documentation Master Sheet

Amendments to this Document are Detailed Below

| Version Number | Date Amended | Comments | Date Approved | Author | Approved By |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--|----------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 01 | 08.02.2021 | New Policy | | Andrew Smith | |
| 02 | 12.02.2024 | Review and policy name change. Appeals included. | 28/03/2024 | Matthew Dunne | Executive Team |
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TWO RIVERS HOUSING

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

1. Statement of Intent.

- 1.1 Two Rivers Housing (TRH) is committed to dealing with customer dissatisfaction and disputes empathetically and providing an accessible and robust formal process in line with the Comments, Compliments & Complaints Policy.
- 1.2 On occasions when this commitment and/or policy is abused in a vexatious or unreasonable manner, we will take proportionate action to protect staff and curtail the impact on resource and service provision.

2. Background

- 2.1 In a minority of cases people will pursue issues and complaints in a way that is unreasonable and meets the definition of unacceptable behaviour (see 3.0). This can impede the investigation and/or cause significant resource issues to the organisation. In some instances, it will also impact staff wellbeing. This policy should be considered alongside the Zero Tolerance Policy and Comments, Compliments & Complaints Policy.

3. Definition of unacceptable behaviour (vexatious)

- 3.1 Unacceptable behaviour is not merely a customer being forthright or determined. It is accepted there will be stressful or upsetting circumstances, which will cause an individual to act out of character with an isolated display of frustration. TRH will deal with such circumstances with fairness, compassion and consistency. Behaviour will only be deemed unacceptable when it results in unreasonable demands on resource/service, or behaviour towards staff, and/or is consistent and reoccurring in nature.

3.2 Aggressive or abusive behaviour:

Physical aggression towards staff is unacceptable and covered by the TRH Zero Tolerance policy. However, it is recognised that verbal aggression can lead to staff feeling intimidated or distressed and impact on long-term wellbeing.

Examples of behaviour under this heading include threats, derogatory remarks, rudeness, unreasonable persistence, inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations.

3.3 Unreasonable demands:

Customers may make unreasonable demands through the amount of information they seek; the scale of service they expect or the frequency of their contacts. Examples of actions under this heading are:

- Demanding responses within an unrealistic timescale.
- Demanding services beyond TRH service standard.
- Insistence on only speaking to a specific member of staff and/or level of seniority.
- Proportionately abnormal volume of contacts.
- Repeatedly changing the substance of a complaint or responding with unrelated concerns.

3.4 Unreasonable persistence

It is recognised that some customers will refuse to accept TRH is unable to assist them further with a specific matter or provide a level of service that meets their expectations. Customers may continue to disagree with the decision and persistently contact the office about the same issue. The way in which these customers approach TRH may be entirely reasonable, but their persistence is not.

The demands or behaviours explained in 3.3 and 3.4 should be considered unacceptable if they begin to cause significant impact on resource or staff time to the detriment of other customers and operations.

4. **Managing unacceptable customer behaviour**

4.1 It is recognised that instances and circumstances of unacceptable behaviour can vary significantly. To manage this effectively and proportionately it is necessary to retain a flexible approach that can be tailored appropriately to the situation. However, the following guiding principles must always be adhered to.

Guiding principles

- Robust record keeping of the relevant contacts is essential. Where shorter retention periods are in use, such as with phone recordings, copies should be saved and a file of the overall matter created.
- When unacceptable behaviour is identified, the manager for that service area should bring it to the attention of the Head of Customers for an initial review and to ensure the principles of this policy are implemented.
- The Head of Customers will present the case, and proposed actions, to an Assistant Director and seek the authority to proceed.

- Contact restrictions and other sanctions should be considered a last resort and not enforced until a written warning has been issued and the customer given the opportunity to modify their behaviour. The time period this warning is effective for should be made clear to the customer (12 months would be normal).
- If the customer's behaviour remains unchanged, any such actions must be time limited, reasonable and proportionate to the behaviour they are in response to.
- The customer should be written to again with a clear explanation of why, and what, actions are being taken against them and how long they will be enforced before review (1 – 3 months would be normal).
- It is the responsibility of the manager who identified the unacceptable behaviour and/or the Head of Customers to monitor the effectiveness of actions and review removing them after the time advised to the customer.
- Actions/contact restrictions should be lifted at the earliest appropriate opportunity, in line with the customer's behaviour, and relationships returned to normal.
- All frontline staff must be provided clear guidance on what restrictions are in place and how any attempted breaches should be handled.

4.2 The most common temporary sanction for unacceptable behaviour is enforcing contact restrictions. Options include, but are not restricted to:

- Limits on the number and duration of contacts with staff per week or month.
- Limiting the customer to one method of contact (phone, email etc)
- Offering a restricted time slot for necessary calls.
- For joint tenancies - restricting which customer is permitted to contact staff.
- Requiring the customer to communicate only with one named member of staff.
- Requiring any personal contacts to take place in a suitable location.
- Enforcing an emergency-repairs only policy.
- Include a visit in pairs marker.

4.3 Appeals will be reviewed and determined by two Assistant or Executive Directors.

5 Monitoring

- 5.1 The Head of Customers is responsible for monitoring this policy to ensure that it is correctly applied.
- 5.2 TRH will ensure that all relevant details about each case are recorded accurately.
- 5.3 On at least a quarterly basis, an analysis of the information held will be completed to ensure actions have been reasonable and consistent in line with this policy.

6 Review

- 6.1 The Two Rivers Housing Board will be responsible for ensuring that reviews of this policy are carried out.
- 6.2 TRH will undertake a review of this policy whenever there are relevant changes to legislation, case law or good practice that may affect it.
- 6.3 In the absence of any other trigger for a review, the policy will be reviewed after the first year of operation and then at three yearly intervals or such other period as the Board of Two Rivers Housing may from time to time determine.