

Unacceptable Behaviour Policy

In this policy, 'Flagship Group/ ('we') includes Flagship Homes and the housing associations trading as Newtide Homes, Samphire Homes, and Victory Homes.

This policy sets out the approach Flagship Group will take when the behaviour of tenants and other individuals is deemed to be unacceptable.

Department	<i>Housing</i>
Policy Owner	<i>Housing Managing Directors</i>
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Approving Body	<i>Customer Committee – date TBC</i>
Equality Impact Assessment Date	<i>24 June 2024</i>
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Purpose

We strive to provide outstanding customer service to every tenant and those who use our services. We believe our tenants have the right to be heard, understood, and respected. We aim to be open and accessible to everyone.

Occasionally, individuals' behaviour or actions make it difficult to provide services and meet our obligations as landlord. In some cases, individuals' actions become unacceptable because they involve abuse of staff or our processes.

When this happens, we will take action to protect the health and well-being of our staff who have the right to do their jobs without fear of being abused or harassed. We will also consider the impact of tenants' behaviour on our ability to provide a service, for example if you are creating an excessive amount of demand which prevents others contacting us.

The policy applies to all methods of contact. When we talk about unacceptable behaviour towards staff, we include contractors who are acting on our behalf.

Behaviour we consider unacceptable:

We understand that people may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. We also understand that we may not always get things right and encourage you to provide feedback, good or bad.

However, we will not tolerate behaviour or actions that result in unacceptable or excessive demands on our service, which may prevent staff from carrying out their duties effectively and others from accessing our services.

We aim to manage these behaviours under this policy, and we will consider every situation individually.

Aggressive, violent, or abusive behaviour

We understand that you may feel upset or angry about an issue you are affected by. If that anger escalates into aggression towards our staff, we consider this to be unacceptable. We'll never tolerate any violence or abuse towards our staff.

Violence is not restricted to acts of aggression that may result in physical harm. It also includes behaviour or language that may cause staff to feel offended, afraid, threatened or abused. It isn't acceptable to shout or swear at our staff.

We consider the following language to be unacceptable:

- Offensive, derogatory or patronising (for example, questioning our staff's abilities, competency or qualifications)
- Discriminatory language, including, but not limited to, racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic (it does not matter whether staff possess these characteristics or you are not directing the comments towards them personally, we still consider this behaviour to be unacceptable).

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- Making unfounded allegations that staff have committed criminal, corrupt, or indecent conduct.

Threats against staff will be taken very seriously. If staff feel scared or threatened during an interaction, contact will be ended immediately. Violent or threatening behaviour may also be reported to the Police for investigation and action.

Unreasonable demands

A demand becomes unreasonable when it starts to impact our ability to provide a service to you or others.

Examples of this include:

- Repeatedly demanding response within an unreasonable timescale (our timescales for responding are set out in our service standards which can be found on our websites)
- Insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular member of staff.
- Insisting on only dealing with directors or senior staff and refusing to deal with our customer-facing staff.
- Repeatedly raising the same issue after it has been responded to.
- Refusing to accept a decision where explanations for this decision have been provided.

These types of behaviour take up an excessive amount of our time, and in doing so disadvantage others from being able to contact us or access our services.

Unreasonable levels of contact

Sometimes, the volume and duration of contact made by an individual can cause problems.

Examples of this include:

- Lengthy phone calls or contact repeating the same points of discussion.
- Excessive contact over a short period of time, such as a high number of phone calls in one hour or a day.
- Unreasonable levels of contact within the duration of us dealing with an issue. For example, inundating us with information which has already been provided or is irrelevant to the issue we are dealing with.
- Unnecessarily and excessively copying us into emails to other parties.
- Making excessive numbers of service complaints about issues that amount to minor inconveniences.
- Making repeated, unfounded allegations of anti-social behaviour about neighbours for matters already investigated and responded to.

Levels of contact are deemed to be unreasonable when the amount of time spent talking to you, responding or reviewing irrelevant information impacts our ability to deal with the issue or provide services to others.

Harassment

Staff have the right to carry out their duties free from harassment or threats of harassment.

Examples of harassment may include:

- Recording telephone conversations or meetings and publishing the information online or on social media.
- Contacting staff using their personal details or social media presence such as Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn.
- Publishing information about staff online or other public domains such as their names or contact details.
- Threatening to go to the press unless we meet your demands.

You must not make recordings of your contact with our staff without their permission. If we ask you not to record and you continue to do so, we will end the interaction. If you record our staff without their knowledge, we may notify the Police and/or the Information Commissioner's office.

Failure to cooperate

To provide services effectively, we may ask you to cooperate with our processes. We have processes in place so we can efficiently provide services to all our tenants. We will always try to work in a way which is convenient for you and meets your needs, but we consider obstructive behaviour or lack of cooperation to be unacceptable.

Examples of this may include:

- Failing to provide access to your home for repairs, inspections or improvement works.
- Obstructing our staff from completing work in a nearby area.
- Rearranging or cancelling an appointment an excessive number of times.
- Avoiding our contact when we need to discuss an important issue with you.
- Raising service complaints but refusing to engage with staff who deliver our services.

Failure to cooperate could result in us having to withdraw services and might mean you are in breach of your tenancy obligations.

Actions we may take

When we experience behaviour or demands which are unacceptable, we will consider taking action. This could include one or more of the following:

- Drawing your attention to this policy to provide an opportunity to modify your behaviour.
- Ending contact with you (by terminating a call or withdrawing from a home visit).
- Making a record of the unacceptable behaviour.

- Decide not to deal with an issue because it has been presented in a way which is unreasonable.
- Warning you about your behaviour and requesting the behaviour is modified during future contacts.
- Appointing a single point of contact in our organisation.
- Not providing a response to repeat or unreasonable levels of demand
- Putting contact restrictions in place such as communicating only in writing or via a third-party representative. The reasons for putting restrictions in place will be evidenced and restrictions will be kept under regular review. Restrictions will be proportionate and will demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.
- Placing a “staff safety alert” on your address. This is a system marker telling staff how to manage risk.
- Reporting violent or threatening behaviour to the Police.
- In repeated cases of abusive behaviour, we may refer the matter to our teams who handle anti-social behaviour cases which could result in sanctions via the anti-social behaviour process (including legal or tenancy action).

Some of these actions may affect the way we are able to provide services to you for example if we must visit in pairs for staff safety this could mean we are not able to complete your repairs as quickly as we might otherwise.

In extreme cases, where behaviour presents such a high risk or danger to staff that we cannot enter your home, we may have to consider taking action to end your tenancy.

Appeals

If we decide to act as outlined above, we will write to you to inform you. You will be able to appeal the decision if any restrictions have been put in place and the letter will explain how to do so.

Reasonable adjustments

We understand some individuals may find it difficult to express themselves or communicate clearly, especially when anxious or upset.

To assist our interactions with you we ask you explain what adjustments you are looking for to ensure you can access our services and communicate with us effectively.

We offer a range of communication adjustments and you can find more details about this in our reasonable adjustments policy.

We may still use this policy if there are actions or behaviours which are having a negative effect on our staff or our work even where a reasonable adjustment has been made.

Training statement

All customer facing staff will be made aware of this policy. Staff working in service areas which experience a high prevalence of unacceptable behaviour will be provided with additional training around conflict management.

Measuring Effectiveness

The effectiveness of this policy will be measured in the following ways:

- Near miss and incident reporting for staff who have been the victim of abuse or aggression.
- Effectiveness of control measures such as staff safety alerts.

EIA statement

An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken for this policy on 24 June 2024. Where negative impacts may arise, these have been mitigated.

Review Period

This policy will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years.