

Unacceptable Behaviour Policy

DOCUMENT CONTROL	
(Policy) author:	Housing Services Lead
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This policy applies to:	Everyone
Method of delivery:	Email, website

Version Control

Date	Author	Version	Reason for Change
3.4.2025	Emma Bailey	DRAFT	Introduction of Policy

Summary of Changes

Section	Change

Consultations

Consulted with	Version	Date
Customer and tenant engagement panels		
Staff speak out		
Volunteers		

1. Purpose

- 1.1 At Brighter Futures we strive to hear our customers' voices. We embrace all feedback as opportunities for improvement and progression.
- 1.2 We are also aware that many of our customers have additional needs to consider such as (but not limited to) communication barriers, mental health concerns or addiction issues which we are aware could increase feelings of frustration or anger.
- 1.3 We commit to finding reasonable adjustment/alternative means of communication where possible; this policy sets out the considerations we would make in this instance.
- 1.4 Our staff and contractors have the fundamental right to perform their duties without encountering any form of abuse or harassment. We are committed to creating a work environment where every team member feels safe, respected and supported. Therefore, any behaviour that compromises this principle, whether it be verbal, physical, or emotional, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated
- 1.5 In instances where our customers' unacceptable behaviour crosses reasonable boundaries; resulting in the mistreatment of our staff, contractors or our established processes, then this policy seeks to formalise our approach.

2. Policy owner

- 2.1 This policy is owned and reviewed by the Housing Services Lead.

3. Exceptions/Exclusions

- 3.1 This policy applies to contact by way of any communication method including (but not limited to) telephone calls, face-to-face meetings, video calls, texts, letters, emails, social media platforms, and other digital channels.
- 3.2 This policy applies to customers, service users, their representatives, or members of the public when pursuing a complaint or engaging in any communications with us.
- 3.3 This policy is intended for addressing severe instances rather than routine management of customers behaviour and complaint resolution which can be managed via other Brighter Futures policies or procedure.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 **Unacceptable Behaviour** is behaviour that creates a hostile working environment for staff and contractors this can include (but may not be limited to);
 - **Unreasonable demands** – demands that impact our ability to provide a consistent service, or if involves an excessive amount of employee time. Examples can include; demanding responses out of timescale, insisting to speak or refusing to speak to specific staff members, repeatedly changing the scope of enquiries/complaints
 - **Excessive contact** – Examples can include repetitively contacting staff using at least one method of contact over a specified period, long period of time discussing the same subject repeatedly, copying in excessive numbers of staff into communications
 - **Harassment** – aggressive pressure or intimidation

- **Refusal to reasonably cooperate** – Examples can include refusal to speak to staff, refusal to allow us to validate evidence or testimony, refusal to engage with documented policy/procedure/guidance/tool etc.
- **Unreasonable persistence** – not accepting reasonable feedback/decision, repeatedly raising the same concerns
- **Recording staff or contractors** - without their knowledge or consent this can be included both by way of video and or audio recordings
- **Vexatious complaints/ allegations** – when customers complain or make allegations with no evidence and press for investigation or escalation to specifically to cause harassment, annoyance, frustration, worry, or even bring financial cost to staff, contractors or Brighter Futures

4.2 **Unacceptable behaviour** is behaviour that; creates, or has the potential to create,

- risk to the business
- risk to the health and safety of employees
- undue negative impact to emotional, mental (trauma) or physical health (injury)

4.3 **Unacceptable behaviour** is also unreasonable conduct that is

- offensive,
- discriminatory,
- belittling,
- abusive
- insulting
- degrading
- harassment
- threatening

These behaviour examples can be directed towards staff or contractors in any way including (but not limited to) face-to-face, email, text, telephone or via social media.

5. Restrictions or actions considered to manage Unacceptable Behaviour

5.1 If we consider someone’s behaviour is unreasonable (due to the demands made or levels of contact) or unacceptable, we will first try to fix the issue.

5.2 We will explain why the behaviour is unreasonable or unacceptable and will give the person an opportunity to stop the behaviour so we can continue to progress the case.

5.3 If we are unable to resolve the issue and decide there is a need to manage behaviour in line with our policy, this decision will be made by a more senior colleague team leader or above and authorised by their next level of management as reasonable.

5.4 The contact restriction conditions and reasons for the contact restriction will be communicated to the customer in writing.

5.5 Telephone calls

5.5.1 Where our employees experience unacceptable behaviour on a telephone call, they may take immediate action to terminate the call where it is appropriate in the circumstances.

5.5.2 Where possible, the staff member will inform the customer why their behaviour is unacceptable and warn them that call termination is a possibility before deciding to terminate the call.

5.6 Social Media Platforms

5.6.1 Should customers use a social media platform to conduct unacceptable behaviour then we may

take immediate action to delete the comment or message.

5.6.2 Should the customer be seen to be demonstrating unacceptable behaviour via posts/ information shared on social media then we will report posts to platform moderators for review and enforcement.

5.6.3 Screenshots of unacceptable posts maybe taken to be used in other internal investigations such as those relating to Anti-Social Behaviour

5.7 Contact restrictions

5.7.1 The following list sets out the contact restrictions we can impose to manage unacceptable or unreasonable behaviour:

- requesting communication only through a specific staff representative – Single Point of Contact
- requesting communication only through a specific customer representative – Advocate
- restricting method of communication
- deciding not to investigate a complaint on the basis that it has been pursued in an unacceptable or unreasonable way
- restricting or limiting contact with us – for example blocking telephone numbers/ emails, introducing a time window for contact etc
- Preventing or limiting from attending community events where there has been abusive behaviour or threats have been made
- stopping all communication with someone (please note that this would likely not be possible for those customers who rely on our service e.g.: tenants or licence holders)

5.8 Actions where unacceptable behaviour threatens immediate safety of staff

5.8.1 Should any unacceptable behaviour threaten the immediate safety of our employees or other persons:

- meetings will be terminated
- customers may be asked to vacate any Brighter Futures office space
- staff are encouraged to assess their work environment and put their safety first and get themselves to safety
- notifying the emergency services – Police
- If threats are made to a contractor or other agency, then we will contact them to share the threats made so that they can put the appropriate safeguards in place

5.9 Enforcement Action

5.9.1 Brighter Futures will always consider taking enforcement action where verbal abuse, threats or violence is involved. This may include acting under the terms and conditions of a customer's occupation agreement. In extreme cases this may include reporting criminal matters to the police or taking legal action.

6. Reasonable adjustments

6.1 Any actions that are taken to restrict services should be appropriate to the resident's needs and will demonstrate regard for the provision of the Equality Act 2010 and because of the individual's medical condition and vulnerability, such as mental health issues, cognitive impairments and learning disabilities.

7. Customer Notification

7.1 Should it become necessary as a final measure to enforce this policy with a customer, we will communicate our decision to them in writing, detailing:

- decision made and restrictions imposed
- why the decision has been made
- what the decision means to the customer
- how the customer can appeal the decision

7.2 The restriction will remain in force for up to a period of 12 months from the date of the letter (enforcement time frame will be specified on the letter).

8. Reconsiderations and Appeals

8.1 A customer can ask for a managed restriction to be reconsidered in any of the following circumstances:

- where there is a change in circumstances which mean the managed behaviour restriction is no longer appropriate
- where there is evidence, the restriction impacts the customer’s ability to access our service
- a factual error was made by our service when making the decision to apply the restriction

8.2 A senior colleague of manager level or above will consider the reconsideration/ appeal request and decide if any changes will be made the unacceptable behaviour restriction.

8.3 The outcome of this will be communicated to the customer within 15 working days of their reconsideration request.

8.4 The decision from the appeal hearing is final.

9. Tracking and Recording

9.1 All cases will be tracked by the Customer Experience Team Leader.

9.2 Unacceptable Behaviour cases will be reported to the Customer Experience Committee and in summary to Board where required.

10. Internal Auditing

10.1 In order to comply with the Transparency Standard any Unreasonable Behaviour decisions will be reviewed via the Customer Experience Committee.

11. Related policies, procedures and documents

Policies	<u>Anti-social behaviour policy</u> <u>Feedback policy</u>
Procedures	ASB procedure Complaint Handling procedure
Forms / Guidelines	Risk Assessment

12. Other useful documents/websites

[The Complaint Handling Code | Housing Ombudsman Service](#)
[Managing unacceptable behaviour policy - Housing Ombudsman](#)

13. Monitoring and review

13.1 This policy will be reviewed annually alongside the Feedback Policy as part of the Housing Ombudsman Code of Conduct self-assessment. Any major change will require staff and customer consultation.