



The Management of Unacceptable Behaviour

Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cornwall Rural Housing Association Limited (CRHA) is a small rural registered social landlord and provides a mix of affordable and social rental homes across the County of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.
- 1.2 CRHA will ensure that colleague responsibilities in relation to this policy are clear. CRHA's leadership team will have overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy.

2. Policy Principles

- 2.1 Our aim is to ensure that expressions of dissatisfaction from our customers can be dealt with in the best way possible. CRHA welcomes complaints from customers as valuable feedback and, where it is possible, we aim to attempt to de-escalate problems to enable a customer's complaint to be investigated.
- 2.2 CRHA want to ensure that colleagues, customers, contractors and other stakeholders are treated with respect and do not suffer any disadvantage from customers who act in an unacceptable manner.
- 2.3 CRHA have a zero tolerance towards physical and verbal abuse of our team members and contractors. This policy and procedure set out our approach to dealing with customers whose actions or behaviours are considered to be unacceptable.
- 2.4 CRHA recognise that dealing with the public can cause anxiety particularly where there is a risk of aggression, verbal abuse and/or violence. Such incidences should be identified through CRHA's general risk assessment process and suitable control measures implemented as outlined in the Health and Safety Procedure and Employee Handbook.

3. Policy Aims

- 3.1 To deal fairly, honestly, consistently and appropriately with all our customers including those whose actions we consider to be unacceptable. CRHA believes that all of our customers have the right to be heard, understood and respected.
- 3.2 To ensure that CRHA colleagues and contractors are treated with respect and are not subject to verbal or physical abuse by our customers.
- 3.3 That we provide a service that is acceptable to all customers. We retain the right, however, to change or restrict access to our services where we consider a customer's actions or behaviours to be unacceptable.
- 3.4 To ensure that other customers, colleagues and contractors do not suffer any disadvantage from customers who may act in an unacceptable way.

4. Defining Unacceptable Actions

- 4.1 CRHA recognise that people may act out of character at times of trouble and distress. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to contact with the Association. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because a customer is forceful or determined.
- 4.2 There may be incidences of behaviour which an individual may find difficult, but it would be reasonable to expect a well-trained, confident member of the team to be able to deal with in most circumstances. These would not be considered unacceptable actions.
- 4.3 Unacceptable actions are behaviours that affect the ability of a colleague or contractor to do their job, or when the impact of behaviours upon resources means that an unfair or disproportionate amount of resource is being used. We aim to manage this kind of behaviour under this policy and have grouped these actions under four broad categories, as follows:-

Types of unacceptable behaviour:-	
Aggressive or Abusive Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We expect our colleagues to be treated courteously and respectfully. Violence or abuse towards team members is unacceptable.• Violence is not restricted to acts of aggression that may result in physical harm. It includes behaviour and language (whether verbal or written) that may cause colleagues to feel afraid, threatened or abused including personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks and rudeness.
Unreasonable Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customers may make what we consider to be unreasonable demands on our colleagues through the amount of attention they seek, the nature and scale of service they expect or the number of approaches they make.• These demands are unacceptable and unreasonable if they start to impact substantially on the work of our colleagues or contractors by taking up excessive amount of time to the disadvantage of other customers or functions.
Unreasonable Persistence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We recognise that some customers will not or cannot accept that CRHA is unable to assist them further or provide a level of service other than that provided already. Customers may persist in disagreeing with the action or decision taken in relation to their concern.• We consider the actions of unreasonably persistent customers to be unacceptable when they take up what CRHA regards as being a disproportionate amount of team members time or resource.
Unreasonable Use of the Complaints Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We welcome all expressions of dissatisfaction from customers, however, we recognise that in exceptional circumstances the way a customer uses our complaints procedure may act to harass team members or obstruct decisions made by the Association.• Examples include continual attempts to make trivial or frivolous complaints relating to a complaint, which has already been considered by re-framing it.• CRHA recognises an individual's right to access our complaints procedure and will only take action to restrict access to it in very exceptional cases where it is impacting significantly on the resources of the Association.

Likely actions:-	
Managing Unacceptable Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We seek to respond positively and deal with customer issues promptly, courteously and effectively at the first point of contact. There will, however, be an extremely small number of customers whose actions we consider unacceptable. We aim to manage these actions depending on their nature and extent. If it adversely affects our ability to do our work and provide a service to others, we may need to restrict a customer's contact. We aim to do this in a way that, wherever possible, allows a customer to have their concerns addressed and to progress a complaint to completion through our complaints process
Threats, Violence and Abusive Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRHA take threats, violence, abuse and harassment of team members and contractors very seriously. The threat of physical violence, verbal abuse, racial or other discriminatory remarks or harassment towards colleagues and contractors is likely to result in CRHA ending all direct contact with the customer. This includes abuse or harassment on the basis of race, nationality, ethnicity, origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental impairment, religious belief or other grounds.
Telephone Calls Written Correspondence Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through training CRHA colleagues understand and demonstrate the behaviours required to deliver excellent customer service and adopt a positive approach in dealing with customers. Team members may, however, end telephone calls if the caller's behaviour is considered unreasonable, aggressive, abusive or offensive. Written correspondence that is abusive to team members or contractors or which contains allegations that lack substantive evidence will be referred to the relevant manager for response. Correspondence received via CRHA's social media platforms, which is threatening or abusive to colleagues or contractors or which contains inflammatory statements or unsubstantiated allegations will be removed and/or reported. Depending on the nature of the correspondence, the Police, may also be notified, which contravenes the Communications Act 2003.

5. Procedure

- 5.1 All incidents of unacceptable behaviour, actual physical or verbal abuse must be recorded in the Unacceptable Behaviour record log held on CRHA's SharePoint.
- 5.2 A file note is required to be written by the member of the team or contractor which has encountered the unacceptable behaviour identifying the date, time and what occurred, and this should be saved to the customers tenancy file. This will be reviewed by the service manager.
- 5.3 A diary note and a "pop up" notice should be added to CRHA's mainframe software system (SDM) on the customers property and tenancy records highlighting the incident and a warning to any potential visiting officers.

- 5.4 A risk assessment will be carried out by the relevant service manager to understand the unacceptable behaviour with a view to mitigating and safeguarding all colleagues and contractors.
- 5.5 Depending on the unacceptable behaviour displayed CRHA will consider how the incident will be managed, which may include restricting a customer's contact with the Association, carrying out joint visits to the property, enforcement action through the tenancy agreement and reporting, safeguarding, referral to statutory agencies including the Police.

6. Equality and Diversity

- 6.1 This policy has been written with consideration of the Equality Act 2010 and seeks not to consciously or subconsciously discriminate or to have an adverse effect upon anyone on the grounds of age, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation, race, religion or belief or sex.
- 6.2 CRHA is committed to a customer first approach promoting an environment of respect, understanding and encouraging diversity and reasonable adjustments as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 will be made where appropriate to take account of situations where a customer may have a physical or mental health impairment, which has a long term or substantial affect on their everyday abilities.

7. Policy and Procedure Review

- 7.1 This policy and procedure will be reviewed every five years to ensure that its aims are being achieved.