

## Unacceptable customer actions policy

### 1 Our approach to unacceptable customer actions

- 1.1 We promise to be **reliable, responsive and respectful** in our contact with residents. To achieve this, staff and residents need to work together with mutual respect. This is the case in our working relationships with the vast majority of residents.
- 1.2 Where staff members or contractors breach this expectation we will investigate the circumstances and take appropriate action.
- 1.3 On the other hand there are a small number of occasions when a resident's actions towards staff, contractors, or governance / resident group members are unacceptable. When this happens we will take action to protect the individuals concerned, and make sure disproportionate resources are not spent on the unreasonable demands of a few. We may streamline our contact with the resident; limit our service to them to that which is essential; take tenancy action if they breach their tenancy; or inform the police if they break the law.
- 1.4 Our staff, contractors and governance / resident group members are entitled to carry out their work without being harassed, abused or intimidated. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Octavia have a duty of care to employees when they are carrying out their duties at work.
- 1.5 This policy does not cover our approach to managing challenging behaviour in residential care settings or dealing with violent incidents at work. Our approach to these aspects of our work is covered in our Dealing with Challenging Behaviour Policy and Violence at Work Policy respectively. This policy does not cover the range of support Octavia provides to its employees, details of which are in Human Resources policies on the Octavia HUB/intranet.

### 2 What we mean by

- 2.1 **Unacceptable customer actions** include, but are not limited to:
  - **Violence, aggression and abuse**  
(Examples are: threats; physical violence; verbal abuse; offensive language; derogatory or inappropriate remarks; and defamatory comments).
  - **Unreasonable demands / unreasonable persistence**  
(Examples are: a volume of contact that is disproportionate to the service request; continued demands or complaints about a matter already dealt with or been through the

complaints process, deliberately not following our procedures to disrupt our service, expecting a response or service delivery in a timescale that is impractical).

### **3 What customers can expect from our service if their actions are unacceptable**

- 3.1 We will inform you that your actions are unacceptable, the reasons why, and give you an opportunity to change this behaviour.
- 3.2 If we decide to take action by streamlining our contact with you or limiting our service to you, we will inform you of this.
- 3.3 If the unacceptable actions concerned are extreme (for example there are safety concerns for our staff), we will take immediate action.
- 3.4 The response timescales set out in our corporate service standards may no longer apply or maybe varied.
- 3.5 The decision to take the actions set out in this policy lies outside of our Complaints Policy. You have the right to contact the Housing Ombudsman.

### **4 Tackling unacceptable customer actions**

#### **4.1 Informing the resident**

We will inform you when we believe your actions are unacceptable. In most instances we will ask that you stop or change the unreasonable behaviour and give you an opportunity to do so before changing or limiting our service. If the unacceptable actions continue, we will take action.

#### **4.2 Authorising action**

The decision to change or vary our contact standards when we deliver a service to you is authorised by Service Managers. If you disagree and appeal the decision, an Assistant Director will review the decision within 10 working days of receiving the appeal request.

The decision to limit services to you, take tenancy action, or inform the police if you have broken the law, is authorised by an Assistant Director. If you appeal the decision, a Director will review the decision within 10 working days of receiving the appeal request.

The manager of the service experiencing the unacceptable actions consults with other teams and informs them of the actions authorised. Together, involved teams decide which

officer or manager is best placed to inform the resident of the decision/s taken and the service implications for them.

Where action is proposed on the grounds of potentially defamatory comments, the manager will consider any need for legal advice on a case by case basis.

#### 4.3 **Changing or varying our contact standards**

If the unacceptable customer actions relate to unreasonable volume of contact, unreasonable persistence of contact or inappropriate contact, we may limit the ways we have contact with you. This can include (below is not an exhaustive list):

- Provide you with a single point of contact for enquiries.
- Limit our contact time with you to a specified amount of time each week/month.
- Limit the method of contact, for example excluding email contact because you have sent unreasonable numbers of email.
- We do not deal with correspondence (hardcopy or electronic) that is offensive, inappropriate, abusive or defamatory. If you send us this type of correspondence, we will ask that you stop. If this continues, we may only correspond with you through an appropriate third party.
- If you post messages on social media sites about our staff, contractors or governance / resident group members that are offensive, abusive or defamatory, we will contact the relevant sites and request they remove those messages.
- We will end contacts with you if you are aggressive, offensive, or abusive. We will contact you at a later date to ask you to stop making calls in this manner. If this continues, we may no longer take telephone calls from you until further notice and ask you to contact us in a different way.
- In extreme cases where actions raises safety issues, we may have personal contact with you only when accompanied, or we may exclude you from all personal contact with staff, contractors or governance / resident group members (except for emergency repairs and necessary planned works) including a ban from our offices.

#### 4.4 **Limiting our service**

We want our core housing and asset management services to be accessible to all our residents (dependent on the conditions in individual occupancy agreements). However, in exceptional cases we will restrict these services if a resident's actions are unacceptable. This can include (below is not an exhaustive list):

- No approval to make improvements.
- Withheld planned works (including kitchen or bathroom replacements).
- Deliver a health and safety repairs service only.
- No access to any resident group membership or resident meetings / events.
- Our service standards timescales may not apply or maybe varied.

- No access to our complaints process (the right to contact the Housing Ombudsman remains).

#### 4.5 Tenancy / police action

If your actions towards staff or contractors breach your tenancy, we will look to take tenancy action against you. Your home could be at risk, so you need to stop the unacceptable behavior immediately.

If you break the law (for example, you commit a violent act or make physical threats), we will contact the police for them to action.

### 5. Making sure we are succeeding

- 5.1 Managers taking action under this policy will inform the Service Development Team of the actions authorised to ensure decisions are monitored and we work to this policy responsibly.
- 5.2 We want to deliver a service that is fair and as consistent as possible, but balanced by the need to be respectful to residents, governance / resident group members, contractors, and staff alike.

### 6 Governance

<b>Policy category</b>	Operational
<b>Approved by</b>	Director of Homes, Care and Community
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Assistant Director, Housing
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### 7 Revision history

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21 June 2024	MN, Policy Manager	Policy rebranded