Sanctuary

How we respond to challenging or unacceptable behaviour

This guide explains what you can expect from us if behaviour makes it difficult for us to provide a safe and effective service. It applies to all customers who receive housing or property services. We will listen to you, act fairly and continue to deal with the issue you raised.

Our approach

You have the right to be heard, understood and treated with respect. You should also be able to get the services you need.

We will look at the behaviour separately from your repair, complaint, safety concern or other request. We will continue to look into the issue you raised.

We will look at the evidence and the effect of the behaviour before we make a decision. We will not treat you unfairly because you are distressed, persistent, assertive or dissatisfied, because of your personal circumstances, or because you have made a complaint.

What behaviour may cause concern

We may consider behaviour challenging if you:

- raise your voice or shout because you are anxious or frustrated
- contact us many times about an issue we are already dealing with
- refuse to speak to named colleagues or teams about an issue
- send us a very large amount of correspondence about one issue.

We may consider behaviour unacceptable if it includes:

- abusive or offensive language aimed at colleagues
- discriminatory language or behaviour
- physical, verbal or psychological threats
- continued allegations about colleagues without evidence
- harassment through any contact method.

How we will respond

We will stay calm and professional and try to reduce tension. Where we can, we will talk with you about what may be causing the behaviour. We will consider your communication needs, your individual circumstances and any reasonable adjustments you need.

If we cannot continue an interaction safely, we may end it firmly and politely. If an advocate or representative continues to behave unacceptably, we may ask you to choose someone else to contact us for you.

The steps we may take

1. We will usually talk to you about our concerns first. We can do this face to face or by phone, depending on what works best for you. We will then write to explain what we observed, how we will work with you and what may happen if the behaviour continues.

2. If we need to take formal action, an authorised manager must approve it. Any action must be fair, based on evidence, time-limited and the least restrictive option available. We will write to explain what we have decided and why.

Formal action may include:

- using one contact method for non-urgent enquiries, such as email or letter
- giving you one named contact
- replying to non-urgent messages at set times, such as weekly or fortnightly.

You will still be able to use essential and urgent services. We will consider your circumstances and any reasonable adjustments you need.

Immediate action in exceptional cases

In rare cases, we may need to act straight away to protect you or our colleagues. This may happen after repeated abuse or discrimination, threats, physical abuse, or contact that seriously affects our services.

Depending on the risk, we may:

- handle contact in writing instead of by phone
- limit emails to named colleagues
- carry out repair work when you are not at home
- seek a legal injunction that stops contact with named people.

We will make sure any action does not unreasonably limit the services you can use under your tenancy or lease.

Reviews and raising a concern

You can ask us to review any formal action. A senior manager will consider what you tell us and the records we hold. We will usually write to you with the outcome within 10 working days.

We will also review any restrictions on the date we set, even if you do not ask us to. Restrictions will not stay in place indefinitely. We will decide whether they are still needed, can be reduced or can be removed.

After the review, we will explain any other ways you can raise a complaint or ask an external organisation to look at the decision. This may include the Housing Ombudsman Service, where applicable.

Fair and inclusive decisions

We will use this approach fairly and without discrimination. Before we decide what action is needed, we will consider any relevant disabilities, communication needs and reasonable adjustments.