



1. Purpose and scope

Selwood Housing is committed to respecting our customers, appreciating their contributions, and consistently aiming to exceed their expectations. We firmly uphold the principle that customers deserve to be heard, understood, and respected in every interaction we have with them.

At times, certain individuals may engage in behaviour that crosses boundaries, resulting in the mistreatment of our staff, contractors or our established processes. Such conduct can consume an undue amount of time and effort to resolve, ultimately resulting in a negative impact on the level of service that can be offered.

This policy sets out our approach for managing unacceptable behaviour displayed from customers, service users, their representatives, or members of the public when pursuing a complaint or engaging in communications, actions, or behaviours which we consider unacceptable.

This policy applies to individuals who interact with us regardless of the communication method used, including but not limited to telephone calls, face-to-face meetings, video calls, texts, letters, emails, social media platforms, and other digital channels.

2. Underpinning principles

This policy is intended for addressing severe instances rather than routine management of customer behaviour and complaint resolution.

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 valued. Therefore, any behaviour that compromises this principle, whether it be verbal, physical, or emotional, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

We will seek to resolve the situation informally at the earliest opportunity where this is possible, to avoid having to restrict contact.

Selwood Housing understands the diverse needs of its customers and values the importance of their voices being heard in a complex environment



This policy allows Selwood Housing to adhere to its obligations as outlined in both the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code and its policy on unacceptable user actions.

Selwood Housing is committed to upholding the principles of the Equalities Act 2010 and other diversity and equality commitments, ensuring fair treatment and opportunities for all individuals.

3. Policy details

Definition

Unacceptable behaviour can include, but is not exclusive to:

- **Creating a hostile working environment:** Aggressive, intimidating, or abusive behaviour towards Selwood Housing's staff or contractors acting on Selwood Housing's behalf. This may include verbal aggression such as shouting, swearing, physical threats or actual violence. Comments that are offensive, derogatory, or patronising, may also fall under this policy even if overheard, or unsubstantiated allegations made without evidence.
- **Unreasonable demands:** customers frequently demanding responses faster than the published service level agreements, or not following the complaints framework and wanting to immediately escalate to a senior manager/director.
- **Excessive Contact:** Continual phone calls, emails or letters. Chasing a response or sending in new information, having not received a reply from a previous contact. This would also apply to customers who use different methods of contact, i.e. email, telephone, in person etc. with the intention of provoking a faster response.
- **Harassment:** customers recording conversations and then publishing to social media without our consent. Attempts by customers to contact Selwood staff on their personal social media accounts. Referring to any member of staff by name in the public domain without consent, i.e., noticeboard or newsletter.
- Refusal to cooperate by not providing requested information which is necessary to complete a full investigation. Being argumentative, aggressive, or obstructive when being asked to provide information.



Unacceptable behaviour policy

- **Unreasonable persistence:** refusing to accept the answer that has been provided, continuing to raise the same subject matter without providing any new evidence, continuously adding to, or changing the subject matter of the complaint.

Use of this policy

Selwood Housing acknowledges that isolated incidents of frustration and anger can occur, and these should be treated accordingly. Each case will be treated on an individual basis.

Reasonable adjustments

We recognise that some customers may face challenges expressing themselves clearly, particularly when feeling anxious or upset. To address this, we encourage customers to outline the adjustments they require to access our services effectively.

We are committed to considering reasonable adjustments upon request.

Examples of potential adjustments include:

- We could consider using different methods of communication.
- Providing written communication in large print, coloured text, or in translation.
- Giving clear warnings if conversations become unproductive and allowing customers to opportunity to modify their behaviour before ending a call.

Management interventions to be considered

The actions we may consider include, but are not limited to, the following:

- the customer may be assigned a single point of contact. This facilitates easier tracking of all concerns raised by both the customer and Selwood Housing.
-
- the customer will be requested to communicate solely through a single method, such as email. This streamlines the handling of incoming communication for greater efficiency.



Unacceptable behaviour policy

- if a complaint or any other matter has been thoroughly investigated, we may need to inform the customer that we are unwilling to engage in further communication on the issue. The customer will be directed to the Housing Ombudsman for further assistance.
- it may be agreed that a customer can only contact Selwood Housing about specific matters, or they may be instructed to only make contact on a specified time and day of the week.
- under an agreement, the customer may nominate a representative to act on their behalf.
- if there is suspicion of a crime, we will involve the police.
- alerting other appropriate authorities, such as the local authority's safeguarding team.

In severe cases such as physical violence or harassment directed at an employee, actions may involve interventions regarding the tenancy, potentially leading to its termination.

Notifying the customer

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:

- the 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

The restriction will remain in force for a period of 12 months from the date of the letter.

Approval

Formal actions proposed against those engaging in unacceptable behaviour require approval from either the Head of Service or a member of our Executive Team.

Right to appeal



The notification letter will inform the customer of their right to appeal our decision if they are dissatisfied. Appeals will be overseen by a different Head of Service or member of our Executive Team who was not part of the initial decision-making process.

4. Signposting

- The Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code
- Anti-social behaviour policy and procedure
- High risk register policy and procedure
- Equality Act 2010
- Housing Ombudsman's unacceptable user action policy



Unacceptable behaviour policy

Policy Review Date: April 2027

Decision-making record

Date	Meeting/Minute Reference	Version /Amendment
May 2024	Exec / Board approval.	1.0