

## 1 Introduction

1.1 The Policy outlines Stockport Homes Group (SHG) approach to dealing with those customers who are deemed to be behaving in an unacceptable way.

## 2 Scope

2.1 Following the principles provided by The Housing Ombudsman<sup>1</sup>, and operates alongside the Customer Feedback Policy, this policy provides a framework for dealing with customer who behave in an unacceptable way, and applies to all customers, who are deemed to have a relationship with Stockport Homes.

1.2 Details of how to impose terms of this policy can be found in the Unacceptable Behaviour Procedure.

## 3 Policy

3.1 Consistent with the Housing Ombudsman definition, unacceptable behaviour by customers can be split into three main themes. These are unacceptable behaviour, unreasonable demands and unreasonable levels of contact.

### Unacceptable behaviour

3.2 Stockport Homes appreciates customers may sometimes be upset, angry, or anxious about the issues they wish to raise. In these instances, it will always try to resolve the situation, however aggressive, abusive or harassing behaviour towards its employees will not be accepted.

3.3 Examples of this type of behaviour can include:

- Behaviour or language (verbal or written) that may cause employees to feel offended, afraid, threatened, or abused
- Derogatory or discriminatory remarks; including racist, sexist, disablist, homophobic, or transphobic comments
- Using insulting or degrading language
- Making serious allegations against us or others without any evidence
- Publishing information about employees online including social media
- Recording and publishing discussions or interactions with employees that are taken without their consent
- Contacting employees using their personal details or social media presence such as Facebook, Instagram, X or LinkedIn.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/guidance-notes/managing-unacceptable-behaviour-policy/>

## Unreasonable demands

3.4 Demands on the service can be unreasonable if they impact on the ability to provide a consistent service, or if involves an excessive amount of employee time.

3.5 Examples of these type of demands can include:

- Repeatedly demanding a response within a timescale, which is outside of normal timescale agreements
- Insisting on, or refusing to speak to employees when that is not possible
- repeatedly changing the substance of a complaint or raising unrelated concerns
- Refusing to accept a decision where explanations for the decision have been given
- Refusing to co-operate by not providing information we request to allow us to help resolve the issue.

## Unreasonable levels of contact

3.6 Levels of contact becomes unreasonable when the amount of time spent managing it impacts on the ability to process the complaint or limits the service given to other customers.

3.7 Examples of this type of contact can include:

- Repeated contact whilst a complaint is being progressed or after it is closed
- Lengthy telephone calls repeating the same points for discussion
- High volumes of information provided by email, webform, or post where the information repeats what has already been given
- Copying our employees into emails with other parties where this is not necessary.

3.8 It is important to treat each customer as an individual and have regard for their personal circumstances or vulnerabilities. There are many reasons why customers exhibit unreasonable behaviours which could include:

- Being unreasonable due to circumstances unknown to Stockport Homes and/or outside of the control of Stockport Homes
- Acting out of character at times of stress, anxiety or distress
- A medical or mental condition which makes effective communications difficult with or without giving the appearance of being aggressive
- The use of alcohol, drugs or other substances
- A disability that hinders communication.
- Language barriers that mean communication is not clear or easily understood by either party.

3.9 Stockport Homes' employees and those working on behalf of Stockport Homes will make reasonable allowances for behaviour

which is driven by one or more of these factors whilst recognising that it needs to protect employees.

3.10 Support will be offered to customers in instances where the possibility of resolving the matter will be improved by additional support, but the health and well-being of employees is also of utmost importance and both elements should be considered as part of any action to tackle unacceptable behaviour.

3.11 Stockport Homes has a duty to protect those working on its behalf in cases where behaviour is inappropriate, vexatious, abusive, persistent or enduring.

3.12 Stockport Homes has classified the three types of unacceptable behaviour into three levels of seriousness:

- **Minor incidents** - unreasonable demands, unreasonable persistence, and verbal abuse without threats, swearing and shouting.
- **Serious incidents** - abusive behaviour such as damage to property and strong verbal abuse, intimidation or hate abuse.
- **Major incidents** - abusive behaviour such as direct threats of and/or actual physical violence.

3.13 Stockport Homes, in line with Housing Ombudsman guidance, can impose contact restrictions on customers who behave unacceptably, which can include:

- Providing a single point of contact
- Limiting contact to a single form i.e. to writing, email or telephone only
- limiting contact to certain times or to a limited number of times per week or month
- Declining to give any further consideration to an issue unless any additional evidence or information is provided
- Only considering a certain number of issues in a specific period.

3.14 In serious or major incidents of unacceptable behaviour, Stockport Homes will consider applying for an injunction to protect its employees where behaviour includes threats of violence, actual violence or hate crime.

## 4 Data Protection

4.1 The approach to managing unacceptable behaviour requires a balance between protecting employees and holding information about customers in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 and Data Protection Act 2018.

4.2 Stockport Homes maintains a fair approach by sending, when appropriate, a warning letter to a customer when a minor incident occurs. In



## Unacceptable Behaviour Policy

the event of serious and major incidents, a warning marker will be added to the customer's records so that other staff can be protected from similar incidents.



## 5 Internal Controls

<b>1</b>	<b>Version control</b>	Version number will change every three years or at major review	
	<b>Version No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Change/s and reasons for change</b>
	1	April 2026	Policy review in line with Housing Ombudsman guidelines

<b>2</b>	<b>Policy Owner</b> i.e. Executive Director	Director of Customer Services
	<b>Policy Author/s</b> i.e. Head of Service	Head of Customer Voice
	<b>Approved by/date</b> Directorate Management Meeting	Director of Customer Services – 23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2026 – Decision
	<b>Communication</b>	Team Meeting
	<b>Effective Date</b> - the date of sign-off	23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2026
	<b>Next Full Review Date</b> i.e. 3 years after effective date, with an annual light touch review	22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2029 Annual light touch review

<b>3</b>	<a href="#"><u>Regulatory Standards</u></a>	Please list the Consumer, Governance, Viability standards and outcomes this policy meets
	Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard	<p>Registered providers must communicate with tenants and supply information so tenants can use landlord services, understand what to expect from their landlord, and hold their landlord to account.</p> <p><u>1.1 Fairness and respect</u></p> <p>1.1.1 Registered providers must treat tenants and prospective tenants with fairness and respect.</p> <p><u>1.2 Diverse needs</u></p> <p>1.2.1 In relation to the housing and landlord services they provide, registered providers must take action to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for tenants and, where relevant, prospective tenants.</p> <p><u>1.4 Information about landlord services</u></p>

		1.4.1 Registered providers must communicate with tenants and provide information so tenants can use landlord services, understand what to expect from their landlord, and hold their landlord to account.
<b>4</b>	<b>Linked policies/strategies</b>	
		Lone Working Policy - Operates alongside the Lone Working Policy as all employees should take appropriate measures to ensure they are working safely and maintaining personal safety, including undertaking risk assessments where relevant.
		Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy - Operates alongside the Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy. Recognising what could be deemed as instances of unacceptable behaviour, could be a safeguarding risk.
<b>5</b>	<b>Equality, diversity and inclusion</b>	Describe how different experiences, characteristics, and approaches were considered during the formulation of the policy, e.g. neurodiversity, age, religion, sex/gender, financial/digital inclusion.
		In line with the Equalities Act 2010, this policy shows due regard for an individual's medical condition and vulnerability such as mental health issues and learning disabilities. Accordingly, any restrictions imposed on a customer's contact should recognise and be appropriate to their individual circumstances.
<b>6</b>	<b>Customer/Colleague Voice</b>	Describe how the customer and/or colleague voice shapes and influences the policy and services
		Colleague Voice group have been consulted in the drafting of this policy to ensure it is fit for purpose.  Customers and Tenants are consulted by the Housing Ombudsman when setting their guidelines, which this policy follows
<b>7</b>	<b>Risk management</b>	This policy helps to mitigate the following risks identified on the Corporate Risk Register
	Corporate Risk 6	SHG does not deliver excellent customer services in the way that customers require them
	Corporate Risk 8	SHG does not respond to and learn from complaints effectively and does not listen to the customer voice

	Corporate Risk 11	SHG does not maintain a strong, positive reputation where stakeholders have trust and confidence in SHG, including partners in Stockport and across GM
<b>8</b>	<b>Performance monitoring</b>	Please list the relevant government TSMs (Tenant Satisfaction Measures)
	TP06	<p><b>TSM Satisfaction</b></p> <p>TP06 - Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord listens to tenants views and acts upon them</p> <p>TP08 - Proportion of respondents who report that they agree their landlord treats them fairly and with respect.</p>