

Unacceptable User Policy

1.0 Introduction

This policy explains how we deal with the small number of cases where the actions of individuals become unacceptable because they abuse our staff or our processes.

Customers have the right to express their views and ask questions about our services. Comments and suggestions are important in helping us to improve the service we provide, however, occasionally, the behaviour or actions of individuals makes it very difficult for us to deal with a service request or complaint. In a small number of cases the actions of individuals become unacceptable because they are abusive to our staff or our process.

When this happens, we must take action to protect the health and wellbeing of our staff who have a right to do their jobs without fear of being abused or harassed. We also consider the impact of the behaviour on our ability to do our work and provide a service to others.

This policy explains how we will approach these situations. The policy applies to all areas of our work and to all methods of contact including telephone, face-to-face, letters, e-mails, social media, and other digital channels.

2.0 Actions ccha considers as unacceptable

People may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a customer approaching ccha.

However, we will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour nor actions that result in unacceptable or excessive demands on our service in that it prevents staff from carrying out their duties effectively.

It is these behaviours and actions that we aim to manage under this Policy.

Unacceptable behaviour is not:

- Where someone is determined
- Assertive or
- Upset

3.0 Aggressive or abusive behaviour

We understand that many customers are often upset and angry about the issues they have raised with ccha via a service request or a complaint. If that anger escalates into aggression towards ccha staff, we consider that unacceptable. Any violence or abuse towards staff will not be tolerated.

Violence is not restricted to acts of aggression that may result in physical harm. It also includes behaviour or language (whether verbal or written) that may cause staff to feel offended, afraid, threatened or abused.

We will judge each situation individually and appreciate individuals who come to us may be upset. While we accept that those who contact us may feel angry, it is not acceptable to shout or swear at ccha staff.

Unacceptable language is that which:

- is offensive, derogatory or patronising,
- is discriminatory in any way, including racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic comments; or
- makes serious allegations that individuals have committed criminal, corrupt or perverse conduct without any evidence.

We may decide that comments aimed not at us but at third parties are unacceptable because of the effect that listening or reading them may have on our staff. Examples include rudeness, offensive comments, derogatory remarks, making inflammatory statements, or raising unsubstantiated allegations made towards these third parties.

Threats against staff will be taken very seriously and if staff feel scared or threatened at any point during a conversation with a customer, the interaction may be ended at any time.

4.0 Unreasonable demands

A demand becomes unacceptable when it starts to (or when complying with the demand would) impact substantially on the work of our services.

Examples of this behaviour include:

- repeatedly demanding a response within an unreasonable timescale,
- insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular member of staff, when that is not possible,
- repeatedly changing the substance of a complaint or raising unrelated concerns.

An example of such impact would be that the demand takes up an excessive amount of staff time and in doing so disadvantages other customers and prevents their own service request or complaint from being dealt with quickly.

5.0 Unreasonable levels of contact

Sometimes the volume and duration of contact made to our service by an individual causes problems. This can occur over a short period, for example, several calls in one day or hour.

It may occur over a long period of time when a customer repeatedly makes long telephone calls to us or inundates us with copies of information that has been sent already or that is irrelevant to the issues being raised.

We consider that the level of contact has become unacceptable when the amount of time spent talking to a customer on the telephone, or responding to, reviewing, and filing emails or written correspondence impacts on our ability to deal with that service request or complaint.

6.0 Harassment

Staff have the right to carry out their duties free from harassment or threats of harassment. We ask all customers to respect that staff are delivering services and

communication decisions on behalf of ccha and therefore this may not reflect their own views or preferences.

Examples of behaviours we consider to be harassment against our staff include:

- recording telephone discussions and publishing the information online such as through YouTube, Facebook or Twitter;
- contacting staff using their personal details or social media presence such as Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn;
- publishing personal, sensitive or private information about staff online or other public domains such as noticeboards or newsletters

7.0 Unacceptable or excessive demands

A demand becomes unacceptable when it starts to (or when complying with the demand would) impact substantially on the work of ccha.

Examples of this behaviour include:

- repeatedly demanding a response within a timescale outside of service level agreements,
- insisting on, or refusing to, speak to a particular member of staff, when that is not possible,
- repeatedly changing the substance of a service request or complaint or raising unrelated concerns,
- Making repeated and unnecessary contact during us dealing with a service request or complaint or carrying out an investigation,
- Refusing to accept a decision where explanations for the decision have been provided.

An example of such impact would be that the demand takes up an excessive amount of staff time and in doing so disadvantages other customers and prevents their own queries from being dealt with quickly.

8.0 Unacceptable and persistence levels of contact

We consider that the level of contact has become unacceptable when the amount of time spent talking to a customer on the telephone, or responding to, reviewing, and filing emails or written correspondence impacts on our ability to deal with that service request or complaint, or with other customers'.

Unacceptable or persistent levels of contact include:

- Continuous contact while we are in the process of considering a matter,
- Repeated telephone calls over a short period, for example, a high number calls in one day or week,
- Lengthy telephone calls repeating the same points of discussion,
- High volumes of information provided by email or post referencing the same issues,
- Unnecessarily or excessive copying us into emails to other parties.

9.0 Refusal to co-operate

When dealing with a service request or a complaint, we will need to ask the individual to work with us. This can include agreeing with us:

- the service request or complaint we will look at,

- to provide us with further information, evidence, or comments on request, or
- help us by summarising their concerns.

Sometimes, an individual repeatedly refuses to co-operate and this makes it difficult for us to proceed. We will always seek to assist someone if they have a specific, genuine difficulty complying with a request.

However, we consider it is unacceptable to bring a service request or a complaint to us and then not respond to clear and appropriate requests by staff.

10.0 Reasonable adjustments

We understand that some customers may find it difficult for them to express themselves or communicate clearly, especially when they are anxious or upset. To do this, we ask that customers explain what adjustments they're looking for and how this will ensure they can access our services.

We will always consider making reasonable adjustments for a customer if we are asked to do so. Examples of adjustments we can consider are:

- 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.

However, we do not expect our staff to accept being subjected to aggressive, offensive, threatening, or abusive actions, language or behaviour.

We may still use the policy if there are actions or behaviours which are having a negative effect on our staff or our work even where a reasonable adjustment has been made.

Please refer to reasonable adjustment's guidance for more information.

11.0 Actions we may take

When we experience behaviour or demands which are unacceptable, we may consider taking more formal action. The actions we will consider can include the following:

- Try to deal with the with substantive issue, be clear and robust in conversations
- Fully recording any unacceptable behaviour, when, why, the behaviour, and the advice given
- Warning the customer about their behaviour and requesting that the customer modifies their behaviour in future contact with us.
- Appointing a specific point of contact for the customer
- Communicating only in writing or via a representative
- Restricting the frequency of contact
- Stop all communication with a customer
- Refer the resident to our internal awareness and/or caution register
- In exceptional circumstances, notify relevant public authorities

Where it is decided that formal action must be taken to manage someone's behaviour or if they are to be placed on our awareness and/or caution register, we will inform them of the decision in writing. A note will be placed on our records to this effect.

Customers have the right to appeal the decision and they will be informed how to do this in the formal letter.

12.0 ccha's Caution Register

"The Caution Register" provides information to our staff and contractors to inform them of when additional safety procedures are necessary.

A Panel of staff will meet to review a case and:

- Decide whether to add residents onto the register either via direct application or after a temporary caution has been added by a manager;
- Decide the duration of inclusion and the appropriate additional safety procedures to be put in place;
- Agree whether residents on the register should be removed, moved to the awareness register or retained on the database.

The Panel will be provided with sufficient evidence to ensure a fair decision is made

13.0 Your rights

Decisions to restrict contact will be taken after careful consideration.

When a decision has been made and approved, a customer will be told:

- Why a decision has been made to restrict future contact
- The restricted contact arrangements
- The length of time that these restrictions will be in place
- Customers can request a review of a decision to restrict contact
- The review will be considered by a Panel.
- They will advise in writing whether there is to be any reconsideration and the reasons why.

14.0 Staff Conduct

ccha staff are expected to treat everyone with respect and consideration.

We expect all staff to:

- treat everyone they meet in the performance of their role with equal respect, care and consideration.
- show respect for individuals' chosen identities.
- promote, through their own behaviours, an organisational culture that is welcoming, accepting and accommodating to people of all backgrounds, cultures and personal and protected characteristics.
- not harass, bully or attempt to intimidate any person, or use threatening or aggressive behaviour or other discriminatory behaviours.
- not display language in the performance of their role which other people might reasonably find offensive.

Version History	
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