

Title:	Unacceptable Behaviour Policy
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out WPH's approach to managing unacceptable behaviour from a small number of residents whose actions or conduct place unreasonable demands on staff or compromise the safety and wellbeing of others.
- 1.2 WPH recognises that residents may at times feel distressed, frustrated, or upset, particularly where housing-related issues have a significant personal impact. We do not regard behaviour as unacceptable simply because a resident is assertive, persistent, or determined in pursuing an issue.
- 1.3 This policy follows the approach of the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS)
- 1.4 WPH is committed to maintaining a safe working environment for staff while ensuring residents continue to have access to our services.

2. Purpose of this Policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to:
 - Define what WPH considers to be unacceptable behaviour
 - Set out how WPH will respond to and manage such behaviour

- Protect staff, or those working on behalf of WPH from aggressive, abusive, or unreasonable conduct
- Ensure residents are treated fairly, consistently, and with due regard to their individual circumstances
- Provide clarity on residents' rights, including review and appeal routes

3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all residents and any individuals acting on their behalf when engaging with WPH, including contact made:

- In person
- By telephone
- In writing (letters, emails)
- Via digital platforms or social media

4. Definition

4.1 Unacceptable behaviour is behaviour that, due to its nature or frequency, causes distress, fear, or disruption to staff (or others working on behalf of WPH) or significantly interferes with WPH's ability to deliver services effectively.

4.2 Unacceptable behaviour is grouped under two broad categories:

- Aggressive or abusive behaviour
- Unreasonable demands or unreasonable frequency of contact

4.3 Aggressive or Abusive Behaviour

4.3.1 WPH recognises the difference between anger and aggression. A resident may feel justifiably angry; however, behaviour becomes unacceptable when it escalates into aggression towards staff or those working on behalf of WPH..

4.3.2 Aggressive behaviour is not limited to physical acts and includes any behaviour or language that causes staff/WPH representatives to feel threatened, intimidated, frightened, or abused.

4.3.3 Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Threats of harm or intimidation
- Physical violence or assault
- Personal abuse or offensive language
- Derogatory, discriminatory, or hateful remarks
- Rudeness or hostility intended to intimidate
- Inflammatory statements or unsubstantiated allegations made against staff or WPH representatives

4.4 Unreasonable Demands

4.4.1 Behaviour may be considered unreasonable where it has a substantial impact on

WPH's work due to the volume, frequency, or nature of contact, or the expectations placed on staff.

4.4.2 Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Repeated demands for responses within unreasonable timescales
- Insisting on dealing with a specific member of staff without justification
- Excessive or continual contact via phone, email, letters, or social media
- Repeatedly changing the substance of a complaint or raising unrelated matters
- Persistent refusal to engage with WPH's complaints policy or procedures

5. How WPH Will Respond

5.1 WPH will assess each case individually and respond proportionately based on the nature, seriousness, and frequency of the behaviour.

5.2 Where behaviour may constitute a criminal offence, such as violence, harassment, hate crime, or abuse, WPH may refer the matter to the police or other appropriate authorities.

5.3 In most cases, WPH will seek to manage the situation directly and constructively to enable continued access to services while protecting staff.

5.4 All incidents will be logged by staff / WPH representatives on an incident form and discussed with managers to mitigate risk and agree actions that WPH will take.

6. Actions We May Take

6.1 Actions may be taken individually or in combination and may include:

- Restricting contact to specific communication channels
- Limiting the frequency of contact
- Requiring contact to be made through a nominated representative
- Ending telephone calls or meetings where behaviour becomes abusive, offensive, harassing or inappropriate.
- Taking legal action in serious or persistent cases

6.2 Staff may take immediate action at the time of an incident, for example, ending a call if it becomes abusive.

6.3 Any ongoing restriction arrangements must be approved by the relevant Director of Service and confirmed to the resident in writing, including the reasons for the decision and the duration of the restriction.

7. Equality, Vulnerability, and Reasonable Adjustments

7.1 When applying this policy, WPH will take into account the resident's personal circumstances and comply with the Equality Act 2010.

7.2 Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments will be made to support residents with vulnerabilities, including mental health conditions, disabilities, or communication needs.

7.3 This may include working with family members, carers, advocates, or external agencies such as Community Mental Health Teams.

8. Review and Right of Appeal

8.1 Residents have the right to request a review or appeal against a decision to restrict contact or to ask for restrictions to be amended or removed.

8.2 Appeals or review requests must be submitted in writing and will be considered by the Chief Executive (or nominated senior officer) within 10 working days.

8.3 Requests for review will not be considered more than once within any three-month period.

8.4 All restricted contact arrangements will be formally reviewed at least every three months by the Corporate Services Manager, the staff member impacted (where specific) and their line manager to ensure they remain proportionate and necessary.

9. Staff Support

9.1 WPH is committed to supporting those affected by unacceptable behaviour.

9.2 Staff will receive support from their line manager and have access to confidential advice and support through the Employee Assistance Programme.

10. Legislation and Related Policies

10.1 Key legislation relevant to this policy includes:

- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

10.2 Related WPH policies include:

- Complaints Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

11. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

11.1 WPH is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in everything we do. We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly, consistently, and

transparently, and that no person is treated less favourably on the basis of a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

- 11.2 WPH recognises and values the diversity of the communities we serve. We will act sensitively to the differing needs of individuals and will take positive action and make reasonable adjustments where appropriate to ensure equitable access to our services.
- 11.3 In implementing this policy, WPH will have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between different groups
- 11.4 Where a resident has additional needs, vulnerabilities, or communication requirements, WPH will work proactively to provide appropriate support, including alternative communication methods or engagement with advocates, carers, or partner agencies.
- 11.5 This policy supports WPH's wider commitment to dignity, respect, and fairness for residents, staff, and stakeholders.