

Dover District Council

# Managing Unacceptable Behaviour Policy

Summery  
Version



2024

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Dover District Council (“the Council”) is committed to putting our tenants at the heart of our service delivery. We believe that all tenants have the right to be heard, understood, and respected. Our staff and contractors should also have the same rights and protections.
- 1.2 We acknowledge that people may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to the tenant contacting us. However, we will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour. It is these behaviours and actions that we aim to manage under this Policy.
- 1.3 This document summarises the full version of the Policy which is available on our [website](#).

## 2. What is the purpose of this policy?

- 2.1 The purpose of this Policy is to set out what we consider to be unacceptable behaviour from tenants, what our expectations are of tenants and their behaviour, and to give our staff and contractors a framework which manages unacceptable behaviour appropriately and consistently.
- 2.2 The Policy defines the following:
  - 1) The unacceptable behaviour from a resident(s) which we will not tolerate towards staff and contractors working on our behalf; and
  - 2) The actions that may be taken if staff and contractors are faced with unacceptable behaviour from a resident(s).

## 3. Who does this policy apply to?

- 3.1 The Policy applies to:
  - Housing staff.
  - Contractors working on behalf of the Council conducting housing-related tasks.
  - Tenants, other household members and visitors, who live in a Council-owned property.
  - Prospective tenants on Council’s housing waiting list.
  - People acting on behalf of tenants and prospective tenants where they have authority to do so.
  - Tenants transferring from a Registered Provider (Housing Association).
  - Tenants placed in temporary accommodation, whether Council or privately owned.
  - Homelessness applicants.
- 3.2 All other residents not listed above, will be dealt with in accordance with the Council’s Corporate policies and procedures.

## 4. The policy principles

4.1 In operating this Policy, we will apply the following principles:

1. All tenants will be dealt with in a fair, honest, and consistent manner and will be given the opportunity to reflect on and adjust their behaviour.
2. We will not tolerate any form of unacceptable behaviour from tenants as defined by this Policy.
3. All staff are expected to use their skills and knowledge, and to act professionally to try to resolve situations.
4. Services are accessible to all tenants. However, we may decide to restrict or change access to services when a tenant(s) behaves in an unacceptable way.
5. Our aim is to try and make sure the physical and emotional safety of tenants, staff and contractors is not at risk from any tenant(s) who behaves in an unacceptable way.
6. We will alert the Police if it is considered that there is an immediate danger to staff, contractors or other residents due to a tenant's unacceptable behaviour or actions.

## 5. What are your responsibilities?

5.1 As a tenant you are responsible for your behaviour and the behaviour of any household member and visitor to your home. We expect you to abide by your tenancy agreement which states:

*You and anyone who lives in or visits your home must not harass, intimidate, abuse or cause a nuisance, annoyance or disturbance to neighbours, local residents, visitors to the area, employees, agents or contractors of the Council or any other person living in, visiting or engaging in a lawful activity in the locality of your home. (Clause 3.3.3).*

5.2 Failure to abide by the tenancy agreement can result in enforcement action being taken against you and ultimately can result in the loss of your tenancy if taken to court.

## 6. What is 'unacceptable behaviour'?

We take all forms of unacceptable behaviour, whether physical, written or verbal made against staff or our contractors very seriously. Unacceptable behaviour includes the following:

### 1. Aggressive or abusive behaviour

Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Physical threats or violence or threatening / intimidating behaviour.
- Abusive language (written or verbal).
- Discriminatory and derogatory language, including racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic comments.
- False and unfounded allegations of criminal, corrupt or perverse conduct without any evidence.

## 2. Unreasonable and excessive demands

Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Repeatedly demanding a response within an unreasonable timescale
- Demanding for actions or certain actions to be taken by Housing Services.
- Insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular member of staff or contractor when that is not possible or where that member of staff or contractor is not the appropriate person to deal with the issue.
- Repeatedly changing the substance of a complaint or raising unrelated concerns.
- Repeatedly raising the same issue with the same member of staff or contractor or multiple members of staff or contractors.
- Where the demand(s) takes up an excessive amount of staff and / or contractors' time, and in doing so disadvantages other tenants and prevents or impacts service delivery.

## 3. Unreasonable and persistent levels of contact

Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Continuous contact while we are in the process of considering a matter.
- Repeated telephone calls, emails or in person drop-ins over a short period, for example, a high number of calls in one day or week.
- High volumes of information provided or post referencing the same issues.
- Unnecessarily and excessively copying staff or contractors into emails to other parties.

## 4. Harassment

Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Audio / visual recording of staff and contractors while they carry out their duties, without their prior consent or reasonable excuse.
- Contacting staff or contractors using their personal details or social media presence such as Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn.
- Publishing personal, sensitive, or private information about staff or contractors online or via other mediums and domains such as noticeboards or newsletters.

## 5. Refusal to co-operate

Sometimes an individual or group may repeatedly refuse to co-operate when we are trying to deal with a situation or complaint that has been raised by a tenant, and this makes it difficult for us to proceed with resolving the issue or completing our investigation. We consider it unacceptable for any tenant to raise a concern and proceed to not respond to clear and appropriate requests by staff.

## 7. How we will manage unacceptable behaviour

7.1 We use a 4-stage approach to managing unacceptable behaviour. This is:

### Stage 1 – Initial warning

7.2 We will give you 2 warnings to moderate your behaviour. If you do not moderate or change your behaviour, we will progress to Stage 2.

### Stage 2 – Written warning

7.3 We will post a letter addressed to you giving you a written warning. The letter will explain what the reasons are for the warning, and what actions we will take if you continue to behave unacceptably towards our staff or contractors.

### Stage 3 – Contact restrictions

7.4 We put contact restrictions into place if you continue to behave unacceptably towards staff and / or contractors after the warning letter has been issued. Examples of types of contact restrictions include, but are not limited to:

- Contact is limited to writing only
- Contact is limited to a specific individual
- The tenant is removed from the Council's social media and is blocked from our accounts.
- Contact is limited to a specific email address, telephone number or mobile number
- Place on file without a further response if the issue raised in the correspondence has previously been considered.
- Contact is limited in other ways which we consider appropriate in the circumstances.

7.5 We will post a letter to you explaining what the contact restrictions are, and why we have chosen to put these in place. Contact restrictions will last for 6 months, however depending on the severity of the unacceptable behaviour, they can last as long as 12 months.

### Stage 4 – Review

7.6 At the end of the 6 months period we will review whether we can end the contact restrictions, or if they should be extended. We will post a letter to you informing you of the decision.

7.7 If the restrictions have failed to stop the unacceptable behaviour we may decide to take legal action against you.

### Extreme cases

7.8 If your behaviour is extreme, for example you have physically assaulted, physically threatened or intimidated a member of staff or a contractor, the case will immediately progress to Stage 3. In these cases, we may involve the emergency services, such as the Police.

## 8. Appeals

8.1 You can appeal a decision to impose contact restrictions. Appeals must be made in writing to the Head of Housing within 20 days of the date of the decision. This can be emailed to us ([housing@dover.gov.uk](mailto:housing@dover.gov.uk)) or posted to:

**Dover District Council, Council Offices, White Cliffs Business Park, Whitfield, Dover, CT16 3PJ**

8.2 We will endeavour to respond to your appeal within 10 working days of receiving it.

## 9. Complaints

9.1 All complaints received will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy and procedures. More information about how you can make a complaint can be found on our website: [if you are unhappy \(dover.gov.uk\)](http://dover.gov.uk/if-you-are-unhappy).

## 10. Equality, diversity and inclusion

10.1 Although we have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of unacceptable behaviour, we are committed to dealing with all tenants fairly, honestly, consistently and appropriately. We understand that some tenants may have difficulty expressing themselves or communicating clearly with us. We will take this into account when we decide what actions to take. We may also request further information or evidence, and / or seek further advice from professionals.

## 11. Privacy statement and confidentiality

11.1 We are able to record and document information relating to tenant unacceptable behaviour, this is covered under the [Housing Service Privacy Notice and the Housing Needs and Housing Options Privacy Notice](#). Full details of how we store and use personal information can be found on our [website](#). For further information on our data protection compliance please view the [Corporate Privacy Notice](#).

The full version of this Policy is available on the Council's [website](#).