



Craigdale
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

UNACCEPTABLE ACTIONS POLICY

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Craigdale Housing Association can provide this document on request, in different languages and formats, including Braille and audio formats.

Unacceptable Actions Policy

1.0 Policy Statement

Craigdale Housing Association is committed to delivering high-quality, accessible services and ensuring that individuals have the right to raise concerns, make complaints and report anti-social behaviour (ASB).

We recognise that people contacting the Association may be experiencing distress, frustration or anger. We will always seek to listen, respond respectfully and resolve issues wherever possible.

However, the Association also has a responsibility to protect staff from unacceptable behaviour and to ensure that unreasonable demands do not prevent services being delivered effectively to other tenants and service users.

This policy explains how the Association will respond where behaviour towards staff or the organisation becomes unacceptable.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- define what the Association considers to be unacceptable behaviour
- support staff in managing difficult interactions safely and consistently
- ensure responses to unacceptable behaviour are fair, proportionate and transparent
- protect the ability of the Association to investigate complaints and ASB reports effectively.

3.0 Regulatory and Legal Context

This policy supports the Association's obligations under:

- the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) Complaints Handling Procedure
- the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework
- relevant health and safety legislation relating to staff protection
- equality legislation and the duty to consider reasonable adjustments.

4.0 Scope

This policy applies to all contact with Craigdale Housing Association including matters relating to:

- complaints
- service requests
- anti-social behaviour reports
- tenancy management matters
- housing management enquiries
- any other communication with the Association.

It applies to contact made in person, by telephone, email, letter, social media or any other communication channel.

5.0 Principles

In applying this policy the Association will:

- treat all individuals with respect and courtesy
- recognise the right of individuals to be heard and understood
- distinguish between persistent behaviour and unreasonable behaviour
- take a proportionate approach when managing behaviour
- consider relevant personal circumstances and potential vulnerabilities
- ensure that any restrictions are regularly reviewed.

Being persistent, determined or expressing strong views does not in itself constitute unacceptable behaviour.

6.0 Definitions of Unacceptable Behaviour

Behaviour will normally be considered unacceptable where it:

- involves aggression, threats or abuse towards staff
- harasses staff or attempts to intimidate employees
- places disproportionate demands on the Association's resources
- prevents a fair investigation of a complaint or ASB report
- repeatedly raises issues that have already been fully investigated without new evidence
- attempts to disrupt the organisation's ability to provide services.

7.0 Types of Unacceptable Behaviour

7.1 Aggressive or Abusive Behaviour

The Association does not tolerate behaviour that causes staff to feel threatened, intimidated or abused. This includes:

- threats of violence
- physical aggression
- verbal abuse or shouting
- discriminatory, offensive or derogatory language
- personal insults directed at staff
- harassment of staff in person, by telephone, in writing or online
- publishing or sharing abusive comments about staff online.

Serious incidents may be reported to Police Scotland.

7.2 Unreasonable Demands

A demand becomes unreasonable when complying with it would significantly impact the ability of staff to deliver services.

Examples include:

- repeatedly demanding responses within unrealistic timescales
- insisting on speaking to a particular staff member where this is not appropriate
- repeatedly changing the basis of a complaint or ASB case
- demanding enforcement action that is outside the Association's powers
- refusing to accept decisions after all review stages have been completed.

7.3 Excessive Contact

Contact may become unreasonable where the frequency, volume or duration of communication prevents staff from progressing a case.

Examples include:

- making numerous telephone calls within a short period
- sending large volumes of emails or correspondence
- repeatedly submitting the same information
- contacting multiple staff members simultaneously about the same issue.

7.4 Behaviour in Anti-Social Behaviour Cases

The Association recognises that tenants experiencing anti-social behaviour may need to report incidents regularly. However, behaviour may become unreasonable where individuals:

- repeatedly report incidents that have already been investigated
- submit excessive incident diary entries relating to historic issues
- demand enforcement action without supporting evidence
- request updates significantly more frequently than agreed communication arrangements
- attempt to direct or control the investigation process.

8.0 Managing Unacceptable Behaviour

Where behaviour becomes unacceptable the Association will aim to take the minimum action necessary to manage the situation while allowing the issue to be addressed.

Initial actions may include:

- explaining why the behaviour is unacceptable
- asking the individual to modify their behaviour
- ending telephone calls where abuse occurs
- requesting that communication remains respectful and relevant.

Where appropriate a formal warning may be issued.

9.0 Communication Management Plans

Where contact becomes excessive or disruptive the Association may implement a communication management plan.

This may include:

- nominating a single point of contact
- limiting contact to specific methods (for example written communication only)
- scheduling regular updates at agreed intervals
- arranging meetings by appointment only
- limiting the frequency of contact.

These arrangements are intended to allow cases to progress effectively while ensuring staff are able to deliver services to all tenants.

10.0 Restrictions on Contact

In exceptional circumstances the Association may apply restrictions where previous attempts to manage behaviour have not been successful.

Possible restrictions include:

- communication through a nominated officer only
- written contact only
- limiting the frequency of communication
- declining to respond to repeated issues already addressed
- requiring communication through a representative.

Restrictions will normally be applied for a defined period and reviewed regularly.

11.0 Decision Making

Decisions to restrict contact will normally be made by a senior manager after considering the circumstances and reviewing any relevant evidence.

Before restrictions are applied we will normally:

- explain the concerns about behaviour
- give the individual an opportunity to change their behaviour
- consider any relevant personal circumstances or vulnerabilities.

12.0 Informing the Individual

Where restrictions are applied the Association will write to the individual explaining:

- the reasons for the decision
- the restrictions that will apply
- the duration of the restrictions
- how the decision can be reviewed.

13.0 Appeals

Individuals may request a review of a decision to restrict contact.

A senior staff member who was not involved in the original decision will consider the review and decide whether the restrictions should remain, be amended or removed.

14.0 Recording and Monitoring

All incidents of unacceptable behaviour and any actions taken will be recorded.

Where restrictions are applied these will be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain necessary and proportionate.

Restrictions may be lifted where behaviour improves.

15.0 Interaction with Tenancy Enforcement

Where behaviour towards staff is threatening, abusive or harassing this may also be considered under the tenant's tenancy agreement and anti-social behaviour policies.

16.0 Equality, Vulnerability and Support

Before applying restrictions the Association will consider whether behaviour may be linked to distress, vulnerability or support needs.

Where appropriate the Association will consider reasonable adjustments or support options to help individuals engage with services appropriately.

17.0 Responsibilities

Senior management are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently and that staff receive appropriate support when managing difficult behaviour.

Staff are responsible for reporting incidents of unacceptable behaviour and following the procedures set out in this policy.

18.0 Monitoring and Review

The Association will monitor the use of this policy to ensure it is applied fairly and proportionately.

The policy will normally be reviewed every three years or earlier if regulatory or legislative changes require this.

Operational Guidance

The following guidance is provided to support staff in applying this policy consistently.

19.0 Escalation Framework for Managing Unreasonable Behaviour

Stage	Action	Description
Stage 1	Informal Warning	Staff explain that behaviour is unacceptable and request that the individual modifies their behaviour.
Stage 2	Formal Warning	A written warning is issued outlining the behaviour, expected standards and potential consequences if behaviour continues.
Stage 3	Communication Management Plan	A structured communication plan is implemented (for example single point of contact, scheduled updates, written communication only).
Stage 4	Contact Restrictions	Restrictions are applied such as limiting communication methods or frequency of contact.
Stage 5	Severe Restrictions (Exceptional)	Communication may only be accepted through a representative or further complaints may not be considered where issues have already been investigated.

Restrictions will normally be applied for a defined period (typically 3–6 months) and reviewed regularly.

20.0 Serial or Repetitive Complaints

In some circumstances individuals may repeatedly raise the same issues after they have been fully investigated and responded to through the Association's complaints or ASB procedures.

Where the Association is satisfied that:

- the issue has been fully investigated
- a clear response has been provided
- no new evidence has been submitted

We may decide that further correspondence on the same matter will not be considered.

In these circumstances the individual will be informed in writing that the matter is considered closed and that further correspondence on the issue may not receive a response.

This approach will only be used in exceptional circumstances and decisions will be made by a senior manager.

21.0 Social Media and Online Behaviour

The Association recognises that individuals may express views about services online.

However behaviour may be considered unacceptable where individuals:

- publish abusive or threatening comments about staff
- post defamatory allegations about employees
- share personal information about staff members
- record or publish interactions with staff in a way intended to intimidate or harass.

Where this occurs the Association may take action under this policy and may also consider

Reporting the matter to the relevant social media platform or to Police Scotland where appropriate.

22.0 Staff Safety and Home Visits

The safety of staff is a priority for Craigdale Housing Association.

Where a tenant or service user has demonstrated aggressive, threatening or abusive behaviour, additional safety measures may be implemented including:

- conducting visits with two members of staff present
- arranging meetings in office environments rather than at the individual's home
- requiring appointments in advance
- suspending home visits where risks cannot be safely managed.

Any incidents involving threats, harassment or violence towards staff may be reported to Police Scotland and recorded under the Association's health and safety procedures.

23.0 Staff Support

Staff who experience unacceptable behaviour will be supported by the Association. This may include:

- management support and supervision
- incident reporting and review
- health and safety risk assessments
- access to employee wellbeing support where required.

Managers are responsible for ensuring staff are not expected to tolerate abusive or threatening behaviour in the course of their work.

24.0 Reasonableness Test Before Applying Contact Restrictions

Before contact restrictions are applied, the responsible manager should consider the following checklist to ensure that any action taken is fair, proportionate and consistent with regulatory expectations.

Managers should confirm that:

- the behaviour has been clearly documented
- the individual has been informed that their behaviour is considered unacceptable
- the individual has been given an opportunity to modify their behaviour
- the impact of the behaviour on staff and services has been assessed
- any relevant personal circumstances or vulnerabilities have been considered
- alternative approaches (for example a communication management plan) have been explored
- the proposed restriction is proportionate to the behaviour
- the restriction will be reviewed within a defined timeframe.

A record of this assessment should be retained on the relevant case file.

25.0 Managing Unreasonable Behaviour

The following steps provide a simple guide for dealing with difficult interactions.

Step 1 Identify behaviour

Determine whether the behaviour involves abuse, threats, excessive contact or unreasonable demands.

Step 2 Address behaviour early

Explain calmly that the behaviour is unacceptable and ask the individual to modify their behaviour.

Step 3 Set boundaries

If behaviour continues, clearly state that the conversation will end or that contact arrangements may be changed.

Step 4 Record the incident

Document what occurred, including dates, behaviour observed and any action taken.

Step 5 Escalate where necessary

Report repeated incidents to a manager so that a formal warning, communication plan or restrictions can be considered.

Staff should never feel obliged to tolerate abusive or threatening behaviour. Where necessary, calls should be ended and support sought from a manager.