PORTSMOUTH CHURCHES HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD.

Unacceptable behaviour policy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out our approach to managing unacceptable behaviour from residents towards Portsmouth Churches Housing Association (PCHA). This includes employees, contractors, and any third parties providing services on our behalf.

1.2 Any reference to 'we', 'our' or 'us' means PCHA.

1.3 We believe that our residents have the right to be heard, understood and respected. We will not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is assertive or strong-willed. However, we know that residents may act out of character during times of distress and worry; this does not mean their behaviour should be automatically considered unacceptable.

1.4 We treat all residents sincerely, impartially and appropriately regardless of their past actions, acceptable or not.

1.5 PCHA Staff team have the right to do their job without fear of being abused or harassed; any violence or abuse towards is not tolerated.

1.6 Occasionally, the actions of residents result in unreasonable behaviour towards staff members. We will take appropriate action to manage these behaviours and ensure the safety and wellbeing of our staff.

1.7 Any dissatisfactory behaviour reported about staff will be fully investigated.

1.8 This policy covers behaviour on all types of communication including:

- Email
- In person
- Telephone
- Letter
- Online
- Social media

2.0 How we define unacceptable behaviour

2.1 Unacceptable behaviour includes:

- Abusive behaviour towards colleagues or contractors
- Unreasonable demands or persistence
- Harassment
- Refusal to co-operate

2.2 Aggressive or abusive behaviour

We understand a resident may feel angry about the circumstance that resulted in them contacting us. However, it is not acceptable when anger escalates into aggression towards our staff.

Abusive behaviour is not limited to acts that result in physical harm. It includes behaviour or language used that may cause staff to feel afraid, threatened or offended and can impact their ability to carry out their jobs. PCHA staff members understand the difference between anger and abuse.

Examples of behaviours considered unacceptable:

- Threats
- Shouting
- Physical violence
- Derogatory or patronising comments
- Discriminatory comments including ageist, racist, sexist, homophobic etc.
- Unsubstantiated allegations against colleagues

2.3 Unreasonable demands or persistence

We are a small organisation and will consider any requests or suggestions to improve the quality of our service. Demands are considered unacceptable when they become unrealistic in respect to the nature and scale of our service.

Unreasonable persistent behaviour is where, despite our reasonable attempts to resolve a matter, the resident:

- Continues to make repeated contact about the same issue.
- Refuses to accept the outcome of a decision or is seeking an outcome which we are unable to give due to policies, legalities, or other valid reasons.
- Repeatedly changing the substance of a complaint or raising unrelated concerns

The way in which the resident approaches us may be reasonable, but their persistence in doing so is not.

Examples of this behaviour include:

- Asking for responses within an unreasonable time period.
- Making unfound complaints or requests for repairs.
- Persistently refusing to accept issues that do not fall within our remit.
- Continual phone calls, letters, or emails to staff.
- Persistently approaching us through different routes about the same issue.

2.4 Harassment

PCHA staff and contractors have the right to carry out their duties free from harassment or threats from harassment. We expect the residents to respect this and understand they are delivering a service that may not reflect their own views.

Examples of harassment include:

- Audio/visual recording of staff and contractors without their prior consent or reasonable excuse.
- Contacting staff or contractors using their personal details or social media such as Facebook, X, LinkedIn etc.
- Publishing personal or sensitive information about staff or contractors online or via other mediums such as noticeboards.

2.5 Refusal to co-operate

When we are dealing with a resident's complaint or carrying out an investigation, we may need the resident to work with us. This can include providing us with further information, evidence of comments on request, or summarising their concerns.

When a resident refuses to co-operate, this makes it difficult to proceed with investigating the complaint/issue. We will always look to help someone if they have a specific, genuine difficulty complying with the request to co-operate, e.g. Disability or vulnerability.

However, we consider it unacceptable behaviour to raise a concern and later, not respond to appropriate requests related to the area of concern. Refusal to co-operate will force us to close the matter.

3.0 What happens if a resident behaves unacceptably?

3.1 How we respond to a resident behaving unacceptably will depend on the nature and extent of the incident.

3.2 Unless the incident involves physical violence or threats of violence which may require more formal action, we will explain to the resident why we find their behaviour unacceptable and allow them the chance to change their behaviour.

3.3 If a residents behaviour becomes unacceptable or abusive during a telephone call, we will warn them that we may terminate the call if they continue.

3.4 We recognise that a resident's behaviour may be a result of vulnerabilities such as mental health issues, substance misuse, or other factors. Before we take any formal action, we will assess the following:

- Identify any protected characteristics
- Identify any extenuating circumstances
- Understand the resident's particular needs

We will make sure the resident is aware of other support systems they may find helpful such as, mental health services, local authority safeguarding team.

3.5 Should we be granted permission to do so, we may correspond with a the next of kin of the resident or, for hostel residents, their support worker. We will take a multi-agency approach where the resident is receiving support from external agencies such as social services or Portsmouth City Council.

3.6 Where possible, we will attempt to reach a voluntary agreement with the resident and allow them time to recognise and change their behaviour. We may consider mediation through third parties to try and improve the situation.

3.7 If the unacceptable behaviour continues, we may issue the resident a written warning which outlines specific examples of this behaviour and any further steps we could take should this continue.

3.8 Formal action we may take include:

- Restricting the way and/or how often a resident contacts us for a specified period
- Limiting contact with specific members of staff
- Commencing the warning procedure (applicable to hostel residents)
- Contacting the police, local authorities and hostel support providers (if applicable)

Any action we take must be approved either by the Executive Officer or the Chairperson of the Management Committee.

3.9 Some of the unacceptable behaviours covered by this policy could be a criminal offence. For example: physical assault, harassment and hate crime. Should any member of staff choose to make a complaint to the police, they will have our support.

3.10 Where we have applied any restriction to manage unacceptable behaviours, the resident will be made aware of this and be given a letter to outline the conditions.

3.11 Any type of restriction will be applied to the residents' individual needs identified during the initial assessment.

3.12 We will keep records of any incidents of unacceptable behaviour.

4.0 Appeals against a decision to restrict contact

4.1 A resident has the right to appeal any formal restriction of contact we put in place or any action taken under this policy. We may refer them for support from an external agency to put forward the basis of their appeal.

4.2 The appeal must be set out in writing why the resident feels the decision is unjustified in accordance with this policy. It must be within 20 working days of receiving notification of the restriction. The Executive Officer or a member of the Management Committee not involved in the original decision will review the appeal and respond within 10 working days.

5.0 How we will review our decision to restrict contact

5.1 We will not set restrictions indefinitely; we will regularly review any type of restriction put in place to manage behaviours.

5.2 If the resident's behaviour has improved at the point of review, we may consider lifting the restriction. If it has not improved, we will provide an explanation as to why it will remain in place for a further period and agree the next review date.

6.0 What we have done to make sure this policy is fair

6.1 We have carried our equality impact assessment to consider the positive and negative impacts this policy may have on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

7.0 Confidentiality and information sharing

7.1 We will comply with collection, storage, access to, provision and disclosure of data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Policy produced September 2025

Review carried out September 2026

Review due September 2028