



**MANAGING
BEHAVIOURS
POLICY**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** Eastlight Community Homes (hereafter ‘Eastlight’) is committed to providing quality homes and services to its customers.
- 1.2** This Managing Behaviours Policy sets out Eastlight’s approach to the few customers whose actions or behaviour we consider unacceptable.
- 1.3** This Managing Behaviours Policy is to ensure that Eastlight meets its legal and statutory requirements under UK legislative and regulatory obligations.
- 1.4** It applies to employees, involved residents, consultants, Board Members, volunteers, representatives of Eastlight, and contractors (third parties) that are engaged to carry out our duties and manage data on our behalf and by our instructions.
- 1.5** This Policy also serves as a reference document for employees and third parties on the responsibilities of our organisation.

2. Aims & Objectives

- 2.1** We aim to make it clear to customers, at initial contact and throughout their dealings with us, what we can or cannot do regarding our services and how we deliver them. In doing so, we aim to not raise hopes or expectations that we cannot meet.
- 2.2** We also aim to deal fairly, honestly, consistently and appropriately with all customers, including those whose actions we consider unacceptable. We believe that our customers have the right to be heard, understood and respected, and that Eastlight staff have those same rights.
- 2.3** We want to provide a service that is accessible to all whilst retaining the right to restrict or change access to our service, where we consider customer actions to be unacceptable.
- 2.4** We want to make sure that other customers and Eastlight staff do not suffer any disadvantages from those who act in an unacceptable manner.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This Policy applies to anyone who holds a tenancy or lease with us, including members of their household, anyone who receives a service from us, and/or anyone who has applied to live in an Eastlight home.
- 3.2 It also applies to someone acting on behalf of any of the aforementioned.
- 3.3 This Policy is set in line with the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing Regulatory Framework.
- 3.4 We understand that many people have neurodiverse needs, which may affect how they communicate. We also recognise that upsetting circumstances can lead to people acting out of character during times of distress. We do not consider behaviour unacceptable simply because someone communicates differently, or because they are forceful or determined.
- 3.5 However, the actions of complainants who are angry, rude, offensive, demanding or persistent may put unreasonable demands on Eastlight or result in unacceptable behaviour towards our staff. We consider these actions unacceptable and aim to manage them under this Policy.

4. Managing Behaviour

- 4.1 **Aggressive or Abusive Behaviour**
 - 4.1.1 Violence is not restricted to acts of aggression that may result in physical harm. Violence also includes behaviour or language (whether oral or written) that may cause our staff to feel afraid, threatened or abused.
 - 4.1.2 Examples of aggressive or abusive behaviour includes:
 - Threats
 - Physical violence
 - Personal verbal abuse
 - Derogatory and offensive remarks
 - Rudeness
 - Inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations.
 - 4.1.3 We expect our staff to be treated courteously and with respect. Violence or abuse towards staff is unacceptable.

4.1.4 Our staff will show empathy, and where anger involves the subject matter, we will do our utmost to help provide a resolution. Where this escalates into aggression towards an Eastlight staff member, this is not acceptable.

4.2 Unreasonable Demands

4.2.1 Customers may make what we consider ‘unreasonable demands’ through the amount of information they want from us, the nature and scale of service they expect or the number of approaches they make.

4.2.2 What amounts to unreasonable demands will always depend on the circumstances surrounding the behaviour and the seriousness of the issues raised by the customer.

4.2.3 Examples of unreasonable demands include:

- Demanding a response within an unreasonable timescale
- Insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular member of staff
- Continual phone calls, emails or letters
- Repetitious requests for information
- Repeatedly changing the substance of the complaint
- Repeatedly raising unrelated concerns
- Deliberately or repeatedly obstructive, petty or hypercritical
- Repeatedly raising issues outside of our control.

4.2.4 We consider these demands unreasonable and unacceptable if they start to substantially impact on our work, such as taking up an excessive amount of staff time to the disadvantage of other customers.

4.3 Unreasonable Persistence

4.3.1 We recognise that some customers will not or cannot accept that we are unable to assist them or provide a level of service other than that provided already. Customers may persist in disagreeing with the action or decision taken regarding their requests or complaint or persist in contacting us about the same issue.

4.3.2 Examples of unreasonable persistence include:

- Persistent refusal to accept a decision regarding a complaint
- Persistent refusal to accept explanations about what we can or cannot do
- Continuing to pursue a complaint without presenting any new information
- Contacting numerous staff within Eastlight regarding the same issue at the same time.

4.3.3 The way in which these customers approach us may be entirely reasonable, but it is their persistent behaviour in continuing to do so that is not.

- 4.3.4 We consider the actions of persistent customers/complainants to be unacceptable when they take up what we regard as being a disproportionate amount of time and resources.

5. Managing Unacceptable Actions

- 5.1** We find very few customer actions unacceptable. How we aim to manage these actions is dependent on their nature and extent.
- 5.2** If the action adversely affects our ability to do our work and provide a service to others, we may need to manage the unacceptable action by restricting customer contact with us. We aim to do this in a way, wherever possible, that allows a service request or complaint to progress to completion through our general service or complaint process. We may restrict contact in person, by telephone, letter or electronically or by any combination of these.
- 5.3** We try to maintain at least one form of contact. In extreme situations, we will tell the customer in writing that their name is on a cautionary contact list. This means that they must restrict contact with us to either written communication or through a third party.
- 5.4** Eastlight staff that directly experience aggressive or abusive behaviour from a customer have the authority to deal immediately with that behaviour in a manner they consider appropriate to the situation and in line with this Policy. However, they must inform their line manager, Head of Service or Director immediately.
- 5.5** The threat or use of physical violence, verbal abuse or harassment towards Eastlight staff is likely to result in the ending of all direct contact with the customer. We may report incidents to the police, and this will always happen if physical violence is used or threatened.
- 5.6** We do not deal with correspondence (in any form) that is abusive to staff or contains allegations that lack substantive evidence. When this happens, we tell the customer that we consider their language offensive, unnecessary and unhelpful. We ask them to stop using such language and state that we will not respond to their correspondence if they do not stop. We may require future contact to be through a third party e.g. a family member, an MP or a representative from another agency.
- 5.7** Our staff will end phone calls if the caller is considered aggressive, abusive or offensive. The staff member taking the call has the right to make this decision, telling the caller that their behaviour is unacceptable and ending the call if the behaviour does not stop altogether.

- 5.8** Where a customer repeatedly exhibits such behaviour, as described in Section 4, we may decide to:
- Only take phone calls from the customer at set times on set days
 - Arrange for a single point of contact so that one member of staff deals with calls or correspondence from the customer in the future
 - Require the customer to make an appointment to see a named member of staff before visiting or that the customer contacts us in writing only
 - Return documents to the customer or, in extreme cases, advise the customer that further irrelevant documents will be destroyed
 - Offer a template for the customer to populate their enquiry, service request or complaint
 - Take other action that we consider appropriate. We will, however, always tell the customer what action we are taking and why.
- 5.9** Where a customer continues to correspond on a wide range of issues, and this action is considered excessive, then the customer will be told that only a certain number of issues will be considered in a given period and asked to limit or focus their requests accordingly.
- 5.10** Customer action may be considered unreasonably persistent if all internal review mechanisms have been exhausted and the customer continues to dispute our decision regarding their complaint or service request. The customer will be told that no future phone calls will be accepted or interviews given concerning this. Any future contact by the customer on this issue must be in writing. Future correspondence is read and filed, but only acknowledged or responded to if the customer provides significant new information relating to the complaint.

6. Appealing a Decision to Restrict Contact

- 6.1** A customer can appeal our decision to restrict contact. An Eastlight Director, who was not involved in the original decision, will consider any such appeals.
- 6.2** The Director will advise the customer in writing that either the restricted contact arrangements will still apply, or a different course of action has been agreed upon.

7. Reporting Arrangements

- 7.1** We record all incidents of customers' unacceptable actions in accordance with the Data Protection Act. If we decide to restrict contact, we will make a note in the relevant file and on appropriate computer records.
- 7.2** A decision to restrict customer contact will be reviewed at six-monthly intervals, commensurate with restrictions and behaviour.
- 7.3** We will tell customers when we implement restrictions and when we will be reviewing them. If the customer demonstrates a more acceptable approach, restrictions may be lifted.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

- 8.1** An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not necessary for this Policy.

9. Monitoring & Review

- 9.1** We will monitor the effectiveness and implementation of this Policy to ensure that customers are treated fairly and equitably.

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