



## Chrysalis Group & Subsidiaries

Chrysalis Group Services  
Touchstone Developments & Investments Ltd  
Chrysalis Supported Housing  
Opoka CIO  
Compass Project CIC  
Journey Care Services Ltd  
Blackfields Furniture Ltd

## Acceptable Behaviour Policy

Within the Chrysalis Group there is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation supporting Polish women and children escaping domestic abuse, a Registered Social Housing Landlord that delivers supported housing to vulnerable people, a Charitable Incorporated Company supporting those recovering from addiction including counselling and training, a limited company providing treatment under CQC regulation and other commercial companies offering internal and external related services. It is therefore essential that the Governance Framework used within the Group is fit for all the entities and their stakeholders, recognising the regulatory requirements of each organisation within the group. It is also essential that as service users may access services of more than one organisation within the group, policies and procedures are consistently applied across the group, staff are trained using the same guidelines and proper information sharing protocols are in place. For this reason, governance based policies are group wide but apply to all entities within the group to meet our mission:

*To safeguard and promote the wellbeing of our service users and communities across the UK, providing high quality, good value, sustainable services and homes, demonstrating that commercial opportunity and activities through the group can underpin our commitment to deliver for social good.*

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Chrysalis Group has Customer Service Standards that explain how our staff will behave towards and deal with residents, service users and other customers. It is equally important that our staff should not be subjected to unacceptable behaviours from anyone they deal with in the course of their work.
- 1.2 The Group is committed to providing the highest level of customer service and this is achieved through our Customer Service Standards. These set out not only the key functions staff will undertake in delivering our services, but also their approach and behaviour when interacting with our customers. We have an expectation that customers, in return will behave appropriately towards our staff and that staff will not be subjected to acceptable behaviour in the course of their work.
- 1.3 The Acceptable Behaviour Policy is necessary for the efficient management and administration of Chrysalis Supported Group now and in the future and has been designed to define behaviour which the Group deems to be unacceptable and to put safeguards in place should staff encounter such behaviour.
- 1.4 If legislative changes mean any of this policy does not comply with the latest current legislation this will override this policy. All other aspects of the policy will remain in force

## **2 Aim of the Policy**

The purpose of this Policy is:

- 2.1 To define what behaviour from residents and other customers we consider to be unacceptable.
- 2.2 To make every effort to ensure that our staff, contractors and agents working on behalf of the Group are able to carry out their duties safely without disadvantage, fear of discrimination or distress caused by unacceptable behaviour.

- 2.3 To give a commitment to our staff and make it clear to tenants, residents and other customers that unacceptable behaviour, by them will not be tolerated and will be dealt with robustly.
- 2.4 To provide guidance when particular circumstances would mean that we would consider a decision to restrict or change access to our service.

### **3 Scope**

The Acceptable Behaviour Policy extends beyond our staff to Board Members, contractors, consultants and other agencies working on behalf of the Group. Our view is very clear in that no one should be subjected to unacceptable behaviour when representing or working with or for the Group.

### **4 Links to Relevant Legislation**

The Acceptable Behaviour Policy is framed within the context of and complies with relevant legislation, which includes:

- a) The Equalities Act (2010)
- b) The Human Rights Act (1998)

This Policy also complies with the Group's various tenancy agreements.

### **5 Definitions**

For the purposes of this Policy, the term customer refers to:

- a) Current or former Chrysalis tenants
- b) Private tenants, owner occupiers or local landlords
- c) Housing applicants
- d) Service users and beneficiaries
- e) Visitors to any property owned by Chrysalis including people's homes and Chrysalis offices or other premises
- f) Friends, relatives, carers, advocates or a person or group acting on behalf of a customer or group of customers
- g) Elected members
- h) Suppliers and contractors
- i) commercial customers and clients
- j) Members of the general public

For the purposes of this Policy, the term 'staff' refers to:

- a) Staff directly employed by any Chrysalis Group organisation
- b) Chrysalis Board Members
- c) Staff employed by contractors or suppliers to Chrysalis Supported Group when they are working on behalf of Chrysalis
- d) Any agent working on behalf of Chrysalis Group
- e) Any person working with Chrysalis Group on a voluntary basis

For the purposes of this Policy, there are five main categories of unacceptable behaviour

These are:

- a) Unreasonable behaviour
- b) Aggressive or abusive behaviour
- c) Unreasonable demands
- d) Unreasonable persistence
- e) Vexatious behaviour

We will not deem behaviour to be unacceptable just because a customer is determined or forceful when making reasonable requests or complaints. We also appreciate that there may be circumstances where a customer is angry or upset and this will be considered when considering whether their actions are unacceptable.

## **6 Roles and Responsibilities**

6.1 Any staff or Board Member who believes they have experienced unacceptable behaviour, must raise their concerns to their line manager or the Company Group Secretary.

## **7 Equality and Diversity**

7.1 The Group will comply with the terms of our Equality and Diversity policy when dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. We will consider the individual circumstances of the staff member and the customer involved when investigating an incident and determine the most appropriate course of action and make adaptations where appropriate in line with the Equality Act.

7.2 No one will be unlawfully discriminated against because of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, language, religion, belief, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, family circumstances, employment status, physical ability or mental health.

## **8. Definitions of Unacceptable Behaviour**

### **8.1 Unreasonable Behaviour:**

Customers in some instances pursue requests for information or make complaints that are unreasonable.

Examples of this type of behaviour include:

- Refusing to specify the details of a complaint, despite offers of assistance.
- Changing the basis of a complaint/request as the matter proceeds.
- Denying or changing statements made at an earlier stage.
- Making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with an issue and requesting to have them replaced.
- Covertly recording meetings and conversations.
- Submitting falsified documents from themselves or others.
- Refusing to accept a decision; repeatedly arguing points with no new evidence.
- Persistently seeking an outcome which the Group has already explained is unrealistic for policy, legal or other valid reasons.

### **8.2 Aggressive or abusive behaviour:**

This type of behaviour includes physical, verbal or written behaviour which may cause staff to suffer harm, or to feel afraid, intimidated, threatened or abused.

Examples of this type of behaviour include:

- Physical violence against a person.
- Physical violence against objects such as kicking, defacing or destroying property.
- Threats.
- Personal verbal abuse.
- Derogatory or insulting remarks.
- Persistent shouting.
- Persistent swearing.
- Unwelcome or rude gestures.
- Statements intended to or likely to cause offence?
- Unsubstantiated allegations.
- Sexist, racist, homophobic or any other discriminatory comments/abuse.

We consider the use of social networking sites and the internet to perpetrate or encourage aggression and/or abuse including any of the above types of behaviour towards our staff to be unacceptable behaviour. (The Group will consider any messages posted via social media or other internet based media, including email, in the same light as any written or spoken communication.)

### 8.3 Unreasonable Demands:

Customers may make what can be considered as unreasonable demands on our staff through the amount of information they seek, the scale of the service they expect or the number of approaches or complaints that they make regarding the same issue.

We consider demands to be unreasonable when they impact substantially on the work of staff, for example by taking up an excessive amount of time which is disproportionate to the issue. This is likely to disadvantage other customers as it can impact on the service that can be provided to them.

Examples of this type of behaviour include:

- Demanding responses within an unreasonable timescale.
- Insisting on meeting with or speaking only to a particular member of staff.
- Making persistent phone calls or persistently contacting Chrysalis by other means.
- Repeatedly changing the substance of a complaint or raising unrelated issues.

### 8.4 Unreasonable Persistence:

We recognise that some customers will not or cannot accept that we are unable to assist them further or provide a level of service other than that provided already. Customers may persist in disagreeing with the action or decision taken in relation to their concern or contact our office persistently about the same issue.

We consider the actions of persistent customers to be unacceptable when they take up a disproportionate amount of time and resources. Customers who feel frustrated when they believe that they are not receiving appropriate satisfaction from the Group can pursue a complaint, ultimately to the Housing Ombudsman or other relevant independent organisation.

Examples of this type of behaviour include:

- Persistent refusal to accept a decision made in relation to a complaint.
- Refusal to accept explanations relating to what can and what cannot be done.

- Continuing to pursue a complaint without presenting any new information, although this does not preclude customers from pursuing a complaint through the Chrysalis complaints process.
- Unwillingness to accept the terms of a tenancy agreement or title conditions where these terms are clear and unambiguous.

#### 8.5 Vexatious Behaviour:

We consider vexatious behaviour to be when customers complain to cause unnecessary aggravation, frustration or inconvenience rather than to resolve a genuine issue. Their complaint may be based on fictitious events or extreme exaggerations of very minor service issues.

Examples of this type of behaviour include:

- Where the requester states the request is actually meant to cause significant inconvenience, disruption or annoyance.
- Requests for information the customer has already seen or demonstrates a clear intention to reopen issues that have already been considered.
- Customers who have developed an opportunity to complain by their own actions, or lack of actions, creating or making a situation worse, and then complaining about it.

#### 8.6 Raising Awareness of Unacceptable Behaviour

A copy of the Group's Acceptable Behaviour Policy will be part of the information provided to new tenants and partners and will be referred to in any future Written Statement of Services.

Housing Officers should emphasise that unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated during the sign-up of new tenancies.

Team meetings will be used to openly discuss cases of unacceptable behaviour and actions taken in all departments.

Our website, intranet and tenant newsletters (if applicable) will be used to raise awareness of the Acceptable Behaviour Policy.

Line managers should take responsibility for ensuring contractors and others as appropriate are aware of our Acceptable Behaviour Policy.

Appropriate signage, which advise customers that abusive behaviour will not be tolerated, should be placed in locations where they can clearly be seen by customers.

Appropriate training for staff and Board Members will be arranged to ensure that the policy is both understood and being adhered to.

#### 8.7 Managing Unacceptable Behaviour

There are relatively few customers whose actions we consider unacceptable. How we aim to manage these actions depends on their nature and extent. If it adversely affects our ability to do our work and provide a service to others, we may need to restrict a customer's contact with our office to manage the unacceptable behaviour.

In all cases a manager will contact the customer to explain what actions we consider unacceptable and why, ask them to amend their behaviour, and explain what actions we will

take if they do not. Where we have to take action we will tell the customer in writing what action we are taking and why.

We may offer to meet the customer to discuss the unacceptable actions and agree a way forward. It may be appropriate in some cases to engage external experts, such as independent mediators, to assist us in resolving a situation.

We may advise the customer that we consider the issue(s) fully responded to and that continuing correspondence on the issue(s) would serve no useful purpose. In these circumstances future correspondence relating to the issue(s) will be noted and filed but will not be acknowledged or responded to unless it contains new significant information which we consider require action or response.

We may advise the customer that we can only consider a certain number of issues within a given time period and ask them to limit or focus their request accordingly.

We may restrict customer contact with our office. For example, we may:

- Only take calls from the customer during specified times and days.
- Arrange for a specific member of staff to deal with calls or correspondence from the customer.
- Require the customer to make an appointment to see a named member of staff before visiting the office.
- Restrict email contact, which is immediate and easily abused.
- Require the customer to communicate in writing or through a third party and add them to a 'no personal contact' list.
- Take other action that we consider appropriate.

Customers will be notified in writing with details of any restrictions being imposed and the duration that these will apply.

#### 8.8 Aggressive or Abusive Behaviour

The threat or use of physical violence, verbal abuse or harassment towards staff is likely to result in a customer being added to a 'no personal contact' list. All incidents where physical violence is used or threatened will be reported to the police. Verbal abuse or harassment may also be reported to the police if it is sufficient to cause fear and alarm to a member of staff.

Customer correspondence that is abusive to staff or which contains unsubstantiated allegations of a serious nature will be dealt with by informing the customer in writing why we consider what they have written to be unacceptable. We will ask them to stop communicating in this way and advise that we will not respond to future abusive correspondence. If this behaviour continues, we may apply any of the restrictions listed at 9.6 and from 9.11.

We will end telephone calls if the caller is considered aggressive, abusive or offensive. All staff have the right to make this decision, they must tell the caller that the behaviour or language is unacceptable and end the call if the behaviour does not stop.

#### 8.9 Restricting Customer Contact

Apart from incidents where immediate action is required, decisions to restrict contact are only taken after careful consideration of the situation by a relevant Manager. Wherever possible we will give a customer the opportunity to modify their behaviour or action before a decision is taken.

We aim to restrict contact in a way that allows the customer to continue receiving a service from us and continue to progress through any process they are currently involved in. We will aim to maintain at least one form of contact except in extreme situations where we will require all contact to be through a third party and add the customer to a 'no personal contact' list.

Staff who directly experience aggressive or abusive behaviour from a customer have the authority to deal with that behaviour immediately in a manner they consider appropriate to the situation and in line with this policy.

We will tell customers in writing why a decision has been made to restrict future contact, the restricted contact arrangements and the length of time that the restriction will be in place.

We will ensure relevant staff are informed of any restrictions put in place.

Any decision to restrict customer contact must be made in the relevant file and on the Housing Management system.

We will report on the number of customer's subject to Unacceptable Behaviour restrictions annually to the Board.

#### 8.10 Right to Appeal

A customer has the right to appeal against a decision to restrict contact. The customer should be advised in writing about this right and the contact details of the Chief Executive to whom their appeal should be addressed. The Chief Executive will advise the customer in writing that either the restricted contact arrangements will remain in force or a different course of action has been agreed.

At this stage we will advise the customer of their right to contact the Housing Ombudsman or other relevant independent organisation if they believe our decision to restrict contact is unjust.

#### 8.11 Recording and Reviewing Decisions to Restrict Contact

We record all incidents of unacceptable actions and any decision taken to restrict customer contact. This information is kept on the Unacceptable Actions Log and relevant correspondence is saved in the relevant customer and/or complaint file on our computer system.

The Leadership Team will review the status of all customers with restricted contact arrangements regularly. A decision may be reconsidered, and restrictions may be lifted or eased if a customer demonstrates a more acceptable approach.

#### Related Documents

HM04	Complaints Policy
HM01	Dignity at Work Policy – (employee handbook)
HSM01	Health & Safety at Work Policy
HM01	Lone Working Policy – (employee handbook)