



## Acceptable behaviour policy

### 1 REFERENCE MATERIAL

1.1 The following were used as reference material and to guide the development of this policy:

- Housing Ombudsman Guidance
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2010
- Consumer standards
- Compliments and complaints
- Tenancy agreement

### 2 WHY WE NEED THIS POLICY

2.1 This document sets out Croft's policy with regards to acceptable behaviour. The document explains what customers and colleagues (including third party contractors) can expect from any interaction and what the potential consequences may be for customers should their behaviour become unacceptable.

2.2 In relation to this policy we consider a customer to be anyone engaging in any form of contact with Croft.

2.3 To deliver customer service in a fair and proportionate manner, in consideration of the diverse needs of our customers. Croft understands that some customers and members of the public may have complex or challenging needs which may influence their behaviour and consequently, how we manage their enquiries, but we will always treat them fairly and with respect.

2.4 Croft colleagues treat customers with respect, listen to them, show empathy and patience. In return we expect the same from our customers when they are speaking to anyone working for or on behalf of Croft.

2.5 This policy ensures that Croft has a consistent, effective, robust, and clear approach towards the management of unacceptable behaviour of customers.

2.6 Croft's priority is the safety of its customers and colleagues. If a person's behaviour, for whatever reason, is putting others at risk then Croft will act quickly to prevent any harm from occurring.

2.7 This policy is underpinned by several underlying principles, specifically but not limited to ensuring that:

- Our procedures and processes reflect good practice, legislative and regulatory requirements
- Persistent or vexatious customers can be quickly identified and managed appropriately
- Managers are empowered to respond accordingly where persistent and vexatious customers have been identified
- We can deal with all customers and deliver customer service in ways which are demonstrably consistent, fair, and reasonable
- We do not spend disproportionate resources where this is unjustifiable, potentially to the detriment of others requiring services.

### **3 HOW WE DO THIS**

3.1 The Acceptable Behaviour Procedure which accompanies this policy should be implemented in the case of a customer becoming unacceptably persistent, vexatious (e.g., harassing, argumentative), and unreasonable.

#### **Acceptable Behaviour**

3.2 As set out within Croft's Tenancy Agreement, customers are obliged to refrain from committing unfavourable conduct such as using, or threatening to use, violence or abusive or insulting words or behaviour towards employees, agents, or contractors.

3.3 In accordance with the Tenancy Agreement, customers are also obliged to refrain from doing anything or allowing anything to be done which causes or is likely to cause, a nuisance, annoyance, disturbance, or damage. This includes visitor and/or family member to a customer's home.

3.4 For customers who are not subject to a Tenancy Agreement the same terms are implied in their dealings with Croft.

3.5 Unacceptable behaviour is any behaviour that either prevents Croft colleagues from performing their duties or adversely affects Croft as a business from providing a service.

Examples of behaviours that are unacceptable include but are not limited to:

- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Verbal abuse
- Trivial and persistent complaints
- Malicious or personal harassment complaints
- Audio or video recording of a Croft colleague or contractor without

consent

### **Fairness and Objectiveness**

3.6 When identifying whether a customer's behaviour can be defined as unacceptable, and subsequently whether Croft's Management of the Acceptable Behaviour Procedure applies to the behaviour, staff must demonstrate fairness and objectiveness. Bias and prejudice will be always avoided during the decision-making process.

### **Record Management**

3.7 All staff are expected to maintain a detailed audit trail of contact with customers, for example, actions and/or notes added to IT systems, case notes, emails, etc. This information will form an evidence base of communication between staff and customers and is essential to identifying and reviewing whether a customer's behaviour can be unacceptable.

### **Aggressive, threatening, abusive or offensive language or behaviour**

3.8 All staff employed by Croft and customer have the right not to be subjected to aggressive, abusive, or offensive language or behaviour, by customers accessing services regardless of the circumstances.

3.9 Violence is not restricted to acts of aggression that may result in physical harm. It also includes behaviour or language (written or spoken) that may cause staff to feel distressed, threatened or abused themselves.

3.10 Colleagues are held accountable via 'how we act' and customers can use complainants' procedure to report unacceptable behaviour that they experience or see from a Croft colleague or person acting on Croft's behalf.

### **Available Restrictions**

3.12 Where a customer continues to communicate in an unreasonable manner, we exercise the right to restrict contact. The precise nature and action will be appropriate and proportionate to the nature of the unacceptable behaviour and the circumstances.

3.13 Where communication is restricted, if the customer requires access to a service the relevant timescales still apply, for example repairs. Restricted contacted is for customers that are communicating with us excessively and making unacceptable demands on a service and/or the customer is revisiting concluded requests. Another example would be a customer contacting a range of services and/or colleagues across the business with the same repeated requests.

3.14 Those authorised to plan to restrict contact are detailed in the Management of Acceptable Behaviour Procedure.

3.15 A number of actions will be considered when looking to restrict access including;

- Providing a single point of contact.
- Limiting contact to a single form ie to writing, email or telephone only.
- Limiting contact and or responses to certain times or to a limited number of times per week or month.
- Declining to give any further consideration to an issue unless any additional evidence or information is provided.
- Only considering a certain number of issues in a specific period.

### **Notifying the Customer**

3.16 Where any action/restriction, or proposed action/restriction is implemented the customer will be informed of the decision in writing.

3.17 The notification will include the period the restriction will be applied for, in line with Data Protection this will not exceed twelve months.

3.18 The restriction and customer's behaviour will be reviewed within this period to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate.

3.19 The restriction will be removed if the customer's unacceptable behaviour is considered to have improved.

### **Customer's Right to Appeal**

3.20 A customer may appeal any decision to restrict contact. For full details of conditions, refer to the Acceptable Behaviour Procedure.

### **Approach to Subsequent Requests or Complaints**

3.21 We still consider complaints or requests from customers who have been advised that requests have been classed as unacceptable, however, due regard will be given to the original decision and any time limit applied. If a response has already been provided to the customer and no new information has been given to Croft, we will inform the customer that we will not be re- investigating the complaint or request. The customer will then be referred to the original response.

3.22 The customer will be notified of a final decision on whether to process a new request or if continued restricted contact will be provided.

## **4 HOW WE MEASURE THE EXPECTATIONS AND OUTCOMES OF THIS POLICY.**

We will measure the policy by:

4.1 Monitoring the number of contacts by customers to understand where and why a disproportionate amount of resources are required

4.2 Monitoring our response to complaints and the impact.

4.3 Providing timely updates to complainants to build confidence and manage expectations.

4.5 Using customer feedback, from complaints, satisfaction surveys and customer involvement to inform change.

4.6 Using feedback from our colleges to inform procedures for better service delivery and the safety of colleagues.

## **5 CONSIDERATIONS FOR OUR CUSTOMERS AND COLLEAGUES.**

5.1 Croft endeavour to understand who our customers are and any specific needs they may have to underpin our service delivery and ensure our customers are treated fairly and with respect.

5.2 We have effective appeal processes in place as set out in our supporting documents and further supported by our complaint procedure.

5.3 We consider the expectations of the consumer standards when considering how we communicate; especially about customers' diverse needs and how we inform them in an appropriate way that is clear, accessible, relevant, and timely.

5.4 We consider the diverse needs of customers recognising in some circumstances, customers may have an illness, be experiencing difficulties, have a disability or a specific need where it may be difficult for them to either express themselves or communicate clearly and/or appropriately and may wish to use a third party to support them.

5.5 We consider the individual needs and circumstances of the customer and our staff before deciding on how best to manage the situation. All staff are expected to consider the prevalence of the protected characteristics as detailed within the Equality Act 2010.

5.6 Customers can nominate a person to act on their behalf through a third-party authorisation form. This can be accessed via our contact team who will discuss the process with you.

5.7 When planning to restrict contact, any special requirements of those affected by our decision will be taken into account. For example, where someone cannot read, we are unlikely to limit communications to writing only unless we are satisfied there are reasonable adjustments in place to enable the customer to receive a form of communication detailing our response.

5.8 We ensure that all customers wanting to influence and scrutinise our strategies, policies and services have equitable opportunities to do this, using a range of different methods and contact styles, to support our customer and their diverse needs.

5.9 We use our involved customers to consider this policy from a customer's perspective to judge if our policies are fair, reasonable, transparent, and understandable and use their constructive feedback to inform us.

5.10 We listen and learn from our customers, through feedback and complaints to help inform further service improvements.

## **6 TRANSPARENCY ARRANGEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS POLICY.**

We will ensure transparency in relation to this policy by:

6.1 Publication of this policy and supporting documentation in all relevant forums and accessible formats

6.2 Publishing relevant performance information including those defined in how we measure.

6.3 By responding to any enquires in an appropriate and timely fashion.

6.4 For a copy of this policy in an alternative format, such as large print or a translation, please contact us.

## **7 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND GUIDANCE.**

<b>Contents of supporting documentation</b>	
1	<b>Definitions</b>
2	<b>Complaints Procedure</b>
3	<b>EPR Procedure</b>
4	<b>How Customers can contact us</b>
5	<b>Policies Supported by this Policy</b>

### **1. Definitions Unacceptable behaviour:**

Croft regards unacceptable behaviour as behaviour which negatively impacts upon its ability to deal effectively with a request, complaint or to deliver customer service. However, Croft also recognises that in some cases persistent behaviour may be justified and may not be considered as unacceptable.

Behaviour becomes unacceptable if it is so demanding or persistent that it places unreasonable demands on services and impacts on the level of service to other customers.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include but are not limited to:

- Unacceptable/Unreasonable demands (e.g., requesting large volumes of information, asking for responses within a short space of time, refusing to speak to an individual or insisting on speaking with another)
- Unacceptable/unreasonable persistence (refusing to accept the answer that has been provided, continuing to raise the same subject matter without providing any new evidence, continuously adding to or changing the subject matter of the complaint)
- Verbal abuse, aggression, violence (this is not just limited to actual physical or verbal abuse but can include derogatory remarks, rudeness, inflammatory allegations and threats of violence)

- Overload of letters, calls, emails or contact via social media (this could include the frequency of contact as well as the volume of correspondence received as well as the frequency and length of telephone calls).

## **Complaints Procedure**

[Click Here](#)

## **Employee Protection Register Procedure**

- Croft will ensure that a list of potentially violent customers available under the Sharing of Information Protocol (SIP list) is regularly updated and distributed to appropriate members of staff likely to have contact with them.
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- Croft will be represented on the multi-agency Risk Assessment Management Panel (RAMP) and relevant members of staff will be advised appropriately by a senior officer in respect of visiting and interviewing arrangements.
- All members of staff dealing with anti-social behaviour will receive training for lone working and dealing with people in stressful and difficult situations where conflict may arise.
- Appropriate legal action will be taken against those individuals who threaten, abuse or harm staff. This may include the enforcement of the Council's conditions of tenancy via possession proceedings, the seeking of injunctions to restrain individuals, or supporting criminal proceedings, where appropriate.

## **How customers can contact us**

- **In Writing:** Send a letter to: Croft Housing Association, 15-17 Prescott Rd, L7 0LA
- **Email:** Send an email to: [admin@crofthousing.org.uk](mailto:admin@crofthousing.org.uk)
- **Phone:** Call us at 01512604201
- **In Person:** Visit our office at the address listed above.

## **Policies and procedures supporting this policy**

- Acceptable behaviour procedure
- Information Governance Framework
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Complaints, Compliments, and Feedback policy and procedure
- Croft Group's Tenancy Agreement
- Health and Safety Framework
- Croft 'How we act'