



The Trust

Fairness & Respect Policy

*(Replaces Unacceptable
Behaviour Policy)*

Version number: V1

Effective Date:
26th November 2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. SCOPE	1
3. LEGAL & REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.....	1
4. DEFINITIONS	2
5. OUR POLICY	3
6. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION.....	8
7. RESPONSIBILITIES.....	8
8. MONITORING AND REPORTING	9
9. CONSULTATION.....	9
10. REVIEW	9
11. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS.....	9
12. POLICY INFORMATION	10



1. INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out how Peaks & Plains (the Trust) will manage instances of unacceptable behaviour directed at staff and other individuals associated with the Trust. It aligns with our commitment to providing a safe and respectful working environment for all employees, while ensuring fair and proportionate responses to incidents. This policy also ensures compliance with relevant legal and regulatory frameworks.

- 1.1 The Trust is committed to dealing with customers fairly, honestly, consistently and appropriately. However, there are a minority of cases where a person behaves in a way that is unacceptable.
- 1.2 The Trust does not believe that a customer raising legitimate queries, criticisms of our services (or officers), being assertive or determined should in itself lead to being regarded as displaying unacceptable behaviour.
- 1.3 However, behaviour may become unacceptable if it is so demanding or persistent that it places unreasonable demands on the Trust and impacts the level of service that can be offered to others.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all customers, tenants, and any individuals engaging with the Trust. It does not cover internal staff complaint procedures, which are handled through separate complaints and HR policies.
- 2.2 This policy outlines how the Trust will manage unacceptable behaviour, at all times ensuring that customers are dealt with fairly and consistently. The policy describes how we identify unacceptable behaviour, the actions we will take to deal with customers who behave unacceptably, and how we record and report upon unacceptable behaviour management to our customers and Board.
- 2.3 This policy provides protection to colleagues and any individual working on behalf of the Trust who might be subject to unacceptable behaviour from a minority of customers. It also gives colleagues clear guidelines upon when to refer unacceptable behaviour to managers for their support.

3. LEGAL & REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

3.1 **Compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Code of Practice**

- 3.1.1 The Trust is required to comply with the Housing Ombudsman's Code of Practice to ensure fair and transparent handling of complaints, including responses to unreasonable behaviour.

3.2 **The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**

3.2.1 Requires the Trust to provide a safe working environment, including measures to protect staff from violence, harassment, and abuse.

3.3 **Equality Act 2010**

3.3.1 Mandates that policies do not discriminate and that reasonable adjustments are made for those with disabilities.

3.4 **Data Protection Act 2018 (regarding the handling of sensitive information)**

3.4.1 Governs the handling of personal and sensitive data, including records of unacceptable behaviour incidents.

3.5 **Regulatory requirements as set out by the Regulator of Social Housing**

3.5.1 The Trust is required to comply with the expectations of the consumer standards set out by the Regulator of Social Housing in the areas of governance, risk management, and fair treatment of customers.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 **Unacceptable Behaviour:**

4.1.1 Includes but is not limited to:

- 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 without reasonable cause)
- 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 in person, on the phone or online)
- 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 and the frequency and length of telephone calls).
- Recording or filming of conversations, either over telephone or in person, without the consent of other parties
- publishing information about employees (including the recording or filming of conversations) online including social media

4.2 **Persistent Complainant**

4.2.1 A person who continues to raise complaints that have already been resolved or who refuses to accept reasonable solutions.

4.3 **Vexatious Complaints:**

4.3.1 Complaints made maliciously, to cause disruption, or without serious purpose or value.

4.4 **Reasonable adjustments**

4.4.1 A reasonable adjustment involves making a change to the way we usually do things to take account of a customer's individual needs.

4.4.2 This may be a physical alteration in a customer's home, a change to the way in which we deliver our services, or a change to how we communicate with a customer.

4.4.3 There is no set list of options as each reasonable adjustment is suited to meet an individual's needs. For each request, we will work closely with the customer or their representative to discuss.

5. **OUR POLICY**

5.1 **The Trust has a zero-tolerance approach to violence, harassment, and any form of threatening behaviour towards staff. In managing unacceptable behaviour, we will:**

- Clearly define unacceptable behaviour and provide examples.
- Take a proportionate response to incidents, ensuring a fair and transparent process.
- Communicate expectations and potential consequences to individuals engaging in such behaviour.
- Provide reasonable adjustments for individuals with disabilities or other vulnerabilities while maintaining appropriate boundaries.
- Maintain records of incidents to ensure consistency in decision-making.
- Implement warning systems before taking action such as restricting contact.
- Apply proportionate restrictions, such as limited contact arrangements, appoint individual points of contact, withdrawal of services or pursual of legal remedy in extreme cases.
- Provide training to staff on how to manage difficult interactions safely and effectively.

5.2 Reasonable adjustments

5.2.1 Some people that contact us have a mental or physical impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (such as a disability). Where this applies, we may put in place reasonable adjustments to change the way we interact with the customer.

5.2.2 To ensure customers receive the help they need to access our services, we will check whether a reasonable adjustment is required when you first contact us. At any stage where it is determined that a reasonable adjustment is required, it will be recorded on our case management system. Further information on reasonable adjustments can be found in our Reasonable Adjustment Policy.

5.2.3 We will always consider how any restrictions may impact a reasonable adjustment that has been put in place for a particular customer.

5.2.4 Sometimes we may put a contact restriction in place. This is because the behaviour we are experiencing means the adjustment is no longer reasonable where the person has shown unacceptable or unreasonable behaviour towards our employees. This could be because that adjustment is no longer effective or practical. Where possible, we will prioritise selecting contact restriction(s) that provide an alternative way to access to our service.

5.2.5 We will consider contact restrictions on a case-by-case basis and will always let the customer know of a decision to impose a contact restriction in writing.

5.3 Unacceptable Behaviour

5.3.1 Sometimes people may be upset, angry, or anxious about the issues they have raised. We will always try to help but we will not accept aggressive, abusive or harassing behaviour towards our employees.

5.3.2 Examples of this type of behaviour can include:

- behaviour or language (verbal or written) that may cause employees to feel offended, afraid, threatened, or abused
- derogatory or discriminatory remarks; including racist, sexist, disablist, homophobic, or transphobic comments
- using insulting or degrading language
- making serious allegations against us or others without any evidence
- publishing information about employees online including social media
- recording and publishing telephone discussions with employees that are taken without their consent
- contacting employees using their personal details or social media presence

5.4 **Unreasonable demands**

5.4.1 Demands on our services are considered unreasonable if they hinder our ability to provide a consistent service or require an excessive amount of employee time. Examples of these types of demands can include:

- repeatedly demanding a response within a timescale outside of normal timescale agreements.
- insisting on, or refusing to speak to employees when that is not possible
- repeatedly changing the substance of a complaint or raising unrelated concerns.
- refusing to accept a decision where explanations for the decision have been given.
- refusing to co-operate by not providing information we request to allow us to help resolve the issue.

5.5 **Unreasonable levels of contact**

5.5.1 Levels of contact become unreasonable when the amount of time spent managing it impacts our ability to process the complaint or limits the service we can give to other people. Examples of this type of contact can include:

- repeated contact whilst a complaint is being progressed or after it is closed.
- lengthy telephone calls repeating the same points for discussion.
- high volumes of information provided by email, webform, or post where the information repeats what has already been given.
- copying our employees into emails with other parties where this is not necessary.

5.6 **Recording of Staff Without Consent**

5.6.1 Customers or other individuals must not record staff (audio or video) without their explicit consent, and in no circumstances should such recordings be shared, with others or on social media. The Trust considers the unauthorised recording and sharing of such footage to be unreasonable and a breach of staff privacy and dignity. Instances where individuals engage in covert recording or publicly share footage in a manner intended to intimidate, harass, or misrepresent staff may result in restrictions being placed on their interactions with the Trust. The Trust reserves the right to take appropriate action in response to such behaviour, including limiting contact or pursuing legal avenues where necessary.

5.7 **How will we deal with unacceptable behaviour?**

5.7.1 Where our employees experience unacceptable behaviour on a telephone call they may take immediate action to terminate the call where it is appropriate in the circumstances. Before doing so, the employee will, where possible, provide a warning to the customer, explaining why their behaviour is unacceptable and advising that the call will be ended if it continues.

- 5.7.2 If we consider someone's behaviour is unreasonable (due to the demands made or levels of contact) or unacceptable, we will first try to fix the issue. We will explain why the behaviour is unreasonable or unacceptable and will give the person an opportunity to stop the behaviour so we can continue to progress the case.
- 5.7.3 If we are unable to resolve the issue and decide there is a need to manage behaviour in line with our policy, this decision will be made by a Senior Manager. The contact restriction conditions and reasons for the contact restriction will be communicated to the customer in writing.
- 5.7.4 A managed behaviour restriction will usually be in place for 12 months.
- 5.7.5 A record of any managed behaviour restriction imposed will be kept on our case management system. Once the contact restriction expires, we will remove the information relating to the managed behaviour restriction in line with data protection rules.
- 5.7.6 Where a managed behaviour restriction is in place for longer than 12 months, a manager will review the restriction. As part of the review information will be checked, updated or deleted if it is no longer correct.
- 5.7.7 The following list sets out the restrictions we can impose to manage unacceptable or unreasonable behaviour:
- requesting communication only in writing or through a representative
 - deciding not to investigate a complaint on the basis that it has been pursued in an unacceptable or unreasonable way
 - restricting or limiting contact with us, or restricting access to the Peaks & Plains office
 - Limiting contact 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
 - requiring the customer to communicate with us via a named representative
 - where the behaviour is from a representative of an organisation, we may raise a formal complaint.
- 5.7.8 The following list sets out additional actions we can take to manage unacceptable behaviour which threatens the immediate safety of our employees or other persons:
- notifying the emergency services (If behaviour threatens the immediate safety of our employees, other individuals, or an organisation)
 - We aim to let the customer know that we have reported their behaviour to police. There are some circumstances where this is not possible, such as a call being terminated before we have the

opportunity to inform the person, or where informing the person could impact a criminal investigation.

- reporting information shared on social media to platform publishers and moderators.

5.7.9 In extreme cases such as physical violence or harassment, actions will include referrals to the police and taking legal action

5.8 **Reconsideration of a managed behaviour restriction**

5.8.1 a customer can ask for a managed restriction to be reconsidered in any of the following circumstances:

- Where there is a change in circumstances which mean the managed behaviour restriction is no longer appropriate
- Where there is evidence, the restriction impacts the customer's ability to access our service
- A factual error was made by our service when making the decision to apply the restriction
- a senior colleague, of manager level or above will consider the reconsideration request and decide if any changes will be made the managed behaviour restriction. The outcome of this will be communicated to the customer within 15 working days of their reconsideration request.

5.9 **Refusal to co-operate**

5.9.1 When we are looking at a complaint, we will need to ask the individual who has complained to work with us. This can include agreeing with us:

- The specific details of the complaint we will look at,
- to provide us with further information, evidence or comments on request, or
- help us by summarising their concerns.

5.9.2 Sometimes, an individual repeatedly refuses to co-operate and this makes it difficult for us to proceed. We will always seek to assist someone if they have a specific, genuine difficulty complying with a request. However, we consider it is unacceptable to bring a complaint to us and then not respond to clear and appropriate requests by staff.

5.9.3 To provide some services and meet our obligations as landlord, we often require the cooperation of individuals in order to deliver those services effectively. When individuals are obstructive or fail to cooperate with us making it difficult to comply with a request then we consider this to be unacceptable.

5.9.4 Examples of this may include:

- failing to provide access to your home for repairs, inspections or improvement works.

- Obstructing our staff from completing work.
- failing to respond to a reasonable request e.g. being asked to keep pets under control, or not to smoke whilst staff are working in a home.
- Failure to cooperate could result in us having to withdraw services and may also mean that a tenant is in breach of their tenancy obligations.

5.9.5 An injunction may be sought through the Courts to oblige the tenant to stop such nuisance behaviour if the management strategies have failed and the behaviour persists.

6. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

6.1 The Trust acknowledges that individuals may have disabilities, mental health conditions, or other vulnerabilities that may contribute to difficult interactions. We will make reasonable adjustments where appropriate while ensuring a safe environment for staff. A full equality impact assessment has been completed for this policy.

6.2 The Trust will ensure:

- All customers receive equal access to services irrespective of their protected characteristics;
- All staff are trained on equality and diversity issues and are equipped to deal with our customers' specific needs.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 All members of staff will receive training on this policy and will be expected to recognise unacceptable behaviour and differentiate this from a customer who is merely upset and angry. They will report unacceptable behaviour promptly to their manager, and when appropriate use the Trust's E20 Health and Safety reporting system.

7.2 **Service Managers** will be expected to investigate reports of unacceptable behaviour and decide if it has taken place. Service Managers will contact customers who have behaved unacceptably to warn them about their conduct and record this contact in writing. Where appropriate, service managers will recommend further sanctions to their Head of Service or Assistant Director.

7.3 **Heads of Service and Assistant Directors** will decide upon and apply sanctions to prevent and control further unacceptable behaviour towards the Trust's staff. They will write to customers to inform them of these sanctions, the term that they will apply for and an opportunity to appeal this decision.

7.4 **The Trust's Head of Neighbourhoods** will record and monitor, and report upon incidence of unacceptable behaviour. The Head of Neighbourhoods will implement restrictions on contact with the Trust, e.g. control of contact. The Head of Neighbourhoods will manage the review process at the end of the initial term of sanctions that have been applied.

- 7.5 The Trust's Support and Enforcement Team will take appropriate tenancy and legal enforcement action against perpetrators of unacceptable behaviour.

8. MONITORING AND REPORTING

- 8.1 Comprehensive records will be retained by the appropriate service manager of the details of the case and the action that has been taken and will include:
- number and details of customers who are deemed subject to the unacceptable behaviour policy including the protected characteristics of customers who are sanctioned through this policy
 - the duration of sanctions
 - what restrictions are applied

- 8.1.1 An annual anonymised summary of the above will be reported to Board and Challenge Group; as well as contained in our Annual Review report which is published on the Trust's website.

9. DATA PROTECTION

- 9.1 The Trust recognises that confidentiality is important to customers and will ensure all performance reporting information is anonymised and are compliant with GDPR good practice.

10. CONSULTATION

- 10.1 This policy has been reviewed in consultation with customers (Commentators Panel) and Challenge Group. As part of this consultation, it was proposed to change the name of this policy (previously called the Unacceptable Behaviour Policy).

11. REVIEW

- 11.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years.

12. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Complaints Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Vulnerable Persons Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Policy

POLICY INFORMATION

Policy Name:	Fairness and Respect Policy
Status:	FINAL/APPROVED
Approved by:	PPHT Board
Drafted By:	Head of Business Assurance
Date approved:	25 th November 2025
Next Review Date:	November 2028