



ST LUKE'S HOUSING SOCIETY  
MCMASTER HOUSE

## Tenant Unacceptable Behaviour Policy

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Reviewed By:	Head of Operations, Chair of Trustees
Other related policies:	Allocations and Lettings Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Safeguarding Adults Support Planning.
Legislation	<b>The criminal and civil law of England applies to this policy document:</b> ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 Employment Rights Act 1996 Housing Act 2004 Equality Act 2010

### 1. Introduction

At St. Luke's Housing Society, we are committed to promoting an environment where all of our staff can carry out their responsibilities without fear of abuse, aggression, harassment, or threats to themselves or their families.

Here at St Luke's Housing Society, we are a small provider of social housing for tenants over the age of 55. We have one scheme, with a small number of staff and resources, which means at times, our staff may be lone working and without the support of other colleagues and support services. We want our staff to serve all our tenants safely in the knowledge that they are fully protected and supported against abusive or threatening behaviour.

Whilst we expect our staff, contractors and trustees to treat our tenants with fairness and

respect, we also expect the same conduct from our tenants. St Luke's Housing Society take a zero-tolerance approach to any unacceptable behaviour, in line with tenancy agreements and relevant policies.

## 2. Aims and Objectives.

We strive to be a safe place for our tenants and staff, and incidents of unacceptable behaviour can compromise this. This policy aims to address and manage behaviours that may be considered unacceptable, ensuring a supportive and respectful workplace for our staff, trustees, tenants, their families, visitors and our contracted workers. Everyone deserves the right to be heard and understood, and to be dealt with fairly, honestly and consistently.

Sometimes it is difficult to deliver services effectively where there is unacceptable behaviour towards our staff, or unreasonable demands on our service or levels of contact. We have to take action to protect the health and well-being of our staff, who have a right to do their jobs without fear of being abused or harassed. We also consider the impact of the behaviour on our ability to do our work and provide a service to others.

This policy sets out how we will identify and manage these types of behaviours and actions, and how we will communicate this to our tenants.

At SLHS, we aim to:

- ❖ strive to create a safe and respectful environment for our community by clearly setting out the types of behaviours we consider unacceptable and/or unreasonable
- ❖ give clarity on how unacceptable or unreasonable behaviour will be assessed, managed and communicated to customers
- ❖ ensure that our staff can perform their duties without experiencing fear, abuse, aggression, harassment, or threats, creating a positive and supportive atmosphere for everyone.
- ❖ Have clear expectations about what our staff can assist with and what our provision provides.

### What can our Tenants Expect from our Staff?

- **Rent and Service Charges** - Explain how and when to pay your rent and provide annual information on changes.
- **Contact** – give various means to contact us, including any emergencies.
- **Repairs** - Provide information on repair responsibilities and how you can report a repair.

- **Support** – we offer all of our tenants an annual support plan to assess their needs and ask for their feedback on our services. We can signpost our tenants for support to help them live independently in their homes.
- **Safety** – we will make sure all appropriate safety checks are carried out in our tenants' homes and the building in which they live.
- **Tenancy Obligations** – we will explain tenancy obligations to our residents and let them know when any issues arise, helping them to sustain their tenancies.
- **Feedback** – we will give tenants opportunities to provide feedback by carrying out surveys, offering virtual and onsite suggestion boxes, and encouraging them to speak with staff.

**Our staff are not employed to tolerate unacceptable behaviour from tenants, fellow employees or any other person they encounter in their day-to-day work and are supported to report and challenge concerning behaviour.**

Whilst we always strive to deliver the best service we can, on occasions, like any business or human being, mistakes can be made, and things can go wrong. We will always do our best to be open and transparent about mistakes made and take action to put things right. We appreciate that this can, at times, be frustrating for tenants.

We recognise that there can be limitations and conditions on our service provision, especially as a small provider. This means that our staff and association may have to deliver disappointing and upsetting information at times.

We appreciate that all individuals have their own needs and circumstances, which cause difficulties for them in life that we may not be aware of. This applies to both staff and tenants. However, this does not mean we will accept or tolerate unacceptable behaviour where someone is made to feel distressed.

Where our staff, trustees or contractors are subject to unacceptable behaviour, we will take action to protect them. We will ensure the behaviour does not disrupt services to others and, where necessary, take robust and decisive action against the person responsible for the behaviour, which could include legal action.

We want our staff to feel confident and equipped to deal with difficult situations professionally and feel supported whenever they are affected by tenant behaviour and action is necessary

### **3. Concerns about Staff**

If you are unhappy with an area of our service, and you wish to raise concerns regarding staff behaviour, this can be done via our complaints process, which has been written in line with the Housing Ombudsman Code. Any concerns raised will be investigated in line with our complaints policy, where they will be looked at constructively and fairly.

#### 4. Definition – What is Unacceptable Behaviour?

We understand that at times, we may all get upset, angry and anxious about issues. We appreciate that people sometimes need the opportunity to vent their frustrations. We will always try to help, but we will not accept aggressive, abusive or harassing behaviour towards our employees. Individuals may react in various ways to the same type of abuse or incident, influenced by their past experiences or the specific situation. At St Luke's Housing Society, we take all reports seriously.

##### **Examples of unacceptable behaviour can include:**

- Physical abuse and aggression
- Threats of violence and harm.
- Behaviour or language (verbal or written) that may cause staff/trustees to feel offended, afraid, threatened, or abused
- Rudeness, both direct and indirect
- Making defamatory or offensive comments about staff or the association.
- Derogatory or discriminatory remarks, including racist, sexist, disablist, homophobic, or transphobic comments
- Using insulting or degrading language and/or excessive swearing
- Offensive gestures
- Sexually inappropriate behaviour
- Smoking, using alcohol and drugs in and around the scheme and during appointments.
- Making serious allegations against us or others without any evidence
- Publishing information about staff/trustees, in writing, online, including social media
- Recording and publishing discussions with staff that are taken without their consent
- Contacting staff using their personal details or social media.
- Preventing a staff member from leaving a meeting when they have ended their appointments.
- Tenants who refuse to leave our office or meeting place when asked to do so.
- Passive-aggressive communication – sarcasm, eyerolling and/or backhanded compliments.
- Starting 'vigilante' type groups

## 5. Collective Incidents

We are aware that rather than just isolated incidents, unacceptable behaviour can also be cumulative, for example, occur over a sustained period. Remarks which in themselves just about merit attention may, over time and collectively, be considered as unacceptable or insulting or amounting to harassment.

When a staff member feels this may be the case, they will report this to their manager or Chair of the Board, where the information will be recorded to ensure patterns can be identified and evidenced.

## 6. Unreasonable demands

Demands on our service can be unreasonable if they impact our ability to provide a consistent service or if the demands involve an excessive amount of staff 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, a staff member when that is not possible
- Repeatedly changing the content of an issue or complaint, or raising unrelated concerns
- Refusing to accept a decision where explanations for the decision have been given
- Refusing to cooperate by not providing the information we request to allow us to help resolve the issue.

## 7. Unreasonable levels of contact

At St Luke's Housing Society, we are aware that demanding or persistent behaviour can impact the level of service we can offer to others. Levels of contact become unreasonable when the amount of time spent managing it impacts our ability to process the enquiry/complaint or limits the service we can give to other tenants.

**Examples of this type of contact can include:**

- repeated contact whilst an issue/complaint is being processed or after it is closed
- lengthy conversations repeating the same points for discussion
- high volumes of information provided by email, post or any other format where the information repeats what has already been given
- Malicious complaints that are unsubstantiated, usually to cause disruption and harm to staff and our association.

- Unreasonable persistence - refusing to accept the answer provided, continuing to raise the same subject matter without providing any new evidence or continuously adding to or changing the subject matter

## 8. Communication

At St Luke's Housing Society, we recognise and encourage the views of our tenants about our services and where they live. Our tenants have the right to be heard, understood and respected.

We will manage all communications and requests from customers fairly, honestly, consistently, and appropriately, including those from customers whose actions are considered unacceptable. We still must carry out our legal and regulatory requirements.

Where communication becomes difficult, we may need to consider working with other agencies or advocacy services to represent our tenants, to ensure their views are heard fairly and safely. We will also look at what support we can signpost our tenants to, to help them manage their interactions with our staff.

Where there are counter allegations against a staff member, this will be investigated fully in line with relevant policies.

## 9. Managing Unacceptable Behaviour

We operate a policy of zero tolerance towards unacceptable behaviour. We will always try and manage what we consider to be unacceptable behaviour by reaching a voluntary and informal agreement before taking any formal action. There may be occasions where this is not possible and formal action is needed immediately.

Where our staff experience unacceptable behaviour either in person, online or via a telephone call, they may take immediate action to end the appointment or end the call where it is appropriate in the circumstances. Where possible, the staff member will inform the tenant or individual why their behaviour is unacceptable before deciding to end the interaction.

Staff have been given advice and support to help, in line with Housing Ombudsman advice, to help them manage instances of unacceptable behaviour from tenants or other individuals that they may be interacting with through their work. This is saved on the internal staff drive.

We believe it is important to give the person displaying the behaviour time to consider what they have done and make changes. We are open to trying to improve the situation by using mediation or advocacy through third parties.

Usually, before taking any formal steps, we will issue a warning which explains what behaviour we consider to be unacceptable and the formal steps we may take if the behaviour continues.

### **Examples of formal steps we may take include:**

- Providing a single point of contact.
- requesting communication only in writing or through an advocate or representative. Please note, any advocate appointed will be expected to adhere to the same code of conduct.
- deciding not to investigate a complaint on the basis that it has been pursued in an unacceptable or unreasonable way, unless additional evidence or information is provided.
- Stopping all communication with a tenant in serious cases.
- restricting or limiting contact with us

In cases of extreme behaviour such as physical violence or harassment, St Luke's Housing Society will report incidents to the Thames Valley Police and any other relevant agencies.

St Luke's Housing Society will look at the seriousness of the incidents and take action that is both reasonable and proportionate to the situation. This may involve legal action, such as injunctions, possession orders, or ceasing contact with the individual causing harm.

Any restrictions imposed will be agreed at the Board level, where a proportionality and risk assessment will be carried out. The Board and the Head of Operations will agree on a review period. If the behaviour improves during this time, we will consider lifting the restriction. If not, we will explain why the restriction is to stay in place and when the next review date will be.

This policy applies to all our staff, trustees and contracted workers, tenants and their families, visitors and members of the public.

## **10. Staff and Trustee Responsibilities**

All staff and trustees have a right and responsibility to report behaviour they feel is unacceptable. This helps us to understand any patterns of unacceptable behaviour with particular tenants. It allows us to complete adequate risk assessments to keep everyone safe and enables us to take safeguarding precautions where needed.

Our Head of Operations and Board Members must make sure that appropriate actions are taken in line with our procedures and that our response is fair and consistent.

Staff should be given reassurance and signposted to appropriate support and training. Incidents will be discussed at the Board regularly.

## **11. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Some of our tenants who contact us may have a mental or physical impairment, or another type of disability, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their

ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Where this applies, we may put in place reasonable adjustments to change the way we interact with them.

We are aware that people may behave differently because of vulnerabilities or medical conditions, and we will take this into account when deciding how to respond to unacceptable behaviour. We will always treat everyone with dignity and respect, and this is expected of our tenants and their families.

To ensure our tenants receive the help they need to access our service, we will check whether a reasonable adjustment is required. We carry out annual support plans and review these regularly, and carry out housing needs assessments with incoming tenants. At any stage where it is established that a reasonable adjustment is required, it will be recorded on a tenant's support plan.

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

Sometimes we may still be required to put a contact restriction in place, which impacts a reasonable adjustment. This is because the behaviour our staff are experiencing means the adjustment is no longer reasonable where the person has shown unacceptable or unreasonable behaviour towards our staff. This could be because the adjustment is no longer effective or practical. We will always endeavour to put in an alternative contact method where possible.

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

*Approved July 2025 – Board*