



Approver	Board
Pre Board Committee Scrutiny	n/a
Date Approved	June 2025
Classification	Policy
Title	Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy
Revision Date	June 2025
Revised by	HR Manager
Next Revision Date	June 2028
Related Documents	Complaints Handling; Customer Standards; Health & Safety Policy; RSH Consumer Standards; Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and Managing Unacceptable Behaviour Policy – Guidance for Landlords
Location of Electronic Copy	F:\Live Policies\Corporate

1 Viewpoint's Values

Viewpoint is here to help people enjoy their later years. Everything we do is about realising this vision, which is supported by the following straightforward set of values:

- Inspire with positive smiles and words;
- Say 'yes I can and I will';
- Celebrate age, experience and wisdom;
- Do according to our customers' wishes and ambitions;
- Treat people (everyone is a VIP) as we would a "loved one";
- Work hard, have fun and laugh;
- Stay courageous, creative and ahead of the game; and
- Work with those that share our values.

These promises shape us. They're a commitment to our tenants, residents, staff and suppliers. They are fundamental to every single plan, decision and project we embark on.

2 Policy Statement

The Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy sets out Viewpoint's commitment to ensuring a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for staff, customers, and stakeholders. It addresses aggressive, abusive, or inappropriate behaviour that contradicts the organisation's values and culture. Developed through consultation with staff and stakeholders, the policy outlines procedures for managing unacceptable conduct, including interventions, incident documentation, and appropriate consequences. This aligns with Viewpoint's goal of maintaining a positive and respectful workplace for all.

3 Aim

Viewpoint believe that our customers have a right to be heard, listened to, understood and treated with respect. We work hard to be open and accessible to everyone. Occasionally, the behaviour or actions of individuals using our services makes it very difficult for us to provide a service or deal with their request for service or complaint. In a small number of cases the actions of individuals become unacceptable because they involve abuse of our colleagues, our process or other customers.

When this happens, we have to take action to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our colleagues 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 other customers and stakeholders.

This policy explains how we will approach these situations. The policy applies to all areas of our work and to all methods of contact including telephone, face-to-face, letters, e-mails, social media and other digital channels.

4 Legislation/related policies

This policy complies with the Regulator of Social Housing's Standards, particularly the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard and the best practice suggested by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Other relevant legislation and reference points include, but are not limited to:

- RSH Consumer Standards
- Scottish Public Services Ombudsman- Complaint Handling Code and Managing
- Unacceptable Behaviour Policy – Guidance for Landlords
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and
- Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018

This policy should also be read in conjunction with Viewpoints Complaints Handling procedures.

5 Scope

The Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy sets out Viewpoint's commitment to ensuring a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for staff, customers, and stakeholders. Scope: The term 'staff' includes direct employees of the organisation, governing body members, contractors, consultants, and agents. The policy also reinforces that tenancy and occupancy agreements clearly state the expectation for customers to behave appropriately towards staff.

5.1 Actions Viewpoint considers to be unacceptable

5.1.1 Aggressive or abusive behaviour

We understand that some complainants may be angry about the issues they have raised with us, if that anger escalates into aggression towards our staff, we consider that an unacceptable action and operate a zero tolerance approach to such behaviour. Any violence or abuse towards staff will not be accepted.

Violence or abuse is not restricted to acts of aggression that may result in physical harm, it also includes behaviour or language (whether verbal or written) that may cause staff to feel afraid, threatened or abused, and may include threats, personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks and rudeness.

We will judge each situation individually and appreciate individuals who come to us may be upset. While we accept that those who contact us may, on occasion, feel angry, it is not acceptable to shout or swear at any member of our staff.

Unacceptable language is that which:

- is offensive, derogatory or patronising,
- is discriminatory in any way, including racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic comments; or
- makes serious allegations that individuals have committed criminal, corrupt
- or perverse conduct without any evidence.

We may decide that comments aimed not at us but at third parties are unacceptable because of the effect that listening or reading them may have on our colleagues. Examples include rudeness, offensive comments, derogatory remarks, making inflammatory statements, or raising unsubstantiated allegations.

Threats against Viewpoint colleagues will be taken very seriously and if colleagues feel scared or threatened at any point during a conversation with a customer, the interaction may be ended at any time.

5.1.2 Unreasonable demands

A demand becomes unreasonable and unacceptable when it starts to (or when complying with the demand would) impact substantially on the work of Viewpoint. For example, the demand takes up an excessive amount of staff time and in so doing leads to other customers being disadvantaged. What amounts to unreasonable demand/s will always depend on the circumstances surrounding the behaviour and seriousness of the issues raised.

Examples of actions grouped under this heading include:

- demanding responses within an unreasonable timescale
- insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular member of staff
- repeatedly changing the substance of a complaint or raising unrelated concerns
- insisting on being cared for by particular member(s) of staff
- continual phone calls, e mails or letters

An example of such impact would be that the demand/s takes up an excessive amount of colleague time and in doing so disadvantages other customers and prevents the prompt delivery of service to other customers.

5.1.3 Unreasonable levels of contact

A demand becomes unacceptable when it starts to (or when complying with the demand would) impact substantially on the work of this Service.

Examples of this behaviour include:

- repeatedly demanding response within an unreasonable timescale,

- insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular member of staff, when that is
 - not possible,
- repeatedly changing the substance of a complaint or raising unrelated
 - concerns.

An example of such impact would be that the demand takes up an excessive amount of staff time and in doing so disadvantages other customers and prevents their own service request or complaint from being dealt with quickly

5.1.4 Unreasonable use of the complaints process

We recognise that customers have the right to complain more than once as they have a continuing relationship with the Association, and subsequent service request and incidents may occur. We consider access to a complaints system to be a critical element of our service arrangements. Individuals with complaints about Viewpoint have the right to pursue their concerns through a range of means.

However, this contact becomes unreasonable when the effect of the repeated complaints is to harass, or to prevent us from pursuing a legitimate aim or implementing a legitimate decision. It will only be in exceptional circumstances that we would consider such repeated use is unacceptable – but we reserve the right to do so in those exceptional cases.

All complaints will be dealt with as per the Policy and should customers email senior staff direct these will be passed to the relevant operational staff for consideration.

5.1.5 Refusal to co-operate

When we are looking at a service request or complaint, we may need to ask the individual customer to work with us. This can include agreeing with us:

- mutually convenient appointments and to provide access to the property,
- for example in order for Viewpoint to inspect the property, carry out a survey,
- repair or building safety checks and servicing,
- to meet with us to discuss their service request, rehousing application,
- tenancy matters or complaints,
- to provide us with further information, evidence or comments on request, or
- help us by summarising their concerns.

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 request a service or report an issue or bring a complaint to us and then not respond to clear and appropriate requests by colleagues.

5.2 Reasonable Adjustments

We understand that some customers may find it difficult for them to express themselves or communicate clearly, especially when they are anxious or upset. In order to do this, we ask that customers explain what adjustments they are looking for and how this will ensure they can access Viewpoint services. We will always consider making reasonable adjustments for a customer if we are asked to do so.

Examples of adjustments we can consider are:

- we could consider using different methods of communication;
- providing written communication in large print, coloured text, or in translation;
- giving clear warnings if conversations become unproductive and allowing
- customers the opportunity to modify their behaviour before ending a call.

However, we do not expect our colleagues to accept being subjected to aggressive, offensive, threatening or abusive actions, language or behaviour. We may still use the policy if there are actions or behaviours which are having a negative effect on our colleagues or our work even where a reasonable adjustment has been made.

5.3 How we manage aggressive or abusive behaviour

The threat or use of physical violence, verbal abuse, intimidation or harassment, towards staff is likely to result in a termination of all direct contact with the customer and is likely to result in the ending of all direct contact. It may lead to action for breach of tenancy or occupancy agreement. Incidents may be reported to the police. This will always be the case if physical violence is used or threatened or instances of hate crime.

We will not accept any correspondence (letter, email or via social media) that is abusive to staff or contains allegations that lack substantive evidence. We will tell the complainant that we consider their language offensive, unnecessary and unhelpful and ask them to stop using such language. We will state that we will not respond to their correspondence if the action or behaviour continues.

Staff will end telephone calls if they consider the caller aggressive, abusive or offensive. Viewpoint staff have the right to make this decision, to tell the caller that their behaviour is unacceptable and to end the call if the behaviour persists.

In extreme situations, we will tell the customer in writing that their name is on a “no personal contact” list. This means that we will limit contact with them to either written communication or through a third party.

5.4 Managing unreasonable behaviour

We have to take action when unreasonable behaviour impairs the functioning of our services.

We aim to do this in a way that allows a customer to progress through our processes. We will try to ensure that any action we take is the minimum required to solve the problem, taking into account relevant personal circumstances including the seriousness of the complaint and the needs of the individual.

Where a customer repeatedly phones, visits the office, raises repeated issues, or sends large numbers of e mails, letters and documents where their relevance isn't clear, we may decide to:

- limit contact to telephone calls from the customer at set times on set days
- restrict contact to a nominated member of Viewpoint staff who will deal with future calls or correspondence from the customer
- see the customer by appointment only
- restrict contact from the customer to writing only
- return any documents to the customer or, in extreme cases, advise the customer that further irrelevant documents will be destroyed
- take any other action that we consider appropriate
- restrict contact by engaging the services of a third party or legal representative to act on our behalf.

Where we consider continued correspondence on a wide range of issues to be excessive, we may tell the customer that only a certain number of issues will be considered in a given period and ask them to limit or focus their requests accordingly.

In exceptional cases, we reserve the right to refuse to consider a complaint or future complaints from an individual. We will take into account the impact on the individual and also whether there would be a broader tenant/resident/public interest in considering the complaint further.

We will always tell the complainant what action we are taking and why.

5.5 How we make decisions about unreasonable behaviour

Any member of Viewpoint staff who directly experiences aggressive or abusive behaviour from a complainant has the authority to deal immediately with that behaviour in a manner they consider appropriate to the situation and in line with this policy.

With the exception of such immediate decisions taken at the time of an incident, decisions to restrict contact with Viewpoint are only taken after careful consideration of the situation by two Leadership Team member. Wherever

possible, we will give a customer the opportunity to change their behaviour or action before a decision is taken.

5.6 How we let people know we have made this decision

When a Viewpoint employee makes an immediate decision in response to aggressive or abusive behaviour, the customer is advised at the time of the incident. When a decision has been made by a senior manager, a customer will always be advised in writing (this can be supplemented if written communication is not the most appropriate form for the individual) why a decision has been made to restrict future contact, the restricted contact arrangements and, if relevant, the length of time that these restrictions will be in place. This ensures that the customer has a record of the decision.

5.7 The process for appealing a decision to restrict contact

It is important that a decision can be reconsidered. A customer has 20 working days to appeal a decision to restrict contact. If they do this, we will only consider arguments that relate to the restriction and not to either the complaint made to us or to our decision to close a complaint.

Grounds for an appeal could include, for example, a customer saying that:

- their actions were wrongly identified as unacceptable;
- the restrictions were disproportionate
- the restrictions will adversely impact on the individual because of personal circumstances.

An Executive Team member who was not involved in the original decision will consider the appeal. They have discretion to remove or vary the restriction as they think best. They will make their decision based on the evidence available to them. They must advise the customer in writing (this can be supplemented if written communication is not the most appropriate form for the individual) that either the restricted contact arrangements will still apply or a different course of action has been agreed.

6 Compliance & Support

Staff should familiarise themselves with this policy and procedures. Viewpoint will provide relevant staff with training and support to deal with unacceptable behaviour and actions. Additional support should be requested from line management if required.

7 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Viewpoint is aware of our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. We will endeavour to provide a service that seeks to meet the needs of a particular individual or household and

ensure no one is disadvantaged in accessing our services. We recognise that some of our customers may have permanent or transitory vulnerabilities and where customers require additional support, we will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments. We will also take vulnerability into account when carrying out case risk assessments.

8 Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)

No data protection implications have been identified in relation to the review of this policy, and consequently a PIA has not been completed.

9 Monitoring & Evaluation

A Manager will review and approve any decision to put contact restrictions or safety alerts in place.

Viewpoints Housing Team meet regularly to review any contact restrictions and DNVA alerts are reviewed regularly by two Leadership Team members, to decide whether to keep in place for a further period or not and, in most instances, communicate the outcome with customers where appropriate.

10 Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or where there have been significant changes to regulation, legislation, operations or best practice to warrant a further policy review.