

# Unacceptable Behaviour Policy

Originator:	Policy and Strategy Team
Executive Management Team Approval Date:	August 2019
Review date:	August 2022

1	Introduction
1.1	One Vision Housing (OVH) is committed to delivering excellent customer services. It trains all of its staff to treat customers with respect and to deal with any enquiries efficiently and effectively at the first point of contact, if possible.
1.2	In most cases OVH staff enjoy an excellent working relationship with customers and are able to deal with all enquiries without problems. Occasionally, however, there may be incidents where customers may behave unreasonably when contacting OVH which makes it difficult for staff to provide the standards of service that are expected.
1.3	This Policy sets out the ways in which OVH will seek to deal with customers whose behaviour causes upset, prevents OVH staff from doing their jobs effectively and would not be expected in any normal working relationship in the delivery of services.
1.4	The Policy sets out the provisions OVH will put in place to deal with customers who display unacceptable behaviour in their contacts and requests for service from OVH (in person, via telephone and in written form, including electronic forms of communication).
1.5	The Policy aims to address low level incidents and / or those of a repeated nature but is not in place to deal with acts of anti-social behaviour or where more serious incidents may be involved, for example, threats to staff or harassment.
1.6	Where these incidents occur, OVH will take a zero tolerance approach and will take appropriate tenancy enforcement or civil actions as required (see the OVH Anti-Social Behaviour Policy for full details).
1.7	The Policy also aims to ensure that OVH identifies and meets individual customer's needs. Part of the approach and measures that OVH will consider on a case-by-case basis is the provision of additional support, referral to outside agencies or use of other advocates. This will be done to ensure contacts with OVH are managed with no loss of essential services.
1.8	Operation of this Policy ensures compliance with the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing, adopted by the Regulator for Social Housing, as outlined below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registered providers shall:</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants in the delivery of all standards</li> <li>○ Have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible that ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly</li> </ul>
1.9	<b>Access and Communication</b>
1.9.1	OVH is committed to ensuring that its services are accessible to everyone. OVH will seek alternative methods of access and service delivery where barriers, perceived or real may exist, that may make it difficult for people to work for OVH or use its services.
1.10	<b>Equality, Diversity and Human Rights</b>
1.10.1	OVH is committed to ensuring that no person or group of persons will be treated less favourably than another person or group of persons and will carry out our duty with positive regard for the following core strands of equality; Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Transgender, Sexual Orientation and Religion and/or Belief, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity.
1.10.2	OVH also recognises that some people experience disadvantage due to their socio economic circumstances, employment status, class, appearance, responsibility for dependants, unrelated criminal activities, being HIV positive or with AIDS, or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.
1.10.3	OVH will also ensure that all services and actions are delivered within the context of current Human Rights legislation. OVH will endeavour to ensure its staff and others with whom it works, will adhere to the central principles of the Human Rights Act (1998).
1.11	<p>This Policy should be read in conjunction with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The OVH Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Policy</li> <li>● The OVH Anti-Social Behaviour Policy</li> <li>● The OVH Maintaining Professional Boundary Policy</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Statement of Intent</b>
2.1	OVH will seek to foster a good working environment where all staff feel comfortable in their roles and can achieve high levels of job satisfaction. OVH believes that where staff feel they can work effectively and develop good working relations with customers, they are more likely to meet the organisations goals of providing excellent, easily accessible services.
2.2	OVH is committed to maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction and will seek to find the best ways of managing customer contacts, even where problems have been identified in the nature or frequency of the contact that does not meet the levels expected in normal service delivery relationships.
2.3	Where problems in the nature of contact have been identified, OVH will seek to provide a flexible and tailored approach to ensure individual needs are met and services can continue to be delivered effectively, for the benefit of all customers.

2.4	OVH will ensure that any alterations in the way services are normally delivered are reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances involved and are subject to regular review.
2.5	OVH will also ensure, that when considering restricted contacts, a full assessment of an individual's circumstances is taken into consideration with particular regard for any vulnerabilities and will look to provide appropriate support where required.
<b>3</b>	<b>Policy</b>
3.1	<b>Reasons for enactment and immediate response</b>
3.1.1	OVH will consider using the provisions set out in this Policy where staff believe the behaviour of customers, when contacting the organisation prevents them from delivering excellent services and would not be expected in the course of normal working relations.
3.1.2	<p>This can include but is not exclusive of the following types of behaviour in face-to-face, telephone or written contacts, (including electronic forms of contact):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abusive, offensive or intimidating language or behaviour</li> <li>• Persistent contacts about the same issues, where OVH have informed the customer(s) of pending actions to remedy an issue or where an issue has been acted on</li> <li>• Where customers are making contacts about issues that are outside of OVH's remit of responsibility and control</li> <li>• Where customers make unreasonable requests of OVH staff time and resources</li> <li>• Where customers refuse to deal with individual staff members, even when they are the most appropriate person (in terms of role and experience) to respond to a query or complaint</li> </ul>
3.1.3	As an immediate response in face-to-face or telephone contacts, in particular where customers are abusive, offensive or intimidating, OVH staff will inform the customer that their behaviour is unacceptable and outline the reasons why.
3.1.4	In any situation where there is immediate response given to the customer, the OVH staff member will advise that unless the behaviour which is unacceptable changes then they will terminate the contact.
3.1.5	This may involve walking away from a meeting where this happens outside of OVH office locations or politely asking a customer to leave, where this occurs on OVH premises or terminating a telephone call.
3.1.6	In order to provide a tailored service for individual needs, OVH endeavours to record all contacts with customers where their details are known. Whenever, an OVH staff member has had to terminate a contact with a customer, the details of what happened and when will be recorded in the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.
3.2	<b>Decisions and actions</b>
3.2.1	Where the staff member believes the incident or pattern of behaviour requires further action, they will bring the matter to the attention of any of the following:

- A Neighbourhood Services Manager
- The Customer Access Manager or Team Leader
- The Community Safety Manger or deputy
- The Independent Living Manager or Team Leader

3.2.1 Where possible a panel involving all of the above individuals or team representatives will be convened, at the earliest opportunity. If this is not possible a panel will meet involving at least two of those listed above to discuss the case.

3.2.2 The panel will carry out enquiries including reviewing the CRM system and phone records, speaking to other members of staff who may have dealt with the customer(s) concerned and checking known customer profile information.

3.2.3 Where vulnerabilities are identified and these contribute to the unacceptable behaviours in terms of their contacts with OVH, the panel will in the first instance, look to provide additional support if none is already in place. This may include referral to external support and advocacy agencies, including where necessary medical referrals.

3.2.4 Where no vulnerability is established or the provision of additional support does not make any difference to the nature of the contacts, the panel will form a decision as to the best approach for managing future contacts.

3.2.5 This may include any or a combination of the following actions:

- Limits may be placed on the amount of time OVH staff spend on telephone conversations and personal contact with customers or only accepting calls at specified times
- Placing restrictions on the means of communicating with customers e.g. in writing or via telephone only
- Only communicating through an agreed third party or advocate agency
- Requiring personal contacts to take place in the presence of a witness or at OVH office facilities
- Refusing to re-investigate issues that have previously been resolved

3.2.6 Where OVH intends to place any restrictions on the means by which it will manage any customer contacts, the customer will be informed in their preferred communication method and this will always be backed up with a letter outlining the same information.

### 3.3 Appeals

3.3.1 The customer will be informed of the nature of the restrictions on contact that will apply, how long they will be in place for (subject to on-going review) and how they may appeal any decisions or intended actions, through the provisions set out in detail in the OVH Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Policy.

3.3.2 OVH will refuse to hear repeated appeals about the same issue and may alter how appeals are handled in line with any restrictions that have been imposed through the Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.

3.4	<b>Continued access to essential services</b>
3.4.1	Where restrictions on contact are enacted this is not intended to prevent customers from accessing the repairs service, any form of periodic testing or property assessment e.g. annual gas servicing or from making genuine complaints about new issues.
3.4.2	When responding to these issues (as outlined above in 3.16) the conditions that have been imposed as part of the restricted contact will be taken into consideration and this may involve extending normal response targets.
3.5	<b>Review</b>
3.5.1	Whenever restrictions on the way OVH manages contacts with customers are imposed under the provisions of this Policy, they will usually last for a period of Six months before review by the staff members making up the panel (as outlined in 3.2.1).
3.5.2	At the review, OVH may lift restrictions, alter the ways in which contacts are managed going forward for a further Six month period or continue with the same restrictions for an additional six months, again subject to review.
3.5.3	The above conditions will apply unless the individual provides evidence to OVH of a change of circumstances that impacts on the way their contacts should be managed or as a result of a successful appeal.
3.6	<b>Actions specific to housing applicants</b>
3.6.1	If OVH encounters unacceptable behaviour from applicants for housing in any of the Choice Based Lettings schemes it is a member of, it has the option to impose 'ineligible status' on individuals. This would prevent them bidding for properties within the scheme for a 12 month period.
3.6.2	This status would apply unless the individual can demonstrate change of circumstances and / or successfully appeal the decision. Appeals regarding the imposition of Ineligible Status within Choice Based Lettings schemes are heard by Scheme Board and not OVH.
<b>4</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
4.1	All OVH staff have a responsibility to be aware of and abide by the provisions set out in the OVH Unacceptable Behaviour Policy. This will include checking for system markers advising of restricted contacts when fielding calls or organising visits.
<b>5</b>	<b>Performance</b>
5.1	There are no additional performance requirements as a result of the operation of this Policy.
5.2	Any restrictions placed on customer contacts as a result of this Policy will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis at a minimum interval of every 6 months or sooner depending on the individual circumstances.

<b>6</b>	<b>Consultation</b>		
6.1	All OVH staff have been consulted in the development of this Policy. Staff with specific responsibilities for implementing the Policy (as outlined in 3.2.1.) have also been subject to detailed consultation.		
6.2	The OVH Tenant Policy Review Group have been consulted on this Policy on 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2019.		
<b>7</b>	<b>Review</b>		
7.1	The Policy will be reviewed every three years, as near as is practical from the date of EMT approval or sooner if required by changes in operational practices, regulations or any relevant legislation.		
<b>8</b>			
8.1	Was a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) required?	No	
8.2	When was EIA conducted and by who?	An EIA Relevance Test was conducted by the Policy and Strategy Manager and the Policy Writer on 27-06-19.	
8.3	Results of EIA	The Relevance Test did not identify any adverse or differential impacts for any group with protected characteristics as a result of the operation of this Policy	
<b>9</b>			
9.1	Responsible committee for approving and monitoring implementation of the Policy and any amendments to it	EMT	
9.2	Responsible officer for formulating Policy and reporting to committee on its effective implementation	Operations Director – Customer Support	
9.3	Responsible officer for formulating, reviewing and monitoring implementation of procedures	Operations Director – Customer Support	
<b>10</b>	<b>Amendment Log</b>		
Date of revision:	Reason for revision:	Consultation record:	Record of amendments:
Not applicable	Not applicable	See Section 6	This is the first version of this Policy
6th August 2019	Not applicable	See Section 6	Policy re-instated and reviewed in line with OVH business requirements.