

Challenging Behaviour Policy

Our approach to supporting staff to tackle challenging behaviour from customers in the workplace.

The basics

We expect our employees to treat people with courtesy, respect and fairness at all times, and for our employees to be treated in the same way. Behaviour or language that is targeted at an individual rather than the service itself is not acceptable.

We will work with customers to understand any behaviour that is linked to a need for an adjustment in communication method, particularly where this is linked to a disability.

What do we consider to be Challenging Behaviour?

- **Aggressive, violent or abusive behaviour**
We understand that customers may be upset, angry, or anxious about issues affecting them. We will always try to help but we will not accept aggressive, violent or abusive comments towards our employees. Examples of this type of behaviour are:
 - o behaviour or language that may cause employees to feel offended, afraid, threatened, or abused
 - o derogatory or discriminatory remarks
 - o using insulting or degrading language including questioning staff members' abilities or competency
 - o making serious allegations without any evidence
- **Unreasonable demands / levels of contact**
Demands on the time of staff members which may prevent us from being able to deliver a consistent service. Examples of this type of behaviour are:
 - o repeatedly demanding a response within a timescale outside of normal timescales
 - o insisting on, or refusing to speak to employees when that is not possible
 - o refusing to accept a decision where explanations for the decision have been given
 - o placing undue or unreasonable pressure on staff
 - o lengthy telephone calls or other contact repeating the same points for discussion or where explanations have been given
 - o copying employees into emails with other parties, or copying in multiple staff members where this is not necessary
 - o excessive levels of contact, such as a high number of phone calls or multi-platform contact in a short period of time, or continuous contact over an extended period of time.
 - o unreasonable levels of contact whilst we are trying to deal with an issue. For example, inundating us with information which has already

- o been provided to us or is not directly relevant to the issue we are dealing with.
 - o making excessive numbers of service complaints about issues that would reasonably be considered as trivial.
- **Harassment**
Our team members have the right to carry out their duties without being concerned of being harassed or receiving threats of harassment. Examples of this behaviour are:
 - o Recording telephone conversations or videoing interactions with staff and then publishing the information online or on social media.
 - o Contacting staff, their family or friends using their personal details or social media presence such as Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn.
 - o Publishing information about staff online or other public domains such as their names or personal contact details.
 - o Making false allegations about employees
- **Failure to cooperate**
We often need customer cooperation to deliver services effectively. We will always try to work in a way which is convenient for customers and meet their needs, however when customers fail to cooperate with us making it difficult to comply with a request then we consider this to be unacceptable. Examples of this may include:
 - o Failing to provide access to your home for repairs, inspections or improvement works.
 - o Preventing our staff from completing work.
 - o 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.
 - o Rearranging or cancelling an appointment an excessive number of times.
 - o Avoiding our contact when we need to discuss an important issue.
 - o Raising service complaints but refusing to engage with staff who deliver our services.

Our approach

How we will manage Challenging Behaviour

We will assess the risk level of the behaviour that is displayed. This will be done dynamically meaning that the risk level may change and invoke a different route proportionate to the level of risk at any point.

Low to medium risk

We will work with customers who present challenging behaviour to try and find an appropriate way to communicate that lessens the behaviour. This may include the following:

- Advising the customer that they are displaying challenging behaviour
- Asking to speak with them at an alternative time/Rearranging an appointment
- Asking to speak with an advocate on their behalf
- Using the customer's preferred communication method to alleviate anxieties
- Terminating a telephone call/Ending a home visit
- Meeting in a neutral venue

- Using mediation

Medium risk

If these measures are not making improvements to the behaviour, or the risk is initially recorded as medium, measures could include:

- providing a single point of contact at Leeds Federated
- limiting contact to a single form such as writing, email or telephone only
- 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
- only considering a certain number of issues in a specific period
- taking tenancy enforcement action. Where this is the case, please refer to the ASB Policy & Procedure for consideration of pre-legal or legal tenancy enforcement measures.
- reporting information shared on social media to platform moderators
- placing a risk alert on the customer record

High risk

Where the risk level is deemed to be sufficient to present a high risk to the wellbeing of employees, then actions will be taken to prevent further escalation. These could include:

- notifying the emergency services such as the police
- seeking without notice tenancy enforcement action or other legal measures. Please refer to the ASB Policy & Procedure for consideration of relevant enforcement measures.

Review of measures

Whilst measures are in place to manage a customers' behaviour towards staff members, this should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the measures remain proportionate to the risk.

The frequency of this review should be no less than 6 monthly.

Ending measures

When a review of the measures is carried out and the risk is assessed as being below the threshold for Challenging Behaviour, then the customer should be informed of this. A cross reference must be carried out to ensure that any adjustments to communication preferences are accurately recorded and any learning is implemented where this is appropriate.

Key points for customers

The level of action will be proportionate to the risk that has been assessed. Customers will be informed if they are under any form of restriction to services and will be provided with information on how emergencies can still be reported and dealt with during any period of restriction.

Customers have the right to appeal against any measure that is implemented. The appeal will be heard by an operational manager who was not involved in the original decision.

Key points for colleagues

During the period where Challenging Behaviour is being displayed, the risk assessment process will include consideration of how the staff member(s) can be supported.

Support for colleagues may follow a wide range of options, which may include:

- Taking time out following a challenging call/visit
- Consideration of a patch change
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Referral to occupational health
- Provision of personal safety equipment or security equipment for the home
- Access to Employee Assistance Programme
- Training in de-escalation techniques
- Resilience training
- Joint visits
- Reflective practice
- Attending meetings/court hearings remotely
- Stress risk assessment

(This list is not exhaustive)

The staff member will be informed when a measure that has been introduced to protect their wellbeing is no longer to remain in place.

Additional support may be provided at this point to help the staff member following the removal of any previous restrictions.

The staff member has the right to appeal the measures that have been put in place to protect their wellbeing in the workplace. This appeal would be heard by the Health & Safety Manager.

Key points for board/committee members and the regulator

The Health & Safety Committee will be provided with updates as to the frequency and severity of incidents of Challenging Behaviour.

Policy updates

The Housing Management team is responsible for updating this policy.

Policy updated and approved by Customer Experience Committee 5th August 2025.

Next review due 5th August 2027.