



SYHA Customer Behaviours Policy

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1. Purpose

1.1 At South Yorkshire Housing Association (SYHA), our purpose is to provide good quality homes and support people to settle and live well in their communities. We are committed to creating environments where customers and colleagues feel safe, respected, and valued.

1.2 This policy sets out:

- The behaviours customers can expect from SYHA (Section 4.1);
- The behaviours we expect from our customers (Section 4.3);
- How we will respond when behaviour falls below expected standards (Section 5).

2. Our principles

2.1 The principles that underpin our approach are that:

- Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
- Positive relationships between customers and colleagues are essential to delivering great services.
- We will take a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment, and abuse. SYHA's zero-tolerance approach means that we will always act when harassment is reported as set out in Section 3.4.
- We will aim to understand and support underlying causes of behaviour, particularly when someone may be vulnerable.

3. Zero Tolerance Statement

3.1 SYHA has a zero-tolerance approach to:

- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Abuse (verbal, written, physical or online)

3.2 This applies:

- From customers towards SYHA employees as set out in SYHA's Third Party Harassment Policy;
- From SYHA employees towards customers which should be reported via [SYHA's Complaints Policy and Procedure](#)
- Between customers which should be reported via [SYHA's Anti-social behaviour and Harassment Policy](#).

3.3 Discrimination and harassment constitute behaviours based on protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, including:

- Race or ethnicity (including racial harassment and abuse)
- Religion or belief
- Disability
- Sex
- Sexual orientation (including homophobia)
- Gender reassignment (including transphobia)
- Age
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership

3.4 We will always act when such behaviour occurs. This may include:

- Formal warnings
- Restrictions on contact
- Tenancy enforcement action
- Criminal action in partnership with the police

4. Expected Standards of Behaviour

4.1 Customers have the right to:

- Be treated with dignity, privacy and respect
- Feel safe when engaging with SYHA services
- Be listened to and involved in decisions about their home and support
- Receive fair and non-discriminatory services
- Have reasonable adjustments made, including for mental health disabilities under the Equality Act 2010
- Be supported where they experience harassment or hate crime

4.2 To report unacceptable behaviour SYHA customers can either:

- Contact us through [SYHA's Complaints Process](#) if their complaint involves a SYHA employee.
- Report harassment by another customer via our [Anti-Social Behaviour and Harassment Policy](#)

4.2 Our employees will:

- Be approachable, polite and professional
- Listen actively and act with empathy and compassion
- Act fairly, transparently and with integrity
- Take care with customers' homes and belongings
- Work collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for customers

4.3 Customers are responsible for:

- Treating employees and other customers with respect and courtesy
- Not engaging in abusive, threatening or discriminatory behaviour
- Respecting neighbours, communities and shared environments
- Communicating changes in their circumstances or support needs
- Engaging constructively with services and support offered

4.4 Examples of behaviour we consider unreasonable are set out below, however this list is not exhaustive and is provided as a guide:

- Using abusive, aggressive or threatening language when interacting with South Yorkshire Housing Association employees
- Using racist or discriminatory language when interacting with South Yorkshire Housing Association employees
- Making unjustified comments about South Yorkshire Housing Association's employees or people working on our behalf
- Repeatedly contacting us to report an issue that we are already dealing with
- Continuous or excessive contact or repeated requests for the same information
- Demanding a response within an unreasonable timescale
- Insisting on communicating with a particular South Yorkshire Housing Association employee
- Contacting numerous South Yorkshire Housing Association employees regarding the same issue
- Repeatedly changing the basis of a complaint or raising unrelated concerns

- Continuing to pursue a complaint without presenting any new information, when agreed processes are being followed
- Persistent refusal to accept South Yorkshire Housing Association's explanations or decisions
- Denying or changing statements already made
- Refusing to allow access or inspections or to complete work which SYHA is required to carry out for legal or regulatory reasons.
- Refusing to allow access for inspections or to complete work which would resolve a request, complaint.
- Insisting we deal with requests in ways that are incompatible with our policies, procedures, or good practice.

4.5 The safety of our employees is paramount to us. Through SYHA's Third Party Harassment and Abuse Policy, we set out clear procedures for how SYHA employees will report and respond to incidents of discrimination, harassment and abuse from SYHA customers and other Third Parties.

5. Managing Unacceptable Behaviour against SYHA Employees

5.1 We take a proportionate, fair and supportive approach, recognising that behaviour may be linked to vulnerability or unmet need.

5.2 Informal Approach

- Initial discussion to explain concerns and expected behaviour
- Clear explanation of consequences if behaviour continues
- All informal discussions will be recorded on SYHA systems

5.3 We will seek to understand underlying causes, including:

- Mental health needs
- Substance dependency
- Trauma or vulnerability
- Neurodiversity

5.4 Where appropriate, we will:

- Make reasonable adjustments which may result in us changing how we support customers (e.g. increasing the support we are providing)
- Refer to external support services
- Work with partner agencies

5.5 Formal Action

In instances of serious and/or persistent unacceptable behaviour SYHA will take the following action:

- Written warnings will be issued
- Expectations and consequences will be clearly outlined
- In cases of persistent unacceptable behaviour our contact with you may be restricted (e.g.
 - Setting a single point of contact,
 - Limiting communications to appointment-only access or written communication only
 - Replying within set timescales and limiting how often or how long we communicate with you
 - Ending contact about a specific issue once we are satisfied that it has been fully addressed

5.6 Enforcement and Legal Action

In very serious or escalating cases, SYHA may:

- Take tenancy enforcement action
- Seek injunctions or possession proceedings
- Involve the police where criminal behaviour occurs

6. Hate Crime and Harassment

6.1 Hate Crime

Hate crime is defined as any criminal offence perceived to be motivated by hostility or prejudice relating to:

- Race
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender identity
- Disability

6.2 Harassment

Harassment includes:

- Verbal abuse or threats
- Written or online abuse (including social media)
- Damage to property
- Violence or intimidation
- Stalking or behaviour causing alarm or distress
- These are often criminal matters. SYHA will:
- Support victims
- Work with the police
- Take tenancy enforcement action where evidence exists

Any hate crime or harassment of SYHA employees or volunteers by customers will be taken seriously, given our zero-tolerance stance. Instances of hate crime or harassment will always be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken as outlined in sections 5.4 and 5.5. Incidents of hate crime or harassment will also be reported to the Police.

7. Safeguarding and Reasonable Adjustments

SYHA is committed to safeguarding and supporting vulnerable customers.

We will:

- Make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010, including for mental health disabilities
- Follow safeguarding procedures where there are concerns about risk
- Balance enforcement action with our duty of care

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with organisational requirements or sooner where required by legislative or operational changes.

10. Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman Service has guidance about managing unreasonable behaviour - [Managing unacceptable behaviour policy | Policy | Housing.](#)