

Policy Title: Unacceptable Behaviour Policy	
Author (Owner): Operations Director	Version: 1
Approved by: Executive Team	Date: February 2025
Date for Review: February 2028	

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy describes Soho's approach to protecting its staff from unacceptable resident behaviour.
- 1.2. This could also involve abuse of our staff, contractors and other third parties working on behalf of Soho.
- 1.3. Occasionally the behaviour of residents who receive a service from us impact our ability to deliver services effectively, and therefore deemed unacceptable.

2. Scope

- 2.1. In respect of this policy, a resident means:
 - 2.1.1. Current or former Soho residents
 - 2.1.2. Applicants for Soho properties
 - 2.1.3. Visitors to Soho properties
 - 2.1.4. Friends, relatives, carers and advocates acting on behalf of current or former residents
 - 2.1.5. Members of the general public enquiring about Soho services

3. Principles

- 3.1. Under this policy we will treat residents fairly, honestly, consistently, and appropriately.
- 3.2. We will have due regard for an individual's medical conditions and vulnerabilities such as mental health issues and learning disabilities recognising the impact that these can have on behaviours.
- 3.3. Soho appreciates that residents may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances that lead to a resident's behaviour becoming unacceptable. We appreciate this can also be because of poor service received from Soho.
- 3.4. We will not deem behaviour to be unacceptable without seeking to understand any relevant circumstances involved.
- 3.5. This 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 website communications.

4. Behaviour that is deemed unacceptable

5.1. Aggressive or abuse behaviour

Any violence or abuse towards staff will not be tolerated. We consider anger that escalates into aggression towards staff, and any instances where staff suffer harm unacceptable.

Violence is not restricted to acts of aggression that may result in physical harm, it includes behaviour or language (written or verbal) that may cause staff to feel intimidated,

offended, afraid, intimidated, threatened or abused.

Soho will judge each situation individually and appreciate the circumstances surrounding individuals who we come into contact with who may be upset. While we accept our residents may at times feel angry, it is not acceptable to shout or swear or interfere with Soho staff and their representatives.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Offensive, derogatory or patronising remarks
- Physical violence against a person
- Physical violence against objects, such as kicking, defacing or destroying property
- Persistent shouting
- Persistent swearing
- Offensive or rude gestures
- Threats made to a person
- Any discriminatory remarks or actions
- Allegations that individuals have committed criminal, corrupt or perverse conduct without any evidence

5.2. Unreasonable and excessive demands

Soho considers demands to be unreasonable when they impact substantially on the work of staff, for example by taking up an excessive amount of time which is disproportionate to the issue. This is likely to disadvantage other residents as it can impact on the service that can be provided to them.

Examples of this behaviour include:

- Repeatedly demanding responses within an unreasonable timescale
- Insisting on, or refusing to, speak to a particular member of staff, when that is not possible
- Repeatedly changing the substance of a complaint or raising unrelated concerns

5.3. Unreasonable, unacceptable and persistent levels of contact

Sometimes the volume and duration of contact made to our services by a resident can be problematic. This can occur over a short period of time, or persistently over longer periods of time.

This may also occur over the lifespan of a complaint when a resident repeatedly makes long telephone calls to us or inundates us with copies of information that have been sent already or that is irrelevant.

We consider that the level of contact has become unacceptable when the amount of time spent engaging with a resident on the telephone, or responding to, reviewing and filing emails or written correspondence, impacts on our ability to deal with their or another resident's concerns or requests, or it impacts performance of its housing management function.

5.4. Harassment

Soho staff and their representatives have the right to carry out their duties free from harassment or threats of harassment. We expect all residents to respect staff that are delivering our services and who communicate information on behalf of Soho.

Examples of behaviours we consider to be harassment include:

- Recording telephone discussions and publishing the information online

- Contacting staff or Soho representatives using their personal details or social media presence such as Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn
- Publishing personal, sensitive or private information about staff or Soho representatives online or other public domains such as noticeboards or newsletters
- Using intimidating behaviour against staff or Soho representatives

5.6. Refusal to cooperate

When we are looking at a complaint or service issue, we will need to ask the resident who has raised their concerns to work with us in order for us to investigate their concerns fully.

This can include:

- Agreeing with the specific nature of the complaint we will look at
- Providing us with further information, evidence or comments
- Summarising their concerns
- Cooperating with us to comply with Housing Ombudsman orders

Occasionally, residents can repeatedly refuse to co-operate, and this makes it difficult for us to investigate and resolve their complaints or issues effectively. We will always seek to assist a resident if they have specific, genuine difficulty in complying with a request.

6. **Reasonable adjustments**

- 6.1. We understand that some of our residents may find it difficult to express themselves or communicate clearly, especially when they are anxious or upset. Soho will seek to understand any reasonable adjustments that would make it easier to access Soho services. In order to do this, we may ask individuals to explain what adjustments they need and how this will ensure they can access Soho services.
- 6.2. We will always consider making reasonable adjustments for residents if we are asked to do so.
- 6.3. Examples of adjustments that we can consider are:
 - Using different methods of communication
 - Communicating in different languages using the support of a translator
 - Providing written communication in large print, easy read, coloured text, or in translated text
 - Giving clear warnings if conversations become unproductive and allowing residents the opportunity to modify their behaviour before ending a call
 - Identifying alternate representation for a resident such as a family member, carer, advocate, support worker or other professional that can communicate in the best interest of the resident
- 6.4. We may still use this policy even where a reasonable adjustment has been made if the actions or behaviours of an individual have a negative effect on our staff, our representatives or our work.

7. **How will we deal with unacceptable behaviour?**

- 7.1. When we experience unacceptable behaviour as set out in this policy, we may consider taking more formal action.
- 7.2. Prior to any formal action being taken, Soho will endeavour to take steps to allow a resident the opportunity to correct their behaviour. (This could include Soho taking a multi-agency approach, liaising with appropriate professionals who could mediate between Soho and the resident or work towards producing an acceptable behaviour agreement.)
- 7.3. In cases where informal agreements cannot be reached or the resident refuse to stop their unacceptable behaviour, Soho will escalate to formal escalation, which may

include:

- Warning the resident about their behaviour and requesting that the resident modifies their behaviour in future contact with us
- Appointing a specific Soho employee as a point of contact for the resident
- Communicating only in writing or via a representative
- Limiting resident contact with Soho to certain set time slots and/or number of contacts per a specified period

7.3. In any cases of physical violence or harassment towards our staff and representatives, Soho may involve the police and take legal action that could result in Soho ending contact with the resident.

7.4. When it is decided that formal action must be taken to manage a resident's behaviour, we will inform them of the decision in writing. Notes will also be placed on our housing management system along with any relevant warning markers to safeguard our employees.

7.5. The Director of Operations will approve the use of this policy to

- manage an identified resident's unreasonable behaviour; and
- any formal action(s) to be taken against a resident; and
- the appropriate review periods.

8. Review of unacceptable behaviour

8.1. Soho will not set restrictions to service indefinitely; a reasonable review period will be set based on the individual resident's circumstances and levels of unacceptable behaviour.

8.2. Review periods will be discussed with the Operations Director to ensure the review period is balanced, appropriate and without bias.

9. Right to appeal

9.1. Residents have the right to appeal against the decision of any formal action taken in relation to this policy. Any appeal should be made in writing within 3 weeks of the decision and will be heard by the Chief Executive Officer.

10. Responsibility

10.1. Compliance with this policy is the responsibility of the Operations Director.

10. Key controls and reporting

10.1. Performance against this policy will be reported to the Senior Management Team when triggered with a resident.

11. Legal / Regulatory Framework

11.1. This policy incorporates the key requirements of the following:

- Housing Ombudsman Scheme and its Complaints Handling Code
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018

11. Associated documents

11.1. This policy is supported by the following policies and supporting procedures:

- Complaints Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

- Anti-social behaviour Policy
- Reasonable adjustment Policy
- Tenancy Agreement – Tenant's Obligations

12. Equality and Diversity

12.1. Actions under this policy will ensure that all residents will be treated fairly, dignity and respect and in a proportionate manner.

12.2. Soho is committed to valuing and promoting equality and diversity, working to create a culture that celebrates and welcomes individuality, disability, gender reassignment, race, religious or political beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy or maternity status, irrespective of age.

12.3. Policy Review and Version Control

Version number: 1
 Last review date: February 2025
 Next review date: February 2028

Version Control

Version	Type of Change	Date	Revisions from previous issue	Approved By
1	Review and Redraft	Feb 2025	Policy redrafted to reflect changes in internal repairs handling and updates made to inter-dependant policies and procedures	AR