

## **How we Deal with Unacceptable Customer Behaviour**

At Clanmil, we are committed to providing great customer service and we have high standards for the behaviour of the people who work here.

We also expect everyone who uses our services, including people who live in Clanmil homes, to behave in a respectful way to our colleagues and contractors.

We welcome feedback, including complaints, compliments, suggestions, and concerns. These all help us improve the services we deliver to customers.

Colleagues are trained to handle complaints in a sensitive and respectful way. We appreciate that sometimes people can get angry or upset if there are problems. But when people become very abusive or threatening to our colleagues or contractors, that is unacceptable, and we will take action.

We have a policy that sets out our approach to dealing with unacceptable behaviour towards our colleagues. The policy includes guidance for colleagues and ensures they are protected from abusive or harmful behaviour. It also describes how we deal with unacceptable behaviour in a fair, open and consistent manner.

### **What is unacceptable behaviour?**

Unacceptable behaviour means such conduct which involves acts, words or physical gestures that could cause another person distress or discomfort. This includes acting in a way that is unreasonable, regardless of the level of someone's stress, frustration, or anger.

We understand that there may be upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a particular issue that may cause people to act out of character. We also recognise that sometimes perceived unacceptable behaviour can be a result of neuro diverse differences, some disabilities, cultural and communication differences, or other exceptional circumstances. We train our staff to recognise these signs and respond in the right way.

Unacceptable behaviour can include:

- Physical or verbal violence, including using language that would cause someone to feel threatened or afraid. Examples include threats, derogatory remarks, rudeness, inflammatory statements, and unsubstantiated allegations.

- Customers may make unreasonable demands by the amount of information they seek, the scale of service they expect or the number of times they approach colleagues about the same topic or issue. This might include insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular colleague or refusing to deal with some colleagues.
- Other examples of unreasonable behaviour can include secretly recording a visit or phone call, making repeated or excessive phone calls, emails, or requests, expecting responses within an unreasonable timescale, asking multiple colleagues about different issues or complaints, making inappropriate or false social media posts directed at colleagues or which seek to defame the organization.

### **Safeguarding and disclosures**

We recognise that customer's actions may be affected by a vulnerability, such as mental ill health, learning disability, substance misuse, learning difficulties, family or relationship breakdown, or other factors. This will be taken into consideration before deciding on an appropriate course of action.

In our work, if someone threatens to harm themselves or others, we will consider disclosing this to a relevant health professional under our safeguarding procedures. We may also contact the PSNI where there is a risk or threat of harm.

### **Managing unacceptable behaviour**

When addressing Unacceptable Behaviour, we will follow a four-stage process.

STAGE 1 – INFORMAL ACTION – verbal warning

STAGE 2 – FORMAL ACTION – written warning – we will advise the customer about the reason the warning is being issued, what behaviour we consider unacceptable, what steps we will take if the behaviour does not change, what the customer can do to have the warning reviewed.

STAGE 3 – CONTACT RESTRICTIONS / OTHER FORMAL ACTION

STAGE 4 – REVIEW OF CONTACT RESTRICTIONS

Examples of formal actions and restrictions:

- Limiting the number and duration of contacts with colleagues.
- Offering only a specific time slot for the customer to call us.
- Limiting the customer to only one channel of contact (letter, telephone, email etc.) or to only one Clanmil colleague.
- Stopping phone contact altogether if the calls are abusive.
- Asking the customer to engage with Clanmil through a third party (e.g. an advocacy agency), or asking that any personal contacts with the customer take place in the presence of a witness (e.g., social worker or PSNI).
- Taking tenancy enforcement action or contacting the police.

The decision to apply this policy will be a last resort. It will be approved by Clanmil managers and accurate chronological record of each stage will be kept.

Customers' rights to access essential services such as response repairs service will not be affected.

### **Right to appeal**

A customer can appeal, in writing, against a decision to restrict contact. Their appeal will be considered within ten working days of receiving it, and the panel will advise them of its decision within seven working days of the meeting.

An Assistant Director at Clanmil will write to them advising them either that the restricted contact arrangements will continue, or that they have been removed, or confirming that a different course of action has been agreed.

### **In conclusion**

There are very few customers whose behaviour or actions are unacceptable. However, when this does happen, it can take up a lot of time and can cause stress for Clanmil colleagues. Applying this policy is always a last resort.

**If you would like a copy of the Unacceptable Behaviour Policy, please email [customerfeedback@clanmil.org.uk](mailto:customerfeedback@clanmil.org.uk)**