

Policy Name:	UNACCEPTABLE RESIDENT BEHAVIOUR POLICY	
Version	001	
Reviewed Date	May 2026	

1. Purpose

AHCL is committed to providing a fair, accessible and effective service to all its residents. The vast majority of residents who contact AHCL or the Managing Agent do so reasonably and in good faith, including when they are frustrated or distressed.

However, on rare occasions, behaviour by residents or their representatives may become unacceptable – in a way that makes it difficult for AHCL or the Managing Agent to deliver services effectively, or that affects the wellbeing of staff. This policy sets out how AHCL will respond to unacceptable behaviour in a way that is proportionate, consistent, fair and compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

This policy is referenced in AHCL's Customer Complaints Policy (v009, February 2026) as a basis for declining to investigate complaints in certain circumstances. It does not affect residents' right of access to the Housing Ombudsman.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all contact between residents (or their authorised representatives) and AHCL or the Managing Agent, including complaints, service requests, telephone calls, emails, written correspondence, social media contact, and face-to-face interactions.

This policy does not apply to behaviour that constitutes anti-social behaviour between residents – that is addressed under AHCL's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. It applies to behaviour directed at AHCL or the Managing Agents staff.

3. Our Commitment to Accessible Services

Before applying this policy, AHCL will always consider whether a resident's behaviour may be explained by:

- distress, frustration or anxiety arising from a genuine service failure

- a disability, mental health condition or cognitive impairment that affects how they communicate
- a safeguarding situation or domestic abuse context
- a language or communication barrier
- a legitimate grievance that has not been properly addressed

Where any of these factors may be relevant, AHCL will make reasonable adjustments before concluding that behaviour is unacceptable. AHCL will also consider whether a resident would benefit from support from an advocate or representative.

4. What Counts as Unacceptable Behaviour

The following types of behaviour may be considered unacceptable under this policy. This list is not exhaustive and each case will be considered on its own merits:

4.1 Abusive, threatening or offensive behaviour

- verbal abuse, shouting, swearing or aggressive language directed at staff
- threats of physical harm or intimidation directed at staff
- discriminatory language or behaviour based on a protected characteristic
- sending offensive, threatening or harassing written communications

4.2 Unreasonable or vexatious contact

- making repeated complaints or requests about the same matter after a final decision has been communicated and all internal and external escalation routes have been exhausted
- making excessive numbers of contacts (telephone calls, emails, letters) within a short period that is disproportionate to the matter being raised
- contacting multiple AHCL staff members simultaneously about the same issue in a way that is designed to circumvent or disrupt the normal process
- raising complaints that are clearly designed to harass or distress staff rather than to achieve a genuine resolution

4.3 Deliberately false or misleading information

- knowingly providing false information in connection with a complaint or service request
- making allegations against staff that are known to be untrue

5. What Does Not Count as Unacceptable Behaviour

The following are explicitly not unacceptable behaviour under this policy:

- persistence in pursuing a genuine complaint, even after a stage 1 or stage 2 response has been given
- expressing frustration, disappointment or distress about a service failure, provided this is not abusive
- copying in the Housing Ombudsman, the RSH, a solicitor, an MP or a councillor
- making a Subject Access Request or a STAIRs information request
- raising a complaint about the way a previous complaint was handled
- requesting a meeting or a telephone call to discuss a matter

6. AHCL's Response to Unacceptable Behaviour

6.1 Immediate response

Where a member of staff experiences abusive, threatening or offensive behaviour, they may:

- end a telephone call or meeting, with a clear explanation that the call or meeting is being ended due to the behaviour, and an offer to continue when the resident is ready to engage respectfully
- decline to respond to an email or letter until the tone is appropriate
- in cases of threats or serious abuse, contact the police

All incidents of unacceptable behaviour must be reported to the line manager or the Customer Team lead on the same day. A record is kept on the resident's file.

6.2 Formal written warning

Where unacceptable behaviour is repeated or serious, AHCL will send the resident a formal written warning. The warning will:

- identify the specific behaviour that is unacceptable
- explain the impact of that behaviour on staff or on the ability to deliver services
- set out clearly what behaviour AHCL expects in future
- warn the resident of the restrictions that may be applied if the behaviour continues (see Section 6.3)
- confirm that the warning does not affect the resident's right to contact the Housing Ombudsman

A formal written warning requires the authorisation of a senior manager. The warning is recorded on the resident's file and reviewed after six months.

6.3 Restrictions on contact

In serious or persistent cases, following a written warning, AHCL may apply one or more of the following restrictions:

- requiring all contact to be in writing only
- requiring contact to be made through a single named point of contact at AHCL
- limiting the number of contacts per week or month
- in extreme cases involving threats or abuse, requiring a resident to be accompanied by a representative for any face-to-face contact

Restrictions on contact require the authorisation of the CEO. The resident will be informed in writing of the restriction, its duration, and how they can have it reviewed. Restrictions will not prevent a resident from making a complaint, making a Subject Access Request, or contacting the Housing Ombudsman.

6.4 Declining to investigate a complaint

In accordance with AHCL's Complaints Policy, AHCL may decline to investigate a complaint where the complainant's behaviour has been unacceptable and a formal written warning has been issued. This will only be considered in cases of serious or persistent unacceptable behaviour, not simply because a resident has been difficult or persistent.

Any decision to decline to investigate a complaint on the grounds of unacceptable behaviour must be:

- authorised by the CEO
- communicated to the resident in writing with clear reasons

- accompanied by information about the resident's right to contact the Housing Ombudsman

7. Safeguarding Considerations

Before applying any restriction under this policy, AHCL will consider whether the resident's behaviour may indicate a safeguarding concern, a mental health crisis, or domestic abuse. Where such concerns are present, this policy will be applied with particular care and in consultation with AHCL's Designated Safeguarding Lead. Safeguarding obligations always take precedence over the application of this policy.

8. Record-Keeping and Review

All incidents of unacceptable behaviour, written warnings, and contact restrictions are recorded on the resident's file and in a central log maintained by the Customer Team. This log is reviewed quarterly by the CEO. Restrictions on contact are reviewed at least every six months and lifted as soon as they are no longer necessary.

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner following a significant change in the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code or regulatory guidance. The Company Secretary is responsible for coordinating the review.

9. Related Policies

Customer Complaints Policy

Compensation Policy

Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

Safeguarding Adults Policy

Domestic Abuse Policy

Communication and Accessible Information Policy

Version History

Version	Date	Author	Sections Updated	Principal Changes
001	May 2026	Grace Robinson	All	New document – first issue