

COMPANY NAME:

Hillcrest Group of Companies

PROCEDURE NUMBER:

G15A

PROCEDURE TITLE:

Unacceptable Actions

This document can be produced in different formats, for example, in larger print or audio-format, and in other languages, as appropriate. We promote equality through seeking to eliminate unlawful and unfair forms of discrimination, as appropriate.



## 1. Introduction

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Hillcrest has to take action to protect its staff and to consider the impact unacceptable behaviour has on its staff and the ability to do their job. In a small number of cases the actions of individuals can become unacceptable if they involve violence or abuse of our staff or processes.

Violence is not restricted to acts of aggression that may involve physical harm. It includes behaviour or language (whether verbal or written) that may cause staff to feel offended, afraid, threatened or abused.



## 2. Principles

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The key principles of the communications policy for the Hillcrest Group of Companies are as follows:

- to make it clear to tenants, service users or customers that throughout their dealings with our staff that it is unacceptable to behave in an abusive, threatening, violent, or overly persistent manner, where this behaviour is likely to upset or offend staff or cause them physical danger.
- to deal fairly, honestly, consistently and appropriately with all tenants, service users or customers, even those whose behaviour or actions we consider unacceptable. We believe that all service users have the right to be heard, understood and respected. We also believe that Hillcrest Group staff have the same rights;
- to provide a service that is accessible to all. However, we retain the right, where we consider a tenants, service users or customers actions to be unacceptable, to restrict or change access to our service; and
- to ensure that other tenants, service users, customers and Hillcrest Group staff do not suffer any disadvantage from tenants, service users, customers who act in an unacceptable manner.
- to ensure that the Group's effectiveness is not compromised by tenants, service users, customers who act in a manner that makes excessive and unacceptable demands on Group's resources.

## 3. Responsibilities

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### Role of Members

- The Audit and General Purposes Sub-committee has responsibility for agreeing and reviewing the policy and associated procedure so as to ensure that fair and equitable processes are being followed.

- The Audit and General Purposes Sub-committee discharge the responsibility for monitoring the use of the policy to the Complaints Review Group.
- The Audit and General Purposes will consider the policy at least every three years and will approve any material changes to the policy and practice as appropriate.

#### Role of Senior Team

- The Director of Corporate Services will be responsible for ensuring that the Hillcrest Group's unacceptable actions process are effective and that these are communicated to, and understood by all staff;
- The Director of Corporate Services will ensure that this policy and its appropriate procedures are regularly reviewed and its provisions consistently followed throughout the Group.
- The Director of Corporate Services is responsible, in conjunction with the Corporate Services Manager, for ensuring that the use of this policy is recorded when required and that any significant use of the policy is reported to the Complaints Review Group.

#### Role of Staff

- All managers will have a responsibility to support their staff in the use of the unacceptable actions process and record any such activity appropriately.
- Managers will be responsible for escalating decisions to the Director of Corporate Services and ensuring that decisions made are communicated to staff.
- Managers will be responsible for reviewing the alerts on customer records in accordance with the procedures.
- All staff will be responsible for reporting unacceptable behaviour and actions of tenants, services users or customers to their line manager and completing the relevant H&S processes
- All staff will be responsible for recording the instances of unacceptable behaviour in line with the relevant H&S processes.



## Procedure Document Governance and Management

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## APPENDIX 1

### Strategies For Dealing With Difficult Conversations

Basic Tips - Stay calm. You can use some basic body awareness techniques – these apply to all the scenarios below:

- Ensure your breathing stays steady
- Pushing your feet into the ground can make you feel more in control
- Keep your voice low – the higher the pitch the more distressed you sound
- Keep the pace of your voice steady

We have set out below some possible approaches to different scenarios which you may find helpful:

The Person is Shouting	Let the person know the problems they are causing and that if they stop you will be able to help  “Can I please ask you not to shout so that we can deal with this and I can try to offer you some help”  “I appreciate you are upset. It’s difficult for me to follow what you are saying when you are shouting. If you can calm down we can talk this through”  “I’m sorry you feel that way ..... We can’t solve the problem if you continue to shout”
The person is Distressed & Upset	Make it clear you can hear the distress and upset. Check if they need time out to deal with this.  “I appreciate this is very difficult for you/ I can hear you are becoming very upset. Would you like to take a break and I can call you back in five minutes?”  “I can hear that you are upset, would you like to take a few minutes until you feel able to talk more calmly? I can call you back if that helps?”
The Person is Angry	Reflect back that you can feel the anger; 'I can hear you are very angry'. You can empathise if appropriate; this is not the same as agreeing with their point of view.



“I understand why that would be upsetting”.

“I agree that would be frustrating.”

You may feel able to respect both views “I understand your position and why you feel strongly about this”. We have looked at this carefully and we have come to a different view.

The Person is  
Going Round in  
Circles

Reflect this:

“We are now going round in circles and this is not taking things forward”.

“Can I ask you some questions”?

“Can I ask you to put this in writing”?

“Can I ask you to [what you need to do next to progress this]”?

“I want to focus now on what steps you now need to take to progress your complaint”.

Or when you need to move to end the conversation.

“I am sorry; we are now repeating ourselves which is not helpful. I have explained what I will do next. I need to now ...”

The Person is  
Making Accusations  
Or Allegations

Probing these sorts of questions means the person is not able to make allegations without justification. It can also help you to work out what is going on if you are unsure why someone is reacting this way – you might consider what/where/how/when questions:

“What makes you think that”?

“What has happened that makes you feel that way”?

“When did you start thinking we weren’t listening to you”?

The Person Has You should not attempt to hide from this. Check what you heard – this

Indicated They May shows signs you are listening. You can show empathy where appropriate  
Hurt Themselves then signpost to appropriate support:

“Let me just check what I've heard. Did you say that you are thinking about taking your own life? ...”

“I can't imagine how you are feeling just now and I can hear that you are very distressed ...”

You should signpost to appropriate support, for example, we may use this phrase

“We have a good partnership with the Samaritans. They are an organisation who are particularly skilled in offering support for people who are experiencing difficult or stressful times. I would like to offer you their telephone number – Samaritans Tel: 116 123