

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR POLICY – SOCIAL MEDIA

1. Introduction

1.1. Our social media accounts are managed by Saffron staff. We strive to be helpful and understanding on our social media channels, which are - Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Snapchat.

2. Purpose

2.1 This policy is in place to protect Saffron, our employees, Board Members, and tenants from unacceptable use of social media.

2.2 Unacceptable behaviour includes (but is not limited to) abusive language, degrading remarks, or attempts to provoke or upset other users.

3. Contacting us

3.1 Due to the volume of social media posts, we reply to customer queries asking us to deal with a service request or asking a customer service question. We aim to initially respond to questions and requests within one working day. On some occasions during busy periods this may not be possible, but we will respond to you as soon as we can. For general enquiries we recommend you contact us via info@saffronhousing.co.uk or 01508 532000.

3.2 During an emergency or during times of significant service disruption, we will post all latest service or situation updates on our website and social media channels

4. What is and isn't acceptable

4.1 We know there will be times when people will be unhappy with what Saffron does (or doesn't do) or the decisions it makes.

4.2 Saffron has a Complaints Policy, the purpose of which is to respond to tenant and customer feedback on complaints (and compliments). Complaints can be made by email, by letter, in person, via the website, our customer contact centre, tenant portal or any other means, including social media. This procedure allows us to find effective resolutions and ensure that learning happens to prevent recurrence of complaints.

4.3 If you raise your complaint via social media, we will reply and ask you to message us directly with further details. We will not comment beyond this to ensure that confidentiality and privacy is maintained. Upon receipt of the details, we will register your complaint in the way agreed with you.

4.4 We support public debate and people are free to share their views of us as a housing provider, but we do not tolerate posts or messages on social media sites that cross the line in terms of acceptability.

4.5 This includes targeting named members of staff, Board members or tenants with direct, unacceptable, criticism.

4.6 We reserve the right to take action in relation to social media posts or messages which:

- Are abusive
- Are persistent/harassing (see Unacceptable Behaviour Complaints Policy for further explanation)
- Are threatening
- Use sexist, racist or other unacceptable language/swear words which are intended to cause concern/harm
- Are defamatory or libellous
- May be in contempt of court
- Break any other law (such as hate crime)
- Are spam
- Contain inappropriate material (photographs or video)
- Incite someone/people to break the law

5. Reasonable adjustments

5.1 We understand that some customers have disabilities which may make it difficult for them to express themselves or communicate clearly, especially when they are anxious or upset. We also recognise that some disabilities can make it difficult for customers to assess the impact that their behaviour might have on other people.

5.2 We will always consider making reasonable adjustments for a disabled customer if we are asked to do so. For example:

- We could consider using different methods of communication
- Agree to give clear warning when we feel that a customer's behaviour is unacceptable so that they have the opportunity to change it.

5.3 However, we would not consider it to be reasonable to expect our staff to accept being subjected to offensive or aggressive actions, language, or behaviour. We may still use the policy if there are actions or behaviours which are having a negative effect on our staff or the service they are trying to deliver.

6. How we deal with unacceptable behaviour

6.1 Identification

6.1.1 The Communications Team monitors Saffron's corporate social media accounts daily. If they see unacceptable behaviour, they will record the name and handle of the account, the date, the social media post, and why it is unacceptable.

6.1.2 If staff members see unacceptable behaviour on social media channels, they are to inform the Communications Team (refer to our Social Media & Networking Policy).

6.2 First warning

6.2.1 Once unacceptable behaviour has been identified (this includes both in a public news feed/timeline or privately via a direct message), the Communications Team will confirm whether it is inappropriate with the Head of Communications. Once a decision has been made, they will issue a written warning to the author in private via a direct message, or publicly in the news feed if Saffron are unable to direct message (due to blocking for example). The warning will link to this 'Unacceptable Behaviour – Social Media Policy' and remind the individual of acceptable behaviour. It will be a standard message.

6.2.2 Any behaviour which is deemed to be unacceptable in accordance with a social media channel's own rules will be reported to that social media channel.

6.2.3 Before issuing a warning, the central record will be checked to assess whether this is a first warning or whether the individual has already been blocked.

6.2.4 Extreme unacceptable behaviour will result in a block. Whether a message reaches this threshold will be agreed by the Head of Communications and Director of Engagement & Involvement.

6.3 Blocking users

6.3.1 If unacceptable behaviour continues after the warning, or if the behaviour is extreme, Saffron will consider blocking users from interacting with Saffron's social media feed.

6.3.2 The Director of Engagement & Involvement and Head of Communications will take the final decision to block an individual. This will be recorded.

6.4 Right to appeal a blocked account

6.4.1 After 12 months, the blocked account owner can appeal the decision to block. To request an appeal, they will need to provide evidence that they are no longer posting messages that are unacceptable. Evidence will include screen shots from their account to demonstrate understanding of acceptable behaviour.

6.4.2 On receipt of a request to appeal, a review meeting comprised of the Chair of the Tenant Communications & Support Group, Director of Engagement & Involvement and the Head of Communications will be convened who will review the evidence provided.

6.4.3 Individuals who are unblocked will be regularly reviewed to ensure behaviour remains acceptable.

6.4.4 The panel will review the tone, sentiment and approach taken by the blocked account holder's evidence to assess whether their behaviour remains unacceptable.

6.4.5 Should the account holder remain blocked, Saffron will write (via email or direct message) to the account holder to explain the decision.

6.4.6 Should the account holder be 'unblocked' they will be notified in writing by the Head of Communications.

6.5 Other actions taken when blocking an individual

6.5.1 Saffron manages unacceptable behaviour according to the 'Unacceptable Behaviour Complaints' Policy.

6.5.2 A blocked social media account could also lead to restricting the way someone can communicate with Saffron via other channels.

6.5.3 We may also report the matter to the police where behaviour amounts to abuse or harassment, or a criminal offence is suspected. All decisions on these matters will be made by the Chief Executive.

6.5.4 Saffron reserves the right to take whatever legal action that may be necessary in the case of libellous or defamatory posts/messages.

Related Policies

- Complaints and Compliments Policy
- Unacceptable Behaviour Complaints Policy

Policy Reviews

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

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