1. **Introduction**

One Manchester is committed to providing a fair, consistent and accessible service for all our customers. However, we have to balance this by providing a safe working environment for our staff – including volunteers/work placements etc. - to operate within and to ensure that our work is undertaken in an efficient and effective manner.

On occasions, customers may make unreasonable demands that could affect the service we provide to other customers, or communicate with us in a manner which causes offence to our staff. Where this occurs, One Manchester reserves the right to manage customer contact in an appropriate manner to protect our staff and to maintain the effectiveness of our service to other customers.

1. **Purpose**

This policy sets out One Manchester’s approach to managing customers whose behaviour or actions are considered unacceptable and are having a harmful impact on our staff and/or their ability to provide a consistent level of service to other customers.

1. **Scope**

This policy affects all customers, all areas of work undertaken by One Manchester and all of our staff. For the purpose of this policy, any reference to customers refers to tenants, leaseholders and private owner/occupiers who have dealings with us from time to time, former tenants, visitors to any One Manchester premises and/or friends, relatives of representatives of any of these people. The policy also covers any external service provided by a partner organisation or contractor to our customers.

**4.0 Policy**

One Manchester recognises that, in some circumstances, customers may have a mental health problem or other disability where it may be difficult for them to express themselves or communicate appropriately. Where unacceptable behaviour is evidenced under these circumstances, One Manchester will consider the individual needs and circumstances of the customer and our staff before deciding on how best to manage the situation.

**Unacceptable Behaviour**

One Manchester accepts that people may act in ways which are out of character when they are

upset or distressed and, on occasions, behaviour is difficult for an individual member of staff to deal

with because it does not conform to the standards they expect or the values they hold. An action is

not necessarily unacceptable because a member of staff finds it personally difficult. We also do not

view behaviour as unacceptable just because a complainant is forceful or determined.

Unacceptable actions and behaviour are grouped under the categories below:

* Aggressive, violent, offensive or abusive language or behaviour including unsubstantiated allegations and malicious complaints towards or about One Manchester staff
* Unreasonable demands that complying with would impact on our work or service provision
* Unreasonable persistence including refusal to accept decisions made or accept explanations
* Unreasonable levels of contact that also impact on our work or service provision
* Unreasonable use of the complaints process when the effect is to harass, or to prevent us from pursuing a legitimate aim or from implementing a legitimate decision
* Customers appearing incapable as a result of illness or the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances

**Restrictions**

Wherever possible, customers will be given the opportunity to modify their behaviour or actions before access is restricted. However, where a customer continues to behave or communicate in an unacceptable manner, One Manchester will exercise its right to restrict contact. The precise nature and action will be appropriate and proportionate to the nature of the unacceptable behaviour and the circumstances of our staff and the customer. The decision to restrict access will be taken by a line manager in consultation with the Director of Communities.

Restrictions may include, amongst other considerations:

* the immediate termination of service including the withdrawal of offers of accommodation
* the blocking of telephone calls/emails or other forms of communication
* arranging for a single, named member of staff to deal with all contacts from the customer
* requiring the customer to communicate with us via an agreed representative
* limiting future contact to a particular form and/or frequency
* informing the customer that their correspondence will be read to ensure no new issues have been raised but then filed without further acknowledgement
* termination of all contact
* referring the matter to the police where a criminal offence has been threatened or committed
* legal action to prohibit contact/inappropriate behaviour

Where contact is restricted, the customer will be informed in writing, and verbally if required, of the decision with the reason why we consider their behaviour unacceptable, details of any earlier warnings, the restriction being imposed and, if appropriate, how long the restriction will last. This information will be recorded on all relevant files and computer records.

**Appeal**

A customer can appeal a decision to restrict contact within 20 days of the restriction being imposed. A Director who was not involved in the original decision will consider the appeal and their decision is final. An unsuccessful appeal cannot be progressed through One Manchester’s complaint procedure.

**5.0 Method and approach**

This policy will be applied in a fair, reasonable and consistent manner and due consideration will be given to the Equality Act 2010 in regard to unlawful discrimination and service provision.

**6.0** **Equality**

One Manchester will ensure that this policy is applied fairly to all our customers. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or other grounds set out in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. All staff managing behaviour considered as challenging must ensure

that equality and diversity issues have been fully taken into account and reasonable adjustments made where appropriate.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy.

**7.0 Responsibility**

The Director of Communities is responsible for ensuring this policy complies with any legislative requirements.

Investigations and decisions in relation to unacceptable behaviour towards staff will be conducted by the relevant staff members’ line manager. In the case of serious threats of or actual violence, immediate action should be taken including reporting the matter to the police and the Community Safety Team. Decisions to restrict contact (temporarily or permanently) must be authorised by a Director in consultation with the relevant Head of Service.

**8.0 Monitoring, review and evaluation**

Operations Committee will monitor usage of this policy.

The policy will be reconsidered against any legislative changes annually and reviewed every three years.

**9.0 Legislation**

Equality Act 2010

General Data Protection Regulations 2016

**10.0 Associated Policies**

Complaints Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Allocations Policy

ASB and Hate Crime Policy

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy