

# Managing Unreasonable Complaints or Complainant Conduct Policy

National Operations

Document Owner

1.1

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## 1. Purpose

This policy aims to ensure that Housing Choices Australia can identify and manage unreasonable complaints or complainant conduct fairly, efficiently, and effectively so that we:

- Protect the wellbeing, health, and safety of our staff;
- Effectively manage resource allocations – in our complaints handling;
- Respond appropriately and consistently;
- Communicate effectively.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Feedback and Complaints Policy, and the Appeals Policy.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to our residents, clients, household members, neighbours of our residents, housing applicants, service delivery partners, maintenance contractors, stakeholders and members of the community impacted by our services.

This policy applies to unreasonable complaints or complainant conduct relating to services provided by our staff or maintenance contractors, the decisions we have made, or the way we have handled feedback and complaints.

## 3. Policy Statement

Complainant conduct is unreasonable or unacceptable when actions or behaviours escalate to aggressive, abusive, vexatious, or repetitive conduct toward Housing Choices and the staff handling their complaints.

Unreasonable complainant conduct is any behaviour which, because of its nature or frequency raises substantial wellbeing, health, safety, resource, or equity issues for the people involved in the complaint process and has unacceptable consequences for one or more parties involved in the complaint.

Unreasonable conduct can take place during telephone conversations, face to face interactions, online, or in written correspondence.

Unreasonable conduct can negatively impact on organisational resources, staff productivity, safety, and wellbeing.

Housing Choices has a zero-tolerance policy towards any harm, abuse or threats directed to staff.

## 4. Recognising unreasonable conduct

There are times where residents may be upset by our services or decisions, however responses that are extreme or unreasonable are not acceptable.

Some examples of unreasonable conduct may include, but is not limited to:

### 4.1. Unreasonable persistence

- Ongoing persistence with issues and demands for further action despite the matter having been finalised and reviewed
- Unwillingness to accept reasonable and logical explanations and final decisions
- Sending repeated and excessive correspondence with large amounts of irrelevant information
- Contacting different people within our organisation or externally seeking an alternative outcome.

### 4.2. Unreasonable demands

- Insisting on unattainable, unrealistic, or inappropriate outcomes
- Making unreasonable demands about how we should handle their complaint and the outcome that should be achieved
- Emotional manipulation of staff
- Demands on time and resources are not proportionate to the seriousness of their issue.

### 4.3. Unreasonable lack of cooperation

- Unhelpful or uncooperative behaviour such as providing intentionally misleading information to suit their position or argument
- Unwillingness to accept other valid viewpoints
- Refusing to participate in actions that may resolve the issue.

### 4.4. Unreasonable behaviours

- Acts of aggression, threats of harm or violence, physical violence
- Verbal abuse, derogatory, racist, and defamatory remarks
- Harassment or intimidation
- Stalking (in person or online).

Where we believe that the behaviour is unlawful or the safety of our staff is at risk, we will immediately report this to the Police.

## 5. Responding to unreasonable conduct

Strategies should be adapted to suit the presenting behaviours and individual circumstances and the level of risk to staff or other people.

We will take into consideration factors that may be influencing a person's behaviour such as cultural communication styles or behaviour influenced by a disability, disorder, or trauma.

## 6. Adapting and managing interactions

1.1 Unreasonable complainant conduct may be managed by limiting or adapting the ways we provide interact with residents in the provision of services. All reasonable steps will be taken before changing or restricting a person's access to our services. Wherever possible, we will engage advocacy or support services in these instances. Adaptations may include:

- Who a complainant may have contact with – for example, limiting a person to a sole contact staff member
- What matters a complainant can raise – for example, restricting the subject matter of communications that we will respond to
- When a complainant can make contact – for example, limiting contact to scheduled appointment times with limits on the frequency and length of those meetings
- Where a complainant can make contact – for example, limiting locations for face to face meetings in a secured office space
- How a complainant can make contact - for example, limiting or modifying forms of contact – face to face interviews, telephone and written communications, access to office premises, or contact through a representative only.

The decision to restrict access must be approved by a Team Leader and should be reported to the General Manager.

Where a decision is made to adapt the way we provide services because of unreasonable conduct, we will ensure:

- We are still providing core tenancy and property services
- Any limitations are reasonable and appropriate to the individual's personal circumstances
- That residents and relevant parties are informed in writing about the decision and on what basis
- Information is provided on how to seek a review of the decision
- Any applied service restrictions are set with an agreed review timeframe to ensure efficacy and appropriateness
- That it does not preclude them from making a complaint about a new matter or having a future complaint taken seriously.

## 7. Review of a decision

We will review any decision on adapting or managing interactions as per the agreed review timeframe, or if there are any significant changes in circumstances.

## 8. Scheduled Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years, following any significant restructure, or in response to legislative or regulatory changes. Consultation will be undertaken across service areas and input welcomed from persons who have been involved in the operation of feedback and complaints.

## 9. References:

LEGISLATION & STANDARDS	RELATED INTERNAL DOCUMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Feedback and Complaints Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Appeals Policy</a></li> <li>• Managing Unreasonable Complaints or Complainant Conduct Procedure (TBD)</li> </ul>

**English:**

If you need an interpreter, please call TIS National on 131 450 and ask them to call **Housing Choices Australia** on **1300 312 447**. Our business hours are **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

You can also visit the TIS National website for translated information about the service TIS National provides. Visit: [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

**Arabic:**

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مترجم، يرجى الاتصال بـ TIS الوطنية على الرقم 131 450 وأطلب منهم الاتصال بنا على هاتف رقم **1300 312 447** Housing Choices Australia .9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

يمكنك أيضا زيارة موقع TIS الوطنية للحصول على معلومات حول الخدمات التي تقدمها TIS الوطنية. قم بزيارة: [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

**Farsi (alt Persian):**

اگر به مترجم نیاز دارید، لطفاً با شماره تلفن تیس نشنال 131 450 تماس بگیرید و از آنها بخواهید با Housing Choices Australia به شماره **1300 312 447** تماس بگیرند. ساعت کاری ما **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday** است.

www.tisnational.gov.au شما همچنین می توانید به وب سایت تیس نشنال برای اطلاعات در مورد خدماتی که تیس نشنال فراهم می کند مراجعه کنید. به

**Vietnamese:**

Nếu quý vị cần thông dịch viên, xin hãy gọi cho Dịch vụ Thông Phiên dịch Quốc gia (TIS Quốc gia) theo số 131 450 và yêu cầu họ gọi cho **Housing Choices Australia** theo số **1300 312 447**. Giờ làm việc của chúng tôi là **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**. Quý vị cũng có thể vào thăm trang mạng của TIS Quốc gia để có thông tin về các dịch vụ mà TIS Quốc gia cung cấp. Hãy vào thăm [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

**Somali:**

Haddii aad u baahan tahay turjumaan, fadlan ka wac TIS National taleefanka 131 450 waxaad ka codsataa inay kuu wacaan **Housing Choices Australia** iyo **1300 312 447**. Saacadaha Shaqadu waa **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

Waxaad kaloo booqan kartaa website-ka TIS National ee macluumaadka turjuman oo ku saabsan adeegga TIS National ay bixiso. Ka eeg: [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

**Simplified Chinese:**

如果您需要口译员，请拨打TIS National 的电话131 450，请他们打电话给**Housing Choices Australia**，电话号码：**1300 312 447**。我们的营业时间是**9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**。

你也可以访问TIS National 的网站，了解TIS National提供的服务。网址：[www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

**Traditional Chinese:**

若你需要口譯員，請撥打TIS National電話131 450並請他們轉接 **Housing Choices Australia** 的電話 **1300 312 447**。我們的工作時間是**9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**。

你也可以瀏覽TIS National 網站瞭解TIS National 的服務資訊，網址：[www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

**Spanish:**

Si necesita un intérprete, por favor llame a TIS National en el 131 450 y pida que lo comuniquen con **Housing Choices Australia** en el **1300 312 447**. Nuestro horario de oficina es **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

También puede visitar el sitio web de TIS National para obtener información acerca de los servicios que provee TIS National. Visite [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

**Italian:**

Se hai bisogno di un interprete, telefona a TIS National al numero 131 450 e chiedi di chiamare **Housing Choices Australia** al **1300 312 447**. I nostri orari d'ufficio sono **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

Puoi visitare anche il sito web TIS National per informazioni tradotte sul servizio che TIS National fornisce. Visita il sito: [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)

**For other languages, access to an interpreter is available by contacting Housing Choices Australia on 1300 312 447.**