



Dignity and Respect Policy

Chester House is managed by the Guy Chester Centre. The Guy Chester Centre is the trading name of the Trustees of the North Bank Estate.

1. Policy Statement

The Guy Chester Centre aims to ensure that every person is treated with dignity and respect regardless of their age; disability (including mental impairment affecting day-to-day activities); family responsibility; marital, parental or partnership status; race, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; gender (including gender reassignment); LGBTQ+ status; political/trade union activity; or any other distinction. We will take action against residents, staff, visitors or contractors who exhibit unfair treatment or unacceptable behaviour.

2. Aims of the Policy

The aims of the policy are to:

- Promote an environment where unfair treatment, bullying and harassment are not accepted and are understood to be unacceptable forms of behaviour
- Ensure we maintain an environment in which dignity and respect are fostered by not tolerating any form of unacceptable behaviour
- Provide a framework to support residents subject to or accused of unacceptable behaviour

Guy Chester Centre will:

- Encourage the use of an informal approach to resolving complaints wherever possible
- Ensure that the Accommodation Team are available to support and sign-post residents
- Ensure prompt responses to an informal approach and/or a formal complaint
- Monitor the number of cases arising and the effectiveness of the policy

3. Responsibilities

The overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy will lie with the Guy Chester Centre management. The Accommodation Team will ensure that the policy is acted upon.

All residents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they do not incite, condone or commit any form of criminal act, discrimination, harassment, victimisation, bullying or exclusion within Chester House
- Being aware of behaviour that is not acceptable; and if appropriate, to challenge such behaviour and/or to report such situations to the Accommodation Team

Guy Chester Centre will provide sufficient resources to:

- Ensure this policy is available to all residents
- Monitor complaints of unfair treatment, bullying and harassment in accordance with the complaints procedure

4. Supporting residents

The Accommodation Team can provide support to any resident under this policy. Please contact them by emailing office@chesterhouse.org.uk or by coming to reception. This will give you an opportunity to discuss issues of concern to you. They will explain their role and advise you of routes and options for resolving the issue. They will also inform you of support that is available to you. However they do not take the role of a counsellor nor are they able to resolve issues themselves.

5. Definitions

The following definitions are not an exhaustive list, merely a guide as to the types of behaviour that may be included.

Unacceptable behaviour—Differences in attitude, background or culture can mean that what is perceived as unfair treatment or unacceptable behaviour by one person may not seem so to another. Within this policy the term “unacceptable behaviour” is used to describe any unwanted conduct which violates a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Lack of intent to use unacceptable behaviour is no defence.

Bullying—This is an abuse or misuse of power intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. It can be verbal or written, including electronically. It can happen in public or private and can be carried out by an individual or a group. It could include the abuse of power or authority. Bullying is typically unpredictable, irrational and sometimes unseen by others.

Harassment—UK law defines it as ‘*unwanted conduct related to a relevant “protected characteristic” which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.*’ Individuals may complain of behaviour they find offensive, even if not directed at them or they do not possess a relevant characteristic. Harassment can also be claimed as a result of perception or association linked to a protected characteristic. Examples could include but are not limited to:

- Physical attack
- Verbal and or physical intimidation
- Public humiliation or name calling
- Exclusion from normal conversation or activities
- Display of offensive material
- Offensive jokes or innuendo
- Unwanted comments on appearance/dress

Sexual harassment—This is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Racial harassment—This is any behaviour related to race, colour or nationality directed at an individual or group found to be offensive or objectionable to recipients creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Harassment on grounds of LGBTQ+ Status - It may be directed against individuals or groups of people that can be defined as unwanted conduct violating a person’s dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Harassment on grounds of religion or belief—This is any behaviour relating to religion, religious belief or other similar philosophical belief which can be defined as unwanted conduct violating a person’s dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Harassment on the grounds of disability—This may be based on the fact that a person has a physical or mental impairment, learning difficulty or disfigurement.

Harassment on the grounds of gender reassignment—This may be based on the fact that a person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part) for the purpose of reassigning their gender by changing physiological or other attributes of gender.

Harassment by electronic communication (cyberbullying)—Harassment or ‘cyberbullying’, may take place through e-mail, internet, social networking sites, blogging sites, messaging services, text messaging, mobile phones or other forms of electronic communication. It may include posting of photographs, audio or video files. It should be noted that offensive remarks and material could constitute harassment.

Victimisation—Victimisation can occur when a person is treated less favourably because they have made a complaint of discrimination/harassment/bullying, or helped another person to do this. Victimisation is unlawful and can result in disciplinary action regardless of the outcome of the original complaint.

Safeguarding—Unacceptable behaviour, any form of harassment and/or bullying, may also result in action under GCC’s Policy on Safeguarding.

6. Making a complaint

The complaints procedure should be used as a guide for any resident who wishes to make a complaint. Initially, an informal approach will be taken with both parties receiving confidential support in order to achieve an amicable resolution. If this is not appropriate or achievable, a formal approach will be taken in line with the Residents’ Disciplinary Policy. All parties will be advised of the process involved.

The preferred outcome of this policy is that people, against whom complaints are made, change their behaviour when it is found to be unacceptable. There are various means of achieving this and each individual throughout the complaints process will be treated with dignity, respect and without judgement.

The Guy Chester Centre has a duty to protect its employees and residents from malicious complaints and appropriate action may be taken when a deliberately malicious complaint is made.

7. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is expected to be kept throughout any matter raised under this policy by staff and residents. However, residents need to be aware that discussions with the Accommodation Team may be shared with other members of the Accommodation Team and with Guy Chester Centre management. If the Guy Chester Centre believes that there is an unacceptable risk to anyone involved, e.g. a danger of violence; a criminal act or illegal discrimination; the relevant authorities will be contacted.

8. My Behaviour

What should I do if my behaviour has upset or offended another person?

1. Individuals are advised to raise issues with the person concerned in order to try to resolve differences at an early stage to prevent situations from developing into formal complaints which can be difficult and stressful for all those involved. Being told that your behaviour has caused offence can be upsetting and embarrassing. It is important that when a person has been offended (intentionally or otherwise) there is an opportunity for all of the individuals concerned to resolve the situation informally at the earliest stage.
2. You may not have intended to offend anyone, but differences in attitude, background or culture can mean that what is perceived as unacceptable behaviour by one person may not seem so to another. It is recognised that it can be stressful to be approached in this way, but talking about issues informally can avoid difficulties escalating to a formal complaint.

3. Try to listen to the concerns of the person who approaches you and think about how your behaviour was perceived. Try not to imply that the person has been oversensitive and seek to play down the incident—remember it will not have been easy for the person to speak to you about this. Apologise for the offence that was caused. You do not have to agree with the other person's point of view to say you are sorry an aspect of your behaviour upset them.

You may find it helpful to speak to the Accommodation Team about how you feel about what has happened.

9. Other information

Further information or clarification can be obtained by emailing office@chesterhouse.org.uk

10. Review date

This policy was last reviewed in March 2019 and will be next reviewed in March 2020.