



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

In line with the Equality Act 2010, the Guy Chester Centre (GCC) 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; pregnancy and maternity; race, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; gender (including gender reassignment); LGBTQ+ status; political/trade union activity; or any other distinction. We strive to create a community where everyone is treated fairly and has equal access to our services and facilities. We will act 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.

GCC will:

- Encourage the use of an informal approach to resolving complaints wherever possible.
- Ensure that the Accommodation Team is 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 Centre Director. 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.

GCC 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 visiting the main office. 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 harassment as unwanted conduct related to a relevant ‘protected characteristic’ (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) or of a sexual nature, 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 because of perception or association linked to a protected characteristic. Examples of harassment could include but are not limited to:

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| • Physical attack | • Unwanted comments on appearance/dress |
| • Verbal and/or physical intimidation | • Unwanted sexual advances or comments |
| • Public humiliation or name-calling | • Suggestive behaviour |
| • Exclusion from conversation or activities | • Sexually explicit images or language |
| • Display of offensive material | • Ageist remarks or jokes |
| • Offensive jokes or innuendo | |

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 based on gender identity: This involves any unwanted conduct related to a person's gender identity, including their transition status or history.

Harassment by electronic communication (cyberbullying): 'Cyberbullying' may take place through email, 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, spreading rumours, exclusion from online groups, or sharing personal information without consent. Offensive remarks and material could constitute harassment.

Victimisation: This 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: Any form of harassment and/or bullying may also result in action under GCC's Policy on safeguarding. If there are concerns about a vulnerable adult or child, staff will follow safeguarding procedures as outlined in our *Safeguarding Policy*. This can be found in the *Policies* section of our website.

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 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*. The *Complaints Procedure* details the process for all parties and provides timeframes for responses and resolutions.

The *Complaints Procedure* and *Residents' Disciplinary Policy* can both be found in the *Policies* section of our website.

The preferred outcome of the Complaints Procedure 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 everyone throughout the complaints process will be treated with dignity, respect and without judgement.

GCC 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 maintained throughout any matter raised under this policy by staff and residents. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis with those directly involved in resolving the issue. We will make every effort to protect your confidentiality while balancing the need to ensure the safety and well-being of all residents and comply with legal obligations.

However, residents should be aware that discussions with the accommodation team may be shared with other relevant staff members within the team and with GCC management as necessary for investigation and resolution of the issue.

In situations where GCC believes there is an unacceptable risk to anyone involved, such as 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 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 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 if an aspect of your behaviour has 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 or speaking to a member of the accommodation team.

10. REVIEW DATE

This policy will be reviewed in March 2026.