

# De-escalation

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01	May 2021	Addition of de-escalation & breakaway & related policies. Removal of Legislation.	May 2021
02	Sep 2022	Headings, fonts, colours, grammar, removal of related policies.	Sep 2022
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## 1. **Introduction**

1.1. Keystage Housing supports some of the most vulnerable people in our communities and who, at times, can display behaviour which might challenge us as professionals. Keystage Housing is committed to providing a fair, kind, and equal service to our service users, despite the challenges that can be faced. Therefore, this policy is designed to ensure that we use positive, skilled, and respectful strategies when supporting people who may display behaviour that challenges and apply de-escalation techniques when necessary.

## 2. **Aims**

2.1. The aim of the policy is to ensure that interventions which are used to de-escalate situations are delivered with best practice and maintain the dignity, safety and wellbeing of the service user.

## 3. **Scope**

- 3.1. This policy applied to all Keystage Housing services and employees who are working with Service Users.
- 3.2. 'Culturally abnormal behaviour of such an intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or deny access to and use of ordinary community facilities' (Emerson, 2001)
- 3.3. 'Behaviour of such an intensity, frequency or duration as to threaten the quality of life and/or the physical safety of the individual or others and is likely to lead to responses that are restrictive, aversive or result in exclusion' (Royal College of Psychiatrists, British Psychological Society & Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, 2007)
- 3.4. Emerson's definition is the most widely used in the UK. But the second definition is important because it draws particular attention to the likely use of both aversive and restrictive practices – both of which lead to negative outcomes for the person in question. This policy addresses the rights of the person who displays behaviour that challenges, and the impact upon other staff and services users who may be affected by the person's behaviour.

## 4. **Respecting the rights of the individual**

- 4.1. Behaviours that challenge can present in different ways The NHS states that 'A person's behaviour can be defined as "challenging" if it puts them or those around them at risk or leads to a poorer quality of life.' Someone may show a range of behaviours such as aggression, withdrawal, self-harm, disruptive or destructive, however it is without exception that any person displaying such behavior will be supported with respect and will not be subjected to degrading or abusive treatment.
- 4.2. Degrading and abusive treatment includes the following unacceptable practices:
  - 4.2.1. Withdrawal of a person's basic rights (nourishment, shelter and warmth)
  - 4.2.2. Physical abuse (includes excessive restraint)
  - 4.2.3. Sexual abuse

- 4.2.4. Emotional abuse (persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection)
- 4.2.5. Material abuse (intentional misuse of money, property or possessions)
- 4.2.6. Neglect
- 4.2.7. Ill treatment or the use of punishment
- 4.3. Keystage Housing Managers and resettlement staff will ensure good partnership working and liaison with the services of the GP practice, Community Mental Health Team, Learning Disability Team, and Probation Services of the funding local authority to ensure that each person who experiences is receiving the appropriate support and if necessary behavioural assessment by a psychologist and/or the input of a psychiatrist.
- 4.4. All interventions will seek to enhance the individual's quality of life and to provide them with a safe environment. If a person lacks mental capacity to be involved in behavioural support planning, the best interest decision making process will be followed in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- 4.5. Procedures involving the use of restriction or restraint will only be used as a last resort, when other less intrusive strategies have failed to reduce or stop the behaviour and will be in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
- 4.6. A staff member who engages in degrading treatment of an individual who exhibits challenging behaviour will be subject to a Safeguarding Referral to the Safeguarding team of the local authority and disciplinary action which may lead to dismissal.

## 5. Supporting People with Behaviour that Challenges

- 5.1. Behaviour that challenges can occur in all Keystage Housing services. As highlighted at the beginning of the document, we support some of the most vulnerable people in our communities and at times the most complex. Behaviour that challenges emerge because of individual and environmental factors interacting together. Situations may occur when an individual is unhappy or emotionally charged or cannot understand the situation they are in and have difficulty expressing their wishes and feelings, it may also be due to someone experiencing trauma or being re-traumatised. In some instances, it could be due to the individual being under the influence of substances or alcohol or having the inability to communicate and/or a cognitive disorder and this may be temporary or permanent.
- 5.2. We recognise that all behaviour is a method of communication and that behaviour that challenges will apply to a broad range of individuals from those with substances misuse problems or alcohol dependency to people, those who have been affected by past trauma including adverse childhood experiences to those with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorders, sensory impairments, acute mental illness, brain injury, dementia, and some forms of physical illness. Behaviours that challenge can be identified as a way in which attempts to communicate a specific need or feeling are unable to do so by any other means.
- 5.3. Keystage Housing can implement a Behaviour Support Plan and Risk Assessments outlining the problematic or risky behaviour. This will provide a clear action plan as to how staff should respond to the individual who is displaying the behaviour. If necessary, a behavioural support plan and risk assessments must be agreed with input from local agencies such as the Drug & Alcohol Team, Community Learning Disability Team/Community Mental Health, Probation Team, and/or a psychologist/psychiatrist who will outline all interventions to be taken.
- 5.4. The most effective way of managing challenging behaviour is to ensure that everyone receiving support from Keystage Housing has an individualised pre-admission assessment which outlines their needs and aspirations



and an individualised plan that details how they wish their services to be delivered and takes account of the competency of the organisation to do this. The assessment should take account of any potential challenging behaviour, should include a risk assessment, and should give clear guidance to staff about how to prevent and manage this.

- 5.5. The service user should be involved in the whole process of assessment and care planning as much as possible with regards to their mental capacity to make relevant decisions. The whole process should be person-centered with input from the Community Learning Disability Team/Community Mental Health Team/Probation Services and/or a psychologist/psychiatrist if necessary. The best interest decision making process should be followed for residents who lack mental capacity to be part of this planning process in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

## **6. The Use of Restriction & Restraint**

- 6.1. Restraint is illegal unless it can be demonstrated that for an individual in particular circumstances, not being restrained would conflict with the duty of care of the service or would lead to harm of the person. Where people have mental capacity, restraint may only take place with their consent or in an emergency to prevent harm to themselves and others. In all cases restraint should be seen very much as the “last resort”. Other techniques and strategies should always be employed before restraint is considered (less restrictive options). Any restraint should be in the best interests of the person based upon the level of risk present, taking account of the person’s size, gender, age and medical conditions. It should always be used for the minimum amount of time and with the least amount of intervention. The misuse of restraint can result in injury or even death of the person being restrained.
- 6.2. Legal Framework which describes this in further detail can be found within The Human Rights Act 1998. Article 3 prohibits torture and inhuman or degrading treatment; Article 5 acknowledges that everyone has the right to liberty and that it should only be restricted if there is specific legal justification; Article 14 outlaw’s discrimination of all types.
- 6.3. Whilst Keystage Housing recognise that the use of restriction and restraint is used in some regulated environments, they are not methods that we train our staff in and therefore attempts for such physical interventions should not be applied with service users at any time.

## **7. De-escalation & Breakaway Techniques**

- 7.1. De-escalation techniques rely upon the utilisation of verbal skills and effective communication to defuse situations which have the potential to cause conflict or harm. There are situations where experiencing behaviour that challenges can be safely and effectively managed through this method. The technique recognises that communicating with understanding and without judgement can act to calm and resolve the crisis that someone may find themselves in. Principally offering a safe space to listen to the person and their concerns is the starting point. Showing empathy and care, using open body language, and staying calm adds to the sophisticated blend which will contribute to enabling the person to feel calmer.

- 7.2. Employing the use of de-escalation techniques does not mean that the solution has been found to the problem, however it acts as a platform for a highly charged situation to be brought down to a level where the individual displays less agitation.
- 7.3. Breakaway:
  - 7.3.1. Breakaway techniques aim to manage threatening or physically aggressive situations by using specialist procedures for self-protection and the protection of others. Breakaway techniques are aligned to that of self-defense and should only be used by staff who are trained and competent. Specialist training may be offered in this area to selected staff members and therefore should only ever be used where the physically aggressive situations are inevitable.
- 7.4. Keystage Housing staff are all trained to recognise when situations may have the potential to escalate and to apply a communication style that is non-confrontational.

## **8. Unplanned Physical Interventions**

- 8.1. The unplanned use of physical intervention refers to the use of force by one or more persons to restrict movement or mobility, or the use of force to disengage from dangerous or harmful physical contact initiated by another person without there being an explicitly agreed plan permitting its use. Whilst there will be occasions where unplanned physical intervention is needed to protect a person or others from significant harm. It should be exceedingly rare for staff to have to physically intervene.

## **9. Support People following a Traumatic Incident**

- 9.1. All staff and service users involved in a distressing incident of challenging behaviour will be given an opportunity to debrief by means of reviewing the incident as soon as possible after the event. The Service Manager will support members of staff and service users involved in a traumatic incident to discuss their experience of the situation and decide on any further actions required. Where a staff member is working alone when they experience a traumatic incident, they should telephone the 'On-call' manager for support or contact the emergency services if necessary. The Service Manager should be informed of the incident and the outcome of the debriefing as soon as possible.
- 9.2. Where the debriefing process highlights the need for a response to the incident this should be acted on by the Service Manager as soon as possible to safeguard staff and service users. Incidents and interventions will need to be recorded on the appropriate platform to ensure that the channels of support were explored and offered. Where applicable this will be discussed at a team meeting involving all the relevant support staff and staff should be made aware of the EAP Care First that is available to them.

## **10. Respecting the rights of other Service Users**

- 10.1. Through positive and planned interventions Keystage Housing will seek to minimise the impact of the challenging behaviour incidents on service users who share the same environment.

- 10.2. Each service within the company will oversee that a service user does not have their life unduly disrupted by another who presents with behaviour that challenges. Where there is a continued pattern of incidents and impact upon others, despite interventions, the staff team will work together with the individual and other professionals involved in the person's care and support to manage or end the disruption.
- 10.3. In a situation where the staff team is unable to respond in a way that supports the rights of the individual being affected by the challenging behaviour the Service Manager must bring this to the attention of other agencies who are involved without delay.

## **11. Supporting Staff to respond to the needs of people**

- 11.1. Keystage Housing will ensure that all staff receive training on how to manage behaviour that challenges. This training will teach staff how to identify and respond effectively to the warning signs that someone is beginning to lose control and how to deal with their own stress, anxieties, and emotions when confronted with these challenging situations. The training will also address how staff should develop and implement proactive and reactive strategies for residents whose behaviour may challenge others around them. On occasion additional specialist or outsourced training may have to be sourced and provided for staff.
- 11.2. The Service Manager will ensure that any staff member working with service users are adequately trained and has the necessary skills to implement the behavioural support plan and risk assessments.
- 11.3. All interventions put in place to support individuals who display behavior that challenges will seek to protect staff in dealing with behaviour which will put themselves or others at risk.

## **12. Monitoring and Review**

- 12.1. Line Managers and team leaders will be responsible for general monitoring of these guidelines. Transgression will be reviewed with individual staff members, but in some cases, it may be appropriate to record examples for discussion as part of staff training or discussion at team meetings.
- 12.2. Significant and/or repeated breaches of this policy will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- 12.3. This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years or where Legislation/Guidance requires amendments or review.

