Accommodation Services

Dignity & Respect Policy – Accommodation Helpline

Purpose Statement
Accommodation Services has a duty to provide a safe and secure working environment for both colleagues and students who volunteer their time to support the Accommodation Helpline.

As such, we aim to provide a service in which tolerance and respect for individuals is established and we hope that our customers will abide by these principles. We will not tolerate violent or abusive behaviour and will take decisive action to protect colleagues and students if such behaviour occurs.

Applicability and Scope
This policy is applicable to all customers engaging with the Accommodation Helpline. This includes but is not limited to: applicants, students, parents/guardians who may be making contact on a student’s behalf.

The following are examples of behaviour which are deemed unacceptable:
- Threatening, aggressive or abusive language involving swearing or offensive remarks
- Derogatory remarks or gestures of a discriminatory nature
- Malicious allegations relating to those volunteers supporting the helpline
- Threats of, or actual acts of violence
- Suggestions of bribery to obtain an alternative room offer

Your Responsibilities
When contacting the Accommodation Helpline to discuss room allocations, applicants, students and any parent or guardian acting on an individual’s behalf are reminded that all communication needs to be in line with Newcastle University’s Student Charter & Behavioural Code of Conduct. Our colleagues work hard to support our students and we expect them to be treated with the courtesy, dignity, and respect they deserve. Employees of the University, whose family members plan on attending University should not expect to be given any preferential treatment regarding room allocation.

We appreciate you may have preferred a particular type or location of accommodation, however some of our accommodation proves more popular than others and it is not possible to allocate every student to a preference of their choice. If you are offered accommodation in a room type or location that you had not previously considered, this is because we no longer have any availability in your preferences. Contacting members of the helpline with the intention to obtain a different room allocation will not be possible, however if you have any questions or concerns around the allocated accommodation, the team will be happy to answer these for you.

Our Responsibilities
It is the responsibility of Accommodation Services to ensure that all volunteers, whether they be colleagues or students, are provided with a safe and secure working environment where they are free from bullying or harassment, victimisation or any other act of unreasonable behaviour or unlawful discrimination.
Customers contacting the Accommodation Helpline will be treated in a professional and respectful manner and with the aim to fully inform them of the status of their application/allocation.

Once we have offered you a room, we have fulfilled our position as part of the New Student Guarantee. We won't offer you an alternative room unless a proven procedural irregularity has occurred.

**Should an Incident Occur**

If our helpline volunteers feel that a caller is using any of the unacceptable behaviours detailed previously in this policy, the individual will be informed that the interaction (e.g., the conversation) will end unless appropriate behaviour can be demonstrated.

If the unacceptable behaviour continues, the immediate manager (or their deputy) will be called upon. They will intercede and advise the individual that their behaviour is unacceptable and explain the expected standards of behaviour, which must be observed in the future. The responsible manager will also give an informal warning about the possible consequences of any further incidents. Sanctions could include, but are not limited to, the offer of accommodation being rescinded and the necessity for the student to source alternative accommodation outside of the University. The individual will also be advised that further contact will not be aided without full adherence to this policy.

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*Policy owner: Senior Management Team, Accommodation Services*