Customer Alerts Policy

Audience:	Customers, Colleagues and Stakeholders
Policy Owner:	Executive Director of Housing and Customer Experience
Policy Lead:	Head of Customer Operations
Approved by:	Executive Team
Approved date:	May 2025
Next review date:	May 2028

1. Purpose and scope of the policy

Sometimes we identify issues connected to properties or to people living in our homes that need to be considered when we are delivering services in order to keep everyone safe. To manage this, we add an ‘alert’ to our system so that we, and people delivering services on our behalf, have access to this information before we engage with those households.

It doesn’t cover property alerts linked to our health and safety requirements, such as whether an inspection is due for gas or electrical testing, as these are covered by other policies.

This policy applies to all Moat customers including leaseholders and shared ownership customers.

2. Definitions

Alerts – These are time-limited warning flags about potential risks related to our customers, their family members or visitors, or their pets. They’re different to other information that we hold about you, such as your communication needs / preferences, third party consent or specific needs you’ve told us about to enable us to tailor our services. Here are some reasons why we might add an alert:

- **If there’s a known risk that someone might be aggressive:** This could be someone living with you, visiting you, or someone we’ve had a problem with before. We take threats and violence very seriously, and an alert (e.g. ‘visit in pairs’) helps us to be extra cautious and keep everyone safe.
- **If your home has a safety hazard linked to your living conditions:** This could be anything from dirty needles, weapons, or unsanitary conditions.
- **If there’s a special plan in place to keep you or others safe:** We work with a number of different agencies including the police, local authority, probation and prison service. An alert helps everyone to be aware of any risks and the need to manage them, and what extra support someone might need.
- **If you're away from home for a long time:** We just want to make sure everything’s okay if you're gone for more than a month. This alert helps us keep an eye on things and know who to contact if needed.

- **If you've had some disagreements with us in the past:** We want to make sure we can communicate with you in a way that works for everyone. This alert helps us remember any special communication plans we have in place in accordance with our Unreasonable Behaviour Policy.

3. Policy Principles

We will ensure that alerts are applied fairly, consistently and appropriately. We'll only add an alert to your customer data where this has been approved by a manager and there's a good reason to add it, for example:

- It's the law
- It's a safety risk
- It helps us run our business properly

Before making the decision to add an alert, we'll consider your individual circumstances and any support needs. We'll discuss these with someone else such as a relative, friend or support worker if you want us to.

Alerts will be visible to Moat colleagues who have access to your customer data, and to contractors where this information is shared in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

We won't keep alerts longer than necessary. We'll review them regularly, usually within a year and then at least annually, to decide if they're still needed and inform you of our decision. If you tell us that a known risk has gone, we'll remove the alert if we're satisfied that it's no longer needed.

4. Policy aims and objectives

The aim of this policy is to keep everyone safe while we are delivering services to you. An "alert" tells our colleagues and any contractors working with us to be aware of something important. This helps us to provide you with the best possible service while ensuring the safety of our colleagues and contractors.

In following this policy, we want to ensure that alerts can be used to reduce the actual or perceived risks to colleagues and contractors when working in homes and communities.

We'll track the types and numbers of alerts that we use to help us improve how we use them and ensure they're applied fairly and consistently.

5. Policy Actions

We'll add alerts and additional advisory notes by using the following categories:

- **Physically aggressive:** e.g. there have been previous threats or acts of physical violence, or displays of aggressive behaviour, hostage situations etc.
- **Verbally aggressive:** e.g. verbal assault, threatening behaviour, abusive language including but not limited to racist or sexist language, sexual advances or overtones etc.

- **Unreasonable behaviour:** e.g. in accordance with our Unreasonable Behaviour Policy, there's a communication plan in place to protect colleagues and contractors following repeated unreasonable actions by a customer.
- **Environmental hazard; proceed with caution:** e.g. substances hazardous to health such as hypodermic needles or unhygienic conditions, hoarding, dangerous animals in the home, damage to home where there's a risk to someone's health and safety, weapons etc.
- **Safeguarding:** e.g. There's a Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) in place, safeguarding concerns, known or suspected domestic violence etc.
- **Absent:** e.g. to indicate if a customer is going to be absent from the home for more than 28 days (e.g. visiting family abroad, prison or hospital), to help monitor the condition of the home.

Anyone working with us can ask for an alert to be added if they spot a potential risk. Contractors can do this through their Moat contract manager who will assess the risk, add an alert if appropriate, and take other appropriate steps to mitigate any risk (for example, in accordance with our Unreasonable Behaviour Policy).

If we add an alert to your customer data, we'll contact you (using a method that meets your communication needs) to tell you that we've added it, unless telling you could put someone at risk (e.g. the alert relates to domestic violence, and telling you could put other people at risk). We'll explain why we've added it, when we will review it, and how it might affect our services to you.

If you are unhappy that we've applied an alert and think it should be removed, you can ask us to review our decision. We will consider all of the information you give us in order to fully understand your situation and make a fair decision. We'll consider your request in accordance with our Complaints Policy and our Data Protection Policy.
If your concern is not upheld, you'll have the right to log a formal complaint.

If we're asked for a landlord reference, we may have to mention the alert depending on the situation (e.g. there have been incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) or known domestic violence etc.). There may also be occasions where we need to share this information with other agencies, such as the police.

6. Monitoring, Reporting and Review

- Alerts will be reviewed every 12 months to check they are still relevant.
- Exception reporting will be reviewed monthly by the Head of Customer Operations.
- Data will be analysed regularly to identify trends and re-occurring risk types that may require specific attention or policy adjustments.
- This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required by changes in legislation, regulation, or business need. This will be undertaken in consultation with colleagues and customers.

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

This policy will be delivered in accordance with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. An Equality Impact Assessment was completed for this policy and considered as part of the approval process.

8. Data protection

This policy will be delivered in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.
A Data Impact Assessment was completed for this policy and considered as part of the approval process.

9. Related legislation and regulations

- **The Housing Act 1988** sets out your rights and responsibilities as a tenant and our responsibilities as a housing association. Our policy ensures we handle alerts and flags about your property fairly and legally, following the rules laid out in this Act.
- **The Data Protection Act 2018** protects your personal information, including any details you share with us about your property or needs. Our policy makes sure we only use your information for legitimate reasons, like keeping you safe and informed, and that we keep it secure.
- **The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974** allows certain criminal convictions to become "spent" after a specified time, meaning they don't usually have to be disclosed. This helps people move on from past mistakes.

10. Related policies and procedures

- Customer Alerts Procedure
- Antisocial Behaviour Policy
- Customer Resolutions Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy (Customers)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Hate Related Incidents Policy
- Health and Safety Management Policy
- Hoarding Policy
- Housing Dangerous Offenders Policy
- Pets Policy
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Unreasonable Behaviour Policy

11. Customer engagement

Eight Customer Advocates shared their feedback on this policy. These Advocates were a combination of shared owners and tenants. All the Customer Advocates involved in this review felt that the final Policy was clear and easy to understand and were supportive of the approach. Based on their feedback we:

• Made it clear that the retention period for an alert could be shortened if an individual addresses the alert issue. • Provided digital links to the legislation outlined so that customers can explore further information. All the customers involved supported the adoption of the Policy.

12. Document Revision History		
Date	**Changes approved by**	**Details of changes made**
May 2025	Executive Team	Full review. • Review of language used to simplify and ensure this is customer focused. • A review process for alerts will be implemented to ensure data is kept up to date and is relevant. • Policy has been simplified to Customer Alerts only. Vulnerability/Communication information can now be updated by customers using MyMoat. • All references to 'Resident Alert Policy' now changed to 'Customer Alert Policy' • Reference added to considering customers communication needs when adding alerts.