

Unacceptable Behaviour

What is unacceptable behaviour?

It is acting in a way that is unreasonable, regardless of the level of someone's stress, frustration, or anger. It is an intended action to cause harm, distress or upset, mentally or physically. Unacceptable behaviour comes in many different forms.

These may include swearing, shouting, physical or verbal threats, personal insults, sexism, racism, unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and questioning your ability.

The Unacceptable Behaviour Policy is about supporting our staff when they unfortunately experience Unacceptable Behaviour. All staff members who interact with the public are at risk of experiencing unacceptable behaviour. Therefore, it should always be identified within a Risk Assessment.

We know our staff experience this behaviour, we are contacted regarding this, however, sometimes our staff seem apprehensive to report it through our accident incident recording (AIR) system or to managers and accept it as "part of the job".

We have no power or ability to stop people's behaviour, what we do have the power to do, is let our staff know we support and value them by listening, reporting and issuing consequences to those issuing the Unacceptable Behaviour.

The information and guidance is applicable across ALL Lincolnshire County Council Directorates and their establishments. However, as we are so broad across the council, there isn't a 'one size fits all' process and so this is why we provide possible options, you *may* wish to take.

What do we need to do?

Managers need to ensure that the risk of experiencing unacceptable behaviour is identified within a Risk Assessment with relevant control measures in place e.g. you may wish to source some training on how to deal with unacceptable behaviour.

We need to ensure all staff members report any instances through LCCs Accident Incident Recording (AIR) system.

The AIR system branches off into different areas depending on the severity/situation. Unacceptable behaviour has its own section and so will not take a long time to report.

We need to support our staff who experienced the unacceptable behaviour. This could be through 1-2-1 sessions or check ins.

We need to take some action against those who behaved unacceptable towards our staff.

How do we use consequences against those who behaved unacceptably towards our staff?

Below are some examples of Unacceptable behaviours and their possible consequences. Not all consequences will be suitable for the service/customer group you provide services for. Managers can use these examples or implement similarly effective responses. It is up to you to make a proportionate response to the unacceptable behaviour received.

All experiences should be recorded on AIR -if you wish to also record them on the employees' file, then please feel free to do so.

* An illegal act - contact the police

Behaviours	Available Consequences
<u>Non Face 2 Face threats and behaviours</u>	<u>Non Face 2 Face threats and behaviours - possible consequences</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abusive emails or letters• Verbal threats of violence - over the phone or MS Teams• Abusive phone calls• Unacceptable comments/pictures/videos on social media• Shouting at you• Swearing at you• Personal comments regarding appearance• Homophobic language used• Transphobic language used• Sexism• Questioning your ability• Sexualised comments• Racism*• Discrimination of any kind	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verbal warnings• Leaflets regarding expected behaviours• Manager to phone person/s involved• Manager to email person/s involved• Manager to send letter/s to person/s involved• Postponing the interaction - offer to call back later• Ending the interaction - end the call/Teams call
Behaviours	Available Consequences
<u>Face 2 Face physical acts being carried out</u>	<u>Face 2 Face physical acts being carried out - possible consequences</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spitting• Inappropriate contact• Sexual contact• Physical violence e.g. intentional hitting, punching, slapping*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove yourself from the immediate threat• Refuse to meet face 2 face due to inappropriate behaviour prior• *An illegal act - contact the police• Take away services temporarily• Take away services permanently

Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour received, and the consequences actioned

You receive a phone call from a service user (unknown to LCC), during the call the service user becomes very aggressive, getting very angry, using more and more abusive language, name calling etc which is directed at you.

Consequences you may wish to take:

The employee taking the call may wish to give a verbal warning advising the caller to desist with their language.

If this doesn't happen, the employee can say that they will not be spoken to in this manner and if they do not stop, then they will put the phone down and they can call another time.

Once the caller persists with their unacceptable behaviour, the call is ended politely by the employee and recorded on AIR and to their line manager.

Another example is you are needed to attend the house of a service user. Whilst there they behave aggressively along with their family who are also present, they tell you that you're not helping, are useless at your job and call you sexist names. You feel uncomfortable and feel it would be best for this interaction to end and so leave.

Consequences you may wish to take:

When away from the house, report this incident on AIR and inform the line manager. The manager may wish to send an email/letter or call the service user, to acknowledge the behaviour and state it is not acceptable.

The service user could be asked to attend all future appointments on their own to avoid extra confrontation of the family. It may even arise that if it were to happen again, it might be best to meet the service user in a public space if possible.

Risk Assessments will need to be reviewed to ensure that all control measures in place are working effectively.

If the unacceptable behaviour is coming from a colleague, please report this on AIR and also inform HR.

Useful links:

AIR form - <https://forms.office.com/e/hYSFiBzpZ4>

Contact the Corporate Health and Safety Team – corporatehealthandsafety@lincolnshire.gov.uk