



Falkirk Council

POLICY & PROCEDURE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF VIOLENCE AND UNACCEPTABLE ACTIONS AT WORK



DECEMBER 2015

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 requires employers, so far as is reasonably practicable to ensure the health and safety of their employees whilst at work. In addition the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers to carry out risk assessments to identify potential risks and take necessary measures to remove or reduce and control risk. This policy sets out the approach Falkirk Council will take in dealing with Violence & Unacceptable Actions at Work.

The Health and Safety Executive, employers and employee representatives continue to be concerned about violence to employees. Work related violence is described by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) as:

“Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work”.

Violence and aggression at work is more generally experienced by employees working with members of the public, either directly or indirectly. Evidence is now showing that harm caused by violent threats and verbal abuse over a period of time can also have a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of the victim.

In addition, the actions of members of the public who are angry, demanding or persistent may result in unreasonable demands on our services or unacceptable behaviour towards employees.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Falkirk Council aims to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all employees and service users. The Council will take all practical steps to reduce or, where possible, remove the risk of violence, or unacceptable behaviour to employees whilst at work and will:

- Ensure that risk assessments are undertaken with suitable and sufficient control measures implemented;
- Provide training to employees on dealing with violence and unacceptable actions;
- Take appropriate action against violent and/or unacceptable behaviour towards an employee whilst they are at work;
- Share information on service users where required to reduce the risk to employees with other Services in accordance with Data Protection and Human Rights Legislation;
- Provide debriefing, and support, making reasonable adjustments to working practices where necessary after an incident occurring.

3. SCOPE

This Policy encompasses all employees of Falkirk Council and complements other relevant policies such as the Corporate Health, Safety & Care Policy, Risk Management by Risk Assessment Policy, Accident/Incident Reporting Policy, Lone Working Policy, Policy and Procedure for the Management of Stress and Mental Wellbeing, Dignity at

Work Policy. It also covers all activities undertaken by employees as part of their normal duties.

Issues of harassment by employees or Elected Members should be raised under the Dignity at Work Policy.

4. DEFINITIONS

Violence at Work

For most employees, the likelihood of serious physical assault is minimal. Those most at risk are employees who deal regularly with situations where, for a variety of reasons, members of the public may become angry, distressed, ill, embarrassed or resentful. These feelings sometimes result in aggression or violence towards an employee/s.

For the purposes of this policy, the Council's definition of violence at work is:

A purposeful or reactive behaviour intended to produce damaging or hurtful effects, either physical, psychological or emotional, on other people or personal effects, whilst in the course of their employment or arising out of their employment. This may include physical violence, verbal abuse, damage to personal property, racial violence or sexual violence.

In summary, it is any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.

Threatened Violence

Violence is not restricted to acts of aggression that results in physical harm. It can also include behaviour or language, oral or written, that may cause employees to feel afraid, threatened or abused. This includes:

- Threats;
- Personal verbal abuse;
- Derogatory remarks and rudeness;
- Inflammatory statements;
- Unsubstantiated allegations.

Where an employee is the victim of violence or unacceptable behaviour involving a colleague, local Member or manager, the Council's Dignity at Work Policy should be referred to for information and advice.

Unacceptable Actions

Service users may make what could be considered to be unreasonable demands through the amount of information they seek or the nature and scale of service they expect. They may also be unreasonably persistent in the number of approaches they make. What amounts to unreasonable demands will always depend on the circumstances surrounding the instance. There are relatively few service users whose actions the Council would consider to be unacceptable, however if there are situations that arise that adversely

impact on resources and affect the ability to deliver services, the Council will take appropriate action to deal with this as follows:

Unreasonable Demands

Unreasonable demands will depend on the circumstances surrounding the behaviour and the seriousness of the issues being raised. Examples of unreasonable demands include:

- Demanding action/responses within unreasonable time-scales;
- Insisting on speaking/seeing a particular employee or manager;
- Constant phone calls or letters;
- Repeatedly changing the nature of their enquiry;
- Raising other unrelated concerns/making unsubstantiated allegations.

Unreasonable Persistence

On occasion service users will not, or cannot accept that the Council/Service is unable to help them further or provide a level of service other than that which is already being provided and continue to persist in disagreeing with the action or decision taken in relation to their complaint. Unreasonable persistence includes:

- Persistent refusal to accept a decision;
- Persistent refusal to accept explanations;
- Continuing to try to enter into correspondence/dialogue with employees or other representatives of the Council despite the matter being closed.

5. MANAGING THE RISKS OF VIOLENCE AT WORK

Sharing Information

Prior to undertaking visits/dealing with service users, employees should have access to all available relevant information about the service user. This should include information about any previous violent and/or unacceptable behaviour in order that a reasoned judgement of any potential risk they may be exposed to can be made. Services should therefore have an information sharing protocol in place with relevant partner agencies and other Services that is controlled by managers to ensure that employees are not placed at risk.

Some service users may be aggressive, vulnerable and/or under the influence of drugs or alcohol when an employee deals with them which may mean that communication with these service users can be challenging. This means the risks to Council employees require to be managed at a level appropriate to the increased risk presented in these environments.

Risk Assessment & Emergency Procedures - Violence at Work

In accordance with the Policy & Procedures for Risk Management by Risk Assessment, Line Managers must ensure Risk Assessments are undertaken on areas of work activities

that could place an employee at risk of potential violence. These risk assessments will include identification of the actions to be taken which will minimise any risks.

Services must have a defined contingency procedure in place to protect employees that can be used in the event of an emergency situation, e.g. an employee being assaulted by a service user, an employee becoming very ill or not returning to their workplace at the expected time should be identified and covered by both risk assessment and emergency procedures.

Line managers must ensure that employees who have direct contact with service users are made aware of these risk assessments and emergency procedures. The procedure should also include actions for a line manager to take if an employee has not returned back to their workplace by an agreed time-scale. These procedures must also cover out of hours work, e.g. night shift, key holder call outs or emergency call-outs where routine support structures are not readily available. This procedure may include the use of Lone Worker Voicemail, duty managers or buddy systems to support these employees and procedures for managers to raise alerts if employees do not report in as scheduled.

Risk Assessments and procedures should be reviewed and updated at least annually or where there has been a change in circumstances, for example working practices have altered, a service user's situation has changed, there has been more than one incident or the risk assessment has found to have been insufficient to deal with an incident that has occurred. Emergency procedures should also be reviewed at least annually.

The Council will treat violence, the threat of violence, or unacceptable actions as serious. Where employees are likely to be placed at an unacceptable risk, the Council will review whether service provision can be continued by existing methods. In exceptional circumstances, where all actions to avoid/reduce the risk have been taken and the risk to the employee still presents an unacceptable risk, Services may give consideration to withdrawing/restricting service provision until the risk reduces to an acceptable level. If a decision is made to withdraw/restrict service provision following physical or threatened violence from a service user, the Council will write to the service user informing them of the intended actions giving an explanation of why this action is being taken and any time-scale involved. The Council will ensure that a service user's violent behaviour is monitored and reviewed, e.g. at least annually to decide if any restricted action or change in access to services should continue. Consequently, Services should consider how they will delegate authority to Managers in their Service to deal with and manage such issues.

An information leaflet providing guidance and advice to employees on violence at work is attached as Appendix 1. A poster for display in Council premises on how the Council will deal with violence and abuse is attached as Appendix 2. Services should ensure that this poster is displayed in all premises that members of the public visit.

6. MANAGING UNACCEPTABLE ACTIONS

Unacceptable actions of service users who are persistently demanding may result in unreasonable demands on employees and resources. However, people may also act out of character in times of trouble or distress as there may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to their current/recent behaviour. This should also be borne in

mind when considering undertaking any future contact including developing a risk assessment/procedure.

Managers should be aware that if they fail to act in accordance with the recommendations of this policy and procedure they could be exposing the Council to potential liability claims.

Dealing with Unreasonable Demands

Service users can make what could be considered to be unreasonable demands on resources through the amount of information they seek, the nature and scale of service they expect or the number of approaches they make.

These demands will be considered as unreasonable if they start to impact substantially on the work of the Council and are taking up excessive amounts of employees' time to the disadvantage of overall service delivery. If a service user makes unreasonable demands the Council may consider the following:

- Only accepting calls at a particular time of the day;
- Arranging for only one person e.g. a manager to deal with them;
- Requiring the service user to make an appointment before visiting;
- Requiring the service user to only contact a named employee or manager;
- Restricting contact to written form only.

Dealing with Unreasonable Persistence

In certain circumstances some service users will not, or cannot accept that the Council is unable to help them further or provide an enhanced level of service other than that which is already being provided, and continue to complain persistently about the same or a similar matter. These actions will be considered to be unreasonably persistent if they take up a disproportionate amount of time and resources. Where a service user is unreasonably persistent in response to the outcome of an enquiry and refuses to accept that the matter is closed the Council may consider the following:

- Not accepting any further telephone calls or granting interviews;
- That any future contact on the issue must be made in writing;
- That any future correspondence will only be read and filed unless the service user provides any new information that is relevant and can be acted on.

If a service user regularly makes telephone enquiries or submits correspondence on an ongoing basis about various issues, the Council may consider writing to the service user advising that any of the above actions will be taken as well as :

- Advising them that only a specific amount of issues will be considered in a given period of time and ask them to limit or focus their requests/enquiries accordingly.

If it is decided to take any of the above action the Council will write to the service user informing them of the intended actions giving an explanation of why this action is being taken and any time-scale involved.

7. REPORTING OF VIOLENCE/THREATENED VIOLENCE

The Council's Accident/Incident Reporting Policy requires that acts of violence/threatened violence be reported and recorded in accordance with the Accident/Incident Reporting Procedure. Employees should be encouraged to report all incidents where they feel insulted, abused, uncomfortable or threatened. It should be stressed to all employees that the reporting of incidents will not be taken to imply a failure by the employee concerned, other employees or any other person responsible for the management of the premises concerned. Threats and verbal / written abuse should be given the same priority as physical violence as this often is the end result following a pattern of escalating behaviour. An Accident/Incident Report Form HR14 should be completed and submitted to the line manager who must fully investigate the violent incident, making recommendations and taking action to reduce/remove any risk.

Violent incidents are also subject to the reporting requirements of the Health and Safety Executive, as defined in the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). Further advice on RIDDOR is contained within the Council's Accident/Incident Reporting Policy.

8. EMPLOYEE SUPPORT

The Council recognises that employees who are the victims of violence at work may suffer psychological or emotional reactions to an incident, in addition to any physical injuries. Line Managers should offer all available support to employees who have been subjected to a violent incident as follows:

Violent Incident - Debriefing

In the event of a violent incident occurring involving an employee, the employee should report the incident to their Line Manager in accordance with the Service's procedure. The Line Manager should then provide de-briefing to the employee within 24 - 48 hours, or as soon as is possible and complete an Accident/Incident Reporting Form HR14. The line manager may seek advice on this from Human Resources and/or from the Corporate Health, Safety & Care Team.

The purpose of debriefing is to provide an employee with immediate support and to obtain an initial assessment of the situation. The line manager will require to:

- Provide assistance with accessing any medical treatment if required;
- Involve appropriate emergency services, if necessary;
- Defuse the situation; employees will need to talk through their experience. It is important to create a supportive and positive atmosphere where acceptance of the situation is encouraged;
- Establish if the employee was properly briefed/prepared for undertaking their duties prior to the incident occurring and followed proper procedures;
- Develop an action plan to prevent future incidents occurring in liaison with the employee which should include a review of duties/working practices if required;
- Take any appropriate action against the service user or perpetrator e.g. criminal charges, restriction/withdrawal of service delivery.

Any employee who has been subjected to a violent incident should also be offered support, where appropriate. Further information is available from Human Resources or Occupational Health. Employees will be afforded time off with pay to attend any appointments in relation to support following incidents of violence, e.g. doctors/occupational health appointments. In most cases recovery and/or return to full job effectiveness will happen quite quickly although occasionally employees may require time off work. If the employee is unable to attend work for physical or psychological health reasons, the employee should be advised to visit their Doctor as soon as possible with a view to obtaining a medical certificate. In the short term it may be necessary to:

- Change the work area or type of work if the employee agrees;
- Have the line manager meet regularly with the employee to talk about any issues;
- Discuss any learning points from the incident;
- Get advice from the Human Resources Adviser, Corporate Health, Safety & Care Team, and/or Occupational Health.

Managers should also be aware that the psychological and emotional affects may not appear immediately. Sometimes individuals may develop long term symptoms such as post traumatic stress, therefore support should be available for a time after the incident. It is important that the Line Manager conveys personal concern on behalf of themselves and the organisation and maintains regular contact to ensure the employee feels supported.

Supporting Employees - Criminal Prosecution

Where an employee has decided to prosecute a service user through the court process as a result of an incident related to their job, the Council will aim to ensure that the employee is being given additional support from their Line Manager to help them firstly prepare for appearing in court as a witness and then to assist with ongoing support required during and after giving evidence. There are organisations that will assist with this process, such as the local Victim Support group, local Victim Information Advice Service and Victims of Crime in Scotland which is a Scottish Government web site that provides information on other useful organisations and it explains the court system.

9. TRAINING

The Council offers a corporate training course on coping with violence and aggression which is delivered in liaison with Forth Valley NHS. This course can also be run for individual Services and tailored to meet the specific working environment of the Service. Further information on this can be obtained by contacting the Organisational Development Team.

It is recommended that employees be made aware of the leaflet entitled, Guidance and Advice for Employees on Violence at Work attached as Appendix 1, which is also available on the Council's intranet site along with a range of other supporting guidance and information. This can be found at:

http://underground.falkirk.gov.uk/employee/strategies_policies_procedures_guidance/health_safety_care.aspx

Training for Managers

The Council in partnership with Forth Valley NHS offers a training course on Mentally Healthy Workplaces for managers. This course aims to give managers an understanding of, as well as knowledge and skills to address a wide variety of issues relating to employment and good mental wellbeing in the workplace. Further information can be obtained by contacting the Health, Safety & Care Team.

10. POLICE ASSISTANCE

The Council will ensure that, where necessary, the Police are called with a view to seeking support or protection for employees during or following an incident. This may be relevant in helping managers to take appropriate action with the perpetrator(s) of the violence and also to support employees who have been subjected to a violent incident at work.

11. LEGAL ACTION

Where an employee is a victim of violence at work, this will be deemed a serious incident.

The Council will ensure that, where necessary, the Police are called with a view to seeking support or protection for employees during or following an incident. This may be relevant in helping managers support employees who have been subjected to a violent incident at work.

Where it is considered to be a practicable and effective option for the protection of any employee the Council in agreement with an employee, may raise proceedings in the civil courts as an alternative to, or in addition to, a referral to the police as a criminal matter.

Falkirk Council recognises that employees have rights, as individuals, to make a complaint to the Police irrespective of any investigation or action being pursued by Falkirk Council.

12. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive is responsible for the effective operation of this policy across the Council as a whole and within Services respectively. The Chief Executive is also responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are available to implement appropriate procedures, train employees and ensure appropriate protective measures or procedures are taken as identified in this policy where risk assessments or circumstances involving unacceptable actions have indicated they are required.

SERVICE DIRECTORS

Service Directors are responsible so far as is reasonably practicable for ensuring the effective operation of this policy within their Service. They are also responsible for

ensuring that adequate resources are made available to implement appropriate protective measures as identified by risk assessments to control violence at work and/or for managing circumstances involving unacceptable actions.

CHIEF OFFICERS, HEADS OF SERVICE AND HEAD TEACHERS

Chief Officers, Heads of Service and Head Teachers are responsible, so far as is reasonably practicable, for ensuring the health, safety & care at work of all employees and others in their respective services. Chief Officers, Heads of Service and Head Teachers must:

- Ensure the development, implementation and regular review of the risk assessments and procedures for violence and procedures for dealing with unacceptable actions at work specific to their Service and their working environments i.e. minimum annually or following a change to working practices/circumstances;
- Ensure the operation and management of an effective information sharing system on service users who present a risk of violence in liaison with partnership agencies and in accordance with Data Protection and Human Rights Legislation and the recommendations made in this Policy;
- Ensure that adequate support including debriefing and reasonable adjustments to working practices is provided to employees in the event of a violent incident occurring;
- Ensure that procedures are in place to take appropriate action against service users who have behaved violently or unacceptably;
- Ensure all relevant employees are aware of appropriate risk assessments and related procedures;
- Determine the management arrangements, within their Service, through which these will be implemented and communicated.

SERVICE MANAGERS

All managers who have operational responsibility for employees and for implementing systems and procedures of work will be specifically responsible for ensuring that:

- This policy is effectively implemented, monitored and reviewed in the area/activities under their supervision;
- Overseeing the issue of Personal Protective Equipment (P.P.E.) and enforcement of use as appropriate;
- An effective information sharing system on service users who present a risk to employees is developed, operated and managed in liaison with other Services and/or partnership agencies in accordance with Data Protection and Human Rights Legislation;
- Ensuring that adequate support, including, investigation of incidents, debriefing, reasonable adjustments to working practices is provided to employees in the event of an incident occurring that involves violence or unacceptable behaviour towards an employee;
- Ensuring that procedures are implemented to take appropriate action against service users who have behaved violently and/or unacceptably.

- Safe systems of work, risk assessments and procedures relating to unacceptable actions at work are implemented and all working procedures and practices are properly documented and adhered to;
- Relevant training on dealing with unacceptable actions/violence at work is provided to all employees to enable them to carry out their duties in a competent manner;
- All employees in their teams are aware of and understand this policy and procedures contained within it;
- The Council's Dignity at Work Policy is referred to and implemented where an employee is the victim of violence or unacceptable behaviour involving a colleague, local member or manager.

LINE MANAGERS, TEAM LEADERS & SUPERVISORS

These employees have responsibility for implementing, monitoring and reviewing service based risk assessments, procedures and systems of work to achieve the aims of the Policy, and are responsible so far as is reasonably practicable for:

- Operating a Service based information sharing system on service users who present a risk in liaison with partnership agencies and in accordance with Service based procedures and Data Protection and Human Rights Legislation;
- Identifying work activities where there is a potential risk of violence that require to be risk assessed;
- Undertaking risk assessments to control the risk of violence at work and communicating outcomes to employees;
- Issuing and enforcing the use of Personal Protective Equipment (P.P.E.) where appropriate;
- Ensuring that employees within their area of control are involved in the risk assessment process and are made aware of the Corporate and Service based risk assessments for violence at work, emergency procedures and systems of work;
- Ensuring employees adhere to risk assessments, information sharing protocols, safe systems of work and adhere to prescribed standards are aware of legislation, both current and impending and providing basic advice to employees on this;
- Encouraging employees to report all types of violence at work and that in the case of injury or trauma, that prompt support is provided where required;
- Ensuring that debriefing, reasonable adjustments to working practices are made as appropriate is provided to employees in the event of a violent incident occurring;
- Ensuring all details of incidents are recorded as soon as possible to comply with the Corporate Accident/Incident at Work Policy and report the incident to the Health & Safety Executive if required under RIDDOR;
- Undertaking or ensuring that a detailed investigation of events is completed leading to the violent incident to determine how the incident could possibly have been prevented and take appropriate actions to avoid a similar situation in the future;
- Ensuring that procedures are implemented to take appropriate action against service users to deal with violence and unacceptable behaviour;
- Ensuring all new members of staff undergo appropriate induction training which covers unacceptable actions/violence at work procedures where applicable;

- Liaising with Service Directors and Human Resources to identify training requirements or on any issues relating to violence and/or unacceptable actions at work.

EMPLOYEES

It is vital that all employees of Falkirk Council contribute positively to the successful management of this policy. To ensure the effective implementation of this policy, employees will be expected to:

- Safeguard their health and safety, and that of others by operating to risk assessments, safe systems of work and procedures in accordance with Falkirk council Corporate and Service based risk assessments, strategies and policies;
- Use any P.P.E. issued to them as instructed by their line manager;
- Alert Line Managers to unsafe practices, conditions or incidents of concern;
- Seek advice and clarification from Line Managers when unsure of any health and safety requirement relevant to their working environment;
- Adhere to information sharing protocols and treating all information on service users as confidential;
- Report all incidents of violence to their line manager as soon as possible and co-operate with any investigation into an incident/ accident;
- Attend relevant training as instructed by their manager.

TRADE UNIONS

Trade Union Representatives will work with Falkirk Council to help implement this policy.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources, specifically the Health, Safety & Care Team, have a responsibility for administering the Council's Health, Safety & Care procedures and for supporting Services in implementing these. They will:

- Provide advice, guidance and information to Services on violence at work and/or unacceptable actions including support for individuals in undertaking the roles outlined above.

13. MONITORING & REVIEW

The Head of Human Resources and Business Transformation, will review this policy as per the agreed Human Resources Policy Review timetable in conjunction with Service Directors/ Chief Officers and Trade Unions taking into consideration legislative amendments and best practice advice..

EMPLOYEE development

If you would like to improve your skills in handling abusive situations you can attend relevant training. Contact the Employee Development Team about this on 506244. If you would like information about general health, safety & care relating to your work, contact the Health, Safety & Care Team on 506246/506248. Information is also available on the intranet under Human Resources, Health, Safety and Care Team.

However, here are some tips on how you can deal with difficult situations at work.

Be friendly

Be pleasant when in the office, try not to let a bad mood affect anyone else, or anyone else's bad mood affect you.

Be honest

Always apologise for mistakes and try your best to give reliable information but admit any mistakes you have made and don't pass on the blame.

Be consistent

Treat everyone with the same respect and dignity.

Be fair

If service users feel they have been treated fairly they will be positive towards you and remember you for this.

Be efficient

If you show enthusiasm and commitment, people will respond positively and have confidence in you.



Violence
at Work

Guidance
and Advice
for
Employees

VIOLENCE@WORK



Falkirk Council



Falkirk Council

VIOLENCE

at work can affect anyone, so it is important to learn about the effects of this and the problems that can occur.

Any of the following can be a form of violence at work:

- verbal abuse such as threats, insults and shouting;
- all forms of harassment, bullying or discrimination;
- physical attacks which include pushing, hitting and kicking.

Every employee is entitled to work in an environment that is safe and healthy. When we are dealing with people in situations that are difficult or threatening there is a tendency to focus on ourselves because of how our body responds, but it can be really helpful if we try to think about the other person's feelings too.

If you work in an environment where you provide a service, assist with people's problems or have to enforce legislation then you may regularly have to deal with difficult inter-personal situations either by phone or during face to face discussions.

Key warning signs that someone is irritated or unhappy:

- they will behave irrationally, such as becoming upset easily over minor issues;
- they will usually avoid making eye contact;
- they will usually show a sign of nervousness;
- they will often display aggressive body language such as clenching fists, clenching teeth or pointing;
- their volume and tone of voice will change and increase; they will get louder and they may curse and swear, using repetitive statements or language.

When people are upset, annoyed or frustrated about an issue they do not behave as rationally as they would normally and in the worst scenarios they can lose control and become violent and abusive. If you are on the receiving end of this you are likely to react emotionally too. This is normal, but how you choose to behave in response to this sort of situation is very important:

- try not to respond with anger - this only further escalates the matter;

- try not to feel responsible or guilty for the other person's behaviour by acting defensively, they have chosen to behave in this manner;
- don't let rude remarks upset you, stay detached, but take care not to sound casual or patronising, you are a professional person qualified to do your job.

Communication: You will not be able to communicate effectively with people until they are confident that you are taking their complaint seriously. You can do this by:

Acknowledgement: acknowledge how people are feeling by saying something like, "Tell me what happened" and give them your full attention.

Empathising: If you reassure people that you understand why they are upset or angry, they will respond more effectively to you, for example, "I can see how that would make you upset/angry" and offer a positive response such as "Let's see what we can do to sort this out for you". Use the person's name in conversation.

Taking control: every discussion has a beginning, middle and an end. Show that you are taking action to resolve the situation by using positive verbal and/or body language such as questioning. For example, "tell me about" and then confirming the information given to you is correct whilst taking notes and demonstrating that you are alert and interested by making suggestions on how the matter could be resolved. If you can, and it is warranted, offer to look into things further, by going the extra distance to seek out a workable solution for everyone concerned.

Most people will respond positively by becoming calmer and engaging in normal discussion with you if you can remember to follow these steps. However, there will be times when you will be required to deal with someone who is completely unreasonable or who may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. In situations like this, you have the right to end the discussion. You do not have to put up with extremely abusive

and threatening behaviour. In such circumstances you should:

- Politely ask the person to stop behaving in this way or you will terminate the telephone call or interview;
- If they persist and are not responding to your request and you are dealing with them by telephone, hang up and advise your line manager;
- If it is a face to face situation, ask them politely to leave the office and advise your line manager of the situation. If the abusive person refuses to leave, you should call the police, asking that they attend to assist in escorting the abusive person from the premises.

Your manager may want to consider writing to the abusive person reminding him/her that this type of abuse towards employees will not be tolerated and in extreme cases your manager may warn him/her that service delivery could be reduced or withdrawn as a result of their behaviour. You can have the abusive person formally charged by the police if you wish and you think it necessary.

If following an abusive or violent incident you are very upset, talk to your manager about this. Your manager should complete an Accident/Incident Reporting Form (HR14), with you as part of the de-briefing and support measures that they need to provide to you. For assistance in dealing with extreme situations you can contact the Counselling Service on 0141 332 9833. In addition, the Health, Safety & Care Team are available to provide advice and support on 506246/48 or Housing & Social Work Services have a trauma assistance team who can provide de-briefing for larger scale scenarios.

Where an employee is the victim of violence or unacceptable behaviour involving a colleague, local member or manager, the Council's Dignity at Work Policy and/or Disciplinary Policy should be referred to for information and advice. These are available at the Employee area on the Intranet at Strategies, Policies, Procedures and Guidance.

It's nice to be nice!



**We aim to provide you with a friendly,
polite and efficient service.**

We also expect you to be friendly and polite to us.

**We will not tolerate abusive behaviour, either verbal
or physical, to employees or others.**

**We may take action against anyone
behaving inappropriately and we will involve
the police if necessary.**

Help us to help you!

