

Unacceptable behaviour

management policy

Tewkesbury Borough Council has introduced a new unacceptable behaviour management policy.

The council remains committed to dealing with everyone fairly and impartially, while providing high quality services. As part of its service delivery, the council prioritises customer contact and doesn't usually limit interactions with staff and councillors.

However, the behaviour of some makes it difficult for the council to deal with their enquiry or concern. In a small number of cases, the actions of some individuals become unacceptable because they involve the abuse of people or processes. There are also cases where a customer is not necessarily abusive, but they take up an unreasonable and disproportionate amount of time and resources when dealing with them. When this occurs, the council must take steps to ensure it can continue to do its work effectively and provide a service to others.



What is unacceptable behaviour?

The council broadly defines unacceptable behaviour as:

- The direct or indirect abuse of staff and members whether verbal or physical.
- An intentional disregard of processes.
- When actions become vexatious, namely actions that are unreasonable and are pursued regardless of merit, by taking up a disproportionate amount of time, impacting on the delivery of services.

The policy sets out a comprehensive list of unacceptable behaviours and they are categorised according to their nature and severity as follows:

Category one

Aggressive behaviour where an incident involves physical violence, threats or abusive behaviour. More immediate action will be taken and the case will automatically progress to stage three of the management procedure involving contact restrictions.

Category two

Behaviour and language that are intended to insult, offend or degrade.

Category three

Unreasonable, persistent or excessive demands or behaviour.

Some examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Aggressive or abusive behaviour – physical acts of aggression, threats, brandishing weapons, offensive gestures and behaviour intended to harm or intimidate.
- Offensive or sexual language or tone (verbal, written or in person) that is intended to insult, degrade, or is derogatory.
- Discrimination e.g. racism, sexism, transphobia or homophobia.
- Making unreasonable/ excessive demands such as demanding responses within an unreasonable timescale or insisting on dealing (or not dealing) with a specific member of staff.
- Harassment or stalking e.g. contacting staff using their personal details or personal social media accounts.
- Entering or attempting to enter restricted and/or non-public areas of the council offices or wilful damage to council property.
- Refusing to co-operate with council procedures, hold a constructive conversation or follow instructions, such as failing to leave the premises or providing further evidence.

Our four-stage management approach to unacceptable behaviour is shown below.

Stage one initial warning



The individual will be informed that their behaviour is unacceptable and asked to moderate their behaviour/ language. They will be warned on multiple occasions before the communication ends or the case is escalated to stage two.

Stage two written warning



If the unacceptable behaviour persists, the individual will be sent a letter asking them again to moderate their behaviour/ language.

Stage three contact restrictions



Serious behaviour such as aggression or violence will automatically result in service restrictions. Restrictions can include restricted slots for phone calls, limited responses to emails and restricted access to the council offices. The individual will be issued with a letter to notify them of the type and extent of contact restrictions.

Stage four review of restrictions



Within three to twelve months, contact restrictions are reviewed and it will be decided whether they should end or be extended. In either case, the person will receive written confirmation of the decision and reasons for the decision.

The privacy notice for the Unacceptable Behaviour Management Policy can be found on the council website.

If you have any questions about this policy please contact 01684 295010. March 2025