

West Midlands Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Managing Challenging Behaviour and Contact Plans Policy

Introduction

Members of the public are welcome to contact the Commissioner, and we always strive to provide a high-quality response in a timely manner. Members of the public have a right to be heard, understood and respected. We will always try to provide an understanding and sympathetic service.

We understand that sometimes members of the public or complainants may become impatient or upset, and can display anger or frustration about the issues they are facing. However, we will not tolerate rude, aggressive or vexatious language or behaviour towards our staff or colleagues.

This policy sets out the approach that will be taken to manage challenging and difficult behaviours by members of the public which occur during contact with the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. It covers all contacts between members of the public and the Commissioner, members of the Strategic Policing and Crime Board, OPCC staff, volunteers or contractors. The Policy also covers contact with complainants during a complaint review process.

Managing Challenging Behaviour and Contact Plans

1. In considering our approach, we recognise that people may express themselves differently, and that behaviour may be influenced by a range of factors. We also recognise that certain mental health conditions or disabilities might make it challenging for people to communicate clearly and we are therefore happy to consider appropriate reasonable adjustments if they are requested.

Introducing a Contact Plan

2. If a member of the public behaves in an unacceptable way we may introduce a contact plan. The aim of a contact plan is to
 - safeguard the safety and wellbeing of our colleagues, and
 - enable effective and efficient conduct of our business
3. In this context, unacceptable behavior can be defined as any language or actions that have the potential to cause harm, injury or negatively impact upon the health and safety of our colleagues, or which causes unnecessary or undue additional work. Examples include:
 - Swearing, making personal comments or using abusive language

- Repeated correspondence that has already been dealt with, including the re-framing or re-wording of a complaint, casework request or an enquiry that has already been finalised.
- Persistently and unreasonably calling, writing or emailing to demand updates.
- Demonstrating an unwillingness to cooperate with our processes.
- Refusing to accept reasonable explanations following the conclusion of a complaint or casework, and/or failing to follow appropriate appeal/review channels.
- Contacting different people in the same organisation to try to secure a different outcome and making unreasonable demands.
- The volume or duration of contact impacting on the ability of staff to carry out their day to day functions (this can include calling a number of times repeatedly on the same day, or excessively prolonging telephone conversations taking up disproportionate amounts of time).
- Attempting to make contact in a personal capacity (eg on social media / LinkedIn, personal email or phone numbers).
- Threatening or intimidating behavior or language.

Process

4. In the case of unacceptable behaviour we will follow this process:

- 1) The member of staff should discuss the unacceptable behavior with their line manager. If the line manager agrees that the behavior is unacceptable, the incident will be noted on the Sharepoint casework system and Call Log. If the incident was isolated, it may be decided that no further action is required at this stage.
- 2) If action is needed in accordance with paragraph 2 of this policy, the first stage is for the member of the public to be told why their behaviour is unacceptable and provided with a written warning Letter. The warning will explain that poor behaviour will not be tolerated and will also explain that any further incidents may result in measures to manage future contacts. Once a warning has been issued, future contacts will be recorded and the record will be monitored by the Business Support Team Leader.
- 3) The second stage is a decision is made to manage future contact. The measures imposed will be bespoke to each case, but might include:
 - Placing a limit on the number or frequency of contacts
 - Limiting contact to a single member of staff
 - Limiting the duration of phone calls
 - limiting channels of communication, eg email only. No further engagement with the individual

- Individual barred from attending PCC premises, events or meetings for a period of time.
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- 4) All contact plans will be reviewed regularly (at least quarterly or at time scales agreed as part of the contact plan).
 - 5) If an individual does not comply with the terms of their Contact Plan, further measures may be imposed. In such cases, written confirmation of the further measures will be provided to the individual. These further measures will be specific to the circumstances.
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5. Colleagues are not expected to tolerate abusive, aggressive or intimidating language or behavior. In such cases, the contact should be politely concluded, with immediate effect.
 6. Abusive or threatening language or behavior will be reported to the police and may be dealt with as a criminal offence. It may also result in the individual being barred from attending PCC premises, meetings or events.
 7. In circumstances where there are safeguarding concerns it may be necessary to share details of the person subject to the Contact Plan with police or other relevant agency such as health or social care organisations.
 8. All contact plans will be reviewed on a regular basis. The term of the review may vary with each case, but as a minimum the review will take place quarterly.