

Managing Unacceptable Actions

There are relatively few customers whose actions we consider unacceptable. How we aim to manage these actions depends on the nature and extent. If it adversely affects our ability to do our work and provide a service to others, we may need to restrict contact with the Council in order to manage the unacceptable action. We may restrict contact in person, by telephone, fax, letter or electronically or by any combination of these. We try to maintain at least one form of contact. In extreme situations, we tell the customer in writing that their name is on a 'no personal contact' list. This means that they must restrict contact with the Council to either written communication or through a third party only.

Deciding to Restrict Customer Contact

Decisions to restrict contact with the Council are only taken after careful consideration of the situation by a senior manager. Wherever possible, we give a customer the opportunity to modify their behaviour or action before a decision is taken. Customers are told in writing why a decision has been made to restrict future contact, the restricted contact arrangements and, if relevant, the length of time that these restrictions will be in place.

Appealing a Decision to Restrict Contact

A customer can appeal to senior manager concerning a decision to restrict contact. A senior manager who was not involved in the original decision considers the appeal. They advise the customer in writing that either the restricted contact arrangements still apply or a different course of action has been agreed.

For full details of our Unacceptable Actions Policy or if you would like this leaflet in another language or format (such as large print, audio or Braille) Please call 03451 55 00 00



Unacceptable Actions Policy

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Fife Council believe that customers have a right to be heard, understood and respected.

We work hard to be open and accessible to everyone.

Occasionally, the behaviour or actions of individuals using our Services makes it very difficult for us to deal with their issue. In a small number of cases the actions of individuals become unacceptable because they involve abuse of our staff or our process.

When this happens we have to take action to protect our staff. We also consider the impact of the behaviour on our ability to do our work and provide a service to others.

This leaflet explains how we will approach these situations in accordance with Fife Council Policy.

What actions do Fife Council consider to be unacceptable?

People may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because a customer is forceful or determined. However, the actions of customers who are angry, demanding or persistent may result in unreasonable demands or unacceptable behaviour towards Fife Council staff. It is these actions that we consider unacceptable and aim to manage under our Policy. Fife Council has grouped these actions under three broad headings.

Aggressive or Abusive Behaviour

Fife Council understand that many customers are angry about the issues they have raised with us. If that anger escalates into aggression towards Fife Council staff, we consider that unacceptable. Any violence or abuse towards staff will not be accepted.

Violence is not restricted to acts of aggression that may result in physical harm. It also includes behaviour or language (whether verbal or written) that may cause staff to feel offended, afraid, threatened or abused.

Unreasonable Demands

Customers may make what we consider unreasonable demands on the Council through the amount of information they seek, the nature and scale of service they expect or the number of approaches they make. What amounts to unreasonable demands will always depend on the circumstances surrounding the behaviour and the seriousness of the issues raised by the customer.

Examples of actions grouped under this heading include demanding responses within an unreasonable time-scale, insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular member of staff, continual phone calls or letters, repeatedly changing the substance of the enquiry/request/complaint or raising unrelated concerns.

Unreasonable Persistence

We recognise that some customers will not or cannot accept that Fife Council is unable to assist them further or provide a level of service other than already provided. Customers may persist in disagreeing with the action or decision taken in relation to the enquiry/request/complaint or contact the Council persistently about the same issue.