

# STAFFING AND APPEALS COMMITTEE



**Thursday, 16 September 2021**

**Democratic and Members' Services**  
Fiona McMillan  
Monitoring Officer

**14:00**

Shire Hall  
Castle Hill  
Cambridge  
CB3 0AP

**Multi Function Room, New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald,  
Huntingdon, PE28 4YE  
[Venue Address]**

## **AGENDA**

**Open to Public and Press by appointment only**

**1. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**

*Guidance on declaring interests is available at  
<http://tinyurl.com/ccc-conduct-code>*

**2. Minutes – 24th August 2021**

*[Staffing and Appeals Committee meeting 24/08/2021](#)*

**3. Employment Policy Update**

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The Staffing and Appeals Committee comprises the following members:

*For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact*

### COVID-19

The legal provision for virtual meetings no longer exists and meetings of the Council therefore take place physically and are open to the public. Public access to meetings is managed in accordance with current COVID-19 regulations and therefore if you wish to attend a meeting of the Council, please contact the Committee Clerk who will be able to advise you further.

Councillor Edna Murphy (Chair) Councillor Henry Batchelor Councillor Ken Billington  
Councillor Douglas Dew Councillor Lucy Nethsingha Councillor Kevin Reynolds Councillor  
Tom Sanderson Councillor Neil Shailer and Councillor Steve Tierney

Clerk Name:	Michelle Rowe
Clerk Telephone:	01223 699180
Clerk Email:	michelle.rowe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

## Employment Policy Update

To: Staffing and Appeals Committee

Meeting Date: 16 September 2021

From: Janet Atkin, Assistant Director, HR Services

Purpose: To advise on recent updates and improvements to the Respect at Work Policy and employee guidance on Violence and Aggression at Work.

Recommendation: Members are asked to note the amendments to these key areas of employment policy and guidance.

### Officer contact:

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Tel: 07775 024309

### Member contacts:

Names: Councillor Edna Murphy  
Post: Chair  
Email: [Edna.murphy@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Edna.murphy@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01223 706398

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 Earlier this year a commitment was given by the Chief Executive to review the Council's Respect at Work Policy and guidance for staff relating to any incidents of violence and aggression experienced at work.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Staffing and Appeals Committee with an update on the changes and improvements that have been made.

## 2.0 Respect at Work Policy

- 2.1 Our Respect at Work Policy was first introduced in 2018, and this was a change of approach from the previous Bullying and Harassment procedure, which was taken following a series of staff focus groups, led by the Chief Executive and supported by trade union colleagues.
- 2.2 The driver was to create a procedure which was more easily accessible, and that would encourage people to raise matters early, in the hope that swift resolution could be found.
- 2.3 The Policy clearly sets out that we all have a part to play in establishing and maintaining a culture of respect, and that this culture underpins employee wellbeing, and is crucial to a positive working environment. The Respect@Work Policy defines the behaviour that is expected from everyone.
- 2.4 We recognised the importance of being able to talk to someone directly therefore we put in place a number of Respect@Work Contacts when the policy was first introduced. These are people who are trained to talk with anyone who feels that they are experiencing, or have witnessed, unreasonable behaviour in the workplace.
- 2.5 The most recent update to the policy which can be found at Appendix A made our zero tolerance approach to unacceptable behaviour more explicit. It was also expanded to more explicitly include discrimination and victimisation as we recognised that these weren't sufficiently well addressed previously. The Equality Impact Assessment can be found at Appendix B.
- 2.6 It also became clearer that people may not realise that what they were experiencing or witnessing would fall under the remit of the Respect At Work policy. To try and address this, we have provided a wide range of examples of unacceptable behaviour that employees can refer to, as well as a separate document which highlights examples of case studies.
- 2.7 In most cases raising matters early is more likely to lead to a positive outcome and we therefore encourage employees to speak up and act on concerns as they arise. There is guidance in the policy regarding the steps to take for example speaking to the other party informally in the first instance if they feel able to do so, or utilising the Respect @ Work contacts within the HR team. If it has not been possible to resolve the concerns informally, there are formal steps which can then be taken.
- 2.8 The policy also now includes other sources of support for employees such as the Equality and Diversity Network. For more serious matters, external

sources of support have also been highlighted, for example, when police involvement might be necessary.

- 2.9 Other additions include references to the appropriate route to follow where concerns are raised about the conduct of an Elected Member, partner organisation or customer.
- 2.10 The Council has a protocol on Member/Officer relations which is designed to provide a guide to good working relations between Members and officers, to define their respective roles and provide some principles governing conduct.
- 2.11 The employer also has a responsibility to act where an employee of the council feels that they are being subjected to unacceptable behaviour or conduct from a member of the public, a customer or service user, or an employee of a partner organisation. Routes for responding to these situations are also set out in this version of the policy.
- 2.12 We recognise that the effectiveness of the Respect@Work policy depends on employees being aware of the policy and applying it in practice. We have therefore designed a communication campaign to promote the updated policy. The campaign focuses on our expectations of behaviour towards others. The communication materials feature photographs of officers from all levels of the organisation and a number of elected members. Individuals involved have volunteered to promote the policy and are shown making a commitment to work together to build a culture of respect.
- 2.13 We also highlight the Respect@Work policy in our Equality and Diversity in Employment policy, our induction process, Our Conversations Guidance (this is our performance management system) and our contracts of employment.

### 3.0 Violence and Aggression Guidance

- 3.1 Prior to this most recent review, a number of tools and guidance documents were in place, but were held in various locations and could not be easily navigated. The recent review has brought this together into one place where the information can be more easily accessed. This document can be seen at Appendix C. The Equality Impact for these procedures can be seen at Appendix D.
- 3.2 As a County Council employee, everyone has the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect in the workplace and should not experience violence or aggression at work.
- 3.3 We have a duty of care for our employees and are committed to doing all that we can to keep people safe at work, especially when working in public services brings us into contact with people in difficult and challenging situations. We will not tolerate verbal or physical abuse towards any of our employees.
- 3.4 The HR Team have worked with representatives from across Council services to make sure that the guidance incorporates the various ways in which our employees could be exposed to different forms of violence or aggression at work.

3.5 The guidance details the important preventative measures that must be put in place to minimise the risk of experiencing violence and aggression. It gives information on ways to defuse and de-escalate difficult situations, and provides information on what to do if an incident occurs, what support can be put in place, as well as what action would be taken to prevent something similar happening again.

## 4.0 Revised Approach

4.1 One thing that became clear during the reviews of these policies and guidance, as well as learning and findings from staff engagement, was that people have not always been clear about which process to follow, and where to find the information.

4.2 To address this, a specific landing page has been created for Camweb titled 'Raising Concerns at Work' and this page can be seen at Appendix E.

4.3 This page sets out the broad areas that people are likely to want to raise concerns about and takes them directly to the relevant procedure to follow, and supporting information.

4.4 This should make accessing the right process quicker and less complicated, as well as easier to communicate out to all staff across the organisation.

## 5.0 Appendices

Appendix A – Respect at Work Policy

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment for Respect at Work Policy

Appendix C – Violence and Aggression Guidance

Appendix D – Equality Impact Assessment for Violence and Aggression Guidance

Appendix E – Raising Concerns at Work Camweb Page

## 6.0 Source Documents

[Protocol on Member - Officer Relations](#)

## Respect@Work Policy - Appendix A

We all have a part to play in establishing and maintaining a culture of respect at all levels of our organisation. This culture underpins employee wellbeing, and is crucial to a positive working environment, and an effective and productive workforce. The Respect@Work Policy defines the behaviour that is expected from everyone. Our values and behaviours also define how we treat each other. The Respect@Work policy sets out how to resolve any issues that arise, promptly and constructively. Compliance with the Respect@Work policy is a requirement of our Code of Conduct.

### Our Respect@Work Pledge

As an employee I will:

- Behave professionally
- Treat others with dignity and respect at all times
- Give and receive honest feedback
- Be inclusive and not tolerate discrimination
- Raise any concerns that I have - a Respect@Work contact can support you to do this
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour that I see or flag it with an appropriate person - I will not ignore it.

As a manager I will also:

- Model respectful behaviour
- Deal promptly with issues that are raised.

We recognise that there are situations where people work across two organisations (e.g. CCC and the NHS or CCC and PCC). We expect everyone in shared teams to work in accordance with our Respect@Work pledge, including where CCC is not their employer.

#### **DEFINITION OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS**

Unacceptable behaviour in the workplace is commonly referred to as bullying, harassment or discrimination. It can be described as unwanted behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated, fearful, degraded, humiliated or offended. UNISON has defined workplace bullying as persistent offensive, intimidating, humiliating behaviour, which attempts to undermine an individual or group of employees.

We have zero tolerance for bullying, harassment and discrimination at any level within our organisation. If the way that someone is behaving towards you feels wrong you should use this policy to address this.

People often describe behaviour that “sets a tone” within the work environment that is intimidating, oppressive or unpleasant. It is not always obvious or apparent to others. Unacceptable behaviour is not always intentional as people can sometimes be oblivious to the effect they have had on others. It is completely unacceptable for anyone to be made to feel unhappy or uncomfortable at work because of the behaviour of others.

Bullying, harassment or discrimination may occur between two individuals or involve groups of people. It may be persistent or could be an isolated incident. Unacceptable behaviour can take various forms and can occur in different guises, such as face to face, in written and electronic communications, by phone or text message. This type of behaviour is often associated with an abuse of power. It can also occur between colleagues working at a similar, or a more junior level.

Actions outside of work can also be considered unacceptable behaviour. This includes, sending unacceptable messages by phone, text or email or posting inappropriate content about an employee on the internet/social media.

Harassment is when someone behaves in a way which offends you or makes you feel distressed or intimidated.

### Discrimination

We value diversity and are committed to being an inclusive place to work. Discrimination has no place in our organisation and will not be tolerated. It is not acceptable to bully, harass or discriminate against anyone because of their characteristics for example because of an individual's age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, gender/sex or sexual orientation. It is also unacceptable to bully, harass or discriminate against a person because you think they have a particular characteristic or because of their association with a person with one of these characteristics e.g. because you think someone is gay or because they have a disabled family member.

We expect all employees to treat their colleagues and customers with respect regardless of their characteristics. Examples of unacceptable behaviour in relation to these characteristics include:

- Using offensive or abusive language
- Exclusion from work place events and conversations
- Side-lining someone, ignoring their contribution or taking away responsibilities
- Making derogatory comments or patronising remarks
- Telling or sharing stereotypical jokes or impersonations
- Nonverbal signals which are disrespectful
- Allocating work based on assumptions about a person's characteristics
- Displaying or sending offensive material
- Asking intrusive or derogatory questions
- Deliberately or repeatedly misgendering someone (i.e. referring to someone using a pronoun that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify, particularly when a person has made it clear how they should be addressed)
- Making suggestive or sexual comments
- Micro aggressions – small comments, questions or actions that communicate a negative perception of someone based on their characteristics.

If a person shares an experience of discrimination with you listen carefully to what they say and acknowledge their feelings. You may feel that minimising or excusing what has happened may make a person feel better if they are upset or angry. However this can actually make a person feel like you don't understand or don't believe them. E.g. A service user was racially offensive to a black Support Worker. When she told colleagues what had happened they said "he was probably having a bad day, I'm sure it wasn't personal, take no notice of him". The Support Worker felt like they didn't understand what had happened to her or why she was upset. This behaviour can be termed gas lighting.

Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation are defined as protected characteristics under the Equality Act. As well as being unacceptable to discriminate against a person because of these factors it is also illegal to do this.

If you have experienced racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, discrimination on the grounds of religion, marital/civil partnership status or pregnancy/maternity you should use this process to address this.

## Victimisation

Victimisation means treating an individual badly because they have made a complaint, or provided evidence or information in connection with a complaint. For example a manager not shortlisting an employee for an internal vacancy because they have raised a Respect@Work concern. Victimisation will not be tolerated as it discourages people from raising and addressing concerns. Victimising a person because they have raised a concern relating to discrimination under the Equality Act is against the law.

## IMPACT OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Bullying, harassment and discrimination can have a significant impact on our mental and physical health. It negatively impacts on team morale and productivity and has a detrimental impact on service delivery. For these reasons, as a Council we will not tolerate this behaviour in our workplace.

Some examples of expected and unacceptable behaviour are given below. This list is not exhaustive.

Expected behaviour	Unacceptable behaviour
Deal with colleagues in a respectful and professional manner at all times. Respect people's dignity, personal boundaries and belongings.	Violent or inappropriate physical contact, intimidation or damaging/stealing belongings.  Creating an intimidating atmosphere in the workplace, whether intentional or not, by being aggressive or using inappropriate language.
Communicate in a respectful way, taking extra care when delivering challenging messages, and being mindful and respectful of other people's cultures and beliefs.	Abusive or inappropriate language, mocking, ridiculing or humiliating, spreading rumours/gossip or making threats.
Being open to feedback about your behaviour and the impact it has on others. Reflecting on how your actions and words have been perceived. Being ready to learn and improve how you interact with and treat others.	Being unwilling to change how you behave or communicate when you have been made aware that you are having a negative impact on other people.
As managers, address employment matters promptly and professionally and manage performance in a consistent and constructive way.	Unacceptable behaviour includes deliberately withholding/falsifying information, sabotaging work, marginalising someone, persistent criticism not commensurate with performance. Singling out someone for trivial/unpleasant tasks.
Respecting and valuing employees as individuals with different life experiences and perspectives. Valuing the benefits that having a diverse team brings to service delivery.	Discriminating against a person because of their characteristics. Marginalising someone. Using offensive language. Behaviour that makes someone feel uncomfortable or excluded. Asking questions about a person's characteristics where this makes them feel uncomfortable especially where they have made it clear that questions are unwelcome.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING BULLYING, HARASSMENT OR DISCRIMINATION

In most cases raising matters early is more likely to lead to a positive outcome and you are therefore encouraged to speak up and act on concerns as they may arise.

### Respect@Work Contacts

We recognise the importance of being able to talk to someone directly. We have therefore put in place a number of Respect@Work Contacts. These are people who are trained to talk with anyone who feels that they are experiencing unreasonable behaviour in the workplace. You can also speak to a Respect@Work contact if you have witnessed unreasonable behaviour.

Respect@Work contacts are currently members of the HR Advisory Team that are independent from your service area – they will not be the normal HR contact for your team or manager.

Their role is to:

- Talk through the Respect@Work Policy and answer any questions that you have about the process.
- Give you suggestions on how to initiate an informal discussion.
- Help you to consider how to express your concerns clearly.
- Signpost the support that is available.

In most circumstances we hope that you feel able to raise matters informally in the first instance, by talking to the other party. If your concerns relate to your line manager you should speak to their line manager. If the issue relates to a member of your team's management structure and you are uncomfortable raising this, you should speak to a Respect@Work Contact who will be able to provide guidance in the first instance.

This will give the individual a chance to understand what impact they have had, and to put matters right. Where the matter is very serious and you don't feel that raising it informally is the right way forward, a Respect@Work contact will be able to advise on how to access the formal resolution stage directly and explain the process that will be followed. They can give guidance on what is required to prepare a formal complaint. Their role is impartial, so they cannot give legal advice, provide ongoing emotional/practical support, attend meetings to represent an employee, or write letters on their behalf.

The following people are [Respect@Work](#) contacts and can be contacted directly on the numbers given:

- Karen Tolond, 07785 110802
- Caroline Adu-Bonsra, 07825 521324
- Anna Syson, 07917 214519
- Sarah Martins, 07771 841386
- Jenni Barnes, 07920 870319
- Tara Sutton, 07770 650540
- Stewart Gletherow, 07827 313573

These discussions will not be documented, we do not record your name or job title and anything that you say will be treated in confidence.

Where a group of employees have the same issue they may choose to raise a collective concern, the group should nominate a spokesperson/two spokespeople to take a lead in resolving the issue.

If you are raising concerns about a person employed by another organisation (e.g. NHS or PCC) you should refer to the policy that applies in that organisation. Please speak to a Respect@Work contact if you need help getting a copy of the relevant policy or understanding how to raise your concerns.

It is helpful to have feedback about your experience of speaking to a Respect@Work contact, this will help us to improve our approach. The Respect@Work contact will ask if you want to have a follow up call to let us know if your conversation has helped you. This is completely optional - you can say if you would prefer not to be called. Alternatively you can ring 01223 699666 and give any feedback or email on [RespectatWork@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:RespectatWork@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk). Any feedback that you provide will be anonymized and will be used to update our process.

#### Other Sources of Support

**Trade Unions** – if you are a member of a trade union you can discuss your concerns with your trade union representative. Contact details for our trade unions are available [here](#).

**The Equality and Diversity Network** – is a source of peer support and a safe space to talk if you have experienced unacceptable behaviour/discrimination. Network members meet throughout the year and are also active between meetings. The network can be contacted directly via [Equality&Diversity@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Equality&Diversity@cambridgeshire.gov.uk). Speaking to people that may have insight into your experience can help you feel more able to raise your concerns using this policy. Network meeting details are advertised via Camweb.

**The Employee Assistance Programme** - All employees can use the Employee Assistance Programme to access unlimited practical and emotional support. A free confidential helpline is available 24 hours a day, which can be reached by calling 0800 030 5182. You can also have up to 6 sessions of structured telephone counselling or face-to-face counselling which can be requested using the same telephone number. Details are provided on Camweb of how to access the Employee Assistance Programme if you have a hearing impairment.

#### Support if a concern has been raised about your behaviour

In this situation you can speak to a Respect@Work contact to ask questions about the process and to talk to a neutral party about what happened. You can also speak to a Respect@Work contact if you are the subject of a Respect@Work investigation. The Respect@Work contact will not be involved in the investigation in any way but is available to answer your questions and provide you with guidance on the process that will follow.

#### Other Authorities

In some cases it may be appropriate to raise an issue with another organisation e.g. reporting physical violence, sexual assault, theft, repeated threats or intimidation to the police. Where there is police involvement this usually takes precedence over the internal Respect@Work process and may require the Council to pause internal investigations until the police have decided on a course of action or otherwise. A Respect@Work contact can provide you with guidance in this situation.

#### Witnessing Unacceptable Behaviour

If you witness a person being subjected to inappropriate behaviour, if you feel able to, you should challenge this behaviour. Alternatively, you should raise your concerns with a Respect@Work contact who will give you information on the appropriate manager to direct your concerns to. The Respect@Work contact can also talk to you about how to raise your concerns. We all have a

responsibility to our colleagues to raise unacceptable behaviour and not overlook it. It is not okay to ignore inappropriate behaviour that you see.

#### Recording Details of Unacceptable Behaviour

It may help to keep written notes about any incidents of unacceptable behaviour – make a written note of what happened and when. Similarly, one to one notes should record any issues that you have raised and accurately reflect the discussion with your manager. These notes will help all parties have a discussion about Respect@Work concerned that is focused on specific details.

### **ADDRESSING UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

There are two resolution stages to the Respect@Work Policy, and these are set out below:

<b>Informal Resolution</b>
<p><u>Face to Face discussion</u></p> <p>We want people to feel able to raise issues informally in the first instance. If you have experienced unacceptable behaviour you should, where they feel able to, raise it with the other party informally at the earliest opportunity. You should give specific examples of the unwanted behaviour, explain how this has made you feel, and what you would like to see change.</p> <p>The aim is for you to make it clear how their behaviour has affected you, and for you to agree a constructive way of working together in the future. An informal discussion can be particularly useful in cases where the other party is genuinely not aware of the effect of their behaviour. In many cases this direct and honest conversation is enough to resolve an issue.</p> <p><u>Facilitated discussion</u></p> <p>If you do not feel able to approach the other party you should speak to a Respect@Work contact who can arrange a facilitated discussion between both parties. In this discussion the Respect@Work contact will act in a neutral capacity - their role is to prompt both parties to discuss the issue and agree a constructive way forward. This will be a confidential discussion between those present only. The main issues and agreed outcomes will be recorded.</p> <p><u>Raising concerns in writing</u></p> <p>Where you do not feel able to speak to someone face to face you could raise your concerns in writing – in a letter or an email. The aim of your message is to be clear what your concerns are, how a person’s behaviour has affected you and how you would like to see this change going forward. This written message will be followed up with a facilitated discussion with a Respect@Work contact to allow both parties to talk about the concern and agree a way forward – you should speak to a Respect@Work contact to arrange this.</p> <p><u>Support from your trade union</u></p> <p>If you are a member of a trade union you can discuss your concerns with your trade union representative.</p>
<b>Formal Resolution</b>
<p>The formal resolution stage will usually be applied when either;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an informal discussion has not resolved the issue (e.g. the other party denies behaving inappropriately or does not change their behaviour), or</li> </ul>

- the alleged behaviour is so serious that it warrants moving straight to a formal investigation (e.g. serious persistent bullying, incidents of discrimination). Please note the incidents of physical abuse would be dealt with as a conduct issue under the disciplinary procedure, rather than via the Respect@Work policy.

You should raise this with your Line Manager (either orally or in writing) outlining the alleged behaviour and its impact on you. If the Line Manager is the person that the allegations are centred on then you should raise the issue with their Line Manager, or if you feel that you cannot do this for any reason then you approach a Respect@Work contact.

An appropriately skilled manager from outside of the service (referred to as the Independent Manager) will be identified to carry out the investigation, supported by a member of the HR Advisory team. Employees are entitled to Trade Union representation during the formal resolution stage. Where a situation involves a group of employees the independent manager will speak to each of the people involved. All parties will be advised that if it transpires that there is evidence to suggest that inappropriate behaviour or conduct has occurred, the matter may be taken forward under the Council's disciplinary procedure.

Every effort will be made to complete the investigation as soon as possible after an issue has been raised.

#### **Outcome of the investigation**

The Independent Manager will meet with both parties separately to outline the findings of the investigation and to advise what action will be taken going forward. They will then write to both parties to confirm the outcome and any actions or follow up agreed. Where an investigation involves a group of people the Independent Manager will address the behaviour of each individual separately.

<b>Evidence of inappropriate behaviour</b>	<p>If the Independent Manager concludes there is evidence to suggest inappropriate behaviour has occurred and that this behaviour would normally be in breach of the Council's Code of Conduct or Disciplinary Rules, they will advise both parties that the process will then be taken forward under the Disciplinary Procedure.</p> <p>The Independent Manager will set out the specific allegations in writing and invite the employee to a further meeting where they have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative and will be given every opportunity to answer the allegations made. Once this process is concluded and any additional witnesses have been spoken to, the Independent Manager will take a view on whether the matter should be referred to a Disciplinary Hearing. Full details of the Disciplinary Procedure can be found here.</p>
<b>No evidence of inappropriate behaviour</b>	<p>If no evidence is found of inappropriate conduct the Independent Manager will explain this finding and the rationale for coming to this conclusion.</p>
<b>Inappropriate conduct requiring action short of disciplinary</b>	<p>If evidence of inappropriate conduct is found where the behaviour needs to change but disciplinary action is not considered to be appropriate, the Independent Manager will issue a Management Instruction setting out any expectations about anything that needs to change. This will be monitored by</p>

	their line manager going forward to ensure that the issue does not recur. Any further incidences of inappropriate behaviour are likely to lead to disciplinary action.
<b>Failure to commit to change of behaviour</b>	If the individual will not agree or commit to a change of behaviour then this will automatically be taken forward under the Disciplinary Procedure.
<b>Follow up actions</b>	
In all cases the Independent Manager will discuss and agree actions to move forwards, which may include arranging for mediation to help restore the working relationship. The investigation may also have highlighted training needs for one or both parties. In this case a training plan will be put in place to support the employee(s) to obtain the skills that they need.	

## MEDIATION

Mediation can be very effective when dealing with incidents of bullying and harassment. Mediation is undertaken voluntarily with both parties agreeing to participate. It is particularly useful where there are issues with a working relationship. A trained mediator will facilitate discussions and guide the participants to reach an agreed way forward e.g. to agree more productive and appropriate ways of working together in the future. Mediation can only be successful where both parties are genuinely willing to engage with the process. Either party may suggest that mediation is undertaken at any stage in the process. Where both parties agree to engage in mediation they should contact HR Advisory to arrange this.

## APPEAL

The employee who raised a Respect@Work concern has a right to appeal the outcome of the formal investigation within 10 working days of receiving the outcome in writing. The purpose of the appeal is to determine whether the formal resolution stage was followed correctly, and whether the outcome was reasonable in all of the circumstances.

The appeal must be made in writing and be addressed to the Assistant Director, HR Services, who will appoint an appropriate person to conduct the appeal meeting. The appeal will usually be heard by a Director from another Directorate. The Director will be supported by a member of the HR Advisory Team. The appeal must clearly state the grounds for the appeal.

Both parties may be represented by a Trade Union Representative in the appeal meeting. The decision of the appeal is final.

If the Respect@Work investigation has resulted in disciplinary action being taken the employee will have the right to challenge the outcome through the disciplinary process.

## LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

Managers have a responsibility to address issues consistently and fairly by applying the appropriate procedure e.g. the Disciplinary Procedure or the Improving Performance Procedure. You may have concerns about how another procedure is being applied. These types of concerns will generally be considered as part of the procedure being applied.

However there may be situations where you consider that another procedure is being applied to you in a targeted or inconsistent way e.g. the Disciplinary Procedure/Improving Performance Procedure is not being applied consistently to other employees in your team behaving or performing in a similar way.

You should raise your concerns with the Investigating Manager (for disciplinary issues) or Lead Manager (for performance issues). This manager will seek advice from the Head of HR Advisory or their HR

Business Partner. The manager will determine whether it would be appropriate to address concerns via the procedure being applied. Alternatively a decision may be taken to suspend a procedure and address concerns via the Respect@Work Policy.

**Elected Members** – The Council has a protocol on Member/Officer relations which is designed to provide a guide to good working relations between Members and officers, to define their respective roles and provide some principles governing conduct. This document can be found here: [Council Constitution - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

This sets out in section 12.2 that if an officer is unhappy with the conduct or behaviour of a Councillor they should seek to resolve the matter by appropriate discussion and involvement of their Executive Director or Director. In the event that matters remain unresolved they should inform the Monitoring Officer who will consider what action should be taken, and when necessary, the Chief Executive will arbitrate on the interpretation of this Protocol following consultation with the Monitoring Officer.

If a council employee feels that they are being unfairly treated by an Elected Member, they should speak to their line manager in the first instance to make them aware. The Line Manager will then consider whether it is a matter that they can address informally with the Elected Member, or whether this is something that needs to be referred to the relevant Director or Executive Director to address. If, following this process the employee does not feel the matter has been satisfactorily resolved they should contact the Monitoring Officer (Director of Law & Governance) or Chief Executive.

**External Contacts such as the Public, Customers, Partner organisations** – The employer has a responsibility to act where an employee of the council feels that they are being subjected to unacceptable behaviour or conduct from a member of the public, a customer or service user, or an employee of a partner organisation. Where an employee has experienced inappropriate conduct or behaviour they should make this known to their Line Manager who will take responsibility for action to address these concerns formally or informally, depending upon the nature of them.

If the matter relates to a serious concern of violence or aggression the procedure here should be followed: [Procedure for reporting Violence and Aggression.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

If it does not relate to violence or aggression but is more aligned with inappropriate conduct or behaviour, the Line Manager should talk to their HR Advisor for advice on specific measures to take.

Please note that the sources of support set out on Pages 4-5 above from our Respect@Work Contacts, Trade Unions, Equality & Diversity Network and the Employee Assistance Programme are available throughout these processes.

#### **EMPLOYEES LEAVING THE ORGANISATION**

An employee may raise a concern just before leaving the Council. Wherever possible we will apply this procedure in full. Where this is not possible in the time available the approach taken will be adapted to ensure we give reasonable consideration to the issue before the employee leaves our employment. An employee may raise concerns via an exit questionnaire or an exit interview. Issues that have been highlighted will be addressed even if the employee is no longer in employment where the concerns raised may have implications for other employees.

#### **FEEDBACK AND MONITORING**

If you want to give feedback on any aspect of the Respect@Work policy please email [RespectatWork@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:RespectatWork@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk).

We will use our employee survey and other sources of employee feedback to monitor whether employees in our organisation are experiencing unacceptable behaviour, bullying or harassment. We will monitor the number of informal and formal cases that occur (where they are reported to HR), and

their outcomes which will be reported annually to JMT and the Staffing and Appeals Committee. We will use monitoring data to identify any areas where unacceptable behaviour is more prevalent and to take appropriate action to address this.

## Appendix B

### Equality Impact Assessment – Screening Form

#### Section 1: Proposal details

<b>Service:</b> Human Resources	<b>Person undertaking the assessment:</b> Sarah Haig Pincay
<b>Policy being assessed:</b> The updated Respect@Work Policy	<b>Job Title:</b> HR Policy Manager
	<b>Contact details:</b> Sarah.Haig@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk
<b>Date commenced:</b> 02/09/2021	<b>Date completed:</b>
<p><b>Key service delivery objectives</b></p> <p>The purpose of the Respect@Work policy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set out clear expectations around the standards of behaviour expected of all of our workforce – outlining how we create/strengthen a culture of respect across the organisation.</li> <li>• Provide a clear route for employees to raise/address concerns relating to bullying, harassment and discrimination</li> <li>• Define the steps that are followed to address concerns informally/formally</li> </ul> <p>The purpose of this update is to ensure that the Respect@Work policy is clear and fit for purpose.</p>	
<p><b>Key service outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees are aware of the Respect@Work policy</li> <li>• All employees are clear the standards of behaviour that are expected of them and understand that following these standards is a requirement of the CCC Code of Conduct.</li> <li>• Employees feel confident to challenge inappropriate behaviour and know how to do this.</li> <li>• Employees know that they can talk to a Respect@Work contact for support</li> <li>• Employees know that concerns that are raised will be taken seriously</li> </ul>	
<p><b>What is the proposal?</b></p> <p>Intended updates to the Respect@Work policy are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making it explicit that we have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment</li> <li>• Adding specific information about discrimination</li> <li>• Adding information on what an employee should do if they experience bullying or harassment from an elected member or a contractor</li> <li>• Updating the examples document that supports the policy to include a specific example relating to discrimination to show how the policy can be applied in practice.</li> <li>• Reviewing the terminology used to take out gender specific terms (e.g. his/her, he/she).</li> </ul>	
<p><b>What information did you use to assess who would be affected by this proposal?</b></p> <p>Information held on the number of employees that have spoken to a Respect@Work contract/number of Respect@Work cases to see if this highlighted any particular trends/issues.</p>	

Feedback from members of the equality and diversity action group – working with a focus group of 5 people  
 Feedback from the equality and diversity network group – policy distributed to network members for comments and suggestions and their feedback taken onboard.

**Are there any gaps in the information you used to assess who would be affected by this proposal?**

We have limited feedback on the employee’s experience after speaking to a Respect@Work contact. We have added a prompt to the policy to ask employees to provide feedback following a discussion with a Respect@Work contract.

The feedback from the Respect@Work pulse survey will provide additional insight into employees experiences at work – this may inform further updates to the policy, supporting documents or how the policy is communicated.

**Who will be affected by this proposal?**

The Respect@Work policy applies to all CCC employees at all levels of the organisation. The potential to use the policy to address incidents of discrimination is particularly relevant to employees that have protected characteristics.

**Section 2: Identifying impacts on specific minority/disadvantaged groups**

Scope of this Equality Impact Assessment			
<i>Check box if group could foreseeably be at risk of negative impact from this proposal</i>			
Note *= protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010			
Age*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disability*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marriage and civil partnership*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Race*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief (including no belief)*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural isolation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty	<input type="checkbox"/>		

**Section 3: Explanation of ‘no foreseeable risk’ EIA screening**

Explain why this proposal will not have a foreseeable risk of negative impact for each group. Provide supporting evidence where appropriate. Where the same explanation applies to more than one group, state it in the ‘Reasons’ column for the first relevant group and put ‘as per [first group name] above’ to reduce duplication.

Characteristic / group of people	Explanation of why this proposal will not have a foreseeable risk of negative impact
1. Age	<p>The updates to the Respect@Work policy do not have a foreseeable negative impact on individuals due to their age.</p> <p>There is a possibility that those with less work experience could need more support to raise a Respect@Work concern however this is mitigated by having Respect@Work contacts to support employees with this process.</p>

	<p>The updated policy sign posts the equality and diversity network as a source of support which is particularly relevant to individuals with any protected characteristic.</p> <p>The policy highlights the positive value of having a diverse workforce.</p>
2. Disability	<p>The updates to the Respect@Work policy do not have a foreseeable negative impact on disabled individuals.</p> <p>Specific examples are given around disability discrimination and ableism to highlight that these behaviours are not acceptable.</p> <p>The primary way of contacting a Respect@Work contact is via phone which could be less accessible for an individual with a hearing impairment however an email alternative is also provided.</p> <p>Employees can use a screen reader to access the policy and example documents.</p> <p>The policy sign posts the equality and diversity network as a source of support which is particularly relevant to individuals with any protected characteristic.</p> <p>The policy highlights the positive value of having a diverse workforce.</p>
3. Gender Reassignment	<p>The updates to the Respect@Work policy do not have a foreseeable negative impact on transgender employees.</p> <p>The policy gives transphobia is given as an example of behaviour is not acceptable.</p> <p>The gender identity signposts employees to address any discrimination that they experience via the Respect@Work policy.</p> <p>The policy sign posts the equality and diversity network as a source of support which is particularly relevant to individuals with any protected characteristic.</p> <p>The policy highlights the positive value of having a diverse workforce.</p>
4. Marriage and Civil Partnership	<p>The updates to the Respect@Work policy do not have a foreseeable negative impact on individuals on the basis of their marriage/civil partnership status. Marriage and civil partnerships are detailed as characteristics covered by the Equality Act.</p> <p>The policy sign posts the equality and diversity network as a source of support which is particularly relevant to individuals with any protected characteristic.</p> <p>The policy highlights the positive value of having a diverse workforce.</p>
5. Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>The updates to the Respect@Work policy do not have a foreseeable negative impact on individuals on the basis of being pregnant or on maternity leave. Pregnancy and maternity are detailed as characteristics covered by the Equality Act.</p> <p>The policy sign posts the equality and diversity network as a source of support which is particularly relevant to individuals with any protected characteristic.</p> <p>The policy highlights the positive value of having a diverse workforce.</p>
6. Race	<p>The updates to the Respect@Work policy do not have a foreseeable negative impact on individuals based on their race.</p>

	<p>Specific examples are given around racial discrimination to highlight that this is not acceptable. An extra example has been added to the supporting document detailing a situation where an employee has experienced racial discrimination. The example shows how the Respect@Work policy would apply in this situation.</p> <p>The policy includes new references to gaslighting and micro-aggressions which are relevant in the context of race as well as for other protected characteristics.</p> <p>The policy sign posts the equality and diversity network as a source of support which is particularly relevant to individuals with any protected characteristic.</p> <p>The policy highlights the positive value of having a diverse workforce.</p>
7. Religion or Belief (including no belief)	<p>The updates to the Respect@Work policy do not have a foreseeable negative impact on individuals based on their religion or belief.</p> <p>Specific examples are given around discrimination on the basis of religion or belief to highlight that this is not acceptable.</p> <p>The policy sign posts the equality and diversity network as a source of support which is particularly relevant to individuals with any protected characteristic.</p> <p>The policy highlights the positive value of having a diverse workforce.</p>
8. Sex	<p>The language in the policy has been updated to make it gender neutral.</p> <p>The policy highlights the positive value of having a diverse workforce.</p>
9. Sexual Orientation	<p>The updates to the Respect@Work policy do not have a foreseeable negative impact on individuals based on their sexual orientation.</p> <p>The policy is explicit that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientations is unacceptable and unlawful.</p> <p>The policy sign posts the equality and diversity network as a source of support which is particularly relevant to individuals with any protected characteristic.</p> <p>The policy highlights the positive value of having a diverse workforce.</p>
10. Rural Isolation	<p>There is no negative impact anticipated based on an employee living or working in an isolated rural location – the treatment that employees can expect at work are not directly impacted by these factors. The Respect@Work policy can be accessed by employees working at any CCC location with access to Camweb. They will have equal access to the Respect@Work policy.</p>
11. Poverty	<p>The policy applies equally to employees across the organisations pay grades. The figures for Respect@Work cases do not show a correlation between a person's pay grade and the likelihood of the person raising a concern via the Respect@Work procedure. Some employees on lower grades do not routinely access our computer network/Camweb – we therefore focus communications about the Respect@Work policy via non electronic channels</p>

	e.g. briefing note to be discussed in team meetings and using physical posters where possible.
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**Other relevant information**

**Respect@Work Contacts**

Respect@Work contacts can provide support to employees to address issues that they have experienced – to be able to fulfil this role employees need to be willing and comfortable to speak with them. Following feedback from the focus groups we have updated the information on Respect@Work contacts in the policy to include a photo and short biography of each contact. This is to make these contacts more approachable and allow employees to decide who they feel most comfortable to speak to.

Not all of the Respect@Work contacts will have lived experience of discrimination on the basis of a protected characteristic e.g. they may not have personally experienced racism, sexism or homophobia etc. Training will ensure that all Respect@Work contacts have the cultural competency to deal with a broad spectrum of issues. We are also currently working on recruiting a broader range of Respect@Work contacts, from across the organisation to increase the diversity of the people available to speak to.

A potential issue is that all of the current Respect@Work contacts currently work in the HR Team. Some employees may prefer to contact a person that is outside of the HR team/someone within their service. The work that we are undertaking to recruit Respect@Work contacts from across the organisation will address this issue giving employees a broader range of Respect@Work contacts to choose from.

**Communication and Credibility**

How well the policy supports employees that are experiencing bullying, harassment or discrimination on the basis of age is dependent on employees knowing that the policy exists, being willing to use the policy and trusting that their concern will be taken seriously. A communications campaign has been designed to raise awareness of the Respect@Work policy. We also highlight the Respect@Work policy in our Equality and Diversity in Employment policy, our induction process, Our Conversations Guidance (this is our performance management system), our contracts of employment and our Code of Conduct.

The updates to the policy have been informed by feedback from a diverse range of employees that made suggestions about how to make the policy clearer more user friendly.

**Establishing a Culture of Respect**

Building and strengthening a respectful work culture is dependant on how the Respect@Work policy is applied in practice e.g. how managers and employee give and receive feedback, willingness to promptly and effectively address conduct issues, how all individuals engage with and demonstrate the Respect@Work pledge statements in their day to day work. The policy sets the framework for expected behaviour managers and employees at all levels have a key role in putting the Respect@Work policy into practice.

**Section 4: Approval**

*Note: if there is no information available to assess impact, this means either information should be sought so this screening tool can be completed, or information should be gathered during a full EIA.*

I confirm that I have assessed that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

<b>Name of person who completed this EIA:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Job title:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

I have reviewed this Equality Impact Assessment – Screening Form, and I agree that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Job title:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

## Violence and Aggression at Work Guidance

### Introduction

You have the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect at work and should not experience violence or aggression as part of your job. We have a duty of care for our employees and are committed to doing all that we can to keep you safe at work. Working in public services brings us into contact with people in many different circumstances, including people in difficult and challenging situations. We will equip you with the skills to deal with potentially difficult interactions and support you if you experience these. We will not tolerate verbal or physical abuse towards any of our employees.

This guidance details the important preventative measures that must be put in place to minimise the risk of experiencing violence and aggression. It gives information on the ways you can defuse and de-escalate difficult situations where this is appropriate. We also provide information on what you should do if an incident occurs and explains how we will support you following an incident, the reporting process that applies and how we will take action to prevent something similar happening again.

The links below will help you easily navigate to the relevant section of this guidance document

[Process Flowcharts](#)

[High Risk Meeting](#)

[Prevention](#)

[Training](#)

[Incident](#)

[Follow Up/Support](#)

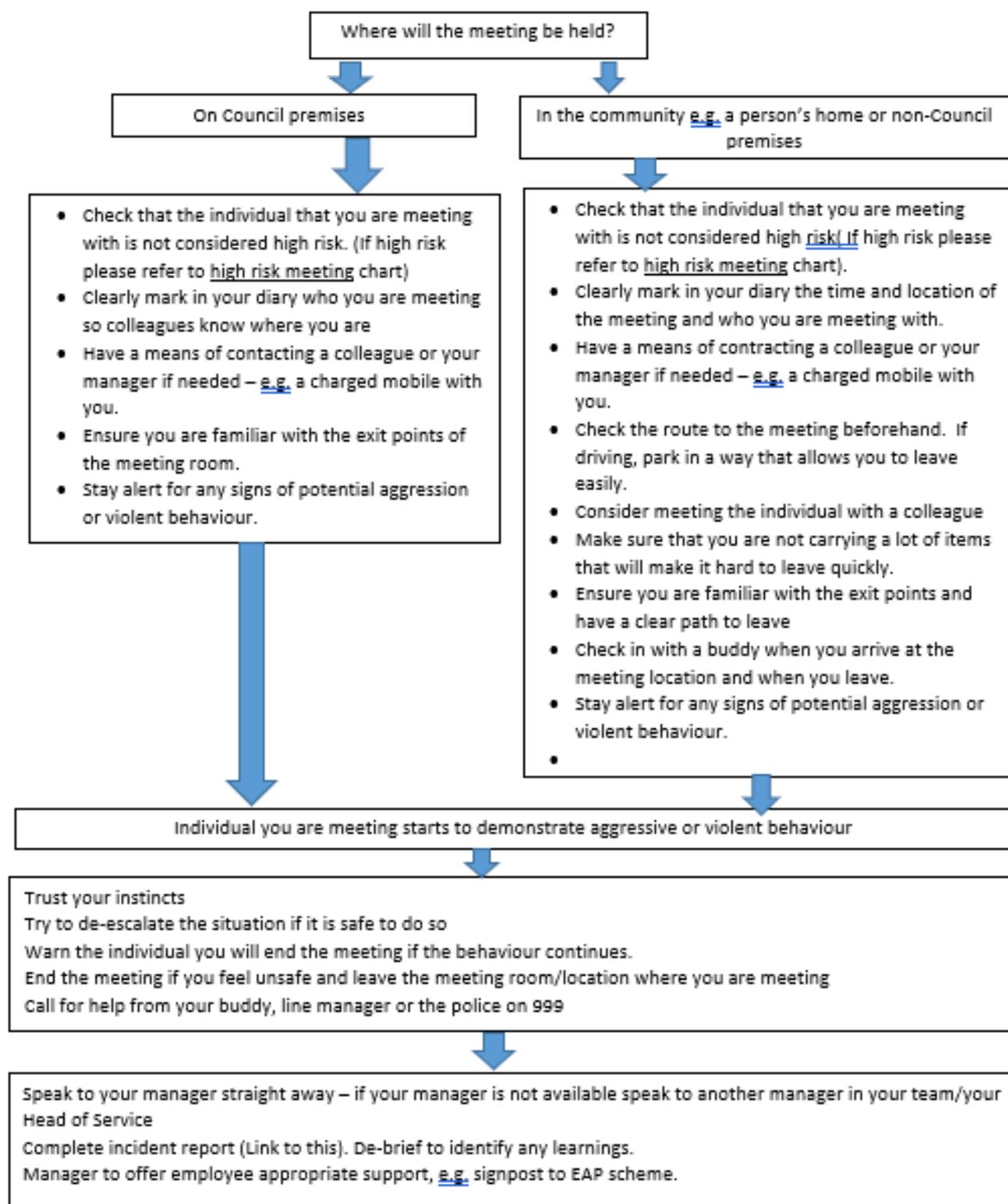
[Abusive Email](#)

[Abusive Phone Calls](#)

[Abuse via Social Media](#)

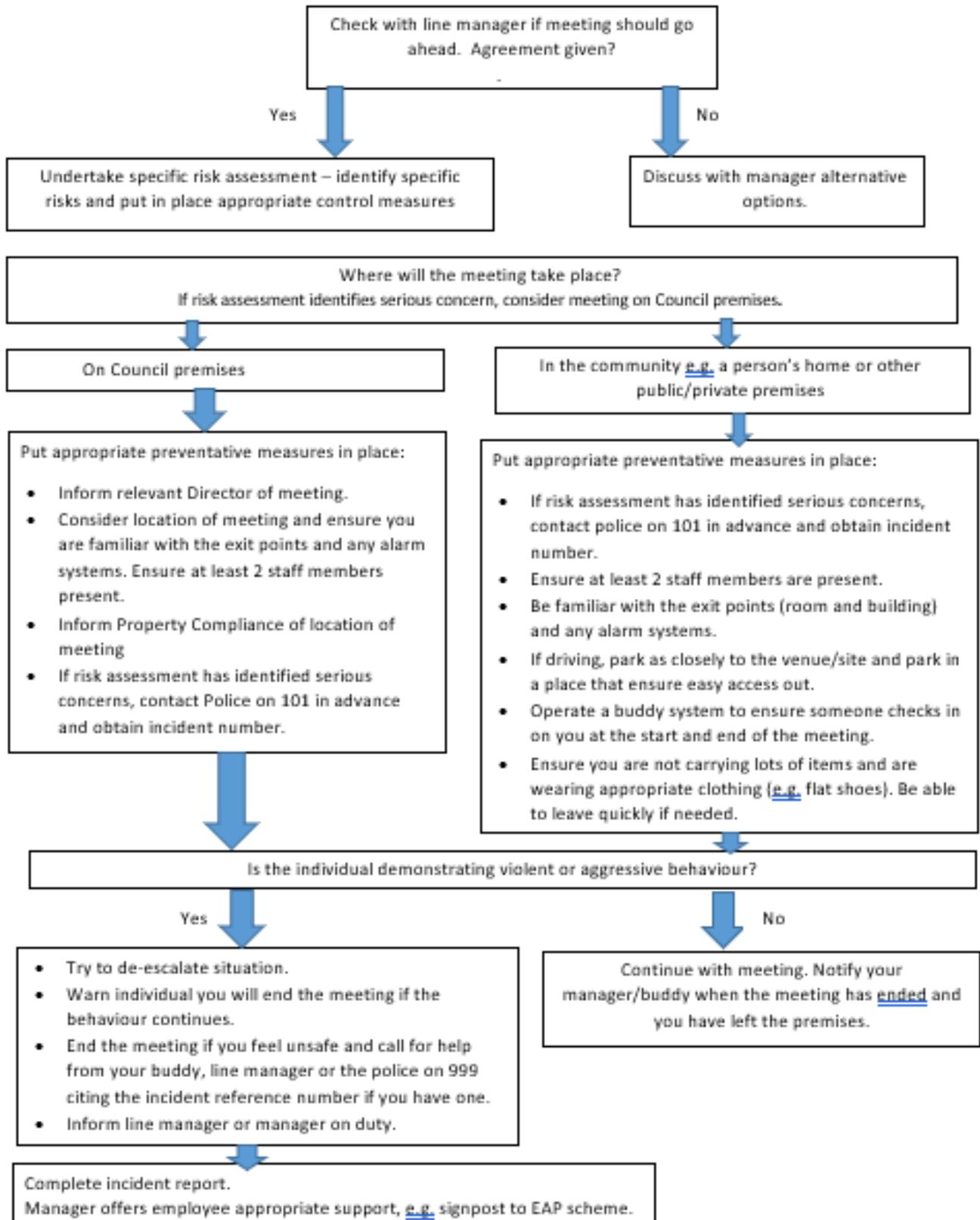
## Process for Planned Meeting or Visit

This process is for a meeting that is not considered high risk – for high-risk meetings see the process for high risk meetings process chart

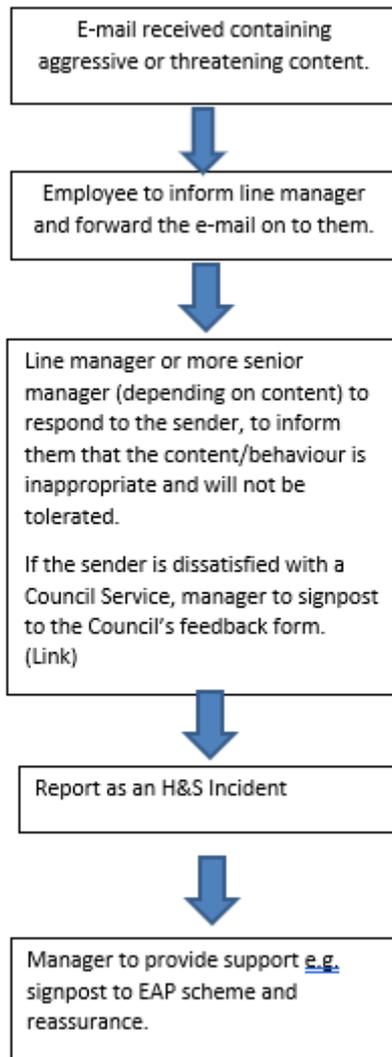


## Process for a high-risk meeting

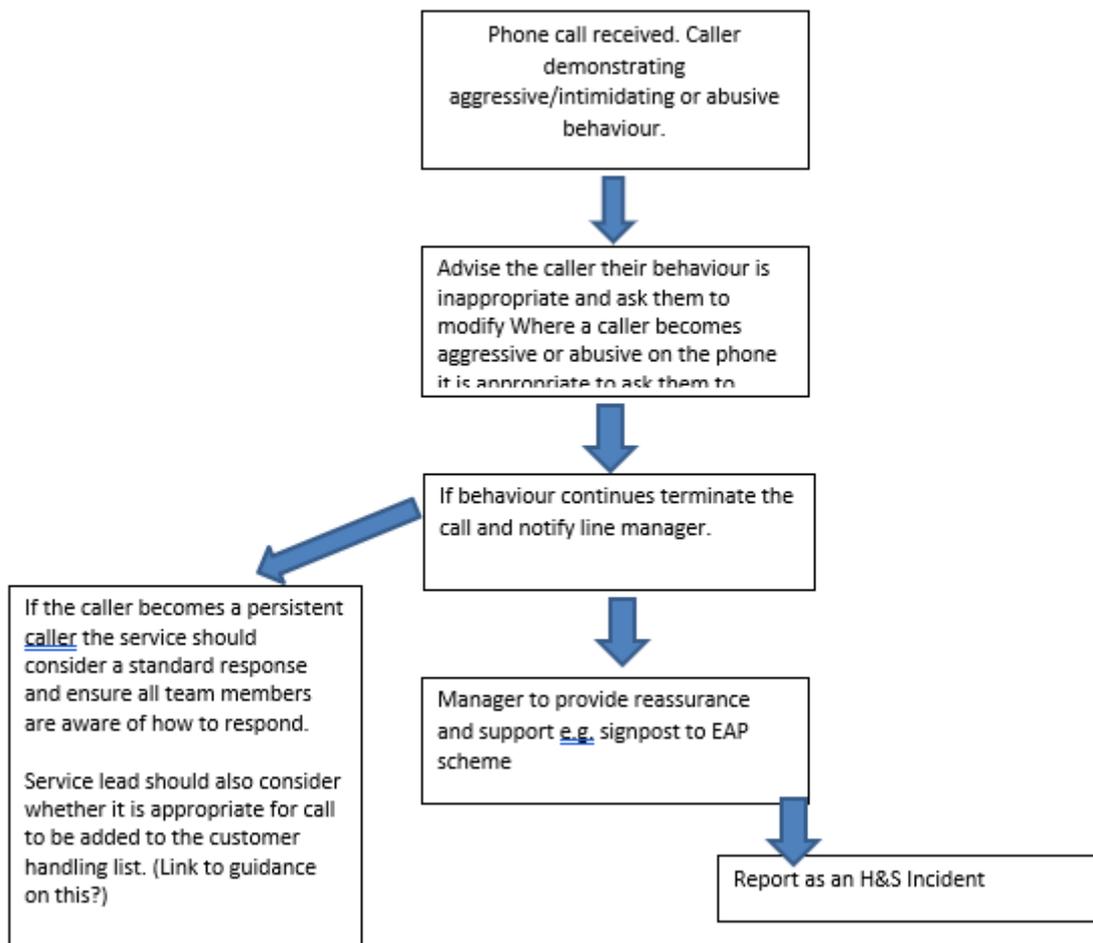
*Meeting with individuals identified as high risk, e.g. where there is a known history of violence or aggression) or where it is anticipated an individual may become aggressive due to the nature/purpose of the meeting*



## Responding to an aggressive/threatening e-mail



## Responding to an abusive phone call



### 1. Unacceptable Behaviours

Work related violence is any incident where you are abused, threatened, intimidated or assaulted while at work or in connection with your work. You should not experience any of the following types of behaviour:

- offensive language or gestures directed towards you in person or on the phone
- verbal abuse or aggression
- sexual harassment
- threats made towards you or others
- physical assault
- discriminatory language
- receiving messages that are offensive or threatening – by email, letter or via social media
- intentional damage to your property

These behaviours are not something that you should expect to experience at work and you are not expected to tolerate them.

### 2. Interaction with Council employees and elected members

The standards of behaviours expected from colleagues and elected members are defined in our [Respect@Work policy and Code of Conduct for staff, and the Members Code of Conduct](#). If you experience unacceptable behaviour from a Council employee or elected member the Respect@Work policy outlines how you can address this.

### 3. Interaction with customers

Our customer service charter outlines what the public can expect from us and our expectations of the public in our interactions. We expect people to treat our staff with courtesy and respect. The customer service charter states that we will not tolerate the use of physical or verbal abuse in any form.

Our customer handling policy outlines what we do in circumstances where customers may be pursuing complaints, and other service-related issues, in ways that could be considered to be unreasonable. The full [customer handling policy](#) is published on our external website. Unreasonable behaviours include:

- Behaving in a way that appears to be deliberately targeted over a significant period of time at one or more members of staff.
- Acting inappropriately towards Council staff such as inappropriate use of language, aggression or violence.
- Refusing to leave Council premises when asked to do so following the use of inappropriate language or behaviour.

If staff or customers are at risk we will call the police. When a customer is regularly displaying unreasonable and/or persistent behaviour the Council will write to tell them why we find the behaviour unacceptable and ask them to modify their behaviour. In some cases a decision may be taken to restrict an individual's contact with the Council. Examples of actions that we may take include only meeting with the customer in the presence of a witness, at Council premises and by appointment only. Full details are given in the [Customer Handling Policy](#)

### 4. Preventative measures

#### Policies

The following policies give information about how we protect you when undertaking different types of activities.

- [Lone working guidance](#) and associated [lone working risk assessments](#)
- [Customer Handling Policy](#)
- [Respect@Work](#) (applies to interaction between employees and also gives guidance on situations involving third parties such as elected members and contractors)

Managers are responsible for ensuring that all team members are aware of these policies and how they apply in their area of work.

### Risk assessments

Services must have risk assessments in place that consider whether there is potential for employees to experience violence and aggression in their role. These will define the appropriate control measures that will be followed. These measures should be documented so that employees understand what they need to do and can refer back to them. All team members have a responsibility to work in accordance with the risk assessment.

### Local protocols

Teams must have local protocols and safe systems of work that cover the specific types of activity undertaken in their team/roles. These should cover how to minimise the risk of violence and aggression and outline what to do if there is an incident. Managers are responsible for ensuring that team members understand and comply with these.

For example

- Pupil Referral Unit will have documented processes that would apply if a pupil is violent towards a member of staff.
- A Supervised Contact Officer will have a protocol to follow in the event of an incident.
- A Parking Enforcement Officer will have a protocol to follow if there is an incident involving a member of the public.

Managers must ensure that team protocols and safe systems of work are reviewed regularly and kept up to date. This is particularly important if there has been an incident that has highlighted any gaps in the local procedures or if working practices have changed.

### Induction

Managers must ensure that all new members of the team, as part of their induction, are aware of the risk assessments that are in place for their area of work and understand what measures are in place to minimise the risk of violence and aggression. Managers must ensure that all employees understand what they need to do to stay safe and explain what to do if a person becomes violent or aggressive. If a new employee will undertake any lone working their induction should explain the lone working procedures.

### Handling Challenging Customers Training

We have a wide range of teams that due to the nature of their work regularly have interactions with members of the public who may be upset or angry. For example:

- Teams in P&E undertaking enforcement visits.
- School admissions teams who are dealing with parents challenging school allocation decisions.
- Contact centre employees who are dealing with people that are unsatisfied about the service that they have received.
- Front line social workers who are dealing with people and families in challenging situations.

We will ensure that employees that have training on how to handle challenging customers so that they are equipped to deal with difficult interactions. Training will help you to identify when a situation is becoming difficult and equip you with a range of skills to defuse and de-escalate these

situations. This training also looks at ways of building personal resilience and is particularly important for people who are new to a role or have less work experience.

### Lone working and Personal Safety Training

All team members must undertake appropriate training for activities that they will undertake – e.g. if a role involves any lone working the employee must attend lone working training (Personal Safety and Lone Working for Managers, Personal Safety and Lone Working for Practitioners), and physical intervention training. This needs to be done before undertaking the relevant activity. Employees should also undertake refresher training to keep their knowledge up to date and to remind them of the key considerations.

In a wide range of roles individuals should undertake both handling challenging customers training and personal safety training.

It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure that the requirement for this training is identified and carried out.

### Solo Protect Devices

A lone worker safety device is a discreet way to alert an emergency contact or the emergency services of an incident. We currently have a contract with 1st Reaction Security to apply a device called a SoloProtect ID. By pushing a button this will make an audio call to an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) – linking a lone worker with 24/7 support if they experience verbal abuse or physical aggression. For more information about getting your team set up with these devices contact [Richard Panter](#). Teams using SoloProtect devices should ensure that they always keep them fully charged so that they are ready to use at short notice.

### Recording Information about high risk individuals

It is important that we have accurate information about whether an individual is considered to be potentially high risk. In some teams e.g. the Integrated Front Door team this information might be provided by the police, health, probation or education services. Where a member of the team has experienced difficulties with a service user this should be documented in a way that other team members can access before any future interactions (e.g. using the Liquid Logic system or the services record keeping system and in case notes). It is important that team members check this information routinely prior to a meeting or visit.

## **5. Preparing to meet a high-risk individual**

Before meeting someone you should check if they are known to be a high-risk individual. Your team should record information about potentially high risk individuals. Case notes should detail whether a person has previously behaved in a violent or aggressive way. In addition, you may anticipate aggressive behaviour if you are meeting a person for the first time to discuss something contentious or difficult e.g. visiting a landowner to address non-compliance with regulations.

Speak to your manager - You must speak to your manager as soon as you can about any situation where you consider that there is the potential for a challenging situation to arise. Under no circumstances should you attend any such meeting or site visit unless your manager has agreed that you should attend and appropriate precautions have been put in place. You must not attend a meeting, a home visit or a site visit alone where there is the possibility of any such violence or aggression towards you.

Undertake a specific risk assessment - Your manager will discuss the situation with you and agree what measures are needed to protect you and others. The specific risks need to be considered and appropriate control measures put in place for the meeting. These need to be documented in a specific risk assessment. Examples of protective measure include:

- Where possible hold the meeting on Council premises and in a room with fixed furniture and a panic button (property compliance can advise which rooms are available).
- Two employees should attend the meeting/undertaking a visit to avoid lone working with a high-risk individual.
- For meetings held on CCC premises arrangements should be put in place to closely monitor the individual joining and leaving the meeting either by phone call or in person.
- Consider how you will exit the meeting room.
- For visits off site consider how you can quickly and safely exit a person's home or the site.
- For visits off site operate a buddy system where an employee checks in with a colleague or their manager at the beginning and end of a meeting or a visit.
- Ensure that you are not carrying a lot of items that would make it more difficult to leave a situation quickly.
- Park as close as possible to a site and in a way that will allow you to leave easily.

This specific risk assessment is in addition to general risk assessments that are in place in your team for meeting members of the public/service users i.e. the risk assessment needs to be tailored to the specific interaction and individual. Your manager must review the risk assessment prior to the meeting or activity.

Alert the relevant people - In all instances where you are meeting a high-risk individual on Council premises you must:

- Alert property compliance in advance so that they can put in place appropriate security arrangements.
- Alert the relevant Director to the situation.
- Inform the police - if the risk assessment identifies serious concern your manager should contact Cambridgeshire Police (by calling 101 or online) before the meeting and advise them of the potential for violence. The Police Service Unit will record details of the situation and give you an incident number.

Brief others - Your managers must brief other employees who may be present when a high-risk meeting takes place (e.g. administrative staff, reception, Hall Keepers etc.) to ensure they are alert to the potential for an incident. You must agree with these people what they should do in the event of an incident.

If you are using a room with a panic button you need to:

- Agree in advance who the panic button alert will go through to.
- Ensure that the emergency contact person is going to be there for the full duration of the meeting.
- Decide in advance what they need to do if the panic button is pressed e.g. call security or call the police.
- Give the emergency contact the incident reference number previously provided so that this can be provided to the police.

Calling the police - If an individual threatens violence or becomes violent towards anyone, you or your emergency contact should call the Police (by calling 999) and quote the Incident number previously provided. This will ensure that the Police officers responding to the emergency call will be fully aware of the background before they arrive.

### **6. During a meeting or visit – stay alert**

During a meeting or site visit you should look out for any warning signs that something is not right - watch a person's body language, gesticulating, their tone of voice, raising their voice or shouting, standing up or pacing, standing over you or getting close to you, making physical gestures such as banging on the table, trying to touch you or hurt you. You should trust your instincts if something is making you feel unsafe and you must act.

### 7. What to do if an incident occurs

What to do if someone starts to become aggressive and looks like they may become violent:

- Try to de-escalate the situation if possible.
- Warn the individual that they need to moderate their behaviour or you will need to end the discussion.
- If you feel unsafe - leave the meeting.
- Call for help – by pressing the panic button, calling your buddy/emergency contact or calling the police.

### 8. What to do if an unexpected incident occurs

An employee may unexpectedly encounter threatening or violent behaviour from a member of the public. For example, a person may come into a library and behave in a threatening way towards staff. Teams should have a risk assessment in place that outlines what to do in this situation. This is likely to include the following types of actions:

- Alert any colleagues present to the situation.
- Ask the person to leave the building or remove yourself from the situation.
- Ask other members of the public to move to a safe area.
- Call the police.

### 9. Reporting an incident

Tell your manager straight away what has happened. If your manager is not available call another manager in the team or your Head of Service. Your manager will record the details of what has happened and report the incidents using our [incident reporting system](#).

In addition to reporting the incident you should also keep a local record and/or case notes of what has happened for future reference. These will alert your colleague to an individual's past behaviour and will alert them to the potential for violence so that they can put in place appropriate control measures. Where appropriate you should ask for an individual to be added to the Council's Customer handling list.

In accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), all incidents involving physical violence against employees that cause major injury or absence from work for more than seven days will be recorded and reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The Health and Safety team is responsible for doing this based on information provided from the employee/manager.

### 10. Investigating an incident

Following an incident report a detailed investigation will be undertaken by the line manager with assistance from health and safety. This is likely to involve the following steps:

- Obtain factual written statements from any witnesses – these should include the date and time of the incident.
- Ensure that statements contain the names and addresses of witnesses.
- Ask witnesses to sign and date their statement.

- If an implement was used it should be securely retained if this can be done safely.
- Inform your Head of Service of the incident and the details of the investigation and follow up actions.
- Retain written records for future reference.

### 11. Reporting to the police

In the event of a police investigation managers will provide full assistance to help with their enquiries. Without prejudice to the assaulted employee's right to report the incident personally to the Police, the Line Manager, in consultation with the victim, shall determine whether to inform the Police of the incident. There must be no delay in reporting incidents to the Police. If the Police decide not to act, then it shall be open to the Council to support the victim in pursuing an action against the perpetrator. The Line Manager will remain responsible for liaising with the appropriate Head of Service and Service Director regarding any action/outcomes following a referral to the police.

Following any incident, the manager should review and update the team/role risk assessments with what you have learnt. Where needed local procedures should be updated to put in place steps to prevent a similar incident from happening again.

### 12. Support following an incident

Experiencing aggression or violence at work is likely to be upsetting and an employee will in most cases need support from their manager following an incident. Exactly what you do will be guided by the circumstances and the wishes of the individual, however the following actions should all be considered:

- The line manager keeps in touch with the employee if they are off work following the incident.
- Support will be provided to other team members who have been affected or witnessed an incident.
- Make sure the employee and other team members know about the Employee Assistance Programme and how to access it – the EAP can provide access to Counselling if needed.
- Carefully plan the employee's return to work. This may involve a period where the employee undertakes modified duties on their return.
- Keep checking in with the individual via Our Conversations discussions which cover wellbeing every month.
- If the person has been injured at work they may be entitled to compensation. HR can provide guidance on the sick pay implications following an incident at work.

### 13. Support to deal with difficult interactions

It is very important that anyone who is having difficult interactions is well supported. This could involve having the opportunity to debrief with their line manager or a colleague following a difficult visit, meeting or phone call. While teams are increasing working in more agile ways they need to consider how this debriefing can continue to happen and this should be documented in your team charter.

Similarly the impact of having repeated difficult conversations can build up over time, individual interactions may not have been particularly challenging, however the cumulative effect of these interactions may have a negative impact on an employee. This needs to be recognised and addressed by line managers. Monthly discussions about wellbeing as part of the Our Conversations approach are a good opportunity to regularly discuss how a person is feeling in their role.

### 14. Discrimination

It is not acceptable for you to experience discrimination at work. For example racist, sexist, ableist, transphobic or homophobic comments or abuse. Discrimination will not be tolerated. If you experience discrimination you should end the conversation or visit. You should tell your manager what has happened straight away. If your manager is not available you should contact the most senior person on duty at the time. The incident should be reported via the incident reporting system. Where possible your manager will contact the individual to tell them that their behaviour is not acceptable and must not be repeated e.g. if the individual behaving in an unacceptable way is a service user your manager will speak to them or write to them to outline that discriminatory behaviour towards our employees will not be tolerated. Your manager will provide you with support following the incident. Your manager will keep checking in with you via Our Conversations discussions which cover wellbeing every month.

### 15. What to do if you receive an abusive or offensive email

If you receive an abusive or offensive email you should tell your manager straight away and forward the message to them. Your line manager should respond on your behalf, tell the individual that their email/their language is not appropriate and will not be tolerated. If the email is in relation to a service issue you should direct the employee to our feedback procedure. The incident should be reported via H&S Incident report system.

If you receive a threat of violence via email you should alert your manager to this straight away. What action is taken will depend on the nature of the message e.g. report the incident to the police, withdraw service from the individual. The incident should be reported via H&S Incident report system.

If you are receiving persistent and challenging contact from an individual via email you should forward the message to your line manager to respond on your behalf. Your manager will make contact with the individual to make it clear that persistent contact is not appropriate. You should consider whether it is appropriate to ask for a person to be added to the customer handling list. Your Head of Service should discuss this with customer services.

### 16. What to do if you receive an abusive phone call

When making work calls ensure that you use your work phone and not your personal phone, where necessary you can also choose to withhold your work phone number.

Where a caller becomes aggressive or abusive on the phone it is appropriate to ask them to moderate their language and tell them that you will terminate the call if they do not do this. Following an abusive phone call you should speak to your manager straight away for appropriate follow up action to be taken.

If you are receiving calls from a persistent caller you must alert your line manager and other members of your team. You should agree a standard response for any calls from the persistent caller e.g. forward their calls to the team manager. You should consider whether it is appropriate to ask for a person to be added to the customer handling list. Your Head of Service should discuss this with customer services.

### 17. Abuse on Social media

You are advised not to show your job title or employer on social media and to have a private profile – publishing this information can make it easier for members of the public to identify and contact you. If you receive an abusive message via social media in relation to your role with the Council, you should inform your line manager and block the person that has contacted you. If the person that has

contacted you is a service user or customer your line manager will follow up with them directly to make it clear that their message is not appropriate and will not be tolerated.



## Appendix D

### Equality Impact Assessment – Screening Form

#### Section 1: Proposal details

<b>Service:</b> Human Resources	<b>Person undertaking the assessment:</b> Sarah Haig Pincay
<b>Policy being assessed:</b> Violence and Aggression at work guidance	<b>Job Title:</b> HR Policy Manager
	<b>Contact details:</b> Sarah.Haig@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk
<b>Date commenced:</b> 02/09/2021	<b>Date completed:</b>
<p><b>Key service delivery objectives</b></p> <p>The purpose of the violence and aggression at work guidance is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarise the steps to preventing violence and aggression at work and sign posting relevant training and policy information.</li> <li>• Detail what an employee should do if they experience violence and aggression at work</li> <li>• Outline the support that is available to employees if they have experienced violence and aggression at work.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Key service outcomes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on violence and aggression is summarised in a central guidance document so that it is easy to navigate/in a user-friendly format.</li> <li>• Employees are aware of how violence at work can be prevented</li> <li>• Appropriate risk assessments and control measures are in place to keep employees safe</li> <li>• Employees have the appropriate training in this area</li> <li>• There is a clear process to follow if an incident occurs</li> <li>• Employees are well supported following any incident</li> <li>• Processes are revisited following any incident so that they can be improved.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>What is the proposal?</b></p> <p>Summarise our approach to preventing and responding to violence and aggression at work in a central guidance document. This will cover the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defining unacceptable Behaviours</li> <li>• Outlining preventative measures</li> <li>• Detailing the steps to follow when preparing to meet a high-risk individual</li> <li>• Guidance that applies during a meeting or visit</li> <li>• What to do if an incident occurs (in a planned meeting or unexpectedly)</li> <li>• How to report an incident</li> <li>• Information on how incidents are investigated</li> <li>• Guidance on reporting to the police</li> <li>• How we support employees following an incident</li> <li>• Information on what an employee should do if they receive an abusive or offensive email, phone call or social media message.</li> </ul>	

**What information did you use to assess who would be affected by this proposal?**

Reviewed existing sources of guidance on violence and aggression in the work place e.g. lone working policy, customer handling policy.  
 Attending the personal safety training undertaken by the Health and Safety team.  
 Meeting with representatives of services where employees have experienced violence and aggression.  
 Input from property, health and safety and customer service colleagues.

**Are there any gaps in the information you used to assess who would be affected by this proposal?**

We are only aware of incidents of violence and aggression that has been reported via corporate incident reporting system. There are potentially incidents of violence and aggression that have been dealt with locally by line managers that are not recorded centrally. The incident reporting system does not capture if an incident is related to discrimination in a way that can be reported on (this detail would be in the notes of an incident).

**Who will be affected by this proposal?**

The violence at work guidance is relevant to all employees in the organisation particularly those that have contact with members of the public/service users/customers. The guidance is particularly relevant to employees that are dealing with challenging situations.

**Section 2: Identifying impacts on specific minority/disadvantaged groups**

Scope of this Equality Impact Assessment			
<i>Check box if group could foreseeably be at risk of negative impact from this proposal</i>			
Note *= protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010			
Age*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disability*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marriage and civil partnership*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Race*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief (including no belief)*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural isolation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty	<input type="checkbox"/>		

**Section 3: Explanation of 'no foreseeable risk' EIA screening**

Explain why this proposal will not have a foreseeable risk of negative impact for each group. Provide supporting evidence where appropriate. Where the same explanation applies to more than one group, state it in the 'Reasons' column for the first relevant group and put 'as per [first group name] above' to reduce duplication.

Characteristic / group of people	Explanation of why this proposal will not have a foreseeable risk of negative impact
1. Age	The violence at work guidance does not have a foreseeable negative impact on individuals due to their age.

<p>2. Disability</p>	<p>The violence at work guidance does not have a foreseeable negative impact on disabled individuals. The steps that are detailed in the guidance to prevent and respond to incidents of aggression and violence would apply in the same way to disabled employees as to non-disabled employees.</p> <p>There are situations where reasonable adjustments are required to aspects of a specific role for a disabled employee. These would be tailored to the specific nature of a person's disability, the requirements of the role and their individual circumstances. Consideration should be given as to how reasonable adjustments fit with team/role risk assessments including any control measures in place to prevent violence and aggression. If any control measure in the team/role risk assessment are not appropriate for a person with a disability this should be addressed on an individual basis.</p> <p>There is potential for an employee to receive abuse from a member of the public due to their disability. Information is given in the policy about how discrimination/abuse will be dealt with.</p> <p>Employees can use a screen reader to access the guidance document.</p>
<p>3. Gender Reassignment</p>	<p>The violence at work guidance does not have a foreseeable negative impact on transgender employees.</p> <p>There is potential for an employee to receive abuse from a member of the public because they are transgender – either in person, by phone/email or via social media. Information is given in the policy about how discrimination/abuse will be dealt with including where this has been received through online channels.</p>
<p>4. Marriage and Civil Partnership</p>	<p>The violence at work guidance does not have a foreseeable negative impact on individuals on the basis of their marriage/civil partnership status. The guidance is applicable to all employee regardless of their marriage/civil partnership status.</p> <p>It is not anticipated that marriage/civil partnership status would increase the likelihood of a person experiencing violence or aggression at work or mean that measures that are outlined in the risk assessments need to be amended.</p>
<p>5. Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p>The violence at work guidance does not have a foreseeable negative impact on individuals on the basis of being pregnant or on maternity leave.</p> <p>Any employee that is pregnant will have a maternity risk assessment undertaken. This needs to consider if the measures that are in place to prevent violence and aggression are appropriate/workable for a pregnant employee. If any control measure in the risk assessment for the role are not appropriate for a person with a disability this should be addressed on an individual basis via the maternity risk assessment.</p>
<p>6. Race</p>	<p>The violence at work guidance does not have a foreseeable negative impact on individuals on the basis of race.</p> <p>There is potential for an employee to receive racist abuse from a member of the public in person, via phone, email or social media. Information is given in the policy about how discrimination/abuse will be dealt with including where this has been received through online channels.</p>

<p>7. Religion or Belief (including no belief)</p>	<p>The violence at work guidance does not have a foreseeable negative impact on individuals based on their religion or belief.</p> <p>There is potential for an employee to receive abuse from a member of the public due to their religion or belief particularly where a person religion or belief is visible via observing religious practices norms of dress during the working day. This may be in person, via phone, email or social media. Information is given in the policy about how discrimination/abuse will be dealt with including where this has been received through online channels.</p>
<p>8. Sex</p>	<p>The violence at work guidance does not have a foreseeable negative impact on individuals based on their gender.</p> <p>There is potential for an employee to receive abuse from a member of the public due to their gender. This may be in person, via phone, email or social media. Information is given in the policy about how discrimination/abuse will be dealt with including where this has been received through online channels.</p> <p>The policy uses gender neutral language throughout.</p>
<p>9. Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>The violence at work guidance does not have a foreseeable negative impact on individuals based on their sexual orientation.</p> <p>There is potential for an employee to receive homophobic abuse from a member of the public. This may be in person, via phone, email or social media. Information is given in the policy about how discrimination/abuse will be dealt with including where this has been received through online channels.</p>
<p>10. Rural Isolation</p>	<p>An employee working in a rural area may be more vulnerable to violence and aggression due to the absence of others nearby and are further from assistance if an incident occurs e.g. an employee visiting an isolated farm location where there are not other people around, an employee travelling on rural roads will not be able to leave a problematic situation as easily and response time from the police are likely to be longer etc. The guidance directs teams to consider these factors via the risk assessment process and put in place appropriate control measures e.g. carry out joint visits, putting in place a buddy systems to check in and out when undertaking a site/home visit, use of technology such as solo protect devices, planning journeys etc.</p>
<p>11. Poverty</p>	<p>The policy applies to employees across the organisations pay grades. We have roles across the salary spectrum that have significant contact with members of the public e.g. reablement workers undertaking home visits and principle social workers dealing with case work to leadership roles interacting with the public at a more strategic level. The nature of any risk of experiencing violence and aggression will vary depending on their job role. The guidance directs teams to put in place control measures that are role specific.</p> <p>Some employees on lower grades do not routinely access our computer network/Camweb – in these situations we are reliant on managers to communicate the messages outlined in the violence and aggression guidance.</p>

**Other relevant information**
**Communication and application**

How well the policy supports employees is dependent on them knowing that the policy exists and the actions within the guidance being routinely put into practice. A Camweb page has been designed that signposts employees to this guidance (and the routes to raise other types of concerns).

Communication will also be done to highlight this guidance via Friday Focus, the HR Newsletter and briefings to management teams. Where employees do not have IT access, we are reliant on managers to disseminate this information to their team members and ensuring that it is put into practice.

**Section 4: Approval**

*Note: if there is no information available to assess impact, this means either information should be sought so this screening tool can be completed, or information should be gathered during a full EIA.*

I confirm that I have assessed that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

<b>Name of person who completed this EIA:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Job title:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

I have reviewed this Equality Impact Assessment – Screening Form, and I agree that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Job title:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	



## Raising Concerns at Work

It is important that you tell us about any issues and concerns that you have at work. This allows us to deal with them promptly and thoroughly. If something doesn't feel right, trust your instincts and speak up. The information below details different ways that you can do this.

