



Working Together with Respect Policy

1. Purpose

We're committed to providing a service where all customers feel heard, understood and respected. There are lots of reasons you might need to get in touch with us. Sometimes, that might be because something's gone wrong, and emotions may be high. This policy makes sure we're balancing supporting our customers and protecting our colleagues.

This policy applies to every form of contacting us, whether that's on the phone, via email, or a face-to-face conversation with our colleagues in the field.

2. Our principles and commitment to you

We'll always treat you fairly, with dignity and respect. We ask for the same in return so that we can work to resolve issues safely and effectively.

When you contact us, we always aim to:

- Listen and take concerns seriously
- Be clear and honest
- Treat you with respect
- Work to resolve issues as quickly as possible

3. Understanding customer behaviour

We understand that frustration, concern or distress can affect how people communicate, and our teams are trained to respond with empathy and patience. However, there are times when behaviour towards colleagues becomes abusive, threatening or intimidating, and that isn't acceptable.

4. When behaviour crosses the line

This includes (but isn't limited to):

- Verbal abuse, offensive or discriminatory language
- Threats, intimidation or harassment
- Physical aggression or violence
- Personal accusations or false allegations against staff
- Repeated unreasonable demands or changing complaints
- Repeated contact about the same concern after we've given a full and final response

5. Managing conversations

If a conversation becomes inappropriate, our colleagues will:

- Clearly explain the concern
- Ask for the behaviour to stop

If it continues, our colleagues will end the interaction to protect their own wellbeing. For example, if you're talking to us on the phone, our colleagues will end the call. If you're talking to us face-to-face, we support our teams in walking away from a situation where they feel unsafe.

6. In more serious situations

In more serious or repeated cases, we may:

- Limit contact to specific channels or times
- Restrict communication to writing only
- Provide you with a single point of contact for any further communication
- Work through a third party
- Involve police or authorities where necessary

7. Fair use of our service

We aim to provide a fair and efficient service to all customers. Sometimes, we may need to manage contact if someone repeatedly gets in touch about the same issue.

Where we feel we've dealt with and resolved your issue fully, and we've previously signposted you to other organisations that might be able to help, our teams won't spend any more time dealing with that issue and will ask you to stop contacting us about it.

By continuing to contact us about the same issue, it takes resources away from customers who need our support.

8. How we'll use this policy

If we do need to apply any restrictions to how you communicate with us, we'll let you know what these are and the reasons for them. Any decisions like this will follow internal processes and will be approved by a line manager.