

**Unacceptable Behaviour & Withdrawal of Service Policy & Procedure**

**Unacceptable Behaviour**

**How we handle unacceptable behaviour**

We understand your situation could be stressful and you might be frustrated - but our staff have the right to do their jobs without being treated badly.

**Check what behaviour is unacceptable**

We won’t accept aggressive behaviour while helping you, for example:

• swearing

• abusive language

• discrimination like racism, sexism or homophobia

• being violent or threatening violence

We’ll also tell you if you’re taking up an unfair amount of time as this could stop us helping other people. For example, if you:

• keep demanding things in a short amount of time

• ask to speak to a specific member of staff when it’s not possible, or contact lots of staff to try and get a different outcome

• keep changing issues or raising unrelated ones

• demand help for something outside our advice areas

• keep raising the same issue when we’ve already helped you or we can’t help more

• ask for sensitive or confidential information we aren’t allowed to share

• make lots of complaints without giving us the chance to resolve them, or make an unreasonable number of data protection rights requests

**What we’ll do if your behaviour is unacceptable**

We’ll give you a chance to change your behaviour, but if you continue we might:

• end the conversation

• limit how much time we spend on the phone with you

• stop helping you face to face and only help you by phone and email

• not reply to all your communications

• send letters and documents back to you

• only help you with certain issues

**In very serious situations we might:**

• stop helping you completely

• call the police

**If we decide to stop helping you**

If we decide to stop helping you it means you can’t access Age UK Enfield services- so we might not respond to any contact from you.

We’ll give you a chance to change your behaviour before we stop helping you - unless your behaviour threatens the safety of our staff or other people.

We’ll always try to tell you why we’ve stopped helping you.

**If you think our decision is unfair**

If Age UK Enfield decides to stop helping you, you can appeal to the Chair of Trustees of Age UK Enfield.



**Withdrawal of Service**

Withdrawing service from a client is one the actions we may take under our Unacceptable Behaviour policy. We will consider this action when:

• attempts to manage a client's behaviour have not been successful

or

• the behaviour displayed merits immediate withdrawal of service to reduce risk of harm to staff, volunteers or anyone in the office

**In some instances a client’s behaviour merits immediate withdrawal of service. Examples of this are:**

• violence or attempted violence towards staff, volunteers or anyone in office

• serious threats of violence such as bomb threats

• behaviour which you feel threatens the safety of staff or other people

• deliberate damage to office property

If you’re not sure if immediate withdrawal of service is appropriate, ask your appropriate manager to review the situation and come to a decision.

Withdrawal of service should also be issued when a client has been given warnings about their behaviour and has failed to change. For example:

• the client fails to provide the required information, for example someone who does not disclose all of their debts, or continually changes the information they give to the office

• you suspect or know that the client is attempting to make a fraudulent benefit or other claim

• you feel that the organisation can't offer the client any further assistance on a particular issue, either because they have exhausted all available sources of advice, the client is proving too demanding on time and resources, or the advice or support required is beyond the expertise or remit of the Age UK Enfield

• the client regularly refuses to follow the advice given by the office

• the client regularly changes their mind about what they want to do

• the client is persistently unreasonable, abusive or discriminatory

**Procedure**

**1**. (if not immediate withdrawal), make sure you've given the client clear warnings about their behaviours and explained why they could result in withdrawal of service if they do not change

**2**. The decision to withdraw service must be made by the Chief Executive Officer or equivalent, and the Chair informed of this decision

**3**. (if withdrawing on the basis that the organisation is unable to help the client) you must be satisfied that all relevant local agencies have been approached as part of the advice process, or that the client has been correctly signposted

**4**. You should keep a written record of the decision and central list of clients who have had service withdrawn and update the client's case record

**5**. The decision should be communicated to the client in writing by the Chief Executive Officer. The correspondence should include:

• why the decision has been made and what behaviours lead to the withdrawal

• reminders of any previous warnings given

• (if you have more than one office) the client must be made aware they won't be able to seek advice from any offices within your organisation

• how the client can appeal the decision along with contact details

• (if applicable) client signposted to other relevant advice agencies

**You can use the withdrawal of service correspondence template** **to record the information (please ask your Manager for the template ).**

If you don’t have an email or home address for a client, informing them of withdrawal of service may need to happen verbally. If the client has displayed a behaviour which has threatened the safety of others, it may not be appropriate to proactively contact them, but you should let them know if they attempt access the service again.

Make sure all staff are aware of the withdrawal of service and agree what will be communicated to the client if they attempt to access the service again.

If the client asks for details of how to appeal the decision these should be provided even if they have been previously.

Be mindful that clients sometimes publish copies of withdrawal of service correspondence on social media so make sure you're satisfied the letter is fair, balanced and accurate. All letters are to be agreed and sent by the Chief Executive Officer

**Making the decision**

You must ensure that you have solid reasoning for withdrawing service and be satisfied that any decision does not conflict with other policies or regulatory responsibilities. For example, it is not acceptable to withdraw service purely on the basis that the client is deemed ‘difficult' or has mental health issues. You should also not exclude a client just because they have made a complaint or claim; although if there is an ongoing complaint or claim this does not prevent you from withdrawing service.

If the behaviour does not merit immediate withdrawal of service, it's good to discuss the matter with multiple senior colleagues or at trustee board meetings to ensure a decision is fair and balanced.

You may want to consider withdrawing certain aspects of the service if this more appropriate. For example limit client contact to letter or email only and withdraw the option of phone or face to face access.

**Appeal**

If a client appeals the withdrawal of service, the Chair of Trustees (or another designated trustee) should review the decision and check that it was arrived at properly and is reasonable in the circumstances. It may be appropriate to review or revoke a withdrawal of service if a client's behaviour has changed or a significant amount of time has passed and you feel it's appropriate to give them another chance.