# Citizens Advice Richmond- How we handle unacceptable behaviour

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| **Source** | **CITA model policy** |
| **Approved by trustee board** | December 2024 |
| **Next review date** | December 2025 |

**Unacceptable Client Behaviour Policy**

**Purpose:**

To cultivate a safe and respectful environment for both staff and clients at our organisation. We are committed to providing assistance to everyone in need, but we also uphold the right for our staff to work without fear of abuse or harassment.

**Unacceptable Behaviours:**

The following Behaviours will not be tolerated under any circumstances:

* **Verbal Abuse:** Swearing, using abusive or discriminatory language (racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.), shouting, or making persistent interruptions.
* **Threats and Violence:** Threatening or engaging in violent Behaviour towards staff or other clients, including intimidating body language or gestures.
* **Unreasonable Demands:** Making excessive demands on staff time, repeatedly requesting to speak to a specific person when it's not feasible or contacting multiple staff to obtain a different outcome.
* **Unacceptable Online Behaviour:** Engaging in any of the above behaviours in emails, or social media interactions.

**Consequences of Unacceptable Behaviour:**

If a client engages in unacceptable behaviour, the following actions may be taken:

1. **Verbal Warning:** The client will be given a clear verbal warning to cease the unacceptable Behaviour.
2. **Written Warning:** If the behaviour continues, a formal written warning will be issued, outlining the potential consequences of further unacceptable Behaviour.
3. **Temporary Suspension of Services:** In cases where the Behaviour persists or is particularly severe, services may be suspended for a specified period.
4. **Permanent Suspension of Services:** In severe cases, or if unacceptable behaviour continues despite warnings and temporary suspension, services may be permanently suspended.
5. **Police Involvement:** If behaviour poses a threat to the safety of staff or others, the police may be contacted.

**Zero-tolerance policy:**

We operate a zero-tolerance policy for extreme behaviours, such as physical violence or threats, which may result in immediate permanent suspension.

**De-escalation & Support:**

* Staff will be trained in de-escalation techniques to manage difficult situations and prevent escalation.
* We recognize that some clients may exhibit challenging behaviour due to underlying vulnerabilities. We are committed to providing reasonable adjustments and referrals to support services where appropriate.

**Appeal Process:**

If a client believes the decision to suspend services is unfair, they may appeal in writing to the CEO at Citizens Advice Richmond, 94-102 High Street, Hampton TW12 1NY, or via the complaints form on our website [Complaints – Citizens Advice Richmond](https://www.citizensadvicerichmond.org/contact-us/complaints/)

**Feedback:**

We will inform clients of the reasons for any service suspension and give them an opportunity to modify their Behaviour before taking such action, unless their behaviour poses an immediate threat to safety.

We welcome feedback from clients on their experience, even if services have been suspended. This feedback will help us improve our service delivery and conflict resolution processes.