

Position statement

Managing inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour

We are committed to providing a professional and fair service to everyone and our service charter explains what customers, stakeholders, and the people that we engage with can expect from us. In return we ask that everyone respects our staff, volunteers, partners, and contractors.

We do not have to tolerate inappropriate, unacceptable, threatening, bullying, discriminatory, or abusive behaviour towards our staff, volunteers, partners, or contractors. Under these circumstances our staff and volunteers are not required or obliged to engage further with anyone either face-to-face, over the phone or in correspondence.

About this position statement

We have clearly explained how we will deal with inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour: professionally, consistently, and fairly. It lets our staff, volunteers, and the people we interact with know what we consider inappropriate or unacceptable and outlines the steps and actions we may take to deal with such behaviour.

It is for dealing with external situations. Internal situations involving Forestry England staff and volunteers that are covered under our HR policies and procedures.

What behaviour is inappropriate or unacceptable?

For the purpose of this statement, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour is defined as:

Behaviour or language (written, spoken or online) that we consider may cause staff, volunteers, partners, or contractors to feel intimidated, afraid, offended, threatened, or abused.

Examples of this include, but are not limited to:

- communication that we consider to be vexatious, unreasonably demanding, or unreasonably persistent in its frequency or content. We include face-to-face, written/email, telephone, SMS (text message), online or through social media.
- inflammatory/derogatory statements, remarks of a discriminatory nature and malicious, unsubstantiated allegations.
- violent behaviour: physical contact made in an aggressive or threatening manner. This includes pushing; jostling; kicking; punching; spitting; physical restraint; sexual assault; and using weapons.

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- threatening behaviour: words or actions that cause a person to be concerned for their safety, the safety of other people, or the safety of their property. This includes threats or gestures; aggressive stance; sexually explicit or threatening language or body language; abusive phone calls; recording our meetings and conversations; on-line bullying; use of aggressive dogs and obstruction or aggressive use of vehicles.
- abusive behaviour - words or actions that cause a person to feel harassed, intimidated, or distressed. This includes offensive gestures; excessive rudeness; aggressive stance; goading; abusive, provocative, or obscene language and inappropriate use of social media.
- wilful damage to property - this can belong to Forestry England, its employees, contractors, other visitors or volunteers. This includes buildings; fixtures; fittings; infrastructure; equipment and vehicles.

Action we will take

We are very clear about inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour: we will not tolerate it inside our organisation, and we will not tolerate it against our staff, volunteers, partners, or contractors from visitors outside our organisation. We will support our staff, volunteers, partners, or contractors if they feel an immediate threat to their personal security or safety.

If we feel that an individual's behaviour is inappropriate or unacceptable, where possible we will take the following steps:

Step 1	Identify	Behaviour is openly recognised as inappropriate or unacceptable. We will ask the person to modify their behaviour and explain why. If the behaviour continues staff and volunteers are advised to remove themselves from the situation or terminate the contact or call.
Step 2	Report	Behaviour reported internally. The staff member or volunteer will inform their line manager about the situation and the incident will be recorded on Forestry England systems.
Step 3	Review	Incident investigated. The line manager will investigate the situation and decide what action to take. Where relevant, we will keep those involved informed. In some instances, we may need to escalate to the police, other authorities, or organisations, or take legal action.

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How to appeal

If you disagree with our decision that your behaviour was unacceptable, and to take action on that basis, you are entitled to make a complaint. Information on how to do this is available on our [website](#).