



Unacceptable Customer Behaviour

Unacceptable Customer Behaviour (UCB) is any incident that causes employees or has the potential to make employees feel upset, threatened, frightened or physically at risk and is directed at them because of their work in the Department. Employees should note that we should have a zero tolerance view of UCB.

Customers are expected to treat DWP people with courtesy and respect. This expectation is documented in the Child Maintenance Service welcome booklet and DWPs Customer Charter

Reducing Incidents of Unacceptable Behaviour

One of the most effective ways to manage the risk of unacceptable client behaviour is to prevent them happening in the first place.

Good customer service is an important factor in good health and safety practice when dealing with clients.

Delays, not keeping our promises, not returning calls, officious letters and communications, queues or refusals can all increase the risk of a violent incident - but these can be managed.

Most incidents do not 'just blow up out of nowhere'. Sometimes, the way that people are dealt with, the tone of letters, queues or desperation can all lead people to become angry or frustrated.

The aim is to:

- put the client at ease by explaining why the decision has been made
- tell the client what they can do if they don't agree with something
- maintain a controlled, friendly tone of voice even if the client responds negatively

Everyone who deals with the public, even occasionally, must have completed the necessary Keeping Safe training appropriate to their job.

Training provides the skills and knowledge to help anticipate and defuse potential incidents, avoid triggering a violent incident and help employees to keep safe during an incident.

The CMG / DWP has a duty of care to all colleagues and will identify clients who have displayed behaviour that is unacceptable using the [DWP Staff Protection List Search Tool](#). This will be visible to anyone who needs to contact the client. For more information on how to identify Unacceptable Customer Behaviour (UCB) refer to the [DWP Unacceptable Customer / Claimant Behaviour Portal](#).

This procedure describes how to record an instance of Unacceptable Customer Behaviour (UCB) shown by a client towards an employee of the Child Maintenance Group (CMG). If warranted, some instances could result in control measures being applied i.e. a potentially violent (PV) marker being added to the case or the client to enable CMG / DWP colleagues to handle clients appropriately during contact with them.

Unacceptable Customer Behaviour (UCB) is referred to as an instance throughout the procedure.

The process, in conjunction with the [DWP Unacceptable Customer / Claimant Behaviour Portal](#) will include identifying and reporting the UCB, determining if police involvement is required, setting a PV marker if needed and re-establishing the relationship in the future between the CMG and the client.

Unacceptable behaviour can include the following:


- Violence
- Verbal abuse (inc by telephone)
- Abuse of a discriminatory nature e.g., sex, race, disability, religion, age
- Threats, which are implied or otherwise
- Intimidation
- Sexual innuendo
- Harassment
- Unwelcome attention
- Attempted or actual assaults - spitting that makes contact with the body is classed as an assault
- Employees filmed, photographed or recorded in the workplace or working off-site, without their express consent
- Threats made in writing or via email
- Information about employees posted on social media e.g. face book

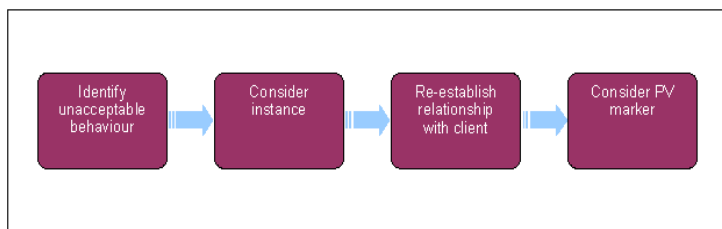
The list is not exhaustive. Any other incident that makes an employee feel uncomfortable, vulnerable or threatened must be reported. Incidents where the person's identity is not known should also be reported.

If a confrontation can be prevented from escalating by transferring the call to a team leader or a more experienced colleague then this should be considered.

An instance can be launched by a caseworker and approval is carried out by a Team Leader (TL) and Nominated Manager (NM). The action may be carried out by colleagues in applications, maintenance or enforcement services at any point in a case.

These instructions should be read in conjunction with the [DWP Unacceptable Customer / Claimant Behaviour Portal](#).


For more information refer to the Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance in conjunction with the [DWP Unacceptable Customer / Claimant Behaviour Portal](#). 




 When speaking to clients always use the new terminology - for more information refer to [Terminology Changes](#).

Identify Unacceptable Customer Behaviour (UCB)


Caseworker action

1. Unacceptable Customer Behaviour (UCB) is any incident that causes employees or has the potential to make employees feel upset, threatened, frightened or physically at risk and is directed at them because of their work in the Department. Employees should note that we should have a zero tolerance view of UCB. Consideration should thus be afforded to the levels of sensitivities and tolerance colleagues may have if they were experiencing the same behaviour. An incident of unacceptable customer behaviour (UCB) can be in the form of either written or verbal communication or during a face to face interview. When unacceptable behaviour is identified it must be reported as soon as possible and recorded on the system. For more information about unacceptable behaviour refer to the Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance in conjunction with the [DWP Unacceptable Customer / Claimant Behaviour Portal](#). 
2. Complete the [Incident Report Form](#), or refer to [How to create a new Third Party Referral Record](#) for guidance on reporting third party referrals. Once the form is complete select **Submit Your Report**, to save it in the Unacceptable Client Behaviour (UCB) database and and it will ask you for the LM email address – ensure this is correct as the link to the incident form will be emailed direct.

 Information may be received about an underlying risk in respect of a customer's behaviour but where no actual UCB incident involving DWP / CMG employees has occurred. There may have been an incident involving another organisation. Third party referrals can also be made customers themselves. These should be recorded on a [Third Party Referral form](#) and e-mailed to the Nominated Manager.

3. Create a service request (SR) to update the client information.
4. From the drop down lists select:
 - **Process = Special Case Management**
 - **Area = Client Unacceptable Behaviour**
 - **Sub Area = Record CUB Instance**
5. Update the case number and set the SR **Status** to **In Progress**. The system will generate an activity plan for you to follow.
6. Go to the Contact Summary and select the **Instances** view (if not shown, drill down on the client's surname, select the drop down option at the end of the tabs tool bar to view further tabs and select **Instances** from the list). Create a new instance, type **UCB** and record the details of the incident. Record the type of instance, the date the instance occurred, the name of the person affected by the instance and the person recording the instance.
7. If the incident is severe enough, consider police referral. Instances where a referral to the police should be made include, but are not limited to:
 - Physical assault, actual or threatened, on a CMG employee
 - Serious racially motivated attack or threat (as determined under the Racial and Ethnic Hatred Act 2006)
 - Stalking a CMG employee

Within the instance, record **Police Authorisation** as **Request Police Involvement** with an appropriate reason for doing so. See para 218 'The Law and Unacceptable Customer Behaviour' in the [DWP Unacceptable Customer / Claimant Behaviour Portal](#).

 Where the instance is linked or related to any previous instance recorded against the client, complete the **Related Instances** field.

8. Record the source of the information on the system (the person who has reported the incident e.g. the RP).
9. Record any relevant notes in the SR **Notes** tab and link the instance by selecting the instance from the **Instance Number**. Update the SR **Status** to **Pending Approval** and the **Sub Status** to **Pending Approval – TL**. Use the **ctrl** and **s** keys to save the SR. This action prompts the system to forward the SR to the TL for approval.
10. For further information on caseworker action when reporting unacceptable customer behaviour please see [DWP Incident Reporting - Staff Guidance](#).

Consider Instance

Team Leader action

11. The Team Leader (TL) will retrieve the SR in which the instance occurred and the details along with any supporting evidence. Once this information has been gathered the TL will confirm enough information has been received (this may include telephone calls). The TL will also assess the evidence and listen to any telephone conversations (if the UCB occurred during a telephone conversation).
12. The TL will check the Incident Report Form and complete all relevant sections of the form using the guidance in [Line Manager Process](#). They must add to the form views etc. about the incident after speaking to the member of staff. This action must be completed asap to ensure the NM makes the decision within 24 hours. The TL will ensure that caseworkers have sufficient time to complete the incident report form as well as, if appropriate, time away from phones to compose themselves following the UCB incident over the phone, (which could be using the emotional break aux code) and to discuss any additional support they require and offering [Employee Assistance Programme](#) information.
13. Once complete, save the information recorded.
14. The UCB Nominated Manager (NM) will make a UCB decision on application of control measures based on the caseworker and TL information on the incident report form. It is essential that all information is factual and correct. They will also decide if a written or oral warning is necessary
15. DWP H&S policy stipulates that staff should report any case of UCB. Staff should not be inhibited to report any case of UCB by following this departmental process - staff have the right to complete a UCB incident form if they experience UCB. It is the NM decision to determine if control measures are to be applied. There will be cases, due to circumstances (e.g. first incident where this is considered low risk and the decision will be to not apply controls), when the case will then be archived for future reference in the UCB database.

Nominated Manager action

16. Where the NM determines no further action is needed, the TL will update their inbox message within **My Activities** with **Rejected** and enter comments explaining the reason for rejection. The system automatically updates the SR **Status** to **In Progress** and the **Sub Status** to **Rejected**. The SR returns to the originating caseworker to be closed.
17. Where the NM determines that client behaviour was unacceptable, they will publish the control measure to the Staff Protection List (SPL). Any control measures will be visible to all staff using the [Staff Protection List Search Staff Protection List Search](#)
18. Where the customer behaviour has been determined unacceptable and further action is needed, on the approvals screen the TL updates the SR **Priority** to **High/Standard** and the **Status** to **Approved**. Work allocation returns the SR to the caseworker to progress.


Consider (UCB) Potentially Violent (PV) marker

Team Leader action

19. Once a decision is made to mark a client as UCB / PV, navigate to the **Instances** tab within the SR (if this is not shown within your tab display; drill down on the client's surname, select the drop down option at the end of the tabs tool bar to detail the tabs that are not displayed, then select **Instances** from this list). Drill down on the instance number and **tick** the check box in the **UCB Details** applet to ensure PV marker is set.

UCB/PV reviews must be carried out at least once every twelve months **by the NM**.






The PV review date defaults to one year from the day the client is marked as local PV but can be set to a shorter time period. This is a discretionary decision based on individuals judgement of the unacceptable behaviour e.g. if the instance is relatively minor, you may consider setting the review date for six months, rather than a year. NM UCB/PV reviews must be carried out at least once every twelve months.

 If the UCB was displayed by a third party, for example the client's partner, child, or anyone else living at the client's home (but not part of the case) select **Person Connected To Client**. This will then show that although the flag is on the client, the UCB was taken by another person.

20. After you have saved and closed the instance, complete the activities and manually close the SR by updating the **Status** to **Closed** and the **Sub Status** to **Completed**.
21. Send a confirmation email to your nominated officer once the flag has been set:
 - Plymouth - CM 2012 Scheme South West Potentially Violent SPOC
 - Belfast - New Case - STEPHEN.CAMPBELL5@CMS.GSI.GOV.UK
 - Belfast - Complaints - GARY.MCDOWELL@CMS.GSI.GOV.UK
 - Hastings - MARCUS.BAUGHURST@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK
 - Falkirk - DAWN.DEACON@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK
 - North East - MICHELLE.BELL@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK
 - Midlands - STUART.HAYDEN@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK
 - North West - PAT.O'CONNOR@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK

Re-establish relationship with client

Team Leader action

22. Depending on the severity of the incident you may need to refer the case for police involvement prior to re-establishing the CMG's / DWP's relationship with the client. For further information about unacceptable customer behaviour please refer to the Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance in conjunction with para 168 of the [DWP Unacceptable Customer / Claimant Behaviour Portal](#). 
23.  Before contacting the client the TL should check with the NM to determine if a warning letter has already been issued. If no warning letter has been issued contact the client to discuss the instance and re-establish the relationship we have with them. Advise the client that the CMG / DWP finds the instance unacceptable and ask the client for any comments they have about the CMG / DWP view of the instance. Seek agreement with the client that the instance was unacceptable, and ask for assurance that an incident of this kind or nature will not happen again. If assurance not given explain to the client that the UCB / PV marker will remain in place. Re-establishing our relationship may involve multiple attempts to contact the client.
24.  Attempt to contact the client by telephone as many times as necessary, at all different times of the day, until you are satisfied that continued call attempts will delay progression of the case. Where telephone contact has been unsuccessful **CMEL9271** will be issued; this is an editable template which allows you to write a letter specific to the situation.
25. Create a record in the **Re-establish Contact** applet within the **Instances** list and update this with the outcome.
 -  If the first attempt at re-establishing our relationship with the client was unsuccessful, set a date for a second attempt in the system.
26. After investigating the instance, you will either accept or reject the police referral. If a referral hasn't been made and you feel that the instance is serious enough, this can be carried out at this point. Update the **Police Authorisation** to **Yes** and update the **Referral Reason** as appropriate.
 -  Where the case was referred for police involvement and you don't think this is now necessary, reject the police authorisation and let the referring caseworker know that you have done this.
27. Assign the instance to the NM. They will be the CMG's contact with the police regarding the instance.

CMEL9271 Child maintenance update

Generic free text letter template.

Complete the free text area to inform the client of the current situation / what further information we require

Suggested type of content:

Suggestion 1:

I am writing in respect of your recent contact with the Child Maintenance Service, when a manager called to apologise for an error made on your case. During the conversation you were warned of your aggressive and inappropriate language towards the manager, and for previous calls to various caseworkers within the Child Maintenance Service. We have standards of service to which we expect our people to meet. These standards include treating every client in a courteous manner, and we have mechanisms in place to ensure this happens.

By the same token, we expect every client to extend the same courtesy to our people. Under no circumstance will we tolerate abuse of any sort, and we reserve the right to restrict how a client may communicate with us should this occur. In view of the manner in which you have spoken to our people, should you use threatening or abusive language again, we will no longer accept in-coming calls from you.

Suggestion 2:

The tone and language used in your recent correspondence has at times been unacceptable. We treat all our clients with dignity and respect. We expect you to treat our people with dignity and respect too. I appreciate that you are angry and frustrated and that administrative errors have been made, but you should be aware that we are responsible for the health and safety of our people and take incidents of aggression seriously. If the tone and language used in your future correspondence continues to be unacceptable we will take further action which may include the involvement of the Police or civil action being taken against you.

Suggestion 3:

We have standards of service to which we expect our caseworkers to meet. These standards include treating every client in a courteous manner when dealing with their enquiries, and we have mechanisms in place to ensure this happens in all cases.

By the same token, we expect every client to extend the same courtesy to our staff. Under no circumstances will we tolerate abuse of any sort, and we reserve the right to restrict how a client may communicate with us should this occur.

In view of the manner in which you have spoken to our caseworkers, we will now only accept communication from you in writing.

Once complete this letter must be checked and signed off by your Line Manager before it is issued.

Potentially Violent Status - Review

Terminology Changes

Verint

Can a caseworker put a UCB / PV marking on a case?

No, a caseworker will launch an instance but the decision to mark a case UCB is that of the Nominated Manager (NM). Progression of the instance will be carried out by a Team Leader (TL).