**Managing Unreasonable Telephone Calls**

**Quick Guide May 2021**

In line with our Values, we expect staff to treat everyone with respect and we also expect customers to treat our staff in the same way. We understand that people can often be angry or upset due to a particular situation or circumstances, but when this escalates into aggressive or abusive behaviour towards employees then it is unacceptable.

We have a zero tolerance approach with regard to racist, sexist, homophobic or other prejudicial behaviour directed towards any member of staff or MVDC contractors.

**Handling a Difficult Call**

* Remain Calm
* Listen and use verbal nods
* Recap and check understanding
* Acknowledge and empathise
* Move Forward; explain what you can do not what you can’t
* Be honest about outcomes/timeframes etc...

**How to terminate (last resort):**

1. I can hear that you are upset/angry about the situation. However, please do not swear/shout. Please can you stop and I will try to help you
2. Advise that if they continue to swear/shout that you will terminate the call e.g. “I want to hear your side of the story. However, I will have to end this conversation if you do not stop swearing/shouting”
3. If they continue to swear/shout after warning. I am happy to talk about this issue but not while you are speaking to me in that way. I am afraid that I am now going to end the call as your swearing/shouting is making me feel uncomfortable. Please call back later so that we can help you with your enquiry.
4. If a call has been particularly upsetting please ask for help from colleagues or your line manager. You may need to take a short break or go for a walk. You may also wish to discuss alternative ways of handling such a call in the future.

**Racist, sexist, homophobic or other prejudicial behaviour**

Any such behaviour will not be tolerated and should be reported to your line manager immediately. Please also complete an ‘Accident and Incident Report Form’ as soon as practicable.

**Listening to the Call**

Call recordings are held for 6 weeks before being deleted and are a useful training tool. To retrieve a copy of a call recording, your manager can contact ICT via Servicedesk.

**Further Advice and Training**

For further advice on how to deal with difficult customers, please speak to your line manager or to the Customer Care Officer/Manager. Training courses on managing conflict and aggression and managing telephone aggression are available through Surrey Learn. Protection against violence at work guidance can be found on Molly under Health and Safety and [here](https://molevalleydc-my.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/personal/admin_molevalleydc_onmicrosoft_com/_layouts/15/guestaccess.aspx?e=ZO4gC9&share=ETanqkIUqqtGr6rRwbaT470Bg8bzf9qepI9jXGkZ5HQZ1Q).