# Challenging Behaviour Toolkit

## for the Fire Community

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**NFCC**
National Fire
Chiefs Council

# Foreword

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The NFCC Challenging behaviour toolkit seeks to add to the suite of products that NFCC has produced which promotes a positive working environment where all Fire and Rescue Service people feel safe and valued at work.

Underpinned by the Core Code of Ethics and driven by the Culture Action Plan, the Challenging Behaviour toolkit aims to support the challenge of inappropriate or harmful behaviour. This guidance provides the opportunity for peer-to-peer intervention, giving people the confidence to appropriately address harmful behaviour when they see it. We also explore frameworks and techniques for managing the challenging of inappropriate behaviour and proactive measures for fostering a supportive work environment.

We recognise that there can be a number of reasons that people behave inappropriately or harmfully toward others, from lashing out due to unseen stressors to ideological beliefs not aligned with the values of inclusion and equality. Whatever the cause, it is vital that harmful behaviour is addressed swiftly and appropriately, and that due support is given to those on the receiving end of that harmful behaviour. Knowing there is a clear plan in place to address inappropriate behaviour is one of many ways to make people feel safe, and we hope that this toolkit provides the tools services need to refine and build upon existing policies and procedures.

A big thank you to those colleagues who have help to pull this toolkit together, drawing on good practice from within the sector, lived experience, and their own expertise.

## Introduction

All Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) are committed to creating a work environment where every employee is treated with dignity and respect – regardless of their background, gender, age, or education.

Yet every now and then, incidents of inappropriate behaviour will arise and should be handled swiftly, sensitively, and effectively. This Toolkit aims to help you do that.

Everything we do is underpinned by the Core Code of Ethics and the five ethical principles. To foster an inclusive environment, we prioritise learning and development through training, and we take a zero tolerance approach to behaviours which show a lack of respect for others, or cause people to feel uncomfortable, threatened, harassed, or intimidated.



Importantly, the toolkit is not a replacement for our bullying and harassment policies. Fire and Rescue Services take all allegations of bullying very seriously, investigating them through the proper channels and may impose a range of disciplinary measures up to and including dismissal. Whilst we are clear and consistent in our approach to zero tolerance, context and circumstances will guide how behaviours are addressed, which could result in formal disciplinary action, or informal action including support and awareness training.

In all instances, where behaviour shows lack of respect for others, or causes people to feel uncomfortable, threatened, harassed, or intimidated, Fire and Rescue services must:

- Ensure everyone is clear on what behaviours are unacceptable and why.

- Call out the behaviour or language when it occurs and in an appropriate environment.

- Support staff and the public to report concerns and complaints safely and confidentially.

- Tackle instances through robust and transparent policies and processes.

- Take prompt action that is proportionate, appropriate and fair

Some types of challenging behaviour can and should be dealt with in a more informal way – by speaking up at the time, irrespective of whether the behaviour is aimed at you or a colleagues, and saying something said or done is not okay, pulling someone aside, or talking things through over a coffee. This guide explains more about how you might do this, as well as outlining the potential causes, immediate effects, and long-term impact of challenging behaviour on our workforce.

This toolkit is the result of a collaborative effort between the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and fire services across the country. Through the collective expertise and input of fire service professionals nationwide, this toolkit has been developed to provide valuable resources and guidance for effectively addressing challenging behaviours within the Fire Services. This partnership highlights the commitment of both the NFCC and individual fire services to promote a safe, respectful, and productive work environment for all members of the fire service. As the NFCC, Fire and Rescue services and as individuals, we commit to calling out unacceptable behaviours whenever we see them and to learning from, and reflecting on, our own behaviours and actions.

## Context for Challenging Inappropriate Behaviour:

### Definitions

**Challenging**

'Challenging' in the context of this toolkit is being used to describe the action of 'calling out', 'naming', 'identifying' or 'raising concerns' about inappropriate behaviour, so that the behaviour can be addressed appropriately. Behaviour is challenged when it is dealt with and appropriate action is taken, although what this looks like will vary depending on the circumstances. This proactive approach aims to promote a culture of accountability, continuous improvement, and mutual respect among team members by fostering a positive work environment, rather than solely focusing on the negative actions of individuals.

**Inappropriate Behaviour**

Any behaviour that shows lack of respect for others or causes people to feel uncomfortable, threatened, harassed, or intimidated. Inappropriate behaviour could also be considered as any behaviour which is contrary to the five ethical principles outlined in the Core Code of Ethics.

### Impact on individuals

When dealing with inappropriate behaviour in the workplace, one of the first things we need to consider is the impact that it has on people and the wider organisation.

The impact of experiencing or witnessing inappropriate behaviour in the workplace can lead to:

- low morale and decreased wellbeing

- emotional distress

- increased levels of stress

- presenteeism

- increased sickness absence

- negative impact of personal relationships outside of work

- lower work performance and motivation

When inappropriate behaviour is left unaddressed people that have experienced or witnessed the behaviour may experience increased stress, which affects their health and relationships; their demeanour may change, and they may become more withdrawn over time.

Any behaviour that is offensive, discriminatory, bullying, or harassing, wherever possible, must be reported or challenged in the moment. This could be via an anonymous reporting system, emailing HR or the EDI Team, contacting someone's manager, or by sitting down and having a conversation with the person who displayed inappropriate behaviour.

Whilst everyone working within FRS should have a firm

understanding of what behaviour is expected of them, speaking with someone who has displayed inappropriate behaviour may assist the person understanding why that what they have said or done is inappropriate and unacceptable at work. It may also help identify any learning and development needs.

### Impact on the Organisation

Inappropriate behaviour that is left unchallenged not only impacts the workforce but can also have a negative impact on the whole organisation, which could lead to:

- High employee turnover

- Reduced organisational output

- Negative impact on reputation impacting:

    - Future recruitment

    - Reduced trust by members of the public

On a local level, managers will start to notice the overall effect on their teams of low motivation, higher turnover, and changes to the team culture with damage to relationships between team members. There will very likely be a lack of innovation as people fear scrutiny.

For an organisation, the impact will be lack of progress on projects or developments, disruption to events, less engagement from staff, a reduced quality of service to the public and as a result potentially a damage to the Service's reputation. Legal claims and associated costs may result from tribunal claims. Additional costs will arise from higher turnover and the financial impact from recruitment costs of recruiting and training new staff.

**Intention and Cause**

There are many reasons why we may see inappropriate behaviour in the workplace, these range from frustrated employees, a lack of education and training, to wellbeing concerns and neurodiversity challenges. It is important to understand the intention behind the behaviour before we can effectively manage it.

If the behaviour is due to…

Frustration with work systems – discuss with the employee how we can navigate these challenges, and how their behaviour, while understandable, is not the most effective way to deal with the issue.

A lack of education and training – point the employee (and their team) towards your internal training and EDI teams to ensure that all employees are aware of the standards and values of your service.

Wellbeing concerns – have a private discussion with the employee to work out what may be leading to this, often people who are struggling with depression and stress are easy to lash out and make unfortunate choices, how can you support this person?

Neurodiversity challenges – take a look at your services resources for supporting neurodiverse individuals, and work with the employee to create an environment in which they do not have to supress their neurodiversity, without disrupting the workforce.

**Clumsy, cruel or criminal.** This is an easy way to think about it. We can all say the wrong thing in a wrong way and be clumsy. We need to be tolerant – though of course we can all keep learning how to avoid being clumsy.

If there was intention to hurt or you don't care how you say things, then you are stepping into cruel – as you are knowingly trying to hurt someone. It becomes criminal when there is clear intention to offend, especially if there is unlawful discrimination behind the actions – e.g., negative comments about being gay or undermining a woman because she is a woman.

# Cause

It will not always be possible to identify what causes someone to behave inappropriately at work which is why setting out clear expectations of behaviour and providing regular formal and informal training for staff is vital.

In some instances, displays of inappropriate behaviour may be caused by issues impacting someone at work or home. If you identify that someone's behaviour is out of character or suspect that someone's behaviour is being influenced by other factors, the individual should be encouraged to speak with their line manager or a HR professional for support.

# Organisational Culture

An organisation is a group of people who share ideas, practices, and behaviours. Culture is the way the members of an organisation relate to each other, their work and external factors; usually guided by a set of norms and assumptions that infer the way we should behave.

When an organisation has an effective set of values, beliefs, and behaviours which are clear and upheld by its staff, it will perform at a higher level of productivity and effectiveness. A positive organisational culture is one where staff feel able to report inappropriate behaviours without fear of retribution, and where managers will appropriately address behaviours that do not fit with the Core Code of ethics.

Organisations should promote systems that enable inappropriate behaviours to be addressed quickly and effectively; these could include anonymous reporting systems, well-written and understood grievance and disciplinary policies, effective recruitment and selection processes, appropriate training for managers and staff for effective people management and awareness, and monitoring and reporting at Board level. When it comes to addressing inappropriate behaviour, it is the job of everyone in the service to call it out and uphold the standards and values of their service.

## Challenging Inappropriate Behaviour:

**This section contains:**

- Practical strategies and frameworks for recognising and addressing inappropriate behaviour in different situations

- De-escalation techniques and conflict resolution methods tailored to the fire service environment

- Information on the importance of proactive communication and fostering a supportive work environment

# 1) Understanding the Dynamics of Challenging Inappropriate Behaviour

**Key Characteristics in Challenging Inappropriate Behaviour:**

Constructive Engagement: Challenging inappropriate behaviour involves engaging with colleagues in a constructive and respectful manner to address behaviours that may be detrimental to team dynamics or operational effectiveness.

Opportunity for Growth: It presents an opportunity for individuals to provide feedback and support to their colleagues, facilitating personal and professional growth within the team. Positive Impact: Challenging of behaviour can have a positive impact on team dynamics, fostering open communication, trust, and collaboration among members.

**Emphasising the Importance:**

Recognising and addressing challenging inappropriate behaviour in a positive and proactive manner is essential for maintaining a supportive and high-functioning team. By encouraging team members to respectfully challenge behaviours that do not align with the values and goals of the fire service, leaders can foster a culture of continuous improvement and excellence. This approach empowers individuals to contribute to a positive work environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and motivated to perform at their best.

# 2) Frameworks for Managing Challenging Inappropriate Behaviour

**Cultural Competence Framework**

Cultural competence plays a crucial role in understanding and effectively managing challenging inappropriate behaviour within the fire service. It entails having the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to recognise, respect, and respond to the cultural differences present among team members.

In a diverse environment like the fire service, cultural competence enables individuals to navigate interactions sensitively, reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings and conflicts arising from differing cultural backgrounds. By

embracing cultural competence, teams can foster inclusivity, enhance communication, and promote a more harmonious work environment.

Recognising diverse perspectives within the fire service requires an awareness of cultural norms, values, and communication styles that may vary across different demographic groups. This involves actively listening to and valuing the viewpoints of colleagues from diverse backgrounds, thereby fostering mutual respect, and understanding.

Respecting diverse perspectives entails refraining from making assumptions based on one's own cultural lens and instead seeking clarification or additional information when needed. It also involves being mindful of non-verbal cues and contextual factors that may influence communication, allowing for more effective interpersonal interactions.

## The Cultural Competency Continuum

| Cultural Destructiveness | Cultural Incapacity | Cultural Blindness | Cultural Pre-competence | Cultural Competence | Cultural Proficiency |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**This challenge involves moving as far as possible, as quickly as possible, along the following six-point continuum (Cross et al., 1989)**

**Cultural destructiveness:** those who believe or engage in behaviours that reinforce the superiority of one race or culture over another, with the resultant oppression of the group viewed as inferior;
**Cultural incapacity:** those who have less actively destructive beliefs or behaviours, but are paternalistic and lack the skills to be effective with individuals from diverse groups;
**Cultural blindness:** those who profess that culture, race and / or language make no difference and explicitly or implicitly encourage assimilation;
**Cultural pre-competence:** those who accept the need for culturally competent policies and procedures, but do not procedd beyond tokenism or searching for ways to respond;
**Cultural competence:** those who accept and respect differences and implement policies that support these beliefs and commitments;
**Cultural proficiency:** those who seek to refine their approach by learning more about diverse groups through reserach, dissemination and fully inclusive practices.

Cultural Competence Continuum, developed by Terry Cross in 1989. This continuum outlines stages of cultural competence, ranging from cultural destructiveness to cultural proficiency, providing a roadmap for individuals and organisations to assess and improve their cultural competence.
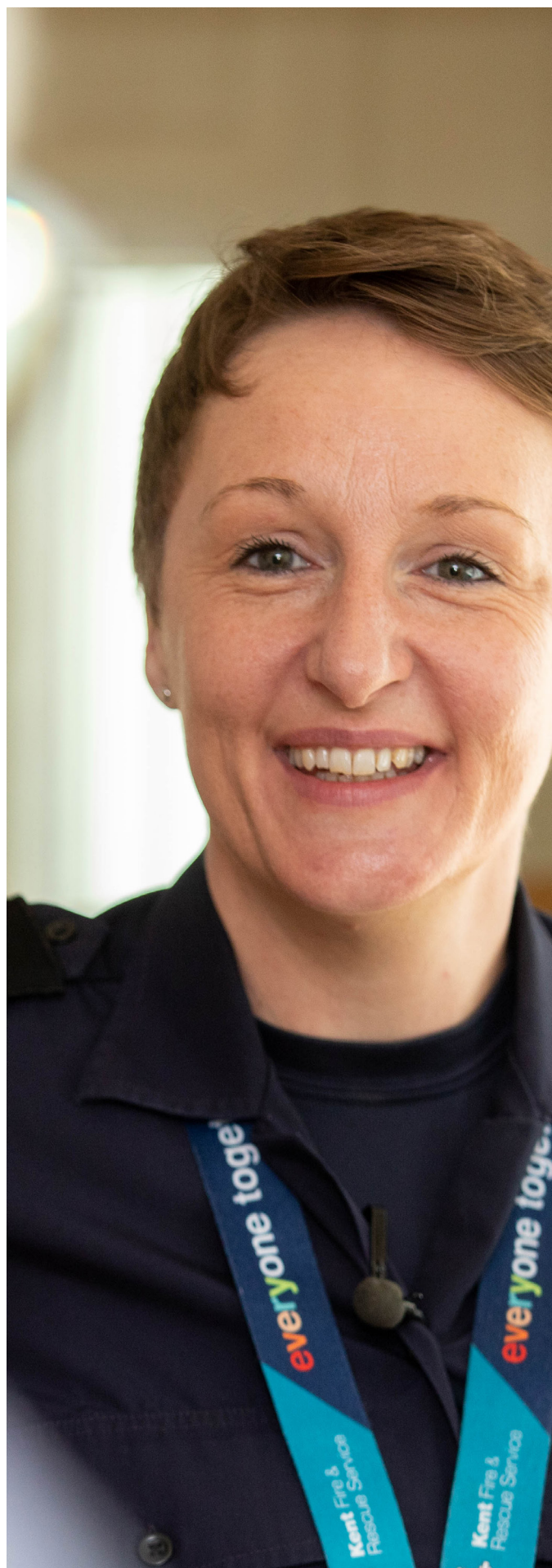
**Emotional Intelligence Framework**

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to recognise, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. In the context of managing challenging of behaviour within the fire service, EI plays a critical role in facilitating effective communication, conflict resolution, and team cohesion.

Enhancing emotional intelligence involves developing key competencies such as emotional awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills among team members. Strategies for enhancing EI may include:

- Conducting self-assessment exercises to increase awareness of one's own emotional triggers and patterns of response.

- Practising mindfulness and relaxation techniques to improve self-regulation and stress management.

- Engaging in perspective-taking exercises to cultivate empathy and understanding of others' emotions and perspectives.

- Participating in role-playing or communication skills training to enhance social skills and interpersonal effectiveness.

|  | **Self**<br>Personal Competence | **Other**<br>Social Competence |
|---|---|---|
| **Recognition** | **Self-Awareness**<br><br>Emotional Self-Awareness<br><br>Accurate Self-Awareness<br><br>Self-Confidence | **Social Awareness**<br><br>Empathy<br><br>Service Orientation<br><br>Organizational Awareness |
| **Regulation** | **Self-Management**<br><br>Self-Control<br><br>Trustworthiness<br><br>Conscientiousness<br><br>Adaptability<br><br>Achievement Drive<br><br>Initiative | **Relationship Management**<br><br>Developing Others<br><br>Influence<br><br>Communication<br><br>Conflict Management<br><br>Leadership<br><br>Change Catalyst<br><br>Building Bonds<br><br>Teamwork and Collaboration |

Daniel Goleman's framework identifies four key components of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, which serve as a foundation for enhancing EI in various contexts, including the workplace.

# 3) Strategies for Managing Challenging of Behaviour:

**Conflict Resolution Models:**

Introducing Conflict Resolution Models: Conflict resolution models provide structured approaches for addressing and resolving conflicts. One such model is the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), developed by Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann. The TKI identifies five conflict-handling styles: competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating, each suited to different situations and preferences.
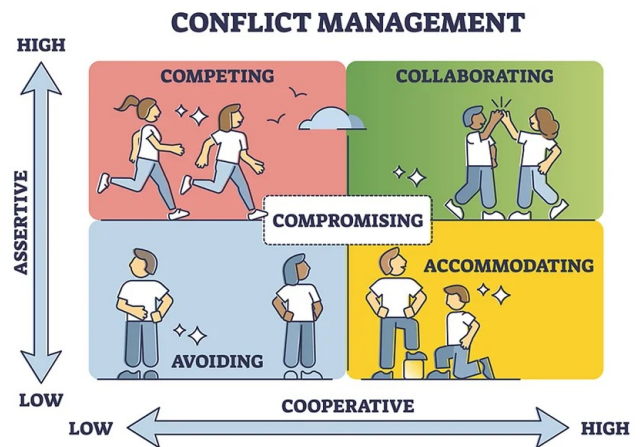


**Step-by-Step Approaches for De-escalating Conflicts:**

1. Identify the Issue: Clearly define the source of the conflict, focusing on observable behaviours rather than personal attributes.

2. Active Listening: Practice active listening to understand the perspectives and underlying concerns of all parties involved.

3. Choose the Appropriate Conflict Mode: Utilize the TKI framework to determine the most suitable conflict-handling style for the situation.

4. Seek Mutual Understanding: Encourage open dialogue and brainstorming to find common ground and explore potential solutions.

5. Negotiate and Collaborate: Work together to generate mutually beneficial agreements that address the needs and interests of all parties.

6. Follow-up and Monitor: Implement agreed-upon solutions and monitor progress, making adjustments as needed to prevent future conflicts.

**Effective Communication Techniques:**

Offering Communication Strategies: Effective communication is essential for managing challenging inappropriate behaviour and resolving conflicts within the fire service. The CLEAR model, developed by Jack Gibbs, offers a structured approach to assertive communication:

- Clarify: Clearly express your thoughts, feelings, and expectations using specific and descriptive language.

- Listen: Actively listen to the perspectives of others, demonstrating empathy and understanding.

- Express: Express your own needs, concerns, and boundaries assertively, using "I" statements and avoiding blame.

- Assert: Assert your position respectfully and confidently, maintaining composure and firmness.

- Review: Review and confirm mutual understanding, seeking clarification and addressing any remaining concerns.

**Emphasising Active Listening, Assertive Communication, and Non-verbal Cues:**

- Active Listening: Encourage firefighters to listen actively, paraphrase, and validate the concerns of their colleagues to promote mutual understanding and empathy.

- Assertive Communication: Teach individuals to express their thoughts, feelings, and needs assertively, without aggression or passivity, to establish clear boundaries and expectations.

- Non-verbal Cues: Emphasise the importance of non-verbal communication, such as body language and facial expressions, in conveying sincerity, openness, and respect during interactions.

**Behavioural Contracting:**

Behavioural contracting involves establishing clear expectations, boundaries, and consequences for behaviour within the fire service. This proactive approach aims to prevent challenging of behaviour by providing a framework for accountability and mutual understanding.

Guiding Teams in Establishing Expectations, Boundaries, and Consequences:

1. Define Expected Behaviours: Collaboratively identify and articulate the behaviours expected of all team members, focusing on professionalism, respect, and cooperation.

2. Establish Boundaries: Set clear boundaries regarding acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, ensuring alignment with organisational values and policies.

3. Outline Consequences: Clarify the consequences for violating behavioural expectations, emphasising fairness, consistency, and proportionality.

4. Obtain Agreement: Ensure that all team members understand and agree to the behavioural contract, providing opportunities for discussion and clarification as needed.

5. Monitor and Enforce: Regularly review adherence to the behavioural contract and address any violations promptly and constructively, reinforcing positive behaviour and addressing issues as they arise.

By incorporating these conflict resolution models, effective communication techniques, and behavioural contracting strategies into the fire service toolkit, teams can effectively manage challenging of behaviour and promote a culture of accountability, respect, and collaboration.
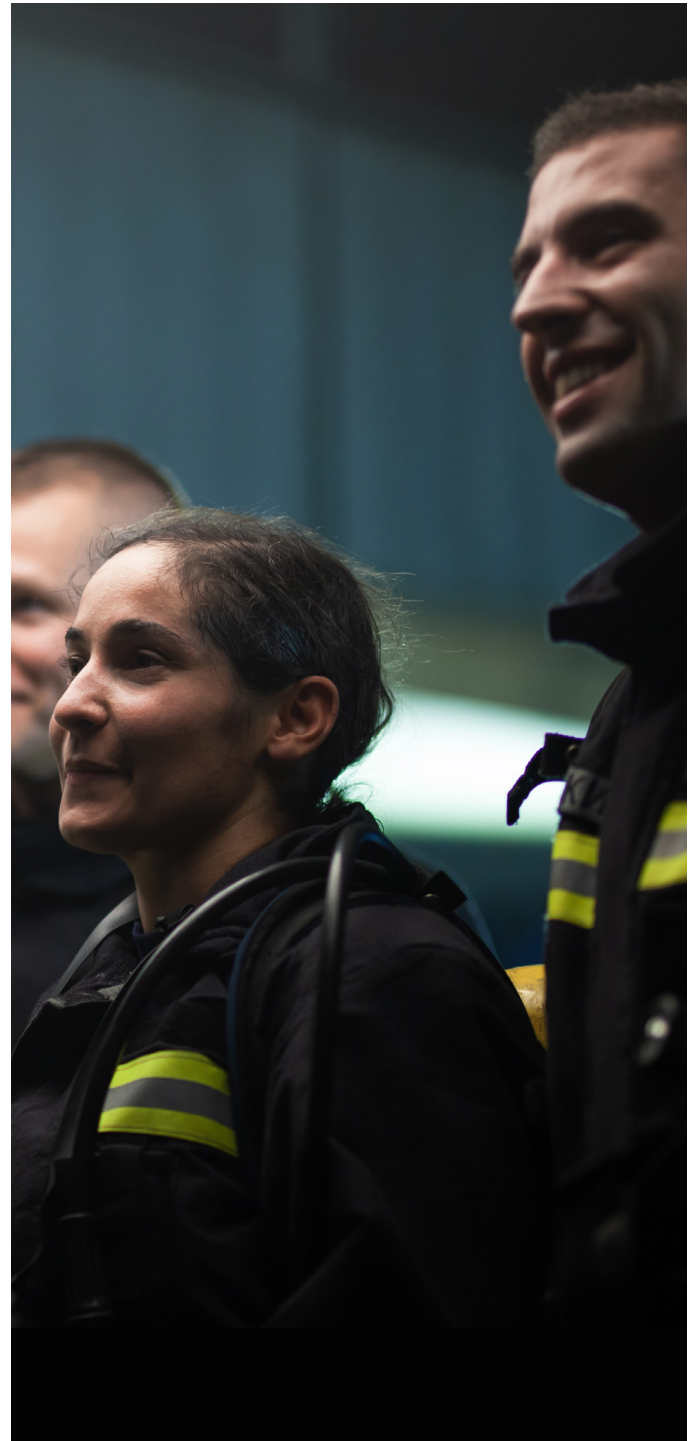
# 4) Specific Techniques to Challenging Behaviour:

Techniques for Difficult Conversations:

**1. Assertive Communication:**

- Encourage individuals to express their concerns or objections assertively, using "I" statements to convey their perspective without blaming or accusing others.

**2. Clear Expectations Setting:**

- Clearly outline expectations for behaviour and performance, providing specific examples of desired conduct and the potential consequences of non-compliance.

- Example: "As a team, we expect everyone to treat each other with respect and professionalism, regardless of rank or background. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action."

Good Example: A team leader notices a colleague consistently arriving late to team meetings. In a private conversation, the leader addresses the issue assertively: "I've noticed you've been arriving late to our team meetings frequently. It's important for everyone to be punctual so we can start on time and respect each other's time commitments. Can we discuss any challenges you're facing that might be causing this?"

Positive Outcome: The colleague appreciates the direct but respectful approach and opens up about personal issues causing the lateness. Together, they find a solution, and the colleague starts attending meetings on time, improving team productivity.

Bad Example: The team leader publicly reprimands the colleague for being late to a meeting, embarrassing them in front of their peers.

Potential Consequence: The colleague feels humiliated and becomes defensive, leading to resentment and a breakdown in trust between the leader and the team member.

**3. Questioning Techniques:**

1. Open-ended Questions:

- Encourage open dialogue and exploration of underlying issues by asking open-ended questions that prompt reflection and discussion.

- Example: "Can you help me understand your perspective on this issue?"

2. Reflective Questions:

- Use reflective questions to encourage individuals to consider the impact of their behaviour on others and to explore alternative viewpoints.

- Example: "How do you think your actions might be perceived by your colleagues?"

Good Example: During a team brainstorming session, a team member suggests an unconventional approach to a project. The project manager asks an open-ended question: "Can you elaborate more on your idea? How do you see it benefiting our project?"

Positive Outcome: The team member feels valued and respected for their input, leading to a fruitful discussion where the team explores the idea further and integrates aspects of it into the project plan.

Bad Example: The project manager dismisses the idea without further exploration, saying, "That won't work. Let's move on."

Potential Consequence: The team member feels demotivated and unheard, leading to disengagement and reluctance to contribute ideas in the future.

**4. Active Listening:**

1. Paraphrasing:

- Demonstrate active listening by summarising and paraphrasing what the other person has said, ensuring understanding and validation.

- Example: "So, if I understand correctly, you're feeling frustrated because you believe your contributions are being undervalued?"

Good Example: A colleague expresses frustration about a recent change in procedures. Their supervisor actively listens and paraphrases their concerns: "It sounds like you're feeling overwhelmed by the new procedures and uncertain about how they'll affect your workflow."

Positive Outcome: The colleague feels understood and validated, leading to a productive discussion where the supervisor addresses their concerns and offers support in adapting to the changes.

Bad Example: The supervisor interrupts the colleague mid-sentence and starts offering solutions without fully understanding their concerns.

Potential Consequence: The colleague feels unheard and misunderstood, leading to further frustration and a breakdown in communication between the supervisor and the team member.

2. Non-verbal Cues:

- Pay attention to non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions, which can provide valuable insights into the emotions and intentions of the speaker.

- Example: "I noticed you crossed your arms when discussing this issue. Is there something you're feeling uneasy about?"

**5. Cultural Competence and Understanding Differences:**

1. Acknowledge Cultural Differences:

- Recognise and respect cultural differences in communication styles, attitudes, and values, understanding that these may influence behaviour and perceptions.

- Example: In some cultures, direct confrontation may be seen as disrespectful, leading individuals to avoid challenging behaviour openly.

Good Example: In a multicultural team, a team leader notices differences in communication styles. They acknowledge these differences and adapt their approach, accordingly, ensuring everyone feels included and valued.

Positive Outcome: The team members appreciate the leader's cultural sensitivity, leading to improved collaboration, trust, and cohesion within the team.

Bad Example: A team member from a different cultural background is consistently overlooked during team discussions. The team fails to acknowledge and adapt to their communication style, resulting in the team member feeling marginalized and excluded.

Potential Consequence: The team member becomes disengaged and may eventually leave the team, leading to loss of talent and diminished team performance.

2. Adapt Communication Styles:

- Adapt communication styles to accommodate cultural differences, employing strategies such as active listening and sensitivity to non-verbal cues.

- Example: In cultures where hierarchical structures are prevalent, individuals may be more deferential to authority figures, requiring leaders to actively encourage open dialogue and feedback.

By incorporating these specific techniques to challenge bad behaviour into the fire service toolkit, teams can effectively address problematic conduct while promoting cultural competence and understanding of individual differences. This approach fosters a supportive and inclusive work environment where diverse perspectives are valued, and conflicts are resolved respectfully and constructively.

## 5. Proactive Measures for Fostering a Supportive Work Environment:

**Team Building Activities:**

Organise Team Building Activities: Team building activities play a vital role in fostering a supportive work environment within the fire service. These activities provide opportunities for team members to interact outside of formal work settings, building rapport, trust, and mutual respect.

Examples of Activities:

- Outdoor challenges such as ropes courses or wilderness survival exercises.

- Group problem-solving activities like escape rooms or scavenger hunts.

- Volunteer opportunities in the local community, such as charity events or environmental clean-up projects.

Benefits:

- Strengthening Relationships: Team building activities promote social connections and friendships among team members, leading to stronger bonds and enhanced teamwork.

- Promoting Cohesion: By working together towards common goals in a non-work setting, team members develop a sense of unity and cohesion that carries over into their professional interactions.

- Boosting Morale: Fun and engaging activities can boost morale and motivation, creating a positive and energised work environment.

**Leadership Development Programs:**

Investing in Leadership Development: Effective leadership is crucial for creating and maintaining a supportive work environment. Investing in leadership development programmes equips leaders at all levels with the skills and tools to address challenging behaviour effectively and promote a positive workplace culture.

Topics Covered:

- Conflict Resolution: Training leaders in conflict resolution techniques equips them to address challenging behaviour and interpersonal conflicts constructively, fostering a culture of open communication and mutual respect.

- Emotional Intelligence: Developing leaders' emotional intelligence enhances their ability to understand and manage their own emotions, as well as empathise with and support their team members.

- Cultural Competence: Providing training on cultural competence enables leaders to navigate diverse workplace dynamics sensitively, promoting inclusivity and respect for all team members.

Delivery Methods:

- Workshops and Seminars: Interactive workshops and seminars allow leaders to learn and practise new skills in a supportive and engaging environment.

- Coaching and Mentoring: Pairing leaders with experienced mentors or coaches provides personalised support and guidance tailored to their individual development needs.

**Feedback Mechanisms:**

Establishing Feedback Mechanisms:

Creating accessible and confidential feedback mechanisms empowers team members to express concerns and provide input on managing challenging behaviour, ensuring that their voices are heard and valued.

Examples of Feedback Channels:

- Anonymous Suggestion Box: Providing a physical or digital suggestion box allows team members to submit feedback anonymously, reducing barriers to expression and promoting honesty.

- Regular Team Meetings: Allocating time in team meetings for open discussion and feedback-sharing creates a platform for addressing challenges and fostering collaboration.

- One-on-One Meetings: Encouraging regular one-on-one meetings between team members and their supervisors facilitates confidential discussions and individualised support.

Responsive to Team Needs:

- Actively listening to feedback and taking appropriate action demonstrates leadership's commitment to addressing team concerns and promoting a supportive work environment.

- Providing timely feedback and updates on actions taken in response to team input fosters trust, transparency, and accountability within the organisation.

## Documentation:

**Guidelines for documenting incidents related to challenging behaviour.**

**Template forms or checklists for consistent documentation.**

**Emphasise the importance of maintaining confidentiality and adhering to relevant policies.**

## Documentation:

Guidelines for Documenting Incidents Related to Challenging Behaviour:

1. Timeliness:

Document incidents promptly after they occur to ensure accuracy and detail.

Include relevant dates, times, and locations to provide context and facilitate follow-up actions.

2. Objective Description:

Provide an objective description of the incident, focusing on observable behaviours rather than subjective interpretations.

Include specific details such as actions taken, statements made, and individuals involved.

3. Impact Assessment:

Assess the impact of the challenging behaviour on individuals, teams, and organisational objectives.

Document any injuries, property damage, or disruptions to operations resulting from the incident.

4. Contributing Factors:

Identify contributing factors that may have influenced the behaviour, such as environmental stressors, interpersonal conflicts, or underlying mental health issues.

Document any relevant background information or patterns of behaviour leading up to the incident.

**Template Forms or Checklists for Consistent Documentation:**

1. Incident Report Form:

A standardised form for documenting incidents of challenging behaviour, including fields for date, time, location, description of the incident, individuals involved, and any corrective actions taken.

Ensure the form is easily accessible and user-friendly, with clear instructions for completion.

2. Behavioural Incident Checklist:

A checklist outlining key steps to follow when documenting challenging behaviour incidents, including gathering witness statements, assessing the impact of the behaviour, and identifying potential risk factors.

Use the checklist as a guide to ensure thorough and consistent documentation across different incidents.

**Emphasising the Importance of Maintaining Confidentiality and Adhering to Relevant Policies:**

1. Confidentiality:

Stress the importance of maintaining confidentiality when documenting incidents of challenging behaviour, particularly when sensitive information is involved.

Ensure that access to documentation is restricted to authorised personnel only, in accordance with data protection regulations and organisational policies.

2. Policy Adherence:

Remind team members of the importance of adhering to relevant policies and procedures when documenting challenging behaviour incidents, such as those related to data protection, privacy, and disciplinary actions.

Provide training and support to ensure team members understand their responsibilities and obligations when documenting incidents.

3. Legal Compliance:

Highlight the legal implications of inaccurate or incomplete documentation, emphasising the importance of ensuring records are thorough, accurate, and compliant with legal requirements.

Encourage team members to seek guidance from legal or HR professionals when in doubt about documentation practices.

By following these guidelines for documenting incidents related to challenging behaviour and utilising template forms or checklists for consistent documentation, fire service organisations can ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with relevant policies and regulations. This approach also helps to facilitate effective communication, analysis, and resolution of challenging behaviour incidents, ultimately contributing to a safer and more supportive work environment.

# Reporting

### Raising a General Concern

The Service encourages employees to raise any general concerns in a constructive way and strongly advocates open communication with line managers. Where employees wish to raise a general concern, they are encouraged to discuss this informally with their Line Manager or a member of Human Resources in the first instance.

### Confidential Hotline

A confidential external reporting service is in place, working in partnership with SafeCall/ Crimestoppers who provide a professional and independent means for employees to report any concerns relating to workplace matters (including bullying and harassment) via the website or by telephone. As a Service we are committed to reducing fraud and unethical practices to make it a safe and inclusive place to work; a commitment that is underpinned by our internal policies and procedures. These existing policies and procedures are supplemented by the introduction of an independent service available for use when circumstances necessitate a different approach to reporting. This reporting mechanism enables the Service to engage directly with complainants even if they choose to remain anonymous and address the concerns raised.

### Whistleblowing / Bribery

As a public service organisation, the FRS uses public funds prudently and applies the highest standards of conduct throughout the organisation. Employees are encouraged to speak up if they come across any malpractice in the workplace so that any concerns can be addressed as soon as possible. Where employees wish to raise a concern in the public interest they can do so via the Public Interest Disclosures (Whistleblowing) and Bribery Policy. This policy is intended to help employees report fraud, the giving or taking of bribes, financial malpractice, misreporting or practices that might put people at risk. Employees can raise a concern via the Whistleblowing Manager, via a confidential Whistleblowing telephone number with a 24 hour message service, by email or in writing.

### Safeguarding

safeguarding should be integrated into all areas of  Fire and Rescue service delivery with a consistent approach, making it the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and leaders to identify and embed safeguarding principles into all the work it undertakes.

Clear knowledge and understanding of safeguarding throughout the organisation coupled with decisive, informed action creates an effective safeguarding culture. This culture enables the Service to promote safer communities whilst

respecting the dignity, privacy and confidentiality of individuals. There will be occasions where staff identify safeguarding concerns in the course of their duties. The process for making a safeguarding referral is based upon observation and professional judgement.

The perceived immediate risk to the individual concerned will determine the level of referral, response by statutory agencies and immediate actions of the person making the referral.

The Safeguarding Lead and the Head of Human Resources work closely together in terms of safeguarding matters relating to our own staff.

# Support Systems

### Human Resources

The Human Resources department provide professional guidance and expertise to line managers and employees, aiming to optimise the performance of our people and ensuring the relationship between the Service and employees is managed through transparent practices and relevant legislation. The team develops relationships with line managers to enable them to manage and support employees effectively and develop solutions surrounding the management of people.

The department plays a vital role in helping managers and staff interpret and apply policies equitably and fairly. The Human Resources structure enables and empowers managers in establishing the needs of the Service and their corresponding people requirements.

### [Colleague Support Scheme (if applicable)

The FRS recognises that its staff is its most valuable resource and is committed to providing welfare support.  It is recognised that individuals are vulnerable to stress and/or pressures resulting from any aspect of their lives.  The Colleague Support Scheme is an essential mechanism which staff can access to provide them with confidential support and assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, when they feel it is appropriate and beneficial to do so.  The scheme provides a confidential, informal and non-directive system of support for all members of staff.  The scheme is provided by a team of Colleague Supporters, who are all members of the Service, selected and trained to carry out the role.  Colleague Supporters are not regarded as counsellors, but can provide support, facilitating individuals to deal with their issues and concerns, whether domestic, social or work related including complaints of bullying and harassment].

### Union Membership

Trade Unions provide support to employees and offer a platform for employees to voice their concerns. The recognised union for support staff is Unison and for engineering staff is

Unite. The Service also recognise the Fire Brigades Union and FOA. The Service encourages positive relationships with unions on work related matters.

**Employee Assistance Programme**

The Employee Assistance Programme, provides emotional and practical support for issues at home or work. The services are available online and via a Freephone telephone line, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. Counselling is available via telephone or face-to-face in order to assist employees deal positively with crisis situations and complex issues.

The Employee Assistance Programme provider is advised of any issues/trends ongoing within the Service in order for them to advise their call handlers accordingly in the event there is an increase in calls relating to the subject matter. This ensures that call handlers can signpost and advise appropriately.

**Blue Light Mental Health Champions**

The FRS works with Mind who provide advice, support and training in relation to mental health. The aim is to improve the services provided, raise awareness and promote understanding across the Service. The Blue Light programme provides support for emergency services staff and volunteers from police, fire, ambulance and search and rescue. There are trained Blue Light Champions within the Service who take action in the workplace to raise awareness of mental health problems and challenge mental health stigma. Staff who are going through challenging times are able to contact the Champions for advice and support.

**Recuperation Centres (Firefighters Charity)**

The Fire Fighters Charity offers specialist lifelong support for members of the UK fire services community, empowering individuals to achieve mental, physical and social wellbeing throughout their lives. They provide independent, personalised support to all fire and rescue personnel, whatever their role in the Service. The support also extends to those that have retired as well as for spouses and dependants over the age of 18.

The Fire Fighters Charity can provide personalised support to meet individual mental, physical and social needs, delivered in the most appropriate way such as the Reset Programme. The programme helps employees develop and improve their resilience and overall mental fitness through a series of workshops and activities tailored to their individual needs. The aim of the programme is to equip participants with the skills, knowledge and confidence to manage the challenges they are facing.

The Service grants special leave (if applicable) for visits to the Fire Fighters Charity recuperation centres for physical and mental therapy/recuperation. Intense therapy is available where an employee can receive counselling for up to two weeks at a

time. The Charity also has a support line where Assessment Practitioners listen and help individuals identify the right next steps for them, whether that is signposting ways to help, digital appointments with our Charity's services or a centre stay at one of their recuperation centres where they feel this will be of benefit.

**Suicide Crisis Line**

The Firefighters Charity also have a 24/7 Crisis Line created to directly combat suicide amongst present and past fire service employees to directly support fire service employees at a point of crisis.

The Crisis Line is staffed by specially trained clinicians who understand the fire community and the blue light sector.

**Critical Incident Debrief Scheme/ Post-incident Debrief**

The FRS maintains a Critical Incident Debrief scheme to provide support and assistance to members of staff who may have experienced a potentially traumatic event or an event where the application of the Scheme may be appropriate or beneficial to the individuals involved. This can include inter-departmental issues impacting on working relationships within teams such as matters relating to bullying and harassment.

Critical Incidents Debriefs (CIDB) are facilitated meetings, aimed at supporting those involved in critical incidents to share their experiences in a safe environment, in which peer support is available. The CIDB scheme is provided by a team of debriefers, who are all members of the Service, selected and trained to carry out the role[.

**Occupational Health**

The Service has an internal/external Occupational Health Service which employees can access a wide range of welfare support. When an employee has been seen by the Occupational Health Physician guidance is provided to the Service on measures that may be taken to aid recovery.

**Regular Health and Fitness Reviews (Health Screening)/ Health and Fitness Promotion**

Regular health and fitness reviews with the Fitness Team include weight, BMI, body fat percentage, blood pressure measurements and a suitable aerobic fitness assessment. Testing includes enabling discussion surrounding both physical and mental health and is another avenue whereby staff can obtain support or raise any concerns and are signposted accordingly. The Fitness Team also provide employees with information regarding health and fitness. including advice and guidance as required.

# Training and Awareness

**Recommendations for ongoing training on recognising and managing challenging behaviour.**

Services have the responsibility to provide training to all existing and new employees to help them understand their rights and responsibilities, and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment.

Provide additional training to managers to enable them to deal effectively with complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and discrimination.

Ensure training provision is repeated regularly and records keep of attendees for monitoring regularity of attendance. Services should ensure that any training provision is regularly reviewed to ensure the content is current and aligned with up-to-date best practice and legislation.

As a minimum, training should be provided on the following:

- Bullying awareness and all types of harassment

- Inclusion best practice (including unconscious bias and diversity in practice)

- Discrimination / Equality Act / Protected characteristics

- Data security / GDPR

- Recruitment and selection training

- Safeguarding basics

Other training:

- Conflict resolution

- Handling grievances and whistleblowing

**Strategies for raising awareness and promoting a culture of openness and inclusivity.**

Inclusion is created by embedding inclusive practices and values into the Service's way of doing things. The Service should support employees, line managers and senior leaders to build inclusive behaviours and values, ensure policies and practices are inclusive, and challenge organisational values and behaviours that don't promote these principles.

Here are some areas Services can take action to build openness and inclusion:

**Involve all employees in inclusion**

All employees need to understand their role in being inclusive at work. This involves Services setting standards of behaviour, treating all colleagues with dignity and respect, and empowering employees to challenge inappropriate behaviour.

Services should ensure that they make inclusion relevant to people at all levels of the business; what does inclusion mean in their job role and what they can do to be more inclusive?

**Develop people manager capability**

Managers are key in inclusion. The relationship they have with employees, and how they carry out people management practices and policies, will impact employee's opportunities and experiences of work.

Treating all employees with respect, supporting their development, and ensuring they've a say in the workplace is core for any manager. Managers need to ensure there's a level playing field for their team, and support employee's individual needs. We need to embed inclusion in line manager training and development – for example, raise awareness of issues relating to inclusion and empower managers to carry out people management practices effectively.

**Build senior commitment to inclusion**

Many senior leaders are line managers themselves; they set the tone for the behaviour that's expected in the Service. And, with a drive towards increasing diversity on senior leadership teams, attention must also be paid to how inclusive the boardroom is. Services need to highlight the importance of senior leader's advocacy and buy in.

Senior leaders need to actively champion and sponsor inclusion activities, develop self-awareness and understand their own biases, and role-model inclusive behaviour in their own people management, and in their own leadership team.

**Evaluate policies and practices**

A two-step approach is needed to put in place people management practices and policies to support inclusion:

Consider the formal and informal mechanisms that can be improved to enhance inclusion for all employees. For example, ensure that there are clear mechanisms for feedback that allow employees to feel like they have a 'say' in the Service, for example, 360° feedback mechanisms.

Consider how you can embed inclusion into wider people management practices and communicate the policies in place that support inclusion.

Source: CIPD

# Key resources and links

In this section you can find links to hey resources and links to guidance and support from organisations that provide support and advice on how to Challenge Inappropriate Behaviour:

**ACAS Guidance:**

The website provided offers guidance on dealing with workplace problems, provided by ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service). It likely includes information on various workplace issues such as conflicts, grievances, disciplinary actions, and harassment, along with advice on how to address these problems effectively. It's a resource that aims to assist both employers and employees in managing and resolving workplace challenges in a fair and constructive manner.

https://www.acas.org.uk/dealing-with-workplace-problems

The document titled "Challenging Conversations and How to Manage Them" from ACAS provides guidance on handling difficult discussions in the workplace. It offers strategies for effectively navigating conversations around sensitive topics such as performance issues, disciplinary matters, grievances, and conflicts. The document likely includes tips for preparing for these discussions, managing emotions, active listening, providing constructive feedback, and reaching mutually beneficial outcomes. It aims to equip employers and employees with the skills needed to handle challenging conversations professionally and productively.

https://www.acas.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-04/challenging-conversations-and-how-to-manage-them.pdf

"Discipline and Grievances at Work: The ACAS Guide" is a comprehensive resource provided by ACAS that offers guidance on managing disciplinary procedures and grievances in the workplace. It likely covers topics such as the legal framework surrounding discipline and grievances, best practices for handling disciplinary issues and grievances fairly and consistently, procedures for investigating complaints, conducting hearings, and appealing decisions. Additionally, it may provide practical advice on promoting positive workplace relationships, preventing conflicts, and resolving issues amicably. This guide aims to help employers and employees understand their rights and responsibilities in handling discipline and grievances effectively to maintain a harmonious and productive work environment.

https://www.acas.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-04/discipline-and-grievances-at-work-the-acas-guide.pdf

**TUC Guidance**

The website provides guidance on handling workplace issues and challenges, likely offered by the Trades Union Congress (TUC). It probably covers a range of topics such as resolving disputes, addressing grievances, navigating disciplinary procedures, and promoting fair treatment at work. The content likely includes practical advice, resources, and support for both workers and trade union representatives to effectively deal with workplace problems and promote positive working conditions.

https://www.tuc.org.uk/dealing-problems-work

**Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Report**

"Managing Conflict in the Workplace" from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) provides comprehensive guidance on effectively handling workplace conflicts. It covers topics such as the sources and impact of workplace conflict, strategies for preventing and managing conflicts, communication techniques for resolving disputes, and the role of HR professionals and managers in conflict resolution. Additionally, it offers case studies, practical tips, and best practices to help organizations foster a positive and harmonious work environment. Overall, the document aims to equip HR professionals, managers, and employees with the knowledge and skills needed to identify, address, and resolve conflicts in the workplace effectively.

https://www.cipd.org/globalassets/media/knowledge/knowledge-hub/reports/managing-conflict-in-the-workplace-2_tcm18-70655.pdf

**Bullies Out**

Bullies Out offers support and resources for employers dealing with workplace bullying. Providing guidance on recognizing bullying behaviour, implementing policies and procedures to address bullying, supporting affected employees, and fostering a positive and respectful work culture. Additionally, it offers training programs, toolkits, and advice on creating awareness and preventing bullying incidents in the workplace. Overall, the resources aim to help employers take proactive steps to address and eliminate bullying behaviour, promoting a safe and supportive work environment for all employees.

https://bulliesout.com/need-support/employers/