

Zero Tolerance Policy

General statement – policy position

A. Policy Statement

We aim to deal fairly, honestly, consistently, and appropriately with all our beneficiaries, including those whose actions we consider unacceptable. We believe all users of our services have a right to be heard, understood, and respected. We aim to provide a service that is accessible to all and will make all reasonable adjustments to accommodate users' needs.

The behaviour or actions of individuals using our services can, in exceptional circumstances, make it difficult for us to deal with their issues, concerns or behaviour. This policy explains how the organisation (KCIA) manages actions that result in unreasonable behaviour towards our staff.

The policy is required to address a limited number of cases where actions/behaviours become unacceptable as they involve abuse of our staffs and volunteers, stop them from doing their work or providing a service to others, or make them feel bullied or unsafe.

B. Scope

This policy affects everyone from beneficiaries to Trustees. It explains how we may respond, adapt or restrict access to a service when we consider a user's actions to be unacceptable. This is to ensure we can protect our staff/volunteer and the services we provide.

This policy covers all of the behaviours defined under the zero tolerance and definitions section.

1. Introduction

This policy applies to all incidents of work-related abuse, aggression, harassment, violence and any work-related incident by a user involving an employee, or their family, which may happen in or away from the workplace. Kongolese Centre's employees are potentially at risk of violence, abuse, aggression and harassment at work from some members of the public.

The policy covers employees that:

- Have contact with service beneficiaries
- Provide advice or training
- Work alone or in the community
- Carry out outreach duties or visits

2. Zero tolerance

Kongolese Centre for Information & Advice recognises the potentially damaging effect on an employee's well-being of all categories of violence, harassment and abuse and it regards all of these as unacceptable and will support staff/volunteer and take preventive actions to mitigate against any of the following:

- Physical attack – whether visible injury occurs or not
- Harassment / sexual harassment
- Harassment aimed at staff when carrying out their duties
- Discriminatory behaviour
- Verbal abuse – when an employee feels threatened or intimidated and the abuse is personally directed
- Cyber-aggression / cyber bullying through recording staff actions, texts, email messages or social networking sites
- Stalking, in person or online
- Hate crime
- Attack or damage to the community property or belongings of the employee
- Vexatious behaviour
- Demeaning behaviour
- Bullying in person, over the phone or via electronic media / social media

3. Definitions

The organisation will not tolerate any form of abuse, assault or harassment of our staff and will act directly against any such behaviour.

4. Audiences

This includes organisation's users, stakeholders, visitors, partners and members of the public who benefit directly or indirectly our services.

5. Staff

This policy covers employed staff and others who work on behalf of Kongolese Centre for Information & Advice brighter futures for Children and young people, including contractors and volunteers.

People may act in ways that are out of character when they are in trouble or distressed. There may have been upsetting circumstances in the lead-up to a complaint coming to us. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because a complainant is forceful or determined.

6. Unacceptable actions

Unacceptable actions are grouped under the following headings:

Aggressive or abusive behaviour

Anger which escalates into aggression, threatening behaviour or verbal abuse, or unsubstantiated allegations. Violence or abuse is not restricted to acts of aggression that may result in physical harm. It also includes behaviour or language, verbal or in writing, that may cause staff to feel afraid, threatened, harassed, or abused. This includes threats, personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks, and rudeness. We also consider inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations to be abusive behaviour.

Harassment

Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic (sex, disability, race, gender reassignment etc), which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Harassment is illegal.

Bullying

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate, or injure the recipient.

Assault

Behaviour or language that is threatening, abusive or insulting causing them or another person to feel harassment, alarm or distress. Includes of conduct which causes another to fear "imminent" unlawful violence and use/threat of weapons. Assault is illegal.

Stalking

When someone is targeted and repeatedly behaves in a way that makes you feel scared, distressed, or threatened. Stalking is illegal.

Manager responsibility

All managers have a responsibility to set a positive example by implementing this policy and to make sure their staffs are aware of it and understand it. Managers should also:

- Be aware of the different types of abuse that may occur and the circumstances in which they are likely to occur. This awareness and mitigation should take place through the risk assessment process.
- Treat any reports of work-related violence, harassment, threats or abuse seriously and respond to them promptly.

- Report all accidents, incidents and near misses to the organisation Safeguarding Team and give all employees involved in the incident full support during the whole process. He/she should also respond and consider seriously any suggestions made by staff about how to improve violence /abuse prevention and management, and give feedback to staff about their suggestions, including whether it will be taken forward and if not, why not.
- Where personal safety devices or lone working arrangements are in place, review usage and efficacy in supervision meetings.
- Set a positive example by not tolerating abusive behaviour from users and members of the public.
- Respond to and, where possible, resolve incidents, ideally before they escalate.
- Monitor incidences and initiate appropriate action if further measures are needed
- Direct staff to appropriate support and advice after an incident has occurred. Encourage other staff members to support their colleagues, including those who might have witnessed the incident. If victims are particularly impacted by the event, signpost to the appropriate services or local authorities as well as provide support such as time off work or changes to their tasks.
- During the investigation, work with internal teams/ the police /external agencies and offer any assistance needed to help in their enquiries. Managers must report incidents of violence to the police. This includes assault, hate crime, sexual assault, and threats.

For further advice please contact us:

kongolesecentre4info@gmail.com or kongolesecentre@hotmail.com

Managers must ensure employees know about potentially violent users via Drop In and any measures put in place to protect them. They must decide if:

- These users/persons should only be met/seen by a specific member of staff.
- Accompanied visits are necessary.
- Users should only be met at centre premises.
- These users should only be dealt with by letter/email.
- Users whose behaviour/risk justifies inclusion on the Drop In System should be logged there.

7. Employee responsibility

- Be aware of this policy and comply with it.
- Offer good customer service and be aware and sensitive to the user's needs. Wherever possible, give the complainant the opportunity to change their behaviour where it is unacceptable under this policy and action before a decision is taken.
- Recognise the potential for work-related violence and take action to resolve it early on, in accordance with training identified within the risk assessment. Staff should take positive action and, for example, contact a manager if they think a customer or member of the public might cause problems.
- Where a personal safety device has been issued to a member of staff, they have a responsibility to use it at all times when lone-working.
- Don't accept instances of work-related violence/abuse directed towards you or others. Staff must report any instances of violence, threats, or abuse, including any details about when it happened, who was involved and any relevant circumstances that may have contributed to the incident.
- Be supportive of colleagues who are victims or have witnessed work-related violence/abuse; during, as well as and after the incident, whilst ensuring their own safety.
- Suggest additional measures to managers which might help to prevent and manage work related violence.
- Use one-to-one meetings with your line manager to review the need for a personal safety device or to implement a lone working arrangement.
- Be aware that tolerating aggression is never "part of the job".

Staff are responsible for acting in a way that does not incite or increase the likelihood of violence. Any staff member found to be encouraging or inciting violence may be subject to disciplinary action. Refer to our [employee code of conduct](#).