

Unacceptable customer behaviour

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Background

Unacceptable customer behaviour (UCB) is any incident that causes staff, or has the potential to cause staff to feel upset, threatened, frightened or physically at risk and is directed at them because they work in DWP. This also applies when claimants attend partner organisations premises, for example, providers.

Examples of unacceptable customer/claimant behaviour

UCB can occur in the claimant's written Journal entries, face to face, over the telephone, by email, by post or through electronic communications such as social media. This could include:

- violence
- verbal or written abuse
- verbal or written abuse of a discriminatory nature, for example sex, race, disability, religion
- threats, which are implied or otherwise
- intimidation
- sexual innuendo
- harassment
- unwelcome attention
- attempted or actual assaults
- damage to property
- any other incident that makes staff feel uncomfortable, vulnerable or threatened

These are examples, not a complete list.

UCB taking place outside the workplace involving claimants (or others) and staff should also be reported as an incident. This includes UCB in non-working hours.

Suicide or self-harm

Suicide or self-harm threats may also be Unacceptable Customer Behaviour, depending on the nature of the threat or actions.

For full details, please refer to DWP's UCB Policy and Procedures.

Banners on UCFS

UCFS has a banner that will show whether control measures exist on a claimant's record. The marker will alert the member of staff who must check the Staff Protection List and apply the control measures.

Prior to any planned or unplanned contact with a claimant where the UCB flag is not accessible / greyed out on the UCFS system, staff should use other systems

(i.e. CIS and Staff Protection List (SPL)) that are available and manually check the system(s) to confirm if any control measures apply.

Markers should only be added or removed on the instructions of the UCB Nominated Manager

Staff Protection List

Details of claimants who have displayed unacceptable behaviour are recorded on a database called the Staff Protection List (SPL). It shows the control measures that have been put in place to make it a safe environment for staff when the claimant attends the Jobcentre, telephones the Service Centre or uses their Journal.

The SPL should be checked before booking any appointment. For couple's claims, both people should be checked on the SPL. The claimant and/or partner may have been added to the SPL since their last appointment.

The SPL search facility requires the claimant's National Insurance Number (and their partner's for a couples claim) to check if they are on the list.

It is important for staff to have a shortcut to the SPL on their desktop for easy and quick access.

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Reporting an incident

It is important that all UCB incidents are reported, using the Unacceptable customer and claimant behaviour system, within one working day of the incident. This allows prompt action to be taken to minimise the risk of the UCB happening again and to protect staff from further abuse.

Employee assist can offer support to staff affected by UCB.

Control measures

One or more control measures will have been applied by the UCB nominated officer to a claimant who has shown UCB.

Some of the control measures are for example:

- accompanied interviews
- accompanied visits
- banned from an office
- dealt with by member of other race
- dealt with by member of other sex
- dealt with by member of same race
- dealt with by member of same sex
- monitor behaviour
- must be dealt with by post/journal
- must be dealt with in a screened environment
- no home visits
- to be seen by a named officer

If a claimant is banned from an office it is essential that alternative arrangements are put in place and the claimant is informed of these promptly.

If, through working for DWP, staff are the target of online abuse on social media by DWP customers, managers and staff need to discuss and decide on actions to be taken.

