Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council

Kildare County Council's Code of Conduct for People engaging with Council Services

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www.kildarecoco.ie

Introduction

Customers of Kildare County Council have every right to expect a high standard of service and we aim to provide such a service, in a safe and secure environment. Customers expect to receive services from staff acting in a polite and courteous manner. It is reasonable that staff of the Council in turn expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us.

Customers should be aware that how they behave and how often they contact us can adversely affect the ability of our staff to provide a quality service and that the Council has a general obligation to ensure it provides good quality of service *to all its customers.*

Unacceptable Behaviour

In order to ensure a safe, respectful environment for all involved, we would ask our customers to behave in a respectful manner. We do not expect staff or other customers to be exposed to or to tolerate unacceptable behaviour, which includes the following non-exhaustive list:

- Behaviour which is disruptive and interferes with the use and enjoyment of the facility by others or the capacity of the Council to deliver services to other customers.
- Harassment of staff or members of the public by use of abusive, racist, sexist, homophobic, ageist, obscene or threatening language or behaviour otherwise against the nine grounds set out in the Equal Status Acts (as amended).
- Bullying and harassment, including aggressive behaviour involving the use of violence or threat of violence toward staff and/or members of the public or threats of self-harm.
- Using abusive or foul language in communication with the Council.
- Inappropriate use of recording devices or social media in interactions with Council staff without regard for the privacy rights of staff or third parties.
- The posting of unacceptable comments or offensive material on social media platforms or Internet sites about staff of the Council which refer to their role with Council.
- Malicious damage to and/or theft of property.

- The use of alcohol and illicit drugs while using Kildare County Council facilities.
- Smoking within Kildare County Council public offices and buildings.
- Personal property being left unattended while using facilities.
- Using mobile phones while transacting council business in person.
- Failing to supervise children while using Kildare County Council facilities, including libraries. Children under 8 must not be left alone in our libraries and other facilities.
- Unreasonable and disruptive persistence, for example, engaging in disruptive behaviour such as sending multiple emails, letters, phonecalls or attending in person repeatedly on matters that have been responded to, have already been brought to finality or are outside the remit of the Council.
- Unreasonable Demands: repeatedly insisting on outcomes that are unattainable.
- Abuse of complaints process for vexatious purposes, in particular where appeals processes, for example, related to Planning or appeals of Housing assessments and allocations, have been exhausted, and the customer is seeking to use the complaints process to change outcomes from such appeals processes.

What happens if you behave in this way?

If we consider your behaviour to be unacceptable, we will tell you why and ask you to change it. If it might be useful, we will consider changing how we engage or communicate with you, if this can help you avoid unacceptable behaviour.
If the unacceptable behaviour continues, we will take action to put limits on your contact with our facilities and services. This decision will only normally be taken after senior local management has reviewed the situation. Restrictions will be appropriate and in line with the nature of the behaviour and will have due regard for the welfare of staff and members of the public. The sanctions we are mostly likely to consider are:

- Asking you to withdraw any communication containing foul or offensive language, apologise and submit your issue in a respectful tone
- Asking you to contact us by letter only
- Asking you to only contact a named staff member
- Asking you to call by telephone only on certain days and times
- Limiting your access to the facilities and services

- Asking you to enter an agreement about future conduct
- Requesting you to leave our facilities and/or cease using our services if your behaviour threatens the safety and/or welfare of staff and members of the public
- As a final option, terminating all contact with you if this behaviour shows no signs of stopping.
- If the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of the council staff or others, we will consider other options. These could include, reporting the matter to An Garda Síochána or instigating legal action. In such cases, depending on circumstances, we may not give you warning of that action.

Depending on the circumstance of your behaviour, where incidents are reported, we will write to tell you why we believe your behaviour is unacceptable and what action we propose to take. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct may result in a withdrawal of services, which while regrettable may be necessary.

If, following your behaviour, you are of the view that the Council has taken action that is not proportionate, you may write appealing that decision to:

Customer Service Manager
Kildare County Council
Áras Chill Dara
Devoy Park, Naas
Co Kildare W91 X77F.

Upon receipt an appeal will be referred to the Director of the relevant Department for their consideration and response.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of an appeal against the application of this Code, you may contact the Office of the Ombudsman to complain. The best way to contact the Ombudsman is by:

- Clicking on the 'Make A Complaint' link at **www.ombudsman.ie** **or**
- Writing: Office of the Ombudsman, 6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02W773 **or**
- Calling the Ombudsman on **01 639 5600** if you have any queries or if you need help making your complaint.

Please help us to ensure responsible and considerate use of Kildare County Council facilities and services by observing this Code of Conduct