



THE DONALDSON TRUST

The National Body for Neurodiversity

Zero Tolerance Policy

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Owner: People and Culture Manager

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Document Control

Version:

Version	Date	Owner	Reviewer	Approver	Amend
1	August 2023	Director of People and Culture	Leadership Team	ELT	New
2	August 2026	People and Culture Manager	Burness Paull	Director of People and Engagement	Review

Next Review Due: August 2029

References:

Policies:

- Complaints Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy

The Policy

The Donaldson Trust is fully committed to promoting a safe working environment where all colleagues are treated with dignity and respect.

The aim of this policy is to address situations in which a colleague is the subject of aggressive, abusive or threatening behaviour by someone using our service, parent / carer or other family member, client or customer, or member of the public in the course of their duties.

We will not tolerate colleagues being subjected to acts or threats of violence, aggressive behaviour, intimidation, verbal abuse or coercion in the course of their duties. This includes, but is not limited to, actions that are face to face, in writing (including via email or social media) or over the phone. It also includes behaviour which would amount to harassment in terms of our Dignity at Work Policy.

We view any case of the above behaviour towards our colleagues as unacceptable and recognise the fear, stress and anxiety this behaviour can cause. We recognise this is detrimental to the health, safety and overall wellbeing of colleagues.

We are committed to dealing with all instances of violence, aggressive behaviour, intimidation, harassment, verbal abuse or coercion promptly and robustly and will take steps to manage associated risks.

We will also take steps to try to prevent third-party harassment of colleagues and colleagues are encouraged to report any incidents of this using the procedure set out in this policy. Colleagues are also encouraged to speak to the People Team if they have any suggestions in terms of further steps we can take to prevent this type of behaviour occurring.

Due to the nature of the support we provide, some colleagues may be subject to behaviours that challenge from some of those using our services. We will ensure they are appropriately supported in managing this effectively.

The rights of those using our services are at the forefront of everything we do and take priority, the application of this policy will in no way infringe on those. This policy does not prevent anyone from raising concerns with us under the Complaints Policy.

Definitions

Examples of unacceptable behaviour are summarised below:

- violent or aggressive behaviour – an incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work; this can include verbal abuse or threats as well as physical attacks;
- hate crime – a crime that the victim or any other person perceives to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards any aspect of a person's identity, including age, disability, race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), or ethnic or national origins, religion or, in the case of a social or cultural group, perceived religious affiliation, sexual orientation, transgender identity and variations in sex characteristics;
- hate incident – any incident, which may or may not be a crime, that the victim or any other person perceives to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards any aspect of a person's identity;
- unreasonable demands – a demand becomes unreasonable when it impacts substantially on our work; examples of this may include repeatedly demanding responses within an unreasonable timescale or insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular member of staff when that is not possible or appropriate;
- unreasonable levels of contact – volume and duration of contact with the service by an individual that causes problems for the colleague or the organisation; this can occur over a short period, for example, a number of calls in one day or one hour;
- unreasonable use of processes – for example, the complaints process, where someone uses the complaints procedure to challenge professional judgments of a colleague or where they use it repeatedly to raise the same issues that we have already investigated;

- third-party harassment of our colleagues, such as derogatory comments about a person's age, disability, pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, from someone using our service, parent / carer or other family member, client or customer, or member of the public in the course of their duties.

Responses to Unacceptable Behaviour

Where a colleague is subjected to unacceptable behaviour by someone using our services, parent/carer or other family member, a client or customer, or member of the public, the Donaldson Trust reserves the right to respond as is deemed necessary in light of the circumstances. The level of response will depend on the seriousness of the incident and the outcome of any investigation.

The potential responses or actions available to the Donaldson Trust include:

- verbal warnings and / or a follow up letter to the individual;
- meeting with the individual concerned to discuss conduct;
- withdrawal of services;
- involvement of the police.