

Policy Name: **Zero Tolerance**

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Due for Review October 2023

41

Policy Statement

West of England Rural Network takes the issue of abuse or violence towards any of our staff or volunteers very seriously.

WERN supports the government's 'Zero Tolerance' campaign for Health Service Staff. This states that staff have a right to care for and work with others without fear of being attacked or abused. To successfully provide these services a mutual respect between all the staff, volunteers and clients has to be in place.

All our staff aim to be polite, helpful, and sensitive to all clients' individual needs and circumstances. We would respectfully remind clients that very often staff could be confronted with a multitude of varying and sometimes difficult tasks and situations, all at the same time. The staff understand that clients working with WERN do not always act in a reasonable manner and will take this into consideration when trying to deal with a misunderstanding or complaint.

However, aggressive behaviour, be it violent or abusive, will not be tolerated and may result in you being removed from contact with WERN or associated activities and, in extreme cases, the Police being contacted.

In order for WERN to maintain good relations with their clients the following list (although not exclusive) notes the occasional types of behaviour that would be found unacceptable:

- Using bad language or swearing at staff, volunteers or other clients
- Any physical violence towards any member of the WERN team or other client, such as pushing or shoving



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Working with Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE) across South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset, North Somerset and Bristol

- Verbal abuse towards the staff in any form including verbally insulting the staff
- Abuse in electronic form including email, text or social media
- Coercive control or manipulation
- Racial abuse and sexual harassment will not be tolerated with any WERN activity or premises
- Persistent or unrealistic demands that cause stress to staff will not be accepted. Requests will be met wherever possible and explanations given when they cannot
- Causing damage/stealing from the WERN's premises, staff, volunteers or clients
- Obtaining services fraudulently

Removal from WERN activities

The removal of clients from our activities or premises is an exceptional and rare event and is a last resort. An exception to this is on immediate removal on the grounds of violence e.g. when the Police are involved.

Removing other members of the clients household

In rare cases, it may be necessary to withdraw activities for other members of the clients family or the entire household. This is particularly likely where the client has been removed because of violence or threatening behaviour and working the other family members could put our staff at risk.

Approved by the Board of Trustees

Date October 2021

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