

Telephone Incidents, Non Face To Face Incidents

Abuse, threats and difficult calls

59. Employees must have received the appropriate Keeping Safe training which is accessed via SOP and be familiar with the Incident Management Plan before they start to deal with customers or claimants over the telephone for the first time.

60. Employees should be aware that their behaviour can and will influence the behaviour of others.

61. Although employees working in a non public facing environment such as contact centres may be at low risk of actual physical abuse they may still be subject to all forms of UCB, particularly verbal abuse. Managers must take action to make it clear that such behaviour will not be tolerated. They need to be aware of guidance and good practice for dealing with these incidents.

62. Prolonged or repeated verbal or written abuse can lead to anxiety and stress therefore it is imperative this risk is managed appropriately and action take

63. If threats or verbal abuse are made over the telephone, the incident must be reported on the DWP online [Incident Report Form \(link is external\)](#) and employees must be given time away from their duties to complete the report. Prompt and effective action must be taken by Line Managers and Nominated Managers following an abusive phone call. Line Managers should listen to call recordings where possible. The incident report form is automatically forwarded to the Nominated Manager for their action. Reporting incidents of verbal abuse over the telephone is just as important as one that occurred face to face. The information will also be used to inform the risk assessment process. [Examples of UCB incidents can be found here](#)

There may be instances where a copy of the abusive call is required for the police. A copy of the call, where available, should be requested as outlined in [NM Bulletin No 3](#) (Requesting a copy of a call)

Where threats are made in writing , other media, or via Departmental systems such as the UC Journal, the incident must be reported on the online [Incident Report Form \(link is external\)](#) and employees must be given time away from their duties to complete the report. Line manager should ensure that the correspondence or full Journal conversation is made available to the Nominated Manager to view, rather than small extracts, so that the Nominated Manager can see the context of the incident.