



**Brighton
Council**

Media Release

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From Mayor Leigh Gray

Brighton Council Adopts new Unreasonable Conduct of Customers Policy

Brighton Council is seeking to highlight the essential services it provides to the local community while addressing growing concerns about staff facing abuse, aggression, and offensive language from a small number of customers.

The council has adopted a new Unreasonable Conduct of Customers Policy to define unreasonable conduct and protect staff from its potential harm.

Brighton Mayor, Leigh Gray, said council staff worked hard to serve their local communities and didn't deserve to be abused.

"Whether it's fixing potholes, keeping our parks clean and tidy, or ensuring the welfare of animals, our staff are dedicated to providing the highest standards of service to our municipality," Mr Gray said.

"Council staff are responsible for enforcing state legislation, including building, plumbing and planning.

"While it is rare, we have sadly seen council staff threatened with physical violence, verbally abused and had rocks thrown at council cars.

"Many of our staff are also residents, with children in our schools and a stake in our local community, so when they face abuse while doing their jobs, it can have a deeply personal impact.

"In extreme cases, staff have had to installed security cameras so they can feel secure in their own homes.

"We urge all members of our community to treat one another with respect and to acknowledge the contributions of council staff in making Brighton a wonderful place to live."

Mr Gray said the overwhelming majority of interactions with council were positive and reasonable.



“Unfortunately, a small number of people resort to unacceptable behaviour including aggression, verbal abuse, threats, or overwhelming our offices with excessive calls and emails.

“We classify conduct as ‘unreasonable,’ when it raises serious health, safety, and resource concerns for our council, staff, and other service users.”

Unreasonable conduct incidents will be managed by limiting or adjusting how the council interacts with or provides customer services. This can include restricting:

- **Who** the customer contacts (assigning them a single point of contact).
- **What** issues they can raise (limiting the topics we will address).
- **When** they can contact the council (restricting contact to specific times or frequencies).
- **Where** they can meet staff (limiting face-to-face interactions to secure areas).
- **How** they can communicate (adjusting or limiting forms of contact, potentially prohibiting access or terminating services).

Mr Gray said enacting a formal response under the new policy was an absolute last resort.

“We believe in treating everyone with kindness and respect, and we always aim to resolve concerns through understanding and open communication,” Mr Gray said.

“Taking formal action is a last resort, but when necessary, it ensures a safe and respectful environment for our staff and the community.”

Ends

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