

Councillor Safety Protocol

OFFICIAL

1.0 Purpose and Introduction

- 1.1 This Protocol has been developed to support councillors in protecting themselves as a person in a public position and makes suggestions on how to respond to incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation.
- 1.2 Councillors are local leaders and champions, bridging the gap between residents and local government. Becoming and serving as a councillor is a huge privilege and responsibility, but it also means councillors are very visible and often easily accessible to residents.
- 1.3 A pressing concern facing those in public office is the increasing levels of intimidation, harassment and abuse they can experience. While debate and expressing different views are part of a healthy representative democracy, these unacceptable behaviours undermine the key democratic principles of free speech, debate and engagement, and sometimes pose a risk to councillors' safety. Thankfully, serious incidents remain very rare. Councillors, their peers, political parties, council officers and, when necessary, the police, all have a role to play in addressing harassment, abuse, and intimidation.
- 1.4 In recognition of the impact of harassment, abuse and intimidation of councillors, the council has produced this Councillor Safety Protocol which is based on guidance issued by the Local Government Association (LGA) and steps taken by other local authorities across the country.
- 1.5 The Local Government Association's '[Councillors' guide to handling harassment](#)', abuse and intimidation also provides a series of practical guidance for councillors.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 Abuse

Words and/or behaviour that constitute abuse or mistreatment can include, but is not limited to, physical abuse, bullying, emotional abuse, unsolicited abusive communication, and harassment. It may be one-off or repeated.

2.2 Intimidation

Words and/or behaviour intended or likely to block, influence, or deter participation in public debate or causing alarm or distress, which could

lead to an individual wanting to withdraw from public life. It may be one-off or repeated behaviour.

2.3 Harassment

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 indicates that someone's actions amount to harassment when they make the victim feel distressed, humiliated, threatened or fearful of further violence. The main goal of harassment is to persuade victims either not to do something that they are entitled or required to do or to do something that they are not obliged to do.

[Definition of harassment, abuse and intimidation | Local Government Association](#)

3.0 Useful Contacts

3.1 There are a number of useful contacts for councillors, as listed below:

- Member Safety Champion: *TBC*
- Head of Democratic Services (Nominated Officer – Cllr Safety):
Brian Reed, brian.reed@cheshireeast.gov.uk
- Force Elected Official Advisor, Cheshire Police:
Gareth.frith@cheshire.police.uk
- Cheshire East Democratic Services:
CheshireEastDemocraticServices@Cheshireeast.gov.uk

4.0 LGA Debate Not Hate Campaign

4.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) launched a 'Debate Not Hate' [campaign](#) to help encourage civility in public life. The LGA produced a [report](#) with recommendations which range from legislative changes to protect councillors' privacy to creating a longer-term culture change to de-normalise abuse of politicians and other high-profile individuals.

4.2 Many of the recommendations within the report relate to actions for the LGA and central government, however one recommendation was identified for local councils '*to take greater responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of councillors and take a proactive approach to preventing and handling abuse and intimidation against councillors*'.

4.3 The LGA also launched its third edition of the annual Debate Not Hate survey to all councillors in May-June 2025. The full report can be found [here](#), but a summary of the key findings are highlighted below.

- Almost three-quarters of respondents (73 per cent) reported feeling personally at risk when fulfilling their role as councillor, which remained consistent with last year's survey (74 per cent). This was higher among women (84 per cent), ethnic minorities (84 per cent), the LGBT+ community (85 per cent), and disabled respondents (85 per cent).
- Seventy-two per cent of respondents reported experiencing abuse or intimidation due to their role as councillors over the last 12 months. Similarly, this was higher among women (78 per cent), the LGBT+ community (85 per cent), and disabled respondents (86 per cent).
- A quarter of respondents (25 per cent) had experienced a threat of violence or a threat of death against themselves or someone close to them.
- A fifth of respondents (21 per cent) had reported an incident of abuse or intimidation to the police, yet 30 per cent of those felt the policing response had not addressed their concern at all. More than half of respondents (58 per cent) reported that their authority's arrangements for protecting them were very or fairly effective.
- More than half of respondents (56 per cent) have decided not to stand or are currently unsure about standing at the next elections. Of those, a quarter (26 per cent) reported that the possibility of abuse or intimidation had influenced their position on whether to stand; this was higher among female respondents, at 32 per cent, and among disabled respondents, at 37 per cent.

5.0 Member Code of Conduct

- 5.1 Councillors should be able to undertake their role as an Elected Member without being harassed, intimidated or abused by anyone.
- 5.2 The Council's [Member Code of Conduct](#), has been designed to protect the democratic role of councillors, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.
- 5.3 The code seeks to assist councillors in modelling the behaviour that is expected of them, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against them. It is also to protect councillors, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and the specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct.

6.0 Lone Working

6.1 The Council has a [Lone Working Policy](#). Whilst this policy relates to staff, Elected Members may find this the guidance document useful in taking appropriate steps during lone working activities. Some key tips are highlighted below:

- Leave details of where you are going and how long you will be with a friend, relative or colleague.
- Check that your mobile phone is charged and switched on.
- Consider making regular check-in calls to a friend, relative or colleague, or ask them to call you at regular intervals.
- Team up with a Councillor from your ward or a neighbouring ward to make visits.
- If there are a number of risks associated with a particular visit you may wish to carry out a risk assessment and discuss or ask another Councillor or an Officer for their view on whether a visit should be undertaken.

6.2 *The council recognises that the role of councillors means they are often working alone and are aware of the risks that lone working can carry for elected members. Elected members have the option to request a personal-safety lone working device to help them feel more confident and able to undertake their democratic role with more ease. Please speak to the Council's Democratic Services team for additional information. (note that this is subject to the approval of the principle of lone working devices being made available to Elected Members).*

7.0 Nominated Officer: Councillor Safety

7.1 Supporting councillors dealing with harassment, abuse and intimidation is of utmost importance to the council.

7.2 The Council has identified a 'Nominated Officer – Councillor Safety' (e.g. Head of Democratic Services) to ensure that councillors have a point of contact for raising concerns in relation to incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation.

7.3 The Nominated Officer will act as a "sounding board" for councillors, provide guidance/advice and liaise with the Force Elected Official Advisor - Cheshire Police (FEOA) in relation to serious incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation.

7.4 The Nominated Officer will meet regularly with the FEOA and Member Champion: Councillor Safety to discuss the safety of councillors and any improvements that can be made to the support provided to councillors.

- 7.5 If you are experiencing harassment, abuse or intimidation you can reach out to the Nominated Officer – Councillor Safety, for support and/or guidance on how to deal with incidents and formally report them.

8.0 Member Champion: Councillor Safety

- 8.1 The “Member Champion: Councillor Safety” role was established to maintain strong strategic links with relevant partners leading to the implementation of stronger safety processes for Elected Members. The Champion also provides a point of escalation for councillors if/when incidents occur.
- 8.2 The Champion raises the profile of councillor safety issues and advocates for better two-way engagement. Councillors should be more informed about risks and mitigations as the Member Champion acts as a conduit to feed intelligence back to relevant officers.
- 8.3 The Champion will encourage councillors to prioritise their own safety and take on board any information and advice provided to them.
- 8.4 The Champion will ensure councillor safety remains a high priority and provide a conduit for strategic engagement with local partners including Cheshire Police, alongside the Council’s Nominated Officer.
- 8.5 If you are experiencing harassment, abuse or intimidation you can reach out to the Member Champion for support and/or guidance on how to deal with incidents and formally report them.

9.0 Incident Reporting – Cheshire East Council

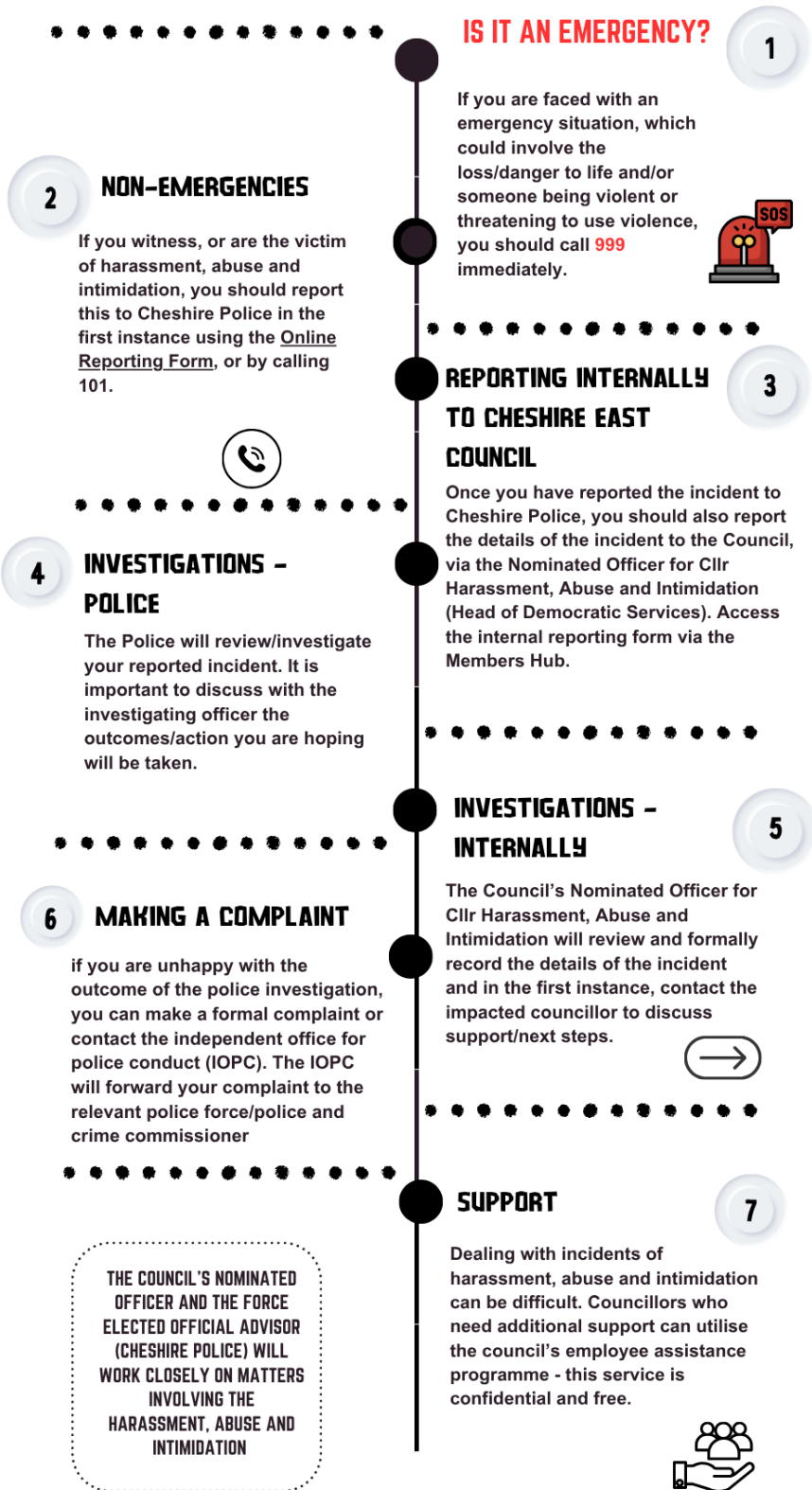
- 9.1 Councillors are encouraged to report incidents of abuse, harassment and intimidation to the ‘Nominated Officer – Councillor Safety’- even those considered minor that have had an impact upon them - to help track incidents and identify patterns of behaviour which may pass the threshold for police action. Reporting of incidents enables the Nominated Officer to decide if any action can be taken to prevent similar incidents reoccurring and to support the effected councillor. **It is important that all serious incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation are also reported to the Police, and in emergencies, the impacted councillor calls 999 immediately.**
- 9.2 Councillors may also consider it advisable to warn ward colleagues of an unsafe situation that they have encountered so they are aware of the risk.

- 9.3 An incident report should be completed as soon as possible after an event, whilst memories are fresh and so that issues can be investigated and appropriate action taken. **Completing this form does not replace the need to report an incident formally to the Police.** If a councillor is unsure if the incident should be reported to the Police, this can be discussed further with the Nominated Officer and/or Member Champion for Councillor Safety. It is important to note that no action will be taken, internally, without a discussion with the impacted councillor.
- 9.4 The Incident Reporting Form – non emergencies (*link to be provided once approved by Corporate Policy Committee*) is available on the Members Hub.

10. Incident Reporting – Cheshire Police

- 10.1 Any concerns about behaviour or conduct which leaves you worried about your safety or that of any other individual can be reported to the Police. If you are concerned about your immediate safety this should be done by calling 999. You can report non-urgent concerns to your local force by calling 101 or you can report online using the [Police UK reporting form](#).
- 10.2 The police will take initial details about the incident/s from you and provide you with a crime reference number. They will then carry out an investigative assessment to determine whether the incident/s need to be investigated further. The systems and practices used to record these initial details vary between police forces, but this does not affect your legal rights. Further information about your rights and how the police should respond can be obtained from [Know Your Rights](#). You may be asked to provide further information and/or be interviewed as part of this (providing a statement).
- 10.3 Not all incident/s will result in an investigation and the decision to investigate is one made by the police based on a number of factors – a decision not to investigate does not mean the incident is not a crime. You should not be deterred from reporting future incident/s because of previous decisions.
- 10.4 It is essential that when an incident occurs, you gather as much evidence as possible (such as social media screenshots) which will assist the Police with any investigations.
- 10.5 The infographic below, developed in partnership with Cheshire Police, sets out, sets out the process Members should follow when reporting incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation.

INCIDENT REPORTING GUIDANCE FOR CHESHIRE EAST MEMBERS



11. Personal Safety Guidance – The Basics

- 11.1 The relationship between councillors and their communities is at the heart of what being a councillor is all about. The face-to-face contact where constituents can share problems and concerns is vital to enhancing that relationship.
- 11.2 The guidance below sets out some of the basic personal safety measures that can be taken to prevent and to deal with those rare circumstances when councillors might find themselves in situations where they become anxious for their safety.

Car Safety and Parking

You need to take the same precautions as most car owners do:

- Have your keys in your hand or easily accessible.
- Consider whether an area will be dark and isolated at the time you expect to return to your car.
- Park under street lighting where possible.
- Lock the car doors when you get into the car.
- Take boxes/bags to the car when other people are around.
- Try to park on the left-hand side of the road facing the way you want to drive off.
- In a Cul de sac, do not park facing the dead end.
- Try to park in a space where you will not be blocked-in.

Dealing with Emotional Constituents

It is inevitable that some of the people you will meet will be angry or upset. You need to be prepared to handle all types of emotion. Councillors have to develop the quiet skill of being concerned about constituents' problems without being so involved that they become too emotional to be of help. Calmness in the face of what comes up will help you and your constituents. You may find that racist or offensive remarks are made. If they are directed at you - do not respond - this will only make the situation worse. Instead, bring the interview to an end as quickly as possible. If they are more general remarks, you should state that this is not acceptable and that you cannot continue the interview. Often this will elicit an apology. Otherwise ask the person to leave. However, you must use your own judgement and if you are alone and in a vulnerable situation do not put yourself at risk, no matter how angry the remarks make you.

Ward Surgeries

Where ward surgeries are held, the arrangements each Councillor makes will vary according to local circumstances and it will be a fortunate Councillor who can find premises for their surgery which meet every aspect of good practice and are also accessible to their constituents. What follows are suggestions about how to make a surgery safe and effective. Most Councillors will go through their entire service on the Council without experiencing any problems, but a little time given to preparation and planning can reduce the already small risk further.

The Basics

1. Do not hold surgeries alone in an otherwise empty building. Try to get someone to act as receptionist. This not only makes you safer but also makes it much easier to manage a busy surgery. If you are currently doing surgeries alone, discuss how this can be changed with fellow Councillors or Council Officers.
2. If you cannot avoid doing surgeries on your own, make sure you remember a few simple guidelines. The layout of the room should suit you, i.e. you should sit nearest to the door with the constituents seated on the other side of the table. Seating is best set out at an angle of 45 degrees (seating directly opposite can be confrontational).
3. If there is no separate waiting room, try to ensure that the waiting constituents are as far as possible away from those whom you are talking to.
4. Make sure there are no heavy items in the room that could be used as weapons.
5. Inform the Police when and where your surgeries are held.
6. If you are at the stage of looking for suitable premises in which to hold a surgery, try to get a space with as many as possible of the following features:
 - Council premises (e.g. community centres) during opening hours or other premises where there are many other people about.
 - Premises where the names of any visitors for Councillors are recorded.

- Premises where there is a comfortable waiting area.
- Try to ensure the surgery (interviewing) room:
- Is in view of the reception or public area.
- Is connected to the reception by an alarm and there is a procedure for dealing with call for assistance.
 - Has a vision panel in the door.
 - Has a swift means of escape and any visitors are not able to lock the door from the inside.

Personal Callers and Home Visits

Most Councillors seek to maintain a balance between their personal and public lives and do not want to encourage any callers at their private homes. Good publicity as to how to contact Councillors and details of ward surgeries reduces the chances of unwanted callers. Councillors may wish to consider whether their personal details (home address/contact number) should remain on the council website when incidents of harassment, abuse and intimidation occur.

Councillors do sometimes visit residents in their homes, especially those who are elderly, disabled or where they simply want to see for themselves the conditions that are the subject of complaints. It is for each Councillor to decide whether a particular visit should be made, especially if the person to be visited is unknown to the Councillor. Most Councillors trust their own instincts as to whether to meet someone alone. Sometimes the Councillor might prefer to be accompanied by a ward colleague or invite the person to a more public place. It is always advisable for you to keep a record of your whereabouts. If necessary, you can let the person whom you are visiting know there is such a record or that you are expected at another place by a certain time, etc., or make a call on your mobile phone during the visit.

Telephone Calls

As with telephone calls, Councillors on rare occasions can become the target of malicious anonymous letters. Any such letters should be given immediately to the Police and reported to the council's Democratic Services team via the incident report.

Malicious and Nuisance Telephone Calls

Councillors occasionally get the odd nuisance or abusive call. Although such calls are likely to be rare, you might become the target of a persistent, anonymous caller with a grudge against the Council. These calls need to be dealt with in accordance with Police advice:

- Keep the caller talking.
- Note any clues the caller may provide as to sex, age, accent, etc.
- Listen for any clues as to the caller's motive and intent.
- Write down the details immediately to assist police at a later stage.
- Listen for background noise that may provide valuable information (e.g. railway sounds, industrial noises, machinery, music, animals).
- Inform the Police.
- Inform the Council.

12. Personal Safety Apps

12.1 Some Members may not have opted to have a personal-safety lone working device. There are a number of different personal safety apps that councillors could download, free of charge, to their mobile devices. The most recommended app, Hollie Guard, is a personal alarm, deterrent and evidence catcher. Every 5 seconds that platform will update your precise location based on your speed and movement activity to identify where you are once an alert has been raised. When raising an alert, the app can automatically start your smartphone's camera and microphone to capture real-time evidence of the situation around you. Your emergency contacts can access this evidence real-time.

12.2 More information can be found here: [Hollie Guard – Personal Safety App](#).

13. General advice on dealing with abuse and intimidation

13.1 Abuse and intimidation can be triggered by particular events, like council decisions, elections, or a misunderstanding of the role and responsibilities of councils and councillors. Perpetrators can be anyone; they may be angry residents, disgruntled members of the public, or activists on a specific issue.

- 13.2 It is normal that individual councillors' resilience to abuse will vary. Some councillors report having an extremely high tolerance to abuse due to past experiences and length of service. However, there is no expectation that councillors should have to accept or tolerate abusive behaviour and not dealing these issues can increase risk to councillor's safety at a later date.
- 13.3 The LGA has developed a set of SHIELD principles. These principles provide councillors with a basic framework on which to base their engagement with the public to reduce the risks and handle incidents if they do occur. These principles can be found [here](#).

14. Online Social Media Safety Guidance and Tips

- 14.1 Social media offers many opportunities for councillors to constructively engage with their communities. Most of the time this is a positive experience. Social media helps you to build a profile, explain complex issues in plain English and to develop a two-way conversation. There are however some pitfalls to be aware of, and the guidance and tips below are produced to help Councillors avoid these and take every step possible to reduce incidents of abuse, harassment and intimidation online.
- 14.2 Code of Conduct
- 14.3 The [Code of Conduct](#) applies to councillors who are, or appear to be, acting in an official capacity, this includes online. As Councillors are aware, the Code does not apply to purely private matters, however, the public may perceive them as acting in an official capacity when it is not their intention. How councillors present their profile online will be important (eg whether or not expressly as a Councillor) but not necessarily conclusive.
- 14.4 Councillors may choose to have two separate accounts, one for private matters and the other for council activities. However, care would still need to be taken to avoid giving the impression of acting as a councillor when using the private account. For example, a discussion about council services or decision-making, even on a 'private' profile, could lead to the conclusion that the Code is engaged. Private profiles that carry a party-political slogan may be more likely to result in the Code being engaged even if council activity is not expressly mentioned.
- 14.5 The particular sections of the Code most likely to give rise to complaints are the requirements to treat others with respect, not to bring the office of Councillor into disrepute and prohibiting the disclosure of confidential information. You should also consider your position carefully as to

whether your online ‘followers’ or ‘friends’ are “close associates”, for the purpose of declaring interests and participation in meetings where their well-being or financial position would be affected.

14.6 Legal Considerations

14.7 The Council owes a duty of care to Members who are the target of such abuse or ‘trolling’, as a result of their being a democratically elected Councillor. There are legal limits, however, as to the action the council may take, in the public interest, where freedom of expression is misused or abused.

14.8 Action to restrict what others may publish should be taken rarely and only after careful consideration of the public interest. When considering this matter, the council should keep in mind the ‘Spitting Image’ test of the acceptable limits of political satire.

14.9 Moreover, Director of Public Prosecution guidance says that any action taken by the Council needs to be ‘necessary and proportionate’. It is also important to recognise that any attempt to remove offending material may spark negative publicity, with the Council criticised for ‘stifling free speech’ or seeking to silence opponents.

14.10 The Council must always be mindful and realistic about the likely impact of taking action – which may have the unintentional effect of re-energising those who post abusive messages on social media – and the need to act in the public interest in protecting the reputation of Cheshire East Council.

14.11 Social Media Etiquette

14.12 ‘Liking’, ‘sharing’ or ‘re-tweeting’ posts could be seen as an endorsement of them. There is no need to respond to everything, and unhelpful online arguments should be avoided.

14.13 Avoid posting about controversial events which may invite disagreement. Be professional, respectful and polite, even (or especially) when corresponding with those who do not return the courtesy. Always consider whether anything you write may be interpreted in a way you do not intend. Promptly admit to mistakes of fact and apologise.

14.14 Avoid using social media when you are tired, angry, upset or when your judgment may be impaired. Be aware that ‘trolling’ posts may be intended to bounce you into an unwise response to be used against you.

14.15 Think carefully about who to ‘follow’ or ‘befriend’ online and be cautious about accepting ‘friend’ requests from anyone under the age of 18. Online

'friendships' with council officers should be avoided as they may compromise the appearance of impartial advice.

14.16 Don't forget to:

- Set a good example to others.
- Check facts before posting.
- Check what you are posting isn't confidential.
- Gain permission before uploading photographs of others.
- Think before you share a post.
- Use humour wisely.
- Dismantle incorrect statements with facts.
- Avoid an immediate reaction whilst you consider your options.
- Contact the poster and ask them to remove their post.
- Request a retraction, correction or apology.
- Report the post to the site moderator.
- If it's a website, contact the web host.
- Seek advice from the Council's Nominated Officer: Councillor Safety (Head of Democratic Services).

14.17 Handling Social Media Abuse, harassment and intimidation

The most important determining factor in deciding how to respond to intimidation is the impact it is having on you. Regardless of what others may think, if it is having an effect on you, then that is sufficient enough for you to take action.

14.18 The Council should normally only take any action where a Member is clearly named in, or is easily identifiable from, the communication in question. The Council will not normally take any action where the target is simply 'the Council'.

14.19 The Council will normally only take action if requested to do so by the targeted Member. However, where material is 'hateful' – in that it discriminates, or encourages discrimination, on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (under the Equality Act 2010) – the Council must consider whether it would be in the public interest to refer the material to the police, notwithstanding the wishes of the person targeted.

14.20 Where a member of the communications team, in the course of their normal work, comes across a tweet/post that is potentially defamatory or clearly meets the criteria of 'abusive behaviour' against an identifiable individual Members, that individual will be informed. The Governance,

Compliance and Monitoring Officer and Head of Democratic Services will also be informed.

14.21 With any abusive or offensive social media posts or tweets there are four options:

- Ignore the post.
- Reply directly to the post (not recommended as it tends to encourage have those who are posting).
- Use the post to inform Comms activity to divert attention away from the conversation/post.
- Report the post as offensive.

14.22 Any X/Facebook account holder can report 'threatening or abusive' social media behaviour to X/Facebook with a view to getting the offending account locked, suspended or specific tweets deleted.

- [How to report a Facebook post.](#)
- [How to block a profile / page on Facebook.](#)
- [How to block/report someone on WhatsApp](#)
- [How to report an abusive message on X.](#)
- [How to block a profile on X.](#)

14.23 A photo can provide personal information that you may not want shared on social media. It is advisable to only publish photos of family, friends and colleagues with your consent and theirs to ensure that photos do not reveal your home or places frequented with family such as schools or care homes. You can disable automatic location tagging so that you have to approve another user including you in their photographs.

- [Manage how others can tag you on Facebook.](#)
- [How to control what others see about you / tag you in on X.](#)

14.24 It can be overwhelming when multiple abusive messages are sent in close succession and this can escalate quickly. You are advised to keep a record of the abuse, inform the social media platform, and the police. If the messages are in response to your original post, you can remove the original post.

14.25 Any intimidation or abuse on social media may constitute a criminal offence. If you feel a post or interaction is intimidating or abusive, and if you feel intimidated, you can take action to report it to the police. Every situation will be different and needs a personal judgement about whether it is worthwhile to pursue the incident, ignore it or politely acknowledge.

- 14.26 Having a social media presence means that people can contact you at any time. It can mean that a reply is expected immediately which can create a sense of pressure. It is useful to set your own rules and limits for how you manage your social media presence, it is suggested that you add these to your page so those accessing information know when to expect responses if required.
- 14.27 The LGA has developed a [guide to tackling online abuse](#) which explores the growing problem of online abuse and attacks. This guide will support Members in knowing how to identify and effectively deal with online abuse.
- 14.28 [Here](#), Members will find a helpful LGA presentation which sets out some tips for handling harassment, abuse and intimidation. It includes steps Members can take to review their social-media privacy settings, screenshots of how to report abuse messages/posts on social media platforms such as WhatsApp and how to take screenshots on your phone/tablet.

15. Support for Councillors

- 15.1 Sometimes interactions with individuals or the public can be stressful, even if you are not directly threatened. Please therefore remember that the Council has a Confidential 'employee' assist programme ('EAP') that **Councillors can use**. Its free and around the clock.
- 15.2 How to access the service.
- By phone: 0800 111 6387 (free 24/7 helpline).
 - Or visit: my-eap.com and log-in using organisation code 'Cheshirewell'
 - Via live web chat: <https://www.vitahealthgroup.co.uk/corporate-health-services/webchat/>
available between 8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 5pm Saturday
- 15.3 Councillors are able to access support from 'Able Futures'. Able Futures is a UK (and UK-wide) government program for those in work whose circumstances or mental health may affect their well-being or work performance. It provides access to around 9 months of mental health support. Generally made up of monthly support sessions. Members may access its services without referral from Cheshire East Council.

[About Able Futures / Able Futures Mental Health Support Service.](#)

16. Training

- 16.1 Personal safety of Councillors is a responsibility of the Local Authority whilst they are on Council business. Therefore, personal safety training for Councillors, including online or social media, is a key component of the councillor induction programme. For further information on the resources and training available to Members, please contact the Senior Member Training and Development Officer.

17. A zero-tolerance approach to persistent abuse, intimidation and harassment

- 17.1 Cheshire East Council has a zero-tolerance approach against harassment, abuse and intimidation. Any reports of harassment, abuse and intimidation will be taken seriously and handled confidentially and sympathetically.
- 17.2 If you feel that you are being harassed, abused or intimidated, it is important that you report the incident (via the Incident Reporting Form – non emergencies) to raise the matter formally with the Nominated Officer – Councillor Safety (Head of Democratic Services). The Nominated Officer will provide advice as to whether they feel a criminal offence may have been committed, and will direct councillors to support/guidance available, including this Councillor Safety Protocol.

Additional Resources / Useful Links

LGA: General advice on handling abuse and intimidation.	General advice on handling abuse and intimidation Local Government Association
LGA: Guide to tackling online abuse.	Guide to tackling online abuse Local Government Association
LGA: Debate Not Hate Ending Abuse in Public Life for Councillors	Debate Not Hate: Ending abuse in public life for councillors Local Government Association
LGA: Managing Online Abuse and Intimidation	Miranda Smythe LGA Managing Online Abuse and Intimidation October 2024 (3).pdf
LGA: Social Media Guidance for Councillors	Social media guidance for councillors Local Government Association

LGA: Practical advice for handling psychological abuse and impact on wellbeing.	Practical advice for handling psychological abuse and impact on wellbeing Local Government Association
LGA: Basics on communicating with residents, colleagues and officers	Basics on communicating with residents, colleagues and officers Local Government Association
LGA: Practical advice for handling physical abuse and personal security	Practical advice for handling physical abuse and personal security Local Government Association
Cheshire Police: Support for victims and witnesses of stalking or harassment	Support for victims and witnesses of stalking or harassment Cheshire Constabulary
Cheshire Police: Report a Crime	Report a crime Cheshire Constabulary