

Call Centre Workers

abuse is not
part of the job



“One customer phoned twelve times after being declined an Insurance policy using sexual terms and abusive language to agents. Our employer did send him a letter to state his behaviour was unacceptable but it should have been a police matter.”

Be prepared

It is important that employers work out how to deal with such calls in consultation with the call handlers themselves – so that they are prepared for them before they have to deal with them.

- Does your employer make it clear that you do not have to put up with abusive calls?
- Are call handlers allowed to terminate calls if they are abusive?
- Do team leaders provide support to call handlers when there is an abusive call?
- Are all call handlers trained on the procedure for dealing with abusive or threatening calls?
- Are call handlers given the opportunity to take a break after a difficult call?
- Are the procedures regularly reviewed at safety committee meetings?

In serious or persistent cases of abuse there are laws which the police can use to bring criminal charges against the abuser. Under the Communications Act 2003 and the Malicious Communications Act 1988 it is an offence to send a message through electronic communications which is grossly offensive, obscene or menacing. The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 can also be used for repeat offenders. It gives powers to issue restraining orders against the harasser. So your employer's procedures should identify when it is appropriate to report offences to the police.

