

APPENDIX 2 – EXAMPLE OF PROCESS FOR TERMINATING VERBALLY ABUSIVE TELEPHONE CALLS

Telephone verbal abuse is not always seen as a serious issue but any abusive behaviour, including verbal abuse, can have serious long term effects on the health and wellbeing of staff.

Verbal abuse is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Some triggers for telephone rage include:

- Calls not being answered timeously
- Insincerity
- Being treated impersonally
- Lack of authority
- Rudeness of staff
- Denied access to a member of staff
- Appointment delay or cancellation

If, when you are on the telephone, you feel you are being verbally abused, you should take the following steps:

- Do not panic
- Try not to lose your temper or be tempted to react with a similar response
- Try not to take the remarks personally
- Clearly state to the caller you are not willing to be spoken to in an abusive manner, and although you would like to assist, you will be unable to do so should the abuse continue, and will have no option but to terminate the call
- If the abuse continues, end the call

- Ensure the incident is reported and inform your manager

Staff should be assured that terminating a call is not viewed as lack of ability and will not be penalised for ending abusive calls.

If abusive/ malicious calls persist within a particular area, calls should be monitored. A short message prior to calls being answered can be recorded, informing the caller that their conversations are being monitored.

Persistent malicious calls will be escalated for Police response.

Further information can be found on Scottish Government CD-rom “Dealing with Phone Rage” and from the Health and Safety Service.

All Health and Safety policies including the policies on Violence and Aggression and Lone Working can be found on Staffnet www.staffnet.ggc.scot.nhs.uk and following the links to Health and Safety from Info Centre.