

Customer Behaviour Procedures (Libraries)

Created: February 2026

Last review date:

Next review date: February 2028

Related information available publicly

[Customer care standards | South Gloucestershire Council](#) - includes information for the public on how to make a complaint and the Council's complaints procedure

[Library Byelaws](#) – can be downloaded from the website

[Open Access Terms and Conditions](#)

[Library Computers Acceptable Usage Policy](#) – viewed when logging into a public computer

[Zero-Tolerance-Posters](#) on display in libraries

Purpose

The purpose of this document is:

- to support a safe and welcoming place for all customers and staff
- to provide clear information for staff managing unacceptable behaviour
- to provide clarity for customers about what is unacceptable behaviour in libraries
- to provide clarity for customer on our response to unacceptable behaviour in libraries
- to ensure any incidents are handled appropriately, consistently and effectively by management
- to demonstrate sensitivity to users who have challenging behaviour that may arise from other circumstances including some disabilities/learning difficulties or home and personal circumstances where the behaviour is not necessarily deliberate

What constitutes unacceptable behaviour in libraries

- violent, aggressive physical or verbal abuse threatening behaviour towards staff, other library users building or contents
- ignoring reasonable requests from staff
- infringement of library byelaws
- infringement of Open Access Terms and Conditions
- infringement of Acceptable Usage Policy when using library computers or wi-fi

Staff and manager actions in cases of unacceptable behaviour

The action taken by managers will depend on the nature and severity of the incident and any previous incidents. Wherever possible, actions will first be discussed and agreed with a Library Manager. If this is not possible, managers will be informed via email following the incident.

Actions

A verbal warning to explain why behaviour is unacceptable can be issued at time of incident by any staff who are present.

If the behaviour continues, in consultation with a Library Supervisor or Librarian, the customer can be:

- a) asked to leave the library for the remainder of the day, or
- b) asked to leave the library and banned from returning for a defined period

- if resulting in a ban, the incident is reported as violence and aggression via the Council's designated portal and the customer advised in writing
- if deemed serious enough, the incident is reported to the police – essential if involves physical assault

If the behaviour stops and no follow up action is required staff record as near miss on the Council's designated portal

Staff and manager actions in cases of misuse of services

Open Access

When customers register for the Open Access service they agree to our Open Access Terms and Conditions. Any deliberate infringements of these terms and conditions will result in the immediate removal of the privilege.

Any infringement of these terms and conditions judged to be unintended or accidental will result in a warning letter.

ICT

Use of public computers is governed by our Acceptable Use Policy which customers agree to every time they sign in to the service. It clearly states the Prohibited Uses and the Penalties for Misuse. Customers agree to the Acceptable Usage Policy the first time they login to the library Wi-Fi on their personal device.

Any breach or suspected breach is managed according to our procedure:

- initial 6 month suspension of computer use for investigation
- the suspension may be lifted earlier if investigation is completed and no infringement occurred
- after 6 months – suspension will be lifted if investigation complete and no infringement occurred. If investigation ongoing, suspension will be extended. If investigation complete and infringement occurred, suspension will become a ban from using the computers

The service user is advised in writing at every stage

Digital Champions no shows

Our Digital Champions are all volunteering their time to provide 1:1 support. We will support our digital champions by valuing their time and avoiding wasted trips.

Whilst not unacceptable behaviour, if clients do not turn up to two appointments without cancelling in advance, we will warn them that we will restrict future appointments. If clients repeatedly cancel appointments in advance or not turn up, then we will stop accepting their bookings.

Lengths of bans

Bans are for different periods dependent on the severity of the incident. A first ban is usually for three months. Any subsequent bans can be for any period from 3 months up to 3 years. In exceptional circumstances a lifetime ban can be implemented, however this can be reviewed once per calendar year on the request of the banned individual.

Open Access:

An Open Access ban is usually for 12 months. After which reapplication for registration can be made with the local library. Consideration will be given at this point to the nature of the behaviour which led to the ban and whether it presents a significant health and safety risk to other extended access users. We will also consider the likelihood of re-occurrence by reviewing the minor incident log for the local library and checking whether there has been any evidence of repeated behaviour.

Neighbouring LibrariesWest authorities may be approached when considering any re-applications. If the re-application is rejected, then there will be a subsequent opportunity in 12 months' time, at which point a decision will be made to either permanently revoke Open Access or re-instate it.

In exceptional circumstances a lifetime ban can be implemented, however this can be reviewed once per calendar year on the request of the banned individual.

ICT Use:

A first ban from using ICT services is usually for up to three years. In exceptional circumstances a lifetime ban can be implemented, however this can be reviewed once per calendar year on the request of the banned individual.

Notification of a warning or ban

The Library Management Team will issue all Library warnings and bans via email if email address known, and post where the address is known on instruction from Library Services Manager

In severe enough cases, the Management team to decide the best way to inform the recipient – they are encouraged to use all tools available to them locally, such as Police Community Support Officers (PCSO).

All warning and banning letters to include:

- date and time of incident
- explanation of behaviour and why it is unacceptable
- the type and length of sanction – including end date
- provision for alternative format if requested (this may include translation where applicable).
- all banning letters to include information on how to appeal the ban
- where a ban is for more than one year, include information on their right to request a review after 12 months

Where the recipient of a letter is a minor, a copy of the letter will also be sent to the parent/guardian of the minor where possible.

In circumstances where the recipient is deemed vulnerable then the Library Services Manager will involve the relevant agencies and carers where appropriate.

Appeals process

Anyone can appeal a ban and this needs to be done in writing. This is all made clear in the banning letter and all appeals are reviewed, considered and replied to in a timely manner.

Record keeping

All records to be kept and archived after 1 year following the completion of a ban. Archived records will be kept for 6 years plus the current year.

A rolling record of current bans to be kept on 'Banning Record' document which will be maintained by Library Team Manager and information shared locally as appropriate.