Serco launches ‘Respect and Protect’ Campaign for employees delivering local services

7 March 2019

Serco is launching a new zero tolerance policy towards any violence, aggression and abuse directed against our people delivering front line local services. The ‘Respect and Protect’ campaign was launched by Serco with representatives from the unions and our customers at an event at Serco’s Environmental Services depot, part of our contract with the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, in South West London. The event was also attended by representatives of Serco’s cycle hire contract with Transport for London and our parking enforcement contract with Brent Council.

Serco’s employees deliver a range of front-line local services across the UK, including waste and recycling collection, street cleaning and landscaping, parking enforcement, call handling, leisure centre management and providing cycle hire schemes.

In the last year alone, Serco employees delivering these services were subjected to 350 reported incidents of unacceptable behaviour, including assault, threats with weapons and verbally abuse. These incidents included:

- employees threatened with knives and on one occasion a gun
- leisure centre employees being physically attacked and verbally abused
- call centre employees suffering insults, verbal intimidation, abuse and threats
- a number of occasions where waste and recycling collection teams have been subjected to assault as well as abuse and threats, from irate and disgruntled motorists
- reckless and dangerous driving on pavements, around refuse vehicles, resulting, in collisions with employees
- lone workers, including parking enforcement officers and street cleaners regularly being the recipients of unwarranted threats, assaults and foul language

A Charter of Protection has been agreed between Serco and our customers, including the many local authorities that we work with, respective unions and the police. The Charter aims to raise awareness and increase understanding of violence, aggression and abuse at work, and to provide a framework of response to identify, prevent and manage such issues. These measures include fostering a culture of zero tolerance, encouraging reporting, supporting police investigations where appropriate, and non-acceptance of unwarranted behaviour, together with specific training and support.

The ‘Respect and Protect’ Campaign was successfully piloted last year when Serco and Sandwell Council in the West Midlands joined unions and police in a unified approach to reduce the increasing number of employees on
our Environmental Services contract being subjected to assaults, threats, abusive and insulting behaviour by members of the public.

Liz Yates, Operations Director, Serco Citizen Services said:

“It is completely unacceptable that our people should be subjected to violence, aggression and abuse at work.

“Serco, our customers and unions have a common shared interest in preventing threats and acts of violence. Serco’s ‘Respect and Protect’ campaign is being launched in a joint approach to ensuring that the risks of encountering violence and aggressive behaviour at work are assessed, prevented, and if encountered, addressed appropriately.

“We will not hesitate to report incidents to the police and support prosecutions. We will work with our partners and enforcement agencies to support our employees; they deserve to be respected and protected and we must collectively do all we can to ensure that everyone goes home safely.”

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