

Ending abuse in Public
Life
Developing **a toolkit** for local
councils

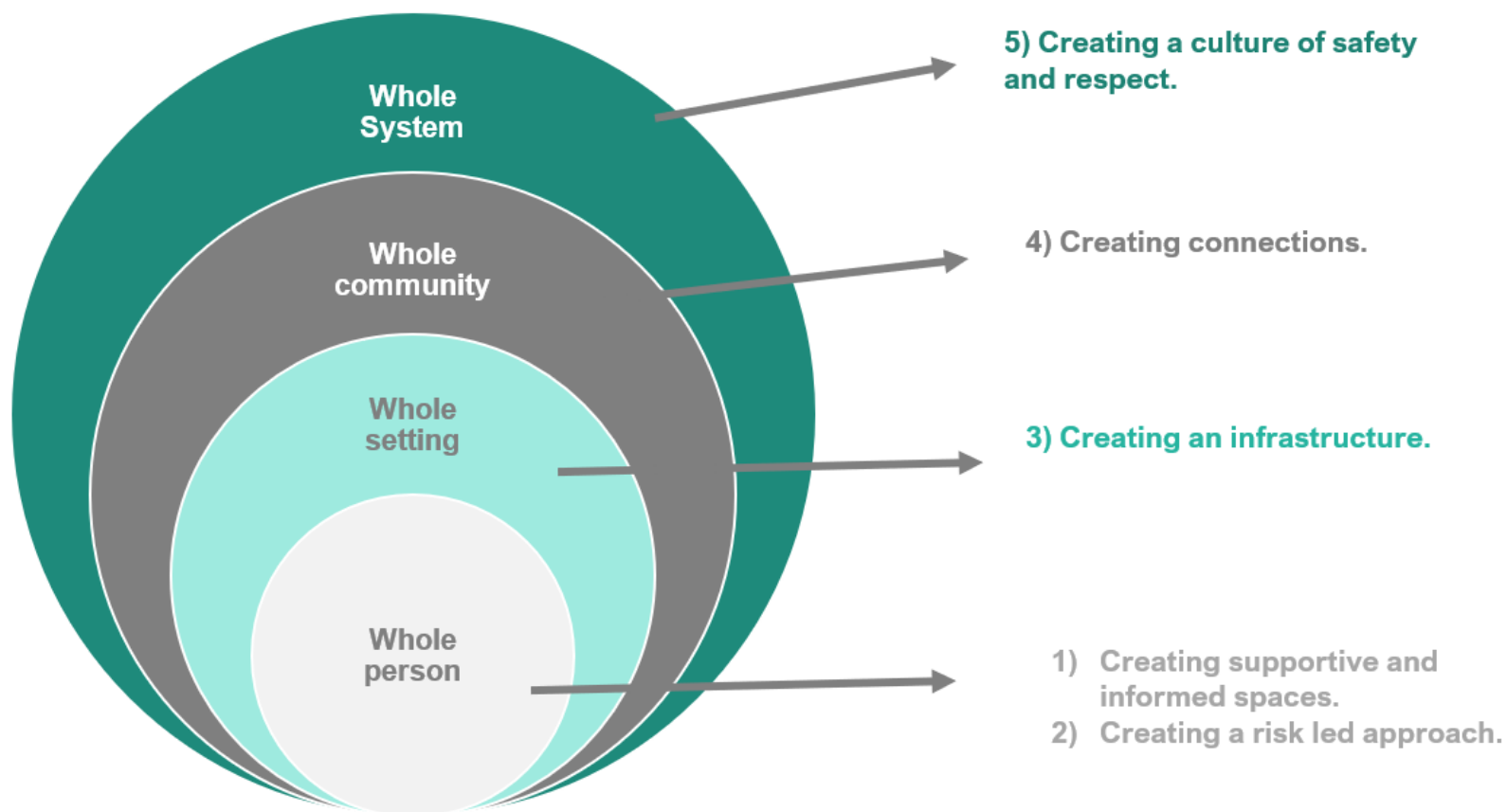
Toolkit launch

3rd June 2024



Ending abuse in public Life toolkit

Aim: To provide a practical tool for councils to self-assess their progress in relation to arrangements and support designed to prevent and tackle abuse and intimidation of councillors, utilising the learning from the Debate Not Hate report.



Toolkit structure

1. Introduction
2. Creating supportive and informed spaces
3. Creating a risk-led approach
4. Creating an infrastructure
5. Creating connections.
6. Creating a culture of safety and respect
7. Summary and forward plan

Principle			Total score	Evidence
Statement			___ / 10	
	0: Not Addressed	1: Partial	2: Comprehensive	

Creating supportive and informed spaces

Prioritise councillor wellbeing: Recognise and consider how your council can support councillor wellbeing and address the negative impacts of personal attacks and hurtful commentaries				Total score ___ / 10	Evidence
Statement	0: Not Addressed	1: Partial	2: Comprehensive		
We recognise and acknowledge the impact of abuse and intimidation on councillor wellbeing, ensuring that support services and resources are readily available and accessible.					
We prioritise councillor wellbeing by establishing regular and meaningful engagement opportunities where councillors can openly discuss their concerns and access support services as needed, ensuring they feel supported and valued.					
We promote a culture of self-care among councillors, encouraging boundary setting, stress management techniques, and healthy coping strategies.					
We equip and resource council staff to identify signs of distress in councillors and offer appropriate advice to support their personal wellbeing.					
We regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the wellbeing support program, soliciting feedback from councillors and stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and enhancement.					

Creating a risk led approach

Identifying and mitigating risk: Consider broad risks across our political landscape as well as empowering individual councillors' so we can work together to proactively identify risks through dynamic and periodic risk assessments.				Total score ___ / 10	Evidence
Statement	0: Not Addressed	1: Partial	2: Comprehensive		
We equip councillors with the skills and resources to conduct their own risk assessments, empowering them to assess their role, responsibilities, visibility, and personal circumstances and flag when they need support from officers.					
We provide councillors with guidance and advice to mitigate against specific risks identified through their own risk assessment.					
We encourage and facilitate open communication and collaboration between councillors and council staff to identify and escalate significant emerging risks, fostering a culture of transparency and shared responsibility in risk management.					
We offer additional individual risk assessment and mitigation support to councillors if higher risks are identified, ensuring that their safety and wellbeing are prioritised.					
We continuously monitor and review the effectiveness of risk mitigation measures, including as part of post incident reviews, soliciting feedback from councillors and stakeholders to adapt strategies as needed and ensure ongoing safety and wellbeing.					

Creating an infrastructure

Clarity of process and responsibility: Clearly define the process for raising concerns and assign responsible individuals within the council to provide support to councillors. This includes collaboration across Local Authority tiers where relevant				Total score	Evidence
				___ / 10	
Statement	0: Not Addressed	1: Partial	2: Comprehensive		
We have established a clear process for raising concerns related to abuse or intimidation, including the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders.					
We assign specific individuals within the council, such as designated safeguarding officers or welfare leads, to provide support and guidance to councillors who experience abuse.					
We ensure that councillors have access to comprehensive information about available support and how the council will handle reports of abuse, including communication channels and points of contact.					
We equip and resource council staff to provide support to councillors who experience abuse and help them to navigate the reporting process.					
We regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of the process, soliciting feedback from councillors and stakeholders to identify areas for improvement.					

Creating connections

Relationships with local police (and wider partners as relevant): Proactively develop strong relationships with the police to enhance coordination and foster mutual understanding of abuse affecting councillors and the role of police in addressing it.				Total score	Evidence
				___ / 10	
Statement	0: Not Addressed	1: Partial	2: Comprehensive		
We establish regular communication channels and liaison arrangements with local police forces to facilitate collaboration on issues related to abuse affecting councillors.					
We provide councillors and council staff with clear advice on the role of the police in addressing abuse and the process for engaging with law enforcement agencies.					
We promote mutual understanding and trust between councillors, council staff, and local police officers through various joint initiatives. This collaborative approach enhances coordination and fosters a shared understanding of addressing abuse affecting councillors.					
We have established approaches for sharing information and intelligence related to serious instances of abuse, harassment, and threats, ensuring compliance with data protection and confidentiality requirements. This information exchange enables us to identify patterns and flag potential escalation, facilitating timely intervention and support for councillors facing abuse and intimidation.					
We establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the partnership with local police, including regular meetings and feedback sessions to continually make improvements.					

Creating a culture of safety and respect

Zero-tolerance approach to abuse: Establish and enforce a local approach that clearly outlines expectations for interactions and promotes respectful debate.			Total score	Evidence
			___ / 10	
Statement	0: Not Addressed	1: Partial	2: Comprehensive	
We have developed a shared understanding with councillors, which we promote publicly, as to what constitutes abuse and intimidation and clarified actions the council may take to address abuse of councillors.				
We actively promote respectful debate and constructive engagement among councillors, council staff, and the wider community, fostering an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect across all interactions.				
We have effectively communicated and equipped councillors to communicate clear expectations for interactions, wherever they take place, between councillors and the public that prioritise inclusive, respectful, and constructive dialogue.				
We provide ongoing awareness campaigns and training initiatives to equip councillors and council staff with the skills to identify, address, and prevent abusive behaviour effectively, fostering a culture of accountability and support.				
We regularly evaluate our practices and procedures to ensure alignment with evolving standards and best practices, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and adaptation to effectively address abuse and intimidation within our organisation.				