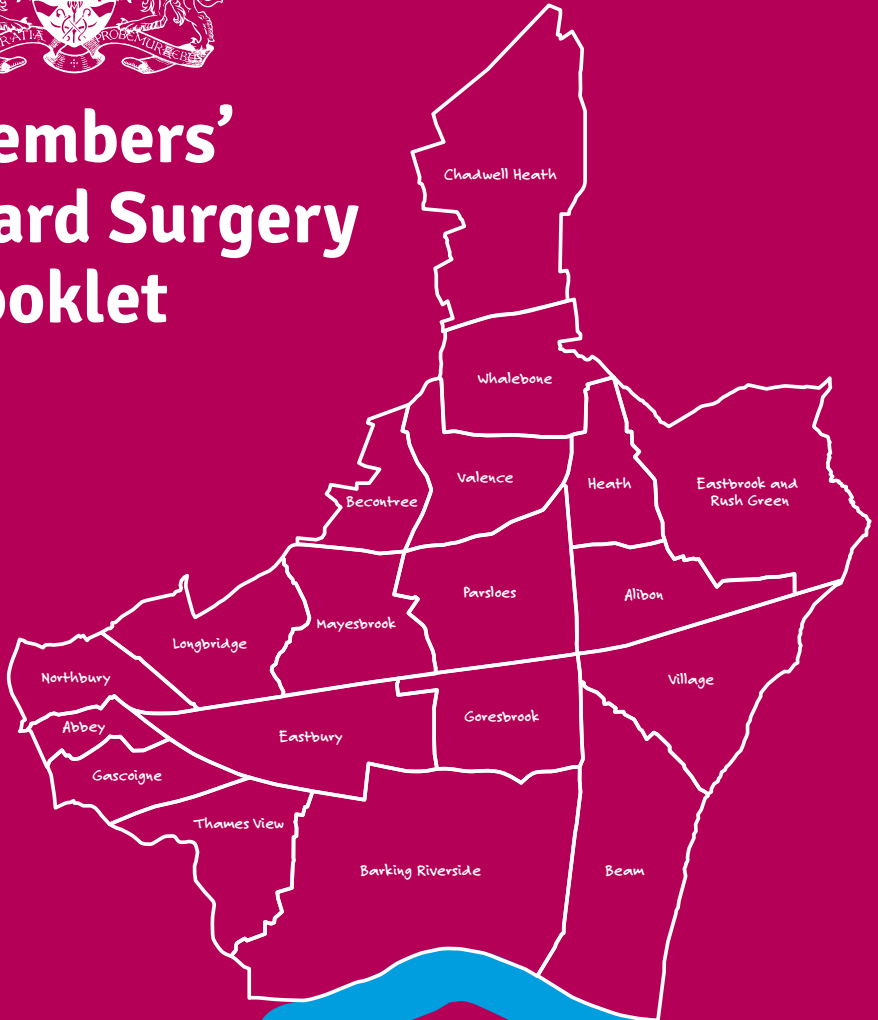




**Barking &
Dagenham**

Members' Ward Surgery Booklet



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Personal Safety Tips

It is an unfortunate fact that members can face violence and aggression including verbal aggression, threats and harassment while conducting their surgery. In this section, we will cover tips and tricks on how to deal with challenging or potentially violent situations.



1.1 The Basics

Please read through the basics list below and ensure they have all been done before you hold your surgery:

1. Do not hold surgeries alone in an empty building. Make sure there is someone in the building with you at all times, either other colleagues or the premises staff;
2. Inform your colleagues, the Labour Group Support Officer and Governance Services of when you are holding your surgeries, time, and location;
3. Make sure there are no heavy items within the room that could be used as a weapon;
4. Make sure you have a mobile phone with you at all times, or access to a landline;
5. Make sure you have contact details of your other ward councillors;
6. If you have a car, make sure you park as close as you can to the premises entrance; and
7. If a threat has been made against you no matter how minor you may perceive it, inform your ward colleagues and the Monitoring Officer of the threat straight away. The Monitoring Officer will assess the situation and decide the best course of action to take in order to protect yourself.

1.2 Spotting Warning and Danger Signs

Spotting warning and danger signs can help reduce or stop the risk of challenging situations. You would need to look out for **STAMP** behaviours:

Staring: prolonged glaring at you;

Tone: loud, argumentative, sharp and sarcastic when talking to you;

Anxiety: having a flushed face, heavy breathing, and rapid speech;

Muttering: talking under their breath, mimicking you or criticizing you; and

Pacing: walking up and down and into areas that are off limits.

Other signs to look out for are:

- Huffing and puffing;
- Aggressive body language such as exaggerated movements, clenching of fists; and
- Tensing of the body.

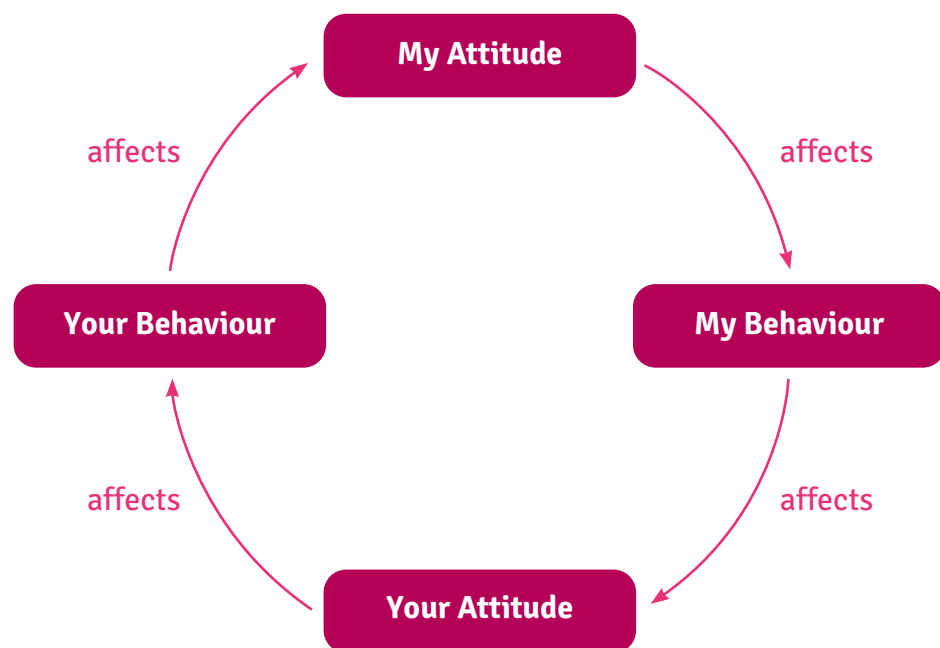
1.3 Understanding your Attitudes

When conducting your surgery, you must bear in mind that your attitudes and behaviours can have an impact on the attitudes and behaviours of others around you.

Example:

When you are feeling motivated and positive, you may smile and compliment others which can have a significant effect on the emotions of others around you. The same principle can be said regarding residents' attitudes and behaviours towards you.

The Betari Box model below is a simple model that helps explain this better:



1.4 Communication

LEAPS Model

One way you can tackle any difficult situation is through communication. One model of communication to keep in mind when searching for a dispute resolution is “LEAPS”.

Listen: to what the other person has to say.

Empathize: with the other person by trying to understand their feelings.

Ask: ask questions for more information from that person, ask questions such as who, what, when where and why.

Paraphrase: repeat what you heard back to the individual to show them that you have been listening and understand what they said. Use phrases such as: “let me make sure I have the details correctly, you said...”

Summarize: give possible solutions to the situation, such as referring them to a council service who would better deal with the situation. For example: “from what you have told me, I will contact...”.

L	listen
E	empathise
A	ask
P	paraphrase
S	summarise



Five Step Appeal

If you find yourself in a standstill situation with residents, one model you can use to steer the situation to the result you want to achieve is the Five Step Appeal:

- 1. Simple Appeal:** ask the resident to comply with your request. For example: “Please calm down and stop shouting at me or I will need to walk away.”
- 2. Reasoned Appeal:** explain to the resident why you have made the request. For example: “I can see that you are upset, however I cannot help in resolving the issue while you are shouting at me.”
- 3. Personal Appeal:** remind the person of the implication to them personally such as what they can lose or potentially gain if they comply with your request. For example: “if you can stop shouting, we could potentially resolve the issue today which is what we both want. However, if you continue to shout at me, I will need to walk away.”
- 4. Final Appeal:** at this stage you would need to confirm to the resident that this is their last chance to comply. For example: “I’m sorry, but this is the last chance I will give you to please stop shouting or I will walk away.”
- 5. Action:** this will be the action you would need to take such as walking away.

1.5 Emergency Contact Details

Emergency Services:
Call 999

Monitoring Officer
Alison Stuart
alison.stuart@lbbd.gov.uk

Governance Services
member.support@lbbd.gov.uk

Members' Casework

A vital part of your role as a Councillor is to deal with issues and concerns raised by your residents. Residents can raise concerns to you by phone, email, surgeries and even on the street. This section will help guide you through handling casework.



2.1 Information Needed

When you receive casework from a resident, it is important for you to get as much information as possible to gain a better understanding of the issue. Please remember to make a note of the following:

1. Full name of the resident
2. The address of the resident
3. Contact information of the resident (phone and email)
4. Details of the issue (As much information as possible)
5. Names and/or addresses of other involved parties.

2.1 Raising Casework

Feedback Team

The Feedback Team is a dedicated team at the council who will ensure you will receive a response from officers within 10 working days. In instances where the case response time is longer than expected, you will be informed of a new response date.

To raise casework with the Feedback Team, you will first need to report the casework via email or phone. The contact details for the Feedback Team are below:

- Email: members.feedback@lbbd.gov.uk or
- Phone: **020 8724 8989**

You should receive an acknowledgment from the team within 24 hours of the casework being raised with a full response provided within 10 working. There may be instances in which the response time is longer. In cases like this, you will be informed of a new response date.

My B&D

Any instances involving service requests should be raised via My B&D Portal. This includes the following:

- Viewing their Council Tax account;
- Apply for Housing Benefit or Council Tax support;
- Report environmental health or waste issues such as fly-tipping; or
- Report a missed bin collection or requesting a bulky waste collection.

This can be done by the resident or you yourself using your council email address. The website link is below:

My B&D portal

<https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/my-bd-help>

Casework Do's and Don'ts



Do's

- ✓ **Do** use your council device to log Service Requests through My Account & encourage residents to do the same.
- ✓ **Do** raise all casework requests on your council device through to **members.feedback@lbbd.gov.uk**
- ✓ **Do** only send your requests to this address and not to officers (and do not CC in officers) as this can cause confusion and slow up response times.
- ✓ **Do** expect that the council will respond to you, the Member, and not to the resident, it is the responsibility of the Member to liaise directly with the resident.
- ✓ **Do** expect the council to answer at least 90% of cases within 10 days. Some cases, due to their complexity can take longer to investigate and respond to; you will always be advised when this is the case.
- ✓ **Do** accept that if you refer a case that is already being dealt with (e.g. as a complaint) then the council won't also take it as members casework.



Don'ts

- ✗ **Don't** submit casework for issues for which there is a right of appeal or legal remedy following the advice that was given on the induction day, e.g. a penalty charge notice, parking ticket, school admissions, housing benefits and planning applications etc.
- ✗ **Don't** submit casework for human resources issues about former and/or existing staff, including appointments, dismissals, pay, pensions and discipline, send to the Head of Paid Service
- ✗ **Don't** submit casework for concerns or issues with freedom of information and data protection issues/ subject access requests as these are dealt with by the Office of the Information Commissioner. <https://ico.org.uk/>
- ✗ **Don't** copy in officers when sending a response to a resident.



Data Protection

The Data Protection Act controls how people's personal information is used by organisations, businesses, or the government. The act applies to councillors in the same way that it does to council employees.

As a councillor, you are considered as a Data Controller. It is your responsibility to ensure that personal data must be kept secure. Misuse of personal data is a punishable offence and can land the council with a hefty fine.

At times, when dealing with someone's casework, you may have a third party such as a family member or a friend of the person whose case you are dealing with contact you for an update. Although their intention may be innocent, **sharing information with a third party is a breach of data protection.**

Please remember to only give out information to the resident whose case you have taken up. The resident can give consent to share their information with a third party, however this consent must be given in the form of written authorisation before information is shared.

Surgery Premises Health and Safety Checklist

Councillor Name:

Date of assessment:

Ward:

Premises Name:

Premises Address:

	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Premises Facilities				
Is there parking available at the premises?				
Are there toilets and washing facilities at the premises?				
Does the premises have heating and cooling facilities?				
Does the premises offer WiFi?				
Does the premises offer the use of IT equipment such as computers?				
Does the premises offer chairs for yourself and residents to sit in?				
Access to the Premises				
Is there disabled parking available at the premises?				
Is the premises easily accessible by public transport such as buses and trains?				
Is there step-free access into and throughout the premises?				
Are the doors and hallways wide enough for wheelchairs to pass through?				
Is there enough space to seat wheelchairs users and/or users of other assistance aids such as walking frames?				
Are floor surfaces to and within the premises slip resistant and even?				
Are there disabled toilets and washing facilities at the premises?				
Health and Safety				
Are the exits clearly marked and kept clear at all times?				
Does the premises have and display escape routes?				
Are there fire doors throughout the premises?				

	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Are there firefighting appliances at the premises such as fire extinguishers?				
Are there working smoke alarms and Carbon Monoxide detectors located at the premises?				
Is there a fully equipped and accessible first aid box at the premises?				
Is the premises, including stairwells and corridors well lit?				
Is there adequate natural light?				
Do you know the capacity of the premises, including both standing and seating?				
Are noise levels acceptable or are adequate controls implemented to mitigate to an acceptable level?				
Is there an adequate supply of fresh air such as windows?				
Are floors and stairs in good condition and kept dry and clear of obstructions?				
Are trailing leads and cables secured or covered?				
Personal Health and Safety				
Does the premise have good signal?				
Is there a working phone in the premises that you can use?				
Will there be other colleagues or premises staff present during your surgery?				
Would there be enough room to space yourself away from residents?				
Does the premises offer security such as CCTV, locked doors etc.?				
Is there any PPE available at the premises such as hand sanitizers?				



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