

Report on Employing Toilet Attendants to Combat Vandalism, Anti-Social Behaviour, and Graffiti

Introduction:

The presence of toilet attendants has become a topic of discussion in urban areas as a potential solution for mitigating vandalism, anti-social behaviour, and graffiti in public restrooms. This report evaluates the pros and cons of employing toilet attendants specifically for the facilities at Devonshire Square, Channel View East, and East Parade, recommending a staffing model of two personnel working a rolling shift of four days on and four days off, with single manning.

Pros of Employing Toilet Attendants

1. Reduction of Vandalism:

Toilet attendants can act as a deterrent against vandalism. Their presence can discourage individuals from engaging in destructive behaviour, knowing that someone is monitoring the area. This could lead to a significant reduction in repair costs associated with damage.

2. Mitigation of Anti-Social Behaviour Having an attendant present can help manage and prevent anti-social behaviour, such as drug use, loitering, or disruptive activity within the facility. A dedicated staff member can address issues promptly, creating a safer environment for all users.

3. Maintenance of Cleanliness: Toilet attendants can ensure the cleanliness and hygiene of restroom facilities. Regular maintenance checks can lead to improved user satisfaction, as clean facilities are more likely to be respected and less likely to attract vandalism.

4. Improved User Experience. With a dedicated staff member available, users may feel safer and more comfortable using the facilities. This can encourage more people to use the restrooms without hesitation, enhancing the overall experience of the public space.

Cons of Employing Toilet Attendants

Cost Implications:

1. Employing toilet attendants involves ongoing costs, including wages, training, and possible benefits. This could be viewed as an inefficient allocation of resources, especially if the reduction in vandalism and anti-social behaviour is not significant enough to offset these costs.

2. Limited Effectiveness of Single Manning. Single manning may limit the effectiveness of toilet attendants. In high-traffic or larger facilities, one attendant may struggle to monitor activities effectively, leaving gaps that could be exploited by individuals' intent on vandalism or anti-social behaviour.

3. Potential for Conflict:

Toilet attendants may encounter aggressive or confrontational individuals. This could put the staff member at risk and may result in incidents that could undermine the primary purpose of their role—creating a safe environment.

Dependence on Human Resources Reliance on human personnel may lead to challenges, such as absenteeism due to illness or other personal reasons. This could result in inconsistent coverage, risking a resurgence of the issues intended to be mitigated.

Proposed Staffing Model

Combining the above factors suggests a staffing model of two toilet attendants working a rolling shift of four days on and four days off. This model ensures consistency in coverage while providing staff with adequate rest and recovery. However, consideration should be given to the challenges of single manning, indicating a potential need for a second staff member during peak times or in particularly busy locations.

Financial Implications

Information based on the current cleaning contractor providing the attendant.

The Attendant would be based at Channel View East and carry out spot checks at East parade and Devonshire Square; this would include cleaning as required. The cost of the Attendant is £20.01 per hour including Wages, employers NI, Insurance, payroll levies, consumables and overheads.

The cost for 84 hours per week in the summer and 70 hours per week in the winter will be an annual charge of £80,126.36.

The mobile crew would still be in place for the other public toilet locations. The cleaning contract for the remaining locations is still subject to agreement of Full Council as part of the 2026-2027 budget setting process.

Conclusion and recommendations

To recommend that the council begins employing toilet attendants to cover 3 of public facilities which can offer significant benefits in combating vandalism, anti-social behaviour, and graffiti. However, the associated costs and the limitations of single manning must be carefully considered. A balanced approach that includes regular assessment and potential adjustments to the staffing model may provide the best outcome for the facilities at Devonshire Square, Channel View East, and East Parade.

