

POLICY ON UNREASONABLE COMPLAINANT BEHAVIOUR

Generally

The Council is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and to providing a high quality service to those who make them. As part of this service the Council does not normally limit the contact complainants have with it.

Unreasonable behaviour

However the Council does not expect its staff to tolerate behaviour by complainants which is unreasonable, for example, which is abusive, offensive or threatening, and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour.

When the Council considers that a complainant's behaviour is unreasonable the complainant will be told why their behaviour is unreasonable and will be asked to change it. If the unreasonable behaviour continues, action will be taken to restrict the complainant's contact with the Council.

Decision to restrict access

The decision to restrict access will be taken at Director level or above.

Restrictions which may be imposed

Any restrictions imposed will be appropriate and proportionate. The options most likely to be considered are:

- requesting contact in a particular form (for example, letters only);
- requiring contact to take place with a named officer;
- restricting telephone calls to specified days and times; and/or
- asking the complainant to enter into an agreement about their conduct.

Notification in writing

In all cases complainants will be informed in writing why it is believed that their behaviour is unreasonable, what action is being taken and the duration of that action. Complainants will also be told how they can challenge the decision if they disagree with it.

Ordinarily, the relevant local ward councillor, as the Member of the Council responsible for the part of the district in which the complainant resides, will be notified of any decision taken under this policy.

Terminating contact with a complainant

Where a complainant continues to behave in a way which is unreasonable, the Council may decide to terminate contact with that complainant.

Extreme unreasonable behaviour

Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of the Council's staff, we will consider other options, for example reporting the matter to the police or taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give a complainant prior warning of that action.

New complaints

New complaints from people who have come under the unreasonable complainant behaviour policy will be treated on their merits.