

## Unreasonable Behaviour Policy

Our service is independent and impartial and we believe that complainants have a right to be heard, understood and respected; and we work hard to be open and accessible.

Occasionally, however, the behaviour or actions of individuals using our service makes it very difficult for us to deal with their complaint; and in a small number of cases, the actions become unacceptable because they involve abuse of our staff or our process. When this happens, we have to take action to protect our staff. We also have to consider the impact of the behaviour on our ability to do our work and provide a service to others. This policy explains how we will approach these situations.

We understand that many complainants are angry about the issues they have raised in their complaint. However, we do not tolerate unreasonable behaviour or actions towards our staff. For the avoidance of doubt, we would regard aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable levels of contact and/or harassment of our staff, and the making of unreasonable demands as examples of unreasonable behaviour. It is important to note that it is how the person who is subject to the behaviour is made to feel, not whether the behaviour was intended, that matters.

Any member of our staff who directly experiences aggressive or abusive behaviour, has the authority to deal immediately with that behaviour in a manner they consider appropriate to the situation and in line with this policy. This may include terminating or declining to accept telephone calls.

Any such experience of unacceptable actions by a complainant will also be brought to the attention of a senior director, who may authorise further action, including restricting any future contact from the complainant to written correspondence only, or even deciding to have no further dealings with the individual concerned. In every instance, we will try to ensure that any action we take is the minimum required to solve the problem, taking into account relevant personal circumstances including the seriousness of the complaint and the needs of the individual.

We will always tell the complainant in writing what action we are taking and why. We will also record all incidents of unacceptable actions by complainants.

CEDR administered ADR services include:

