

## What we consider unacceptable

### **Aggressive or abusive behaviour**

Our staff should be able to do their jobs without experiencing written or verbal abuse, harassment, aggression or violence.

This could include:

- the use of discriminatory language, for example being racist, homophobic or sexist
- the use of language designed to insult or degrade, or the use of expletives aimed towards our staff
- making serious allegations about staff without any evidence, for example saying a staff member has acted fraudulently

### **Unreasonable use of the process**

As a service dealing with thousands of cases and enquiries every year, we have to make sure we can handle every complaint effectively. So, when someone's behaviour impacts our ability to look at their case, or cases for other people, we may have to take some action.

This could include:

- Unreasonable demands, for example repeatedly changing the complaint or demanding responses within an unreasonable timeframe
- Refusing to co-operate with our requests for information or answering our questions
- The volume and/or duration of contact, for example multiple calls in one day or hour or inundating us with copies of information that has already been sent
- Repeatedly asking the same question or requesting the same information, despite having either received an answer or the information – either by phone or email

## How we manage unacceptable actions

### **Aggressive or abusive behaviour**

If someone threatens or uses physical violence, or verbally abuses or harasses our staff, it will likely mean we stop all direct contact with that person. If physical violence is used or threatened, we will report the incident to the police – and may decide to do so in other circumstances.

If a staff member considers a caller to be aggressive, abusive or offensive, they may end the call if the behaviour continues. Our staff are empowered to make this decision.

If we receive correspondence that contains allegations with no evidence or statements that are abusive, we won't respond – we will return it, ask the sender to stop using such language and state that we will continue not to respond if this behaviour continues.

# 20-20 Warranty

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## **Unreasonable use of the process**

There are various actions we may take, including:

- Limiting telephone contact, either to specific times or days or asking for contact in writing only
- Removing access to our telephone lines
- Restricting contact to a specific member of staff
- Returning any documents that are excessive or irrelevant
- Limiting the number of issues we will consider within a complaint
- In exceptional cases, refusing to consider a complaint or future complaints from a consumer taking into account the impact this would have on them
- Any other actions that we feel are appropriate

We will always explain what we are doing and why.

## **The process we follow to make decisions about unacceptable actions**

We will always give somebody the opportunity to change their behaviour or action before making a decision. However, if it persists, we may need to take action.

Some decisions will be made immediately – for example, terminating a call due to aggressive behaviour, in line with this Policy. Other decisions, like restricting contact, will be made after careful consideration by a more senior member of staff. They will write to the person to tell them why the decision has been made, the arrangements and, if relevant, the length of time that these restrictions will be in place.

Where we make a decision like this, there is an opportunity for it to be reviewed by a separate senior member of staff. If a decision is being reviewed, we will only consider arguments relating to the restriction – we won't consider any other arguments.

All incidents are recorded internally and if a decision is made to restrict contact, we will make a note of this on the case file.