

A small number of complainants can exhibit unacceptable conduct in seeking to have their concerns addressed by the Professional Standards Office. When complainants behave in these ways the Professional Standards Office may consider their conduct to be 'unacceptable'.

Complainant conduct is likely to be unacceptable where it involves behaviour which, because of its nature or frequency, raises health and safety concerns, or resource or equity issues for the Professional Standards Office, its staff, other service users and complainants, or the complainants themselves. Unacceptable conduct may be transient, and it may occur on one or more occasions.

Examples of conduct that could either in isolation or taken together, constitute unacceptable complainant conduct may include the following:

Unreasonable Lack of Cooperation

Failing or refusing to identify the issue of complaint or failing to respond to reasonable requests or queries in a reasonable time.

Unreasonable Persistence

Making excessive numbers/volumes of telephone calls, emails, letters, and supplying excessive documentation, in support of their complaint (when requested not to), or refusing to accept the decision on the complaint based solely on the fact it was not in the complainant's favour.

Unreasonable Behaviour

Making threats of self-harm to complaints management staff, making baseless attacks on the motivations, ethics or conduct of complaints management staff, using abusive language, expressing unreasonable anger, aggression or violence, or lying or being intentionally misleading.

Unreasonable Demands

Making unreasonable demands generally (e.g. that the matter be given priority, that there be a different complaints manager; that there be a new investigation); or demanding the outcome be reviewed or changed without demonstrating that the original decision was wrong.

Unreasonable Arguments

Expressing irrational claims/beliefs/ conspiracy theories, making vexatious complaints, or illogically or unrealistically denying any responsibility for actions or inaction.

POLICY

In the event that a complainant's conduct becomes unacceptable, action will be taken by the Professional Standards Office to cause the complainant to desist from that behaviour and prevent further occurrences including ceasing communication, and suspension or closure of the complaint.

However, such conduct by complainants does not preclude valid issues being addressed. The Professional Standards Office will employ appropriate strategies for managing such conduct fairly, ethically and reasonably.

References

- *Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*