

# Unreasonable complainant behaviour guidance

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 RBWM is committed to dealing with you fairly and impartially, and to making our services as accessible as possible.
- 1.2 We ask for and expect the same behaviour from you towards us. We enjoy professional, courteous, respectful contact our customers, whatever the outcome of our work.
- 1.3 This factsheet is here to help explain our expectations and encourage an effective working relationship.

## 2. Unreasonable conduct

- 2.1 We will not tolerate racist, sexist, homophobic, aggressive, threatening, violent or other discriminatory behaviour or language towards us. If you use such language or behaviour, we will ask you to stop doing so and may take other, proportionate action to protect the wellbeing of our staff and make sure we can keep working effectively.
- 2.2 If your use of language is because of a medical condition, we will discuss with you any reasonable adjustments we need to make to how we work with you. However, some language and behaviour is always unacceptable and we will always draw your attention to this and take appropriate action.
- 2.3 Please note this also applies to contacting us after our decision has been made. We will not continue communicating with you on a closed case outside our review or service complaint procedures. Continued contact or attempts to make the same concern again prevents us from carrying out our work effectively.
- 2.4 In most instances if we consider your behaviour is unreasonable, we will explain why and ask you to change it. We will also warn you that, if the behaviour continues, we may take action to restrict your contact with us.
- 2.5 Where your behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of our staff we may report the matter to the police or consider taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give you prior warning.

2.6 When necessary, we will restrict access to our service if you keep behaving unreasonably.

### **3. Restricting access to Council services**

3.1 If your behaviour is considered unreasonable, a Manager will decide whether the circumstances require any restriction of access. They will record the reason for their decision on the vexatious / unreasonable behaviour register and explain it to you. They will state how long any restriction will apply for before we reconsider.

3.2 The sort of restrictions imposed could include:

- Restricting telephone calls to specified days and limited times
- Limiting contacts to one form only (for example, a maximum of one letter or email from you a week)
- Requiring you to only contact us using one named staff member or team (Single Point of Contact SPOC) including redirecting your emails
- Requiring you to formally agree with us how you will behave in future before we continue working with you and/or
- Using an independent advocate to work with you

3.3 After six months we will review whether any restrictions we imposed are still necessary and should remain in place. You will be advised of the outcome of this review.

### **4. Appeal**

4.1 If you are unhappy with our decision you can request an appeal. The appeal will be considered by a Senior Manager of the team involved.

4.2 The request for an appeal of the decision, should include any reasons why you consider the decision unfair or wrong. Such requests should be made within 15 working days of the notification of the council's decision and sent to [complaintsandcompliments@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:complaintsandcompliments@rbwm.gov.uk)

### **5. New complaints / Cases**

5.1 If we have restricted our contact with you and you make a new complaint, we will decide whether or not to continue with any restrictions we put in place for the earlier complaint or case to be implemented on the new complaint.