



OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER
Policy - Inappropriate Behaviour from Members of the Public

SECTION		PAGE
1	Introduction	1
2	Application of this Procedure	1
3	What is Inappropriate Behaviour?	2
4	Contact Handling Strategy	3
5	Process	3
6	Abusive Behaviour and Safeguarding	4
7	Review and Oversight	5
8	Document Control	5

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As the elected voice of the public in policing, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) welcomes contact from members of the community through a range of channels, including email, telephone, letter, webform, and social media. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) supports the PCC in this area and is committed to engaging with the public in a respectful, responsive, and accessible manner.
- 1.2 We are dedicated to providing a high-quality service that is timely, empathetic, and professional. We recognise that individuals have a right to be heard, understood, and treated with dignity, and we strive to uphold these principles in all our interactions.
- 1.3 People contacting the OPCC can often be vulnerable and experienced traumatic or distressing circumstances that lead them to make a complaint. Anger or frustration about the complaint is a common response, but it can become unacceptable if it escalates and/or becomes abusive, and/or is personally directed at OPCC Staff.
- 1.4 In this context, unacceptable behaviour is defined as any behaviour that has the potential to cause harm, injury or negatively impact on the health and safety of OPCC staff. Unacceptable behaviour may be isolated to a single incident or form a pattern of behaviour over time.
- 1.5 While we aim to be understanding and supportive, we also have a duty to protect our staff, volunteers, and contractors from behaviour that is abusive, aggressive, or otherwise

unreasonable.

- 1.6 This policy outlines the approach the OPCC will take to manage inappropriate behaviour during interactions with the public.

2. Application of this Procedure

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all forms of contact between members of the public and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, including interactions with the Commissioner, OPCC staff, volunteers, and contractors. It also applies to communications received during the complaint review process, complaints against the PCC or Chief Constable and contact via OPCC social media.
- 2.2 People communicate and express themselves differently depending on their background and a range of other factors. It is important to be aware that formality, pacing and emotion can vary significantly across cultures. Certain mental health conditions or disabilities may make it difficult for people to express themselves and/or to communicate clearly. The OPCC will always aim to provide a service that is accessible to all and, where appropriate, make reasonable adjustments if we are advised of access requirements. However, we may still need to put in place contact strategies in some circumstances.
- 2.3 The application of this procedure must always take into account individual needs and any reasonable adjustments required under the Equality Act 2010. The aim is to ensure that the OPCC adopts a fair, proportionate, and consistent approach when managing behaviour that may be considered unreasonable, while maintaining respectful and accessible communication for all.

3. What is Inappropriate Behaviour?

- 3.1 In a small number of cases, individuals may engage with the OPCC or the Commissioner in ways that are considered unacceptable. This may include any language or actions that have the potential to cause harm, alarm or distress to OPCC staff, or which causes unnecessary or undue additional work.
- 3.2 Such behaviour can negatively affect the capacity of the office to respond effectively, impact the wellbeing of staff, and hinder the fair handling and resolution of complaints.
- 3.3 Examples of behaviour that may be considered unreasonable include, but are not limited to:
- Excessive contact: Repeatedly contacting the office without providing new or relevant information.
 - Aggressive or abusive communication: Use of threatening, offensive, or intimidating language or tone.
 - Unrealistic expectations: Demanding outcomes that are not achievable or outside the scope of the OPCC's role.
 - Refusal to cooperate: Ignoring reasonable requests for information or clarification, or refusing to accept decisions.

- Manipulative behaviour: Attempts to influence outcomes through pressure tactics or misrepresentation.
- Obsessive pursuit: Persistently raising the same issue despite it having been addressed.

4. Contact Handling Strategy

- 4.1 If a member of the public behaves in a way that is deemed unacceptable, the OPCC may implement a tailored Contact Handling Strategy. The purpose of this strategy is to:
- Safeguard the safety, wellbeing, and dignity of OPCC staff, volunteers, and contractors.
 - Ensure the effective and efficient conduct of OPCC business and service delivery.
- 4.2 The strategy may include measures such as limiting the frequency or method of contact, designating a single point of contact, or setting boundaries around the nature of communications. These steps will only be taken after careful consideration and, where appropriate, consultation with relevant parties.

4 Process

- 4.1 In cases where a member of the public displays behaviour that is considered unacceptable, the OPCC will follow a structured process to assess and manage the situation appropriately.
- 4.2 **Step 1: Initial Assessment**
- The staff member experiencing the behaviour should discuss the incident with their line manager.
 - If the line manager agrees that the behaviour is unacceptable, the incident will be recorded on the contact management system.
 - If the behaviour is deemed to be isolated or minor, it may be decided that no further action is required at this stage. A file note should be added to the case file to record the conversation and outcome.
- 4.3 **Step 2: Issuing a Warning**
- If further action is warranted, the line manager will raise with the Senior Scrutiny and Assurance Manager to discuss if a warning is appropriate.
 - If agreed, the individual will be informed that their behaviour is unacceptable and will receive a formal written warning.
 - The warning will outline the nature of the behaviour, explain why it is inappropriate, and highlight this policy. The warning will advise that continued behaviour of this kind may result

in restrictions on future contact.

- Following the warning, all subsequent contact will be monitored by an assigned Scrutiny and Assurance Manager.

4.4 Step 3: Implementation of Contact Restrictions

- If unacceptable behaviour continues, a decision may be made to implement a tailored Contact Handling Strategy.
- Measures will be proportionate to the nature and impact of the behaviour and may include:
 - Limiting the number or frequency of responses.
 - Restricting contact to a designated member of staff within the OPCC.
 - Setting time limits for phone calls.
 - Restricting communication channels (e.g., online web form only).
 - Ceasing further engagement with the individual.
 - Temporarily barring the individual from attending PCC premises, events, or meetings.

All decisions to implement contact restrictions will be reviewed by a senior manager to ensure fairness and proportionality.

- The individual will be notified in writing of the decision, the reasons for it, and the duration of any restrictions.
- Where appropriate, the individual will be given an opportunity to respond or request reasonable adjustments.

- 4.1 If an individual does not comply with the terms of their Contact Plan, further measures may be imposed. In such cases, written confirmation of the further measures will be provided to the individual. These further measures will be specific to the circumstances.

5 Abusive Behaviour and Safeguarding

- 5.1 OPCC staff are not expected to tolerate abusive, aggressive, threatening, or intimidating language or behaviour in any form. Where such behaviour occurs, the staff member may issue a clear and polite warning, advising the individual that their conduct is unacceptable.
- 5.2 If the behaviour continues despite the warning, the staff member should bring the interaction to a close immediately and report the incident to their line manager. The incident should then be recorded in the appropriate case management system.
- 5.3 Abusive or threatening language or behaviour may be reported to the police and may be considered under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Malicious Communications Act 1988 & Communications Act 2003.

- 5.4 In circumstances where there are safeguarding concerns it may be necessary to share details of the person subject to the Contact Handling Strategy with police or other relevant agency such as health or social care organisations.
- 5.5 Staff subject to abusive behaviour are entitled to support through their line manager, a support organisation such as a Union or the Employee Assistance Programme.

6 Review and Oversight

- 6.1 The OPCC will maintain a record of all reviews and decisions related to contact restrictions, including the rationale for any changes, to support transparency and accountability.
- 6.2 All Contact Handling Strategies will be recorded on the OPCC case management system and retained in accordance with the organisation's data retention policy and relevant legislation, including the UK GDPR.
- 6.3 Contact restrictions will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess whether they remain necessary, proportionate, and effective. The frequency of review will be determined based on the nature and severity of the behaviour.
- 6.4 Restrictions may be amended or lifted if there is evidence of improved behaviour, a change in circumstances, or following a successful appeal or request for reconsideration.
- 6.5 All decisions to implement, maintain, or remove contact restrictions will be reviewed and authorised by the Senior Scrutiny and Assurance Manager to ensure fairness, consistency, and compliance with legal obligations, including the Equality Act 2010.

7 Document Control

Policy Statement Information	
Policy Owner (Job Title)	OPCC Director of Performance and Accountability
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