

Unreasonable behaviour policy

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Contents

An overview of our policy.....	2
Unacceptable behaviour.....	2
Examples of unreasonable behaviour.....	3
Unreasonable demands.....	3
Examples of unreasonable demands.....	3
Excessive frequency or duration of contact	4
Examples of unreasonable levels of contact	4
How we manage unacceptable and unreasonable behaviour.....	4

Arc Legal Group: Unreasonable behaviour policy

An overview of our policy

Arc Legal Group has several policies and procedures, in adherence with FCA requirements, which are relevant to the fair treatment of customers. We are fully committed to treating customers fairly, which is embedded in our philosophy, culture, and day-to-day activities. Our staff are expected to treat all individuals with courtesy, respect and fairness and we also expect our staff to be treated in the same way. We have a duty of care to protect the welfare and safety of all our staff. If an individual behaves in an unacceptable or unreasonable manner, we will refer to this policy to manage that behaviour.

Unacceptable behaviour

We know that people who contact us can be in a difficult and distressing situation, and this can lead to frustration and upset especially if we are obliged to deliver unwelcome news, or the outcome is not as the customer would have hoped for. However, it is not acceptable for our staff to be confronted with aggressive or abusive behaviour whilst at work. This may include:

- ◆ Threats of physical harm or actual physical harm
- ◆ Behaviour or language (verbal or written) that may cause staff to feel offended, afraid, threatened or abused
- ◆ Insulting or degrading language
- ◆ Any form of discrimination
- ◆ Personal grudges directed to individual members of staff
- ◆ Allegations made against staff without any evidence

Arc Legal Group: Unreasonable behaviour policy

Examples of unreasonable behaviour

- ◆ Threats, verbal abuse, shouting, obscene derogatory remarks and rudeness
- ◆ Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist comments, or other harassment based on personal characteristics
- ◆ Recording meetings or telephone conversations without consent

Unreasonable demands

A demand may be deemed unreasonable if it could assume an excessive amount of staff time as this would impact on our ability to provide our service to all customers.

Examples of unreasonable demands

- ◆ Demanding a response from the CEO or a senior manager and refusing to speak to anyone more junior
- ◆ Demanding to speak to a member of staff who is unavailable
- ◆ Demanding an immediate call back from a manager, even if a reasonable alternative time/day/person has been offered
- ◆ Demanding responses within an unreasonable timescale
- ◆ Demanding disciplinary action is taken against a member/members of staff
- ◆ Failing to follow the prescribed complaints process

Arc Legal Group: Unreasonable behaviour policy

Excessive frequency or duration of contact

We understand that being involved in a legal dispute can be stressful and customers therefore often require an immediate response. Unfortunately, this is not always possible and where the contact becomes excessive, either by telephone or responding to multiple emails, this can result in our staff being unable to deal with all customers in a fair and reasonable timescale.

Examples of unreasonable levels of contact

- ◆ Making frequent calls at an unreasonable level
- ◆ Calling our offices and expecting excessive time to be spent on the call
- ◆ Calling, emailing, or otherwise contacting our offices about the same issue, repeatedly sending us large amounts of information that is not required (e.g., when a matter is closed or when we have set expectations as to when a response will be received)
- ◆ Duplicated or repetitive AI generated correspondence
- ◆ AI generated complaints which contain false or misleading claims
- ◆ AI generated communication which makes a fair investigation into a complaint or response to a claim query difficult or creates undue workload
- ◆ Corresponding on a number of claims on the same email
- ◆ Sending in new complaints before we have had an opportunity to address earlier complaints
- ◆ Repeatedly asking us to look at the same issue which has been addressed previously

How we manage unacceptable and unreasonable behaviour

If we feel behaviour is unacceptable or unreasonable, we will consider whether we need to take more formal action, and this will be reviewed by the relevant Manager. We will aim to keep the impact of this to a minimum.

Arc Legal Group: Unreasonable behaviour policy

We may take any of the following actions:

- ◆ Explain why we believe the behaviour is unreasonable and what action we might take if it continues
- ◆ Restrict (e.g., refuse phone contact) or end contact on the matter
- ◆ Restrict contact on all matters
- ◆ Ask that all future contact is made through a third-party advocate
- ◆ Terminate contact entirely for a period
- ◆ Report incidents to the police (e.g., if violence has been threatened)
- ◆ Take any other action that we consider appropriate (in extreme cases, this may include blocking calls and returning correspondence)

We will update the customer about the action we are taking along with the reasons. This may include how long restrictions will be in place.

In making our decision, we may consider:

- ◆ How it affects our staff
- ◆ How it affects the customer (including their personal circumstances and any reasonable adjustments)
- ◆ The extent to which we can engage or assist
- ◆ The extent to which the process or subject matter has been exhausted

This process may be re-considered by us if the customer commits to behaving with courtesy, respect, and fairness and:

- ◆ An appropriate period has passed since the unreasonable behaviour took place
- ◆ There is a more suitable alternative available
- ◆ We receive evidence that there were exceptional reasons for the behaviour