

The Institute of Trichologists

UNREASONABLY PERSISTENT CONTACT AND UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

DOCUMENTATION

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INTRODUCTUON

We aim to provide an excellent level of service to everyone who contacts us. Everybody is entitled to be treated respectfully and courteously; and anybody who raises an issue with us has a right to expect us to deal with it fully and fairly.

However, those endeavouring to assist should not be expected to tolerate abusive, threatening or offensive behaviour. Similarly, we should not be expected to deal with someone who, because of the frequency of their contact, hinders our work. On rare occasions, the information provided by individuals may lead us to believe that there is a genuine and immediate risk to others that we may have to report for the protection of the public.

This policy sets out the actions that we can take when dealing with either unreasonably persistent contact or unacceptable behaviour from people or where we have a concern about wellbeing. This policy is expected to apply to very few people. No action under this procedure will ever allow a potentially serious issue affecting public safety to go un-investigated.

1. WHAT IS UNREASONABLY PERSISTENT?

- 1.1 Unreasonably persistent people are those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with us, can hinder our work. Those who are unreasonably persistent may have justified complaints or grievances, but are pursuing them in inappropriate ways, or they may be intent on pursuing complaints/issues which appear to have no substance or which have already been investigated and determined.
- 1.2 Our resources, including personnel time, have to be used where they can provide the most value. This might mean that we cannot respond to every complaint/issue in the way a person would like.
- 1.3 Examples of the types of actions/behaviours which may cause this policy to be used are noted below. These are not exhaustive but could include one or more of the following:
 - A 'scattergun' approach: pursuing a complaint or other issues with us and, at the same time, with other people or bodies (Member of Parliament / local police / solicitors / the Health Ombudsman).
 - Making unnecessarily excessive demands on the time and resources of personnel whilst a complaint/issue is being looked into (excessive telephoning/emails, repeatedly writing lengthy complex letters and expecting immediate responses).
 - Submitting repeated complaints, after the complaints processes have been completed, essentially about the same issues, with additions/variations which the complainant insists are 'new' complaints worthy of the full complaint's procedure.
 - Refusing to accept the decision on a complaint/issue – repeatedly arguing the point and complaining about the decision.
 - Refusing to accept that issues are not within our remit despite having been provided with information about our scope.

- Insisting on the complaint/issue being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with standard procedure or with good practice.

2. WHAT IS UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR?

- 2.1 We expect our personnel to be treated with courtesy and respect.
- 2.2 We recognise that people often feel angry, under pressure, distressed or feel that they have to be determined to pursue concerns. Personnel must be able to distinguish between distress, frustration, forcefulness and determination and behaviour which is unacceptable.
- 2.3 Unacceptable behaviour is defined as: behaviour or language (verbal or written) that may cause personnel to feel intimidated, threatened or abused. This could include threats of physical violence, derogatory remarks, rudeness, harassment, inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations.

3. HOW DO WE DEAL WITH THESE BEHAVIOURS?

THE PROCESS FOR WHEN UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR OCCURS DURING A TELEPHONE CONVERSATION?

- 3.1 If the unacceptable behaviour occurs during a telephone conversation, Institute of Trichologists (IOT) personnel should explain to the caller why this behaviour is unacceptable. The caller is then given the opportunity to stop the unacceptable behaviour, IOT personnel will explain that if they carry on it will result in the conversation being ended.

If the behaviour continues, the IOT personnel should tell the caller politely that they are ending the telephone call and put down the telephone. Once the call has ended, a note should be made of the conversation and the reasons why the telephone call was ended. This note should be saved to the complaints folder. Please be aware that this information would be disclosable under the Data Protection Act 2018.

WHEN SHOULD A WRITTEN WARNING BE ISSUED?

- 3.2 Following behaviour as defined above (this may be either repeated behaviour or a 'one off', considered on a case to case basis), a written warning should be issued to the person that they are behaving in a manner which is viewed as unreasonably persistent/unacceptable. The warning should be issued with approval from the Board of Directors.

The warning should contain the reasons why we believe the behaviour could be defined as unreasonably persistent/unacceptable; an explanation of the effect such behaviour is having on us; and what could happen should such behaviour continue.

- 3.3 Where the behaviour is particularly serious, we may decide that this policy should be applied without prior warning. In that event, the Board of Directors will write directly to the person explaining the reasons for this.

HOW IS THE DECISION TAKEN?

- 3.4 The decision to restrict access to us will be taken at Board level and will normally follow a prior warning to the person. The personnel affected should provide a summary of the evidence for applying the policy, relevant documentation and what steps they consider appropriate to control the unwanted effects of the behaviour. Any decision taken will be recorded.
- 3.5 If this policy is implemented, there are a range of ways that we can restrict access and the action applied will depend on the nature of the behaviour. These include but are not limited to:
- Restricting contact to one method, named personnel, or particular times of day;
 - Accepting contact through a third party only;
 - Only acknowledging or filing correspondence if new information is presented which is considered to have implications for public protection;
 - Not acknowledging any further correspondence unless new information is presented which we consider has implications for public protection;
 - Refusing to accept further telephone calls; or
 - Restricting the issues we will correspond on.
- 3.6 Any action taken will be reasonable, proportionate and balance the interests of personnel with the duty to protect their health, safety and wellbeing
- 3.7 When we decide to deal with a person under this policy, we will write to them setting out the reasons why we believe their behaviour to be unreasonably persistent/unacceptable, what action we have decided to take in response to this behaviour and how and when any decision to restrict access to us will be reviewed. A copy of this policy will also be sent.

HOW IS THE DECISION TO APPLY THIS POLICY REVIEWED?

- 3.8 Six months after the decision to apply the policy was taken, we will carry out a review and decide if the policy should continue to apply. We will write to the person and explain the decision we reach.
- 3.9 Where a person continues to behave in such a way which is unreasonably persistent/unacceptable, we may decide to continue to restrict access.
- 3.10 Where a person has changed their behaviour to the extent that the personnel affected does not believe the policy should still apply, they should consult with the Board about removing any restrictions.

HOW CAN YOU APPEAL A DECISION TAKEN UNDER THIS POLICY?

- 3.11 A person can appeal a decision to implement this policy using our complain about us policy which is available on our website.

4. EXTREME BEHAVIOUR

- 4.1 In exceptional cases, the behaviour of a person may pose an immediate threat to the health, safety or well-being of themselves, the public or our personnel. In such circumstances, the Board may, without warning to the person, refer the case to an outside body which may

include the Police, the ambulance service, the Health and Social Care Regulator, the Employer or Social Services. We may also in certain circumstances instigate civil proceedings.

- 4.2 Any decision to report a complainant to an external body will be made with careful consideration of their rights for example under the Data Protection Act.
- 4.3 We will keep a record of any decision to report, who was involved in the decision making and why the decision was taken.
- 4.4 We will in as far as possible inform you of the decision and what actions we have taken except where we are not permitted to, such as for the prevention of crime.

5. NEW COMPLAINTS

- 5.1 New complaints from those who have been dealt with previously under this policy will be treated on their merits.

DISCLAIMER: While the IOT is actively seeking to gain **protected professional status** for the title “Trichologist” in the UK, registration with the Institute of Trichologists (IOT) is **not currently required by law** in order to use the title “Trichologist”. The IOT is committed to upholding the **highest professional and ethical standards** among its **registrants** and to maintaining a robust, accredited register of qualified Trichologists. Please note that the IOT **cannot regulate or take responsibility for individuals who are not registered** with the IOT.