



Institute  
and Faculty  
of Actuaries

# Managing unacceptable behaviour and actions policy

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# Managing unacceptable behaviour and actions

## 1. Introduction

All individuals, whether members, employees or members of the public have the right to be heard, understood and treated respectfully. The Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA) will deal fairly, honestly, consistently and appropriately with all individuals.

The vast majority of individuals who contact the IFoA do so in a polite and courteous manner. This policy is intended to help manage the very few instances where actions or behaviour are considered unacceptable.

## 2. Purpose

The IFoA aims to provide a high level of service to all users. However, the IFoA has a duty of care to its employees and needs to ensure that the ability of employees and volunteers to carry out their roles is not adversely affected by unacceptable actions or behaviours of individuals. It is these behaviours and actions which the IFoA aims to manage under this policy.

This policy describes the sorts of behaviours that are unacceptable and sets out how they are likely to be dealt with.

## 3. Application

The policy applies as appropriate to members of the public and to employees and members of the IFoA.

## 4. What are unacceptable actions and behaviours?

The employees of the IFoA are entitled to be treated with respect and should not feel threatened or intimidated when they are undertaking their work.

When the IFoA is contacted people may on occasion be feeling aggrieved, if for example they are making a complaint about a member or an employee, or are themselves the subject of a complaint.

Individuals may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. People may also have a range of personal circumstances, including issues of health and disability, which may affect their behaviour. Behaviour is not viewed as unacceptable just because an individual is assertive or determined.

The IFoA recognises the need to make reasonable adjustments to its processes where disability may be affecting the behaviour of the individual. Such adjustments need however to be balanced against the duty of care owed to employees.

#### **4.1 Sometimes actions or behaviours become aggressive or place unreasonable demands on our employees and volunteers. These actions and behaviours can be considered under three broad headings: aggressive, abusive or disrespectful actions or behaviour**

This type of action or behaviour may be verbal or physical and may cause staff or volunteers to feel intimidated or threatened. Examples of such behaviour include;

- physical violence or verbal abuse (actual or threatened)
- attempted blackmail or bribery
- other threats
- language which is reasonably perceived to be racist, sexist or otherwise discriminatory
- use of language which is otherwise offensive, disrespectful or discourteous
- behaviour which is reasonably perceived as bullying
- making unsubstantiated allegations about members of staff or IFoA volunteers

While people may feel angry, it is not acceptable to direct aggression towards staff or volunteers. Members have a responsibility under the Actuaries' Code to act with integrity and, in particular, to,

*“show respect for others in the way they conduct themselves”* (Actuaries' Code, paragraph 1.1).

#### **4.2 Unreasonable demands**

This type of action or behaviour includes making unreasonable demands in terms of the amount of information being sought, the level of service expected and the amount of contact made and expected in return. Examples of such demands include;

- expecting a response within an unreasonable timeframe
- expecting detailed responses to multiple and lengthy communications
- insisting on speaking to a particular member of staff and/or member, when this is not necessary or appropriate
- asking for matters to be raised before a particular Board, Committee or Council, when this is not necessary or appropriate

The IFoA may determine that such demands are unacceptable if they start to impact substantially on the work of the organisation, such as taking up an excessive or disproportionate amount of staff or volunteer time, to the disadvantage of other services or functions.

### **4.3 Unreasonable persistence**

On rare occasions people contact the IFoA persistently about the same, or a closely related, issue. It may be that the way in which the IFoA is approached is entirely reasonable, but it is the persistent contact that is not acceptable. Requests may be considered to be unacceptable because of the nature and scale of service that is expected. Examples of this include;-

- Raising the same or related matters with the IFoA a number of times, without raising any (material) new issues
- Failing to accept a decision, where appropriate explanation has been given for that decision and the appropriate process followed
- Continuing to pursue complaints/issues which have been investigated and determined
- Refusal to accept explanations given about what the IFoA can and cannot do

Actions become unacceptable when the relevant process or investigation and/or consideration have concluded but the matter continues to take up what the IFoA considers to be a disproportionate amount of time and/or resources.

## **5. Managing unacceptable behaviour and actions**

There are very few instances where the behaviour or actions of someone interacting with the IFoA are deemed to be unacceptable. How such behaviour and actions are to be managed, where they do arise, will depend upon their nature and extent.

### **5.1 Actual or threatened physical violence, verbal abuse and attempted blackmail/bribery**

Physical violence or verbal abuse, whether actual or threatened, and attempted blackmail and bribery, will not be tolerated in any circumstances. They are likely to result in the IFoA ceasing all unnecessary direct contact with the person with immediate effect. Incidents may be reported to the police and this will always be the case where physical violence is used or threatened, or the action or behaviour is otherwise perceived to be criminal in nature. Members are additionally liable to be referred for consideration under the IFoA's Disciplinary Scheme.

Alternatively, or in addition, any one or more of the steps described below may also be taken.

Employees and volunteers of the IFoA will end telephone calls if the caller is judged to be behaving in an aggressive, abusive or offensive manner. All employees and volunteers have the right to make that decision and to inform a caller that their behaviour is not acceptable and that they will end the call should it not stop.

### **5.2 Other unacceptable actions and behaviour**

Any or all of the following steps may be considered and taken;-

- requiring contact with a named employee only
- only accepting telephone calls from the person at set times on set days
- terminating telephone calls if issues are persistently raised which have already been dealt with

- restricting the issues on which the IFoA will correspond
- returning irrelevant documentation to the sender, or in extreme cases destroying it
- requiring the person to make an appointment to see a named employee before visiting or that they only contact the IFoA in writing
- in extreme circumstances, all unnecessary contact with an individual may be terminated entirely

Any of the above steps, or a combination of them, may be applied to an individual. If you wish to discuss this policy or the actions and/or behaviour of an individual, please contact the Chief Executive or another member of the Executive Leadership Team of the IFoA. Any decision to restrict contact with a member will be made by a member of the Executive Leadership Team or the Chief Executive. If any of the above actions are taken, the person will be notified in writing as to what action is being taken and why.

For the avoidance of doubt, any decision to restrict contact etc. under this policy with a member of the IFoA has no impact on their regulatory status or on any necessary regulatory or wider communications with that member. Decisions to restrict contact etc. are not published.

### **5.3 Referral under Disciplinary Scheme in cases other than those described at 5.1**

The IFoA will only consider referring the conduct of a member for consideration under the Disciplinary Scheme as a last resort. Resolution of the concern or issue will be sought through appropriate communication in the first instance. The issue will be brought to the attention of the individual, and they will have the opportunity to address it. Where necessary, the IFoA may issue an informal and/ or formal written warning, issued by a member of the Executive Leadership Team or the Chief Executive. In serious cases, or cases where the behaviour has persisted, the conduct of a member may be referred for consideration under the Disciplinary Scheme.

### **5.4 Appealing a decision to restrict contact**

Someone who has had their contact with the IFoA restricted can appeal the decision to restrict contact at any point, such appeal to be in writing and addressed to the Chief Executive of the IFoA.

The appeal will be considered by a senior employee who was not involved in the original decision to restrict contact. Whilst the appeal is being considered, the restricted contact arrangements will remain in place. The appeal will normally be considered within 14 days of receipt and the outcome of the appeal will be advised in writing.



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