

Unacceptable Behaviour Policy

1. Introduction

At the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), we value feedback from all individuals - whether it highlights areas for improvement, offers praise, or raises concerns about our services. Every piece of feedback is considered on its merits, regardless of its nature or source, as it helps us learn and improve.

Our [customer service policy](#) supports anyone wishing to provide feedback or make a complaint about any HCPC or HCPTS team. While most interactions are constructive, occasionally complaints are made in ways that cause significant disruption, disproportionate cost, or impact staff wellbeing due to unacceptable or unreasonable behaviour.

This policy sets out how we identify and manage such behaviour. It applies to all staff, contractors, associates, and anyone working with HCPC or HCPTS.

2. Our duty to HCPC or HCPTS staff

We expect all interactions with HCPC and HCPTS staff to be respectful and courteous—just as we expect our staff to treat individuals with professionalism and respect. While instances of unreasonable behaviour are rare, when they occur, we may restrict or end communication and access to our staff and offices.

We have a responsibility to protect our staff and safeguard their wellbeing. Any threat of violence is taken extremely seriously. In such cases, we will immediately end direct contact and may report the matter to the police.

For clarity, we define violence broadly to include any behaviour or communication that causes a member of staff to feel afraid, threatened, or abused.

3. Unacceptable behaviour

Most people communicate with HCPC or HCPTS staff in a reasonable and respectful way. However, on rare occasions, behaviour may become inappropriate. We understand this can arise from various causes, but when it puts staff wellbeing at risk or goes beyond what is reasonably acceptable, we will act.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- **Abusive or offensive language or behaviour**

Any communication or action that makes staff feel afraid, intimidated, or abused. This includes:

- Foul, offensive, or discriminatory language.
- Threats or physical violence; derogatory remarks.
- Harassment based on personal characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- Inflammatory statements.
- Cyber stalking and/or malicious content generation.
- Unsubstantiated allegations.

- **Unreasonable behaviour**

Excessive or inappropriate communication that places undue strain on time and resources. This may include:

- Repeatedly raising issues already reviewed without new information.
- Not clearly stating what the complaint is about.
- Contacting us excessively by phone, email, post, or social media.
- Making unreasonable demands, like unrealistic response times.
- Insisting on speaking to a staff member who isn't the right person to help.
- Sending duplicate messages to multiple staff.
- Recording calls or meetings without telling us.
- Making unfair complaints about staff trying to help and asking for replacements.
- Misusing policies to challenge decisions.

4. What action the HCPC or HCPTS will take

When appropriate, the HCPC or HCPTS will put steps in place to address the unreasonable behaviour or contact. These can include:

- Having a single point of contact for the individual.
- Taking calls from the individual only at designated times.
- Where the unreasonable behaviour takes place during a telephone call, the caller will be informed as such and in exceptional circumstances the call handler may end the call.
- Restricting access to specific communication channels, such as in writing and by email.

- Advising the individual that we'll read their correspondence but not necessarily acknowledge or respond to it if we feel that we have already addressed their concerns appropriately and reasonably. We may still respond to any outstanding complaints, information requests or whistleblowing issues in line with our usual policies and procedures.
- Choosing to end communication with the individual if their behaviour continues to be unreasonable or unacceptable after all other options have been exhausted.
- Telling the individual that they're not allowed to visit HCPC or HCPTS premises without being invited first.
- In exceptional circumstances, bringing in legal proceedings against the individual, for example to prevent threats or harassment against HCPC or HCPTS employees.

The above list is not exhaustive and there may be other action that is appropriate for us to take depending on the circumstances.

The decision to take required actions is not taken lightly. Any action taken will be considered carefully and the final approach will be decided by the relevant Head of service or Executive Director.

5. Communication of restricted contact

If we determine that we need to restrict contact, we will write to the individual setting out the restrictions and the reasons for them along with a termination date of the restriction if we agree one is applicable.

Should we decide that a review of any restriction imposed is appropriate at any point, we will write to the individual(s) involved to inform them of any changes.