



Vexatious Complaints Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

The Taxation Disciplinary Board ("TDB") is committed to excellent customer care and meeting expectations by dealing effectively with complaints and concerns. Most complaints, either about us, or to us, are constructive. However, in a minority of cases this is not so, some pursue their requests or complaint in a way that is unreasonable.

2. PURPOSE

This Policy explains how TDB:

- Defines unreasonable behaviour;
- Defines a vexatious request;
- Deals with offensive or abusive comments made on social media;
- Deals with people who behave unreasonably; and
- Deals with vexatious requests.

3. WHAT IS UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOUR?

For the purposes of this Policy, unreasonable behaviour is defined as behaviour that, because of the nature or frequency of contacts with us, negatively impacts our ability to deal effectively with the matter or with other users' issues or complaints. Such as:

- Causing distress to members of staff, which may include the use of hostile, abusive or offensive language, making threats or unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with issues. This includes racist comments, harassment, personal insults or threat of physical harm;
- Excessive demands on the time and resources of staff with the expectation of an immediate response. Examples of this would be frequent and lengthy telephone calls, emails/correspondence to numerous members of staff every few days;
- Making personal derogatory comments via social media about members of staff;
- Refusing to accept a decision;
- Repeatedly arguing points with no new evidence and not following agreed complaint procedures; or
- Changing the basis of the complaint or request as the matter proceeds.

4. WHAT IS A VEXATIOUS REQUEST?

For the purposes of this Policy, a vexatious request is defined as any request likely to cause distress or disruption, without proper or justified cause. Such as:

- Requests for information that has already been provided, or to reconsider issues that have already been dealt with;
- Where complying with the request would impose a disproportionate or significant burden on the TDB in terms of expense and negatively affect TDB's ability to provide services to others; and
- High volume of correspondence or combining requests with accusations and complaints.

5. PROCESS

A decision to classify behaviour as unreasonable or a request as vexatious, will result in the TDB limiting the amount and type of contact an individual will have with TDB. Prior to making that classification the TDB will ensure that:

- The request or complaint has been dealt with properly in line with the Complaints Policy; and
- Every reasonable effort to satisfy the request or resolve the issue has been made.

A decision to classify a person's behaviour as unreasonable or a request as vexatious will be considered by the Board of Directors on a case-by-case basis. The outcome of such a classification will include:

- Limits on the number and duration of contacts with staff per week or month;
- Offering a restricted time slot for necessary phone calls;
- Limiting the type of contact to one method only, for example telephone or email;
- Restricting contact to one named member of staff;
- Refusal of requests to deal with further complaints/requests about the same matter;
- Contact with staff to be made via a third party such as a lawyer, relative or friend; and
- Barring access to our premises.

Where the Board of Directors reaches a decision to treat a person's behaviour as unreasonable or a request as vexatious, the Executive Director will notify the person in the following terms:

- Explain what action will be taken and why;
- Explain what this means in terms of contact with TDB;
- Advise how long any restrictions will be in place and when they will be reviewed;
- Enclose a copy of this policy and any relevant procedures; and

- Explain the consequences of not complying with our instructions.

6. SOCIAL MEDIA

TDB will remove, without notice, offensive or abusive posts from its social media channels. This includes posts that contain swearing or libellous statements. TDB reserves the right to:

- Take any action it considers necessary where derogatory comments are made about staff; and
- Remove any personal information for privacy-law purposes.

Anyone who does not comply with acceptable standards of conduct may be blocked from TDB's social media accounts.

7. NEW COMPLAINTS/REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

TDB will not ignore new complaints from individuals whose behaviour has been previously classified as unreasonable or whose requests classified as vexatious. New complaints or requests will be treated on their merits. The Executive Director will decide if any restrictions which have been previously applied are still appropriate or necessary in relation to the any new complaint or request.

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