

## Members Acceptable Behaviour Policy

### Policy Statement

The Landscape Institute is committed to providing excellent service in all interactions with our members although we recognise that sometimes we may get things wrong or are unable to help customers in the way they would like.

We treat any expressions of dissatisfaction seriously and value feedback from our members which may help us identify learning points and improve our services. We have a process in place to handle complaints about the wide range of services we provide.

However, occasionally complaints are made in a way that causes considerable disruption to our work, disproportionate cost and time to handle and impact the wellbeing of our staff/volunteers because of the unreasonable behaviour of a member(s)

We also recognise that in some circumstances, members may have a disability that makes it difficult for them to either express themselves or communicate clearly and/or appropriately. We are committed to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled members and we will consider the needs and circumstances of the member before deciding on how best to manage the situation.

### Purpose of this policy

There may be occasions where an individual's behaviour puts the wellbeing of LI staff/volunteers at risk. Unlawful or unreasonable behaviour could occur in any interaction with any member of staff/volunteer (over the phone, in person or in writing) not just in the context of a corporate complaint. We recognise that people will often express themselves strongly and communicate the emotions they are experiencing at the time. We will not view the behaviour of anyone using our services or contacting us as unreasonable simply because their communication is forthright or because they are determined in their approach.

On occasion however, the behaviour of our members may go beyond what is reasonably acceptable.

### Scope

Our behaviour policy and framework sets out the Institute's expectations regarding the type of behaviours that are necessary for a successful working relationship to exist between Institute members, volunteers and employees. It also sets out the types of behaviours that are unlawful and those behaviours that are unacceptable.

This particular policy explains our approach to recognising and handling members whose behaviour is unacceptable in respect of their dealings with staff and volunteers.

These situations are not common, but when they do happen we will take action to restrict or end our communication and access to our staff and offices.

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We do this because it is our expectation that our staff and volunteers should be treated respectfully and with courtesy - in the same way that we expect them to interact with our members. We have a duty to protect our staff and volunteers and to be mindful of their welfare and safety.

## Definition of unlawful and unacceptable behaviour

Examples of unlawful and unacceptable behaviour are set out in the Institute's behaviour Framework and annex.

## PROCEDURES

### Deciding if a member may have behaved unreasonably

If a member of staff/volunteer feels a member is behaving unreasonably they must bring it to the attention of their manager/Committee Chair in the first instance.

The member of staff/volunteer will discuss it with their manager or their Committee Chair who will investigate the circumstances and may seek the advice and guidance of the relevant head for their area of business, the Chief Executive or the Honorary Secretary before deciding upon the appropriate action to take.

If, however, a member of staff/volunteer encounters unreasonable behaviour during a telephone call they are entitled to bring the call or meeting to an end providing they have asked that a more reasonable approach be taken and this has not happened.

Similarly, a member of staff/volunteer who encounters such behaviour in a meeting is entitled to bring the meeting to a close using their personal judgement as to whether it is appropriate to request that a more reasonable approach be adopted first. If unreasonable behaviour occurs at an event, the staff member/volunteer should apply the same discretion and notify the event organiser of the chair of the event or who may be able to help diffuse the situation.

We expect our staff/volunteers to be mindful at all times of their own personal safety in exercising this discretion. In all cases where a member of staff/volunteer has had to take action to deal with unreasonable behaviour a record of the circumstances should be made, and the situation brought to the attention of their line manager/committee chair.

### Preventing repeat unacceptable behaviours and protecting staff and volunteers

Where there is sufficient evidence that it appears likely that a member has behaved unreasonably, that member will be advised in writing, or in a format that has been agreed as a 'reasonable adjustment', if the member is disabled, that if their behaviour continues, contact will be restricted and further action may be taken depending on the case.

We do not wish to hinder a members' rights to legitimately and appropriately contact us and use our services. Any restriction on future communication is only a control on how such complaints can be made in a way that does not impact on LI staff/volunteers. Any restriction on contact is a position of last resort. The 'door' will always be left open for the individual concerned to make contact via a

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defined route, if contact with the landscape Institute is needed. We will clearly communicate this to the member and will reconsider the position if s/he agrees to communicate in an appropriate way.

There are a range of additional measures available, depending on the circumstances and the type of behaviour:

1. Requiring the member to contact a named staff member(s)/volunteer only;
2. Restricting telephone calls to specified days and times, as agreed with the member;
3. Terminating telephone calls if the member persistently raises issues which we have already responded to in full. We will politely explain that we are unable to comment further on the matter and will ask if there are any other issues they wish to raise. If no new issues are raised and they persist in raising issues which we have already addressed, we will tell them so before ending the call.
4. Terminating telephone calls if the member becomes aggressive, abusive or offensive. We will politely ask them to modify their behaviour, but if the behaviour continues we will tell them again that it is unacceptable and end the call.
5. Restricting the issues we will correspond on;
6. If the member sends us a large volume of irrelevant documentation, we may return these documents. In extreme cases we will advise that further irrelevant documents will be destroyed;
7. If we have already fully explained our reasons for a decision and the member has exhausted the procedure to request a review of that decision, we will decline to respond to further correspondence which does not raise new issues. The correspondence will be read and filed but we will not acknowledge it unless it provides significant new information or evidence relating to the matter;
8. We will block emails if the number and length of emails sent causes difficulties for our regulatory process;
9. We will not respond to correspondence which is abusive or offensive and we will block emails that are abusive or offensive;

If the initial restrictions on behaviour are not adhered to, then the member could be advised that their communication with the institute, member of staff or volunteer is limited to written communication only

### [Links to other policies for handling Unlawful or Unreasonable Behaviour](#)

All unlawful behaviour against our staff/volunteers will not be tolerated and if appropriate it will be reported to the police, who may decide to prosecute. Alternatively it will be investigated under our code of practice and disciplinary procedure. In the case of serious or vexatious behaviour that is unacceptable the relevant complaint and disciplinary procedure will be followed. This may also include reference to other policies or codes e.g. the vexatious complaints and behaviour policy, the code of professional practice.

Challenging a restriction on future contact If any individual wishes to challenge a decision made in relation to this policy then they may do so by writing

- in the case of staff – to the Head of HR

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- in the case of members – to the Honorary Secretary.

If a member makes a large number of reports to us which prove to be unfounded, we may notify a member that in future any further allegations will be handled by an independent third party.

### Recording the decision to restrict communication as a result of unreasonable behaviour

A register of the restrictions applied will be maintained. It which will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it remains relevant and up to date.