

Vexatious Complaints Policy

Introduction

We are committed to providing excellent service in all interactions with organisations, our patients and members although we recognise that sometimes we may get things wrong or are unable to help patients or members in the way they would like. We treat any expressions of dissatisfaction seriously and value feedback from our patients or members, which may help us, identify learning points and improve our services. We have a process in place to handle complaints about the services we provide. Occasionally we receive complaints that are vexatious in that they cause considerable disruption to our work, disproportionate cost and time to handle and impact the wellbeing of our staff (because of the way the complaint is made or because of its repetitive nature).

Vexatious complaints

Deciding if a complaint is vexatious

Our focus is on the complaint in question. However we cannot consider the complaint in isolation. There must be some regard to the surrounding circumstances including the complainant's previous and associated behaviour. It is important, for example, that we consider the number of repetitive complaints.

To help us decide whether a complaint is vexatious we will take into account the full history and context of our interactions with the individual making the complaint and will look at both the nature of the complaint and the manner in which it is made. The particular issues that will inform our decision will include whether:

the primary purpose and/or effect of the complaint is to disturb, disrupt and or/pressurise the Society of Homeopaths, its staff or an individual member of staff;

the primary purpose and/or effect of the manner in which the complaint is made is to disturb, disrupt and or/pressurise the Society of Homeopaths, its staff or an individual member of staff.

the complaint is otherwise clearly unreasonable.

In considering the context of a complaint and whether there is a justified cause for it we will take into account:

the history of our interactions with the complainant

whether we have correctly followed our complaints or other related procedures

In light of the above we will consider whether the primary purpose or effect of the complaint is to cause disruption or distress. Factors are likely to include:

whether the complaint is part of a pattern of conduct likely to cause harassment or distress.

whether the complaint is part of a pattern or conduct that suggests a campaign against the Society of Homeopaths, its staff or an individual member of staff prompted by the complainant's personal views on a particular issue and/or by personal animosity.

a complaint made in retaliation against the Society of Homeopaths, its staff or an individual member of staff for action taken in delivering the Society of Homeopath's functions

the primary purpose and/or effect of the manner in which the complaint is made is to disturb, disrupt and or/pressurise the Society of Homeopaths, its staff or an individual member of staff

In considering the manner in which the complaint is made we will take into account:

whether the complaint seeks information previously provided or revisits matters already explained appropriately on a number of occasions .

the tone of correspondence or conversations – e.g. abusive or making unreasonable demands.

the extent of the work likely to be needed to respond and whether the costs and administrative burdens are disproportionate to the issues raised

The Professional Standards Manager will make a decision about whether a complaint is vexatious.

If a complaint about our service is declared vexatious

If a complaint is deemed to be vexatious, the Professional Standards Manager will respond directly to the complainant explaining why it is thought to be so, and explaining that the complaint will be closed with no further action.