

# **BELPER TOWN COUNCIL VEXATIOUS POLICY**

Policy on the management of peoples unreasonable behaviour, or unreasonably persistent in their contacts and submission of information.

## **Introduction**

Belper Town Council recognises that in a minority of cases people pursue for information from the Council in an unreasonable behaviour. We are committed to dealing with all complaints and correspondence fairly and impartially, and to making our service as accessible as possible. But because of the nature or frequency of their contact with the Council's service, a few members of the public behave unreasonably and hinder the work of the Council.

## **Unreasonable complainant conduct**

Belper Town Council will not tolerate deceitful, abusive, offensive, threatening or other forms of unacceptable behaviour from people. When it occurs, we will take proportionate action to protect the wellbeing of our staff and the integrity of our processes.

Our Staff has a limited amount of time and resources and they need to work efficiently to meet the demands. They cannot do so if someone tries to dominate their attention with frequent, lengthy contacts and repetitive information. When necessary, we will take action to restrict access to our service when unreasonable behaviour of this nature persists.

## **Warnings**

In most instances when we consider someone's behaviour is unreasonable we will explain why and ask them to change it. We will also warn them that, if the behaviour continues, we may take action to restrict their contact with the Council.

Where the behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of our staff we may report the matter to the police or consider taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give the complainant prior warning.

## Restricting access to Belper Town Council

Belper Town Council will decide whether the circumstances justify any restriction of access. They will record the reason for their decision and explain it to the person concerned. They will state how long any restriction will apply for before it is reconsidered.

The sort of restrictions imposed could include:

- restricting telephone calls to specified days and limited times
- limiting contacts to one form only (for example, a maximum of one letter or email a week)
- requiring contact to take place with one named staff member or Councillor.
- requiring the complainant to enter into an agreement about their future behaviour before any communication is reinstated, and/or
- managing contact with the help of an independent advocate.

Other suitable options will be considered in the light of the complainant's circumstances. Our objective, wherever possible, is to complete consideration of the complaint on its merits in a managed way.

If the complaint is still under consideration six months later, we will review whether the restrictions imposed are still necessary and should remain.

## Terminating access to Belper Town Council

If a complainant continues to behave unreasonably, or overrides the restrictions placed on access to our service, we may decide to terminate contact with them and end any communication.

Further submissions on the same matter will not be considered within six months.

## New complaints

New correspondence from people whose behaviour has previously been deemed unreasonable will be treated on their merits. Restrictions imposed on a person earlier will not automatically apply to a new matter.