

NCTJ Unacceptable and unreasonable behaviour policy

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1. Purpose

The NCTJ is committed to providing excellent customer service to everyone who contacts us. Everyone is entitled to be treated respectfully, courteously and in a polite manner. As an employer, we have a duty to safeguard the health and wellbeing of our staff.

This policy explains how we expect people to behave when they contact the NCTJ.

Abusive, threatening or disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated. If this happens, we may take action. This could include limiting how and when you contact us.

Our aim is to keep staff safe and to make sure we can provide services fairly and professionally to all.

2. Introduction

Everyone deserves to be treated fairly and with respect. We strive to ensure that we treat all individuals impartially and with courtesy. We do not accept and will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour or communication by anyone towards our staff.

Anger and frustration are acceptable and understandable emotions. However aggressive, violent, offensive, rude, harassment or discriminatory behaviour and language will not be tolerated.

When considering this policy, the term 'individual' applies to any individual accessing services or contacting the NCTJ, including their family members, guardians, supporters, and / or representatives who may be in contact with us on their behalf and those who may be impacted by the work that we do.

The term 'staff' applies to anyone working for or on behalf of NCTJ, regardless of where they are working (e.g. in an office, remotely or in a centre).

This policy aims to set clear expectations regarding acceptable behaviour for all individuals when interacting with the NCTJ. It outlines what we consider to be unacceptable behaviour and the steps we may take to address it. By adhering to this policy, we can maintain a respectful and safe environment for everyone.

We will record and share information relating to individuals where it is necessary to apply this policy, so that we can protect our staff.

3. Scope

The strategies proposed in this document are made on the understanding that they are relevant and applicable to all individuals, their representatives, relatives, staff, partners, former employees, and other NCTJ associates.

The definition of '**unacceptable**' and '**unreasonable**' customer behaviour may also be understood as '**persistent**' and / or '**vexatious**' behaviour and this applies to all verbal, physical and written contact with the NCTJ, as described above.

4. Unacceptable and / or unreasonable behaviour

Examples of what we consider to be '**unacceptable**' and / or '**unreasonable**' behaviour may include but is not limited to:

- Abusive communications including verbal or written communications using rude, abusive, racist, homophobic, or foul language or remarks, including in relation to any of the Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

This includes and is not limited to using derogatory, threatening, abusive, demeaning, offensive or discriminatory language in written correspondence and online (including social media).

- Threatening and / or the actual physical abuse of staff.
- Damage to NCTJ property.
- Sending multiple correspondence to a variety of staff or services - to maintain an argument.
- Using bullying or coercive behaviour, emotional blackmail and/or manipulation to try and get met or revisited.
- Prolonged and repeated contact beyond the point at which the NCTJ's processes have been exhausted or actions have already been put in place to address the concerns raised.
- Making defamatory, false and/or inflammatory claims about the NCTJ and/or staff which are not based on any valid evidence; and / or.
- A failure to comply with arrangements that have been made in line with this policy.

Examples of what we consider to be '**unreasonable**' and/or '**persistent**' communication may include but is not limited to:

- Refusing to specify the grounds of a complaint or enquiry, despite offers of assistance.

- Failing to follow the NCTJ's policies and processes including arrangements agreed under this policy.
- Repeatedly demanding responses within an unreasonable timescale.
- Demanding responses from several staff on the same subject.
- Making unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues.
- Insisting on seeing certain staff when that is not possible.
- Repeatedly attending NCTJ offices to try and discuss the matter without a pre-arranged appointment.
- Submitting false documentation.
- Covertly recording meetings or conversations without agreement of those involved.
- Making serial allegations or complaints about various matters or continuing to raise the same or similar matters repeatedly.
- Inundating the NCTJ with emails, telephone calls, or copies of information that have already been submitted or that are irrelevant to the enquiry, request, or complaint.
- Pursuing parallel complaints on the same issue with a variety of organisations.
- Refusing to follow the NCTJ procedures or continuing to correspond when the procedures have been exhausted.
- Refusal to engage in efforts to reach resolution.
- Introduction of trivial or irrelevant information whilst a complaint is being investigated and expecting this to be considered and commented on.
- Denying statements that have been previously made.
- Changing the basis of a complaint or enquiry as the investigation proceeds.

5. Our zero tolerance statement

We are committed to maintaining a safe and respectful environment for all our staff. We expect everyone to treat each other with courtesy and respect. We do not tolerate any form of abuse, aggression, discrimination, or violence towards our staff.

6. Intoxication and substance influence

To ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals, we are unable to provide support to individuals who appear to be intoxicated or under the influence of substances.

If, because of intoxication or substance influence, an individual presents in a manner that prevents us from offering effective assistance, we may respectfully decline service at that time and where necessary ask that they leave the premises.

Support may be resumed once the individual is able to engage with us in a way that allows for a safe and productive interaction.

7. Mental health concerns and safeguarding

We are committed to supporting all individuals, including those experiencing mental health challenges.

When an individual presents in crisis and their behaviour becomes inappropriate, our priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of both the individual and our staff.

We will approach these situations with empathy and professionalism, aiming to de-escalate the situation through calm communication, active listening, and where appropriate, involving trained mental health professionals or emergency services.

If an individual threatens harm to themselves or others during our interactions, we will consider disclosing this to a relevant health professional.

In severe cases, we may also involve the police and / or other emergency services to ensure their welfare.

8. Serious Incidents

Where an individual continues to behave or communicate in a way which is considered unacceptable or unreasonable, a senior manager in consultation with the chief executive will consider if it is appropriate to apply the strategies described in this policy.

Consideration will be given to the individual circumstances of a case, any vulnerabilities or reasonable adjustments required by an individual when applying this policy.

Where an individual's behaviour is so extreme that it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of the NCTJ's staff or others, we will consider other options. For example, this may include reporting the matter to the Police or pursuing legal action. In such cases we may not give the individual notice of that action.

In some circumstances we reserve the right to withdraw services if continuing presents a risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff.

9. Action we will take to manage unreasonable and unacceptable communication and behaviour

This policy may be applied when it is agreed that behaviour and / or communication meeting the description given in this policy has been displayed.

- **A Verbal Warning** - If we consider that an individual's behaviour or communication has been unacceptable and / or unreasonable, then we will tell them why and ask that they stop.
- **An Informal Written Warning** - In follow up to a verbal warning or where this is not possible an informal written warning will be provided to the individual to remind them of our expected behaviours.
- **A Formal Written Warning** - For repeated or more serious offences a formal written warning will be issued to the individual to ask that they cease their unacceptable behaviour and / or communication and will advise them of the action we will take to address this.
- **Restricting Contact** - To a specific method of communication only, such as e-mail or writing. Requesting that contact is only made at a particular day or time or to a specified e-mail address or person to protect staff and resources

- **Limit Service where it is necessary** - An individual's access to certain services may be temporarily restricted.
- **Suspension or Termination** - In severe cases, the individual's access to services may be suspended or terminated.
- **Ban from Premises** - Individuals who continue to violate the policy may be asked to leave the premises immediately. Persistent offenders may be banned from accessing the NCTJ premises for a specified period or indefinitely. The NCTJ's trained security staff may be deployed to deal with an individual refusing to leave our premises, and the individual may be physically removed.
- **Legal Action** - In cases of severe aggression, violence, or threats, legal action may be pursued.

10. Refusing all contact

Where an individual continues to behave in a way which is unacceptable or overrides the restrictions imposed under this policy and having sought legal consideration, we may decide to refuse all contact with the Individual.

If this is the case, the individual will receive a "cease and desist" letter. At this point, the NCTJ may choose to signpost the individual to the relevant regulator, and the possibility of resolving their issue will no longer be available.

Any further contact from the Individual may be recorded but will not receive an acknowledgement or reply.

Restrictions will stay in place where there is no evident change in the behaviours described within this policy OR where further contact with the individual will unnecessarily restart a cycle of negative interaction.

11. Review arrangements

The NCTJ will review this policy annually as part of the NCTJ's annual self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary, in response to customer, learner or regulatory feedback.

If you would like to feedback any views, please contact us via the details provided at the end of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed in September 2027.

12. Contact us

Any queries in relation to the contents of this policy, please contact our head of awarding.

Email: info@nctj.com