

Cairngorms National Park Authority

Statement on unacceptable behaviour

Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) believes that complainants have a right to be heard, understood and respected and we work hard to be open and accessible at all times.

This Statement deals with those rare examples of unacceptable behaviour by customers who complain in person or through someone acting on their behalf.

Introduction

CNPA is committed to operating an organisation that is open and accessible to all. We are further committed to achieving a culture of mutual respect amongst all who work in, visit or contact us.

Occasionally, the behaviour or actions of our customers makes it very difficult for us to deal with their complaint. In a small number of cases these actions become unacceptable because they involve abuse of our staff or impact on our ways of working. We will consider the impact of such behaviours on our ability to do our work and provide a service to others. In extreme cases we will take the measures necessary to protect our staff.

Following guidance prepared by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, CNPA has identified three types of behaviour which are unacceptable and has produced guidelines for its staff to follow in the event of their being subjected to unacceptable treatment by a customer. Our primary aim is to ensure the safety of our employees and prevent escalation and implementation of formal procedures.

1. **Aggressive or abusive behaviour.** This includes saying or writing things which make staff feel afraid, threatened or abused.

2. **Making unreasonable demands.** This includes the amount of information sought, the nature and scale of the service expected or the number of times the complaints service is used.
3. **Making the same complaint repeatedly.** This includes people who are not willing or able to accept that SNH cannot reasonably do any more to help them.

Actions we may take

Where a complainant's behaviour is deemed unacceptable, we may decide to:

- call the Police;
- end telephone calls or face-to-face meetings;
- restrict contact to a nominated member of staff who will deal with future calls or correspondence;
- meet the complainant by appointment only;
- meet at CNPA premises only with other staff members in attendance;
- restrict contact from the complainant to written correspondence by letter or email only;
- return any irrelevant or inappropriate documents to the complainant or, in extreme cases, advise that further irrelevant documents will be destroyed;
- prevent the complainant attending future meetings or events organised by CNPA;
- remove without exception any unacceptable comments on any of our social media sites, that do not adhere to the rules set out on our Facebook site will, without exception, be removed;
- refuse to visit the complainant's own premises, sites or other locations; and/or
- take any other action that we consider necessary, which may include legal advice on whether continued contact is appropriate.

In exceptional cases, we reserve the right to refuse to consider a complaint or future complaints from an individual. We will take into account the risk of further unacceptable behaviour being directed towards our employees, the impact on the complainant and also whether there would be a broader public interest in considering the complaint further.

In most cases, we will respond to the complaint and tell the complainant what action we are taking and why. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances in which a complaint is deemed not to merit a response. We will consider such complaints on a case by case basis.