



WILTSHIRE INVOLVEMENT NETWORK

Vexatious Complaints Policy

A policy for dealing with abusive, persistent or vexatious complaints and complainants.

WIN will do everything reasonably possible to resolve issues of complaint. However, complaints occasionally may focus solely on their concerns to the extent of placing a strain on time and resources which hinder the consideration of their or other people's complaints.

Examples of circumstances which complaints may be considered persistent or vexatious

Where complainants:

- Persist in pursuing a complaint where the complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented;
- Persist in complaints, where the complaint has been thoroughly investigated, but the outcome of the investigation is not accepted
- Persist in complaints, where the expected outcome is unrealistic and the complainant intends to persist until such an outcome is achieved;
- Change the substance of a complaint or continually raise new issues or seek to prolong contact by continually raising further concerns or questions upon receipt of a response whilst the complaint is being addressed. (Care must be taken not to discard new issues that are significantly different from the original complaint. These might have to be addressed separately);

- Are unwilling to accept documented evidence of treatment given as being factual, or deny receipt of an adequate response in spite of correspondence specifically answering their questions
- Do not clearly identify the precise issues they wish to be investigated, despite reasonable efforts by WIN or Host staff and others to help them specify their concerns;
- Where the individual will not accept that WIN does not have a role in investigation their issue e.g. they have not exhausted local processes and wish WIN to intervene inappropriately;
- Focus on a trivial matter that is out of proportion to its significance and continue to focus on this point;
- Have in the course of pursuing their issue, had an excessive number of contacts or that the frequency of contact is often lengthy and complicated (by telephone, e-mail letter or fax) placing unreasonable and disproportionate demands on WIN or Host staff;
- Display unreasonable demands or expectations and fail to accept these may be unreasonable e.g. insist on immediate responses from WIN or Host staff when they are not available and this has been explained;
- Have threatened or used actual physical violence. All such cases must be documented in case of further action and reported;
- Have harassed or been personally abusive or verbally aggressive towards WIN participants or Host staff dealing with them. All cases must be documented and reported in case of further action. It is recognised, however, that complainants may sometimes act out of character at times of stress, anxiety, or distress and reasonable allowances for this should be made.

Procedure

If during the process of dealing with a complaint the WIN agrees that the complaint should now be defined in one of the categories listed above a letter can be sent to the complainant explaining that the investigation has ended.

All complaints and queries and other correspondence regarding a particular complaint must be passed to the Chairs and/or Host staff. This will not only ensure a consistent approach by WIN but will also minimise the possibility of confusion resulting in conflicting responses being given to the complainant. It will also result in the complainants being dealt with in a coordinated way irrespective of the route the complainant takes.