

Complaints Policy - Unreasonable, Persistent and Vexatious

1. Purpose

Partington Parish Council is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly, consistently and proportionately. This policy sets out how the Council will respond where the behaviour of a complainant, rather than the complaint itself, becomes unreasonable, persistent or vexatious.

2. Principles

Every complaint will be considered on its own merits. A complaint will not be regarded as unreasonable simply because it is difficult, critical or time-consuming. The Council recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will consider any reasonable adjustments before applying this policy.

3. Definitions

An unreasonable, persistent or vexatious complainant is someone whose behaviour, because of its nature or frequency, places a disproportionate burden on the Council, its Members or staff, and hinders consideration of the issues raised.

4. Examples of Behaviour

Examples include:

- Repeatedly pursuing the same matter after the Council's complaints process has been exhausted.
- Continually changing the substance of a complaint.
- Refusing to accept evidence already provided.
- Excessive or repetitive correspondence.
- Abusive, threatening or offensive language.
- Making unreasonable demands on staff time.
- Refusing to identify the issues despite reasonable requests.
- Using complaints to harass or intimidate Members or employees.

5. Before Applying this Policy

Before a complainant is designated as unreasonable, persistent or vexatious, the Clerk will review the history of the matter with the Chair (or Vice-Chair where appropriate), ensure the Council's complaints procedure has been followed, consider any Equality Act obligations, and determine whether alternative communication methods could resolve the issue.

6. Possible Actions

Depending on the circumstances, the Council may:

- Limit correspondence to one named officer.
- Require communication in writing only.
- Limit the frequency of responses.
- Decline to respond to repeated issues already fully addressed.
- Seek legal advice where appropriate.

Partington Parish Council, The Community Centre, 99 Central Road, Partington, Manchester,
M31 4FL

7. Decision

The decision to apply this policy should normally be approved by the Full Council or a properly delegated committee and recorded in confidential minutes where appropriate.

8. Review

Any designation will normally be reviewed after 12 months or sooner if circumstances change. A complainant may request one review of the decision within 28 days of notification.

9. Data Protection

Personal information will be processed in accordance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or recognised good practice changes.