

Unreasonable complainant conduct quick guide



Unreasonable complainant conduct (UCC) is any conduct by a complainant which raises substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues for the agency, its staff and other clients. All complainants should be treated with fairness and respect, and **Officers are entitled to be treated with the same level of fairness and respect they afford complainants.**

This quick guide is designed to supplement, rather than replace, relevant standards, policies and legislation governing agency service delivery.

KEEP GOOD RECORDS

- Report all UCC incidents
- Make a factual record of interactions and observations
- Handle initial interactions appropriately

It is vital for future safety that **suitably detailed records** are made of all behavioural observations, the actions and strategies engaged by staff, and how the complainant responded.

Model for identifying and developing strategic response to UCC

Identify warning signs	Assess the reasonableness of the conduct	Categorise the conduct	Consider and select strategies	Implement strategies and monitor
<p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complainant's history • style/content of communication • interaction with agency • outcomes sought • reactions to advice/outcomes 	<p>Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • likely level of impact/risk on staff, clients, service delivery • merits of issues • assess compatibility with human rights • complainant's circumstances • proportionality • responsiveness • personal boundaries breached • unreasonable under any circumstance 	<p>Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • persistence • demands • level of cooperation • arguments • behaviour 	<p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • history of complainant's interactions with agency • previous successful communication techniques • likely level of impact/risk on staff, service delivery • personal thresholds and skill level of the complaint handlers • agency policy, procedures and protocol • jurisdictional issues 	<p>Implement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take actions to put strategies into practice • record assessment and strategy • communicate strategy <p>Monitor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complainant's response • staff response - signs of stress • level of success for agency • respond/alter strategy as required

NOTE
All complaints are to be considered on their merits. UCC does not mean that the issues raised will be invalid or lacking substance.

Safety reminder

The physical and emotional safety of all parties is paramount. Strategies must always be considered in the context of your agency's security protocols and procedures. Consider the differing interpersonal skills, boundaries and thresholds of staff when selecting appropriate strategies. The *Human Rights Act 2019* means that human rights considerations form part of complaints management approaches by agencies.

This quick guide is part of a suite of material supporting *Managing unreasonable complainant conduct*:

- **Strategies and script ideas for managing UCC** – www.bit.ly/MUCResource
- **Practical, interactive training** – www.bit.ly/MUCtraining

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