



LONDON POTTERS Unacceptable Behaviour Policy

London Potters (LP) is committed to providing a quality service to all our members, and we follow the Charity Commissions' Code. In return, we expect everyone who come into contact with our trustees, volunteers and other members to treat them with respect.

Most of our members tell us that they are satisfied with our services, but we recognise that sometimes this isn't always the case. To carry out our work we need to make sure we are using our resources in the best way. This might mean we can't respond to every issue in a way a member may want, if it means using a disproportionate amount of time and resource on a single case.

We understand that, in times of trouble or distress, people may act out of character, and, in a very small number of cases, may behave in an unacceptable way despite our best efforts to help.

This makes it difficult for us to deal with queries or complaints effectively. We also have a duty to protect the welfare and safety of our trustees and volunteers. They should be able to do their work without fear of violence, abuse, harassment, or discrimination.

Purpose of this policy

This policy means we can manage unacceptable member behaviour consistently and fairly. It sets out clearly what we consider to be unacceptable and the steps we may take to deal with such behaviour. It applies to all our members, trustees, volunteers, and Suppliers.

Principles

You can expect that our trustees and volunteers will always:

- provide a fair, open, proportionate, and accessible service
- listen and understand
- treat everyone who contacts us with respect, empathy, and dignity
- behave in line with the Charity commissions Code

We expect our members to:

- be courteous.
- engage with us in a way that does not hamper our ability to carry out our work effectively and efficiently for the benefit of all.
- Treat all other members, trustees and volunteers with respect.

Safeguarding and disclosures

If, in the course of our work, an individual threatens to harm themselves or others, we will consider disclosing this to a relevant health professional. We may also contact the police if others are threatened with harm.

Definition of unacceptable behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour means acting in a way that is unreasonable, regardless of the level of someone's stress, frustration, or anger. It may involve acts, words or physical gestures that could cause another person distress or discomfort.

Aggressive or abusive behaviour

This is behaviour or language (written or spoken) that could cause our trustees and other members to feel afraid, threatened or abused. This includes threatening emails, telephone calls, meetings, and comments on social media or elsewhere.

For example:

- insulting or degrading language, including inappropriate banter, innuendo or malicious allegations



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- any form of physical violence or threats of physical violence
- any discrimination or derogatory remarks relating to:
 - age
 - gender reassignment
 - being married or in a civil partnership
 - pregnancy (or being on maternity leave)
 - disability
 - race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
 - or any other personal characteristic

Unreasonable demands and vexatious complaints

Members might make requests that we cannot reasonably accommodate. This may include but is not limited to:

- the amount of information they seek
- the nature and scale of service they expect
- the volume of correspondence they generate
- a remedy or outcome that cannot be achieved

We accept that someone who is persistent is not necessarily guilty of unacceptable behaviour. What is seen as an unreasonable demand will depend on the circumstances of each case. We will always consider each complaint on its own merits.

However, the behaviour of a member who persistently contacts us about the same issue, when that issue has been dealt with in line with LP's usual processes, can, in some circumstances, amount to unreasonable demand. Such behaviour takes up a disproportionate amount of our time and resources and can affect our ability to provide a service to others.

Examples of behaviour which we consider as unreasonable demands and vexatious complaints include but are not limited to:

- refusing to follow our complaints procedure
- persistently pursuing a complaint where LP's complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and exhausted.
- contacting us repeatedly and frequently without giving us enough time to respond to previous correspondence
- insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular trustee when a suitable alternative has been offered
- focusing disproportionately on a matter in relation to its significance and continuing to focus on this point despite receiving proportionate responses addressing the matter
- adopting a 'scatter gun' approach: pursuing parallel complaints about the same issue with different trustees or volunteers
- threatening or using actual physical violence towards trustees or volunteers
- being personally abusive or verbally aggressive towards trustees dealing with their issue
- recording meetings or conversations (whether face-to-face or on the telephone) without the prior knowledge or consent of other people involved

How we will respond to incidents of unacceptable behaviour

We do not expect our trustees and volunteers to tolerate unacceptable behaviour when communicating with our members. When this happens, we have the right to cancel the members LP membership.

Before taking such action, we will always warn members that they are behaving in an unacceptable way to give them the chance to change their behaviour. However, a warning will not be given in extreme cases for example, when a physical threat is made.



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Where these circumstances arise, we will take the following steps:

- we'll ask members to modify their behaviour and explain why
- if the behaviour continues to be unacceptable, our trustees/volunteers will remove themselves from the situation.
- a record of the incident will be kept, the situation will be investigated, and a decision made as to what action to take. This could include withdrawing membership and ceasing communication.
- We will refer the matter to the police where a criminal offence has been threatened or committed

Communication restrictions

If members continue to behave unacceptably and membership is revoked we will tell the member that we are doing, so setting out:

- why we consider their behaviour unacceptable
- what action we are taking and if there is a time limit on the restrictions

If we decide to limit communication, we will make a note of the limitation in our records.

Communication might be:

- removed from London Potters social media and be blocked from our accounts
- placed on file without a further response if the issued raised in the correspondence has previously been considered
- limited in other ways which we consider appropriate in the circumstances, in line with this policy

In addition, we reserve the right to:

- restrict the issues on which we will correspond
- block emails or telephone numbers if the number and length of communications sent is excessive
- refuse to consider a complaint or any further contact in exceptional circumstances
- take any other action which we consider necessary or appropriate to make this policy effective.

Where circumstances are serious enough to warrant further restrictions, we may take legal action to prevent further contact/poor behaviour.

In making any decision to take legal action in such cases, we may consider:

- how legal action may affect our trustees
- how legal action may affect the individual (including their personal circumstances and any reasonable adjustments)
- the extent to which we can engage or assist
- the extent to which the process or subject matter has been exhausted

Review

We will regularly review any decision to revoke membership or restrict communications and when appropriate we may lift some or all restrictions.