



Marine
Management
Organisation

MMO

Unreasonable customer behaviour policy

V1.0 – March 2022



...ambitious for our seas and coasts

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) aims to provide a professional service on every occasion to all our customers. Our [customer charter](#) sets out our commitment to the level of service we will provide. In return, we expect our customers to behave appropriately and treat our employees with courtesy, consideration, and respect, to allow them to carry out their work.

We recognise that sometimes things can go wrong and might need to be put right. Our [complaint procedure](#) covers how we handle complaints and where necessary, what actions we take to put things right.

There will also be a small number of cases where we consider a customer, either individually or as part of a group, might be behaving in ways that we consider are inappropriate and unreasonable, despite our efforts to help.

Principles and Aims

This policy provides clarity for our colleagues and customers what is expected of them, what they can do, who can authorise actions and how to respond to these situations.

It also enables us to deal with unreasonable customer behaviour consistently and professionally, outlining the steps we may take to deal with such behaviours.

What is considered unreasonable behaviour?

It is difficult to produce a comprehensive list of actions we consider to be unreasonable, and cases should always be considered on their own specific merits. However, we would generally categorise unreasonable and unacceptable behaviour under two main headings.

Unreasonably persistent or vexatious contact

This consists of contact (written or verbal) which we consider places an unreasonable demand on our colleague's time.

For example, customers who:

1. Persist in pursuing a matter when they have already exhausted other statutory routes of appeal.
2. Do not clearly identify the precise issues which they wish to be investigated, despite reasonable efforts to help them specify their concerns.
3. Continue to seek to pursue an issue, including complaints, where the concerns identified are not within the remit of the MMO and this has been previously explained.
4. Persist in pursuing a complaint where our complaints procedure has been fully and properly implemented and exhausted
5. Change in 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.

6. Remain unwilling to accept documented evidence of action despite previous engagement.
7. Remain unwilling to accept that the MMO has reached a final decision on a chosen course of action.
8. Deny receiving an adequate response despite previously issued correspondence specifically answering their questions
9. Focus on trivial matters to an extent which is out of proportion to its significance and continue to focus on this point.
10. Have has an excessive number of contacts with the MMO placing unreasonable demands on our time and resources.
11. Adopting a 'scatter gun' approach. This includes pursuing parallel complaints, or other contact, on the same issue with a variety of individuals and/or teams within the MMO.

Aggressive or unacceptable behaviour

This consists of behaviour (written or verbal) that might intimidate, bully, harass or offend our employees.

For example:

1. Secretly recording meetings and conversations without advance warning.
2. Making malicious or unjustified allegations about MMO colleagues and/or using abusive, offensive or threatening language
3. Any comments relating to disability, religion, belief, perceived gender of other protected characteristic
4. Submitting falsified documents from themselves to assist any case against the MMO.
5. Making threatening contact, either in person, via telephone or email
6. Any form of physical violence, including threats to carry this out
7. Any form of derogatory racial, ageist, homophobic and/or sexist remarks

Actions that may be taken

Before any action is taken the customer will be provided with a warning and directed to a copy of this policy. This is to provide them with an opportunity to correct their behaviour.

If the unreasonable behaviour continues, action will be taken that is considered to be proportionate to the nature and frequency of the customers contact. This will be set out in writing to the customer and the reasons for any action will be clearly explained.

The following action may be taken, taking the specific behaviour and circumstances into account:

1. Placing limits on the number and duration of contacts with colleagues per week or month
2. Only addressing correspondence sent by the customer in writing and to the info@marinemanagement.org.uk email address.
3. Banning a customer from visiting any MMO office except by appointment

4. Letting a customer know that the MMO will no longer reply to or acknowledge any further contact from them on a specific topic.
5. Where an ongoing service is being provided to the customer, limiting this to the legal minimum required only.
6. Refusing to register and process any further contact from a customer altogether, including complaints
7. Taking legal action against a customer where appropriate

Appeal/Review

All MMO customers have the right of review, and this will be set out in any decision letter.

Request for a review must be made in writing, including by email, within two weeks of the date of notification of the decision made under the policy.

We will respond to all appeals within 20 working days of receipt of the request for a review.

When we will review existing decisions to apply policy

There will be a review of existing decisions to apply the policy every 12 months.

Limits will be lifted, and relationships returned to normal, unless there are good grounds to extend them.

We will inform customer of the outcome of the review. If limits are to continue, we must explain the reasons and state when the limits will next be reviewed.