



## **Unacceptable Actions Policy**

Reference: Version: 1

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### **1 Introduction**

This Policy sets out how Business Stream will handle those few customers whose actions or behaviour we consider unacceptable. For the purposes of this Policy a complainant is defined as “a person or organisation whose engagement with Business Stream involves unacceptable behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.”

### **2 Policy Aims**

- 2.1 To make clear to all customers what actions we will take as a result of their unacceptable actions or behaviour.
- 2.2 To deal fairly, honestly, consistently and appropriately with all customers, including those whose actions we consider unacceptable. We believe that all customers have the right to be heard, understood and respected. We also consider that our employees have the same rights.
- 2.3 To provide a service that is accessible to all customers. However, we retain the right, where we consider a customers' actions to be unacceptable, to restrict or change access to our service.
- 2.4 To ensure that other customers and our employees do not suffer any disadvantage from customers who act in an unacceptable manner.

### **3 Defining Unacceptable Actions**

Business Stream considers the actions of customers who are aggressive or abusive, who make unreasonable demands upon employees or who unreasonably persist with their complaints to be unacceptable actions and aims to manage such actions under this Policy.

- 3.1 *Aggressive (including abusive) Behaviour*  
Aggression is not restricted to acts of violence that may result in physical harm. It also includes behaviour or language (whether oral or written) that may cause employees to feel afraid, threatened or abused and also includes threats, physical violence, personal verbal abuse, derogatory remarks and rudeness.  
Business Stream expects its employees to be treated courteously and with respect. Violence or abuse towards employees is unacceptable.
- 3.2 *Unreasonable Demands*  
Customers may make what Business Stream considers unreasonable demands through the amount of information they seek, the nature and scale

of service they expect or the number of approaches they make. What amounts to unreasonable demands will always depend on the circumstances surrounding the behaviour and the seriousness of the issues raised by the customer but may include demanding responses within an unreasonable time-scale, insisting on seeing or speaking to a particular member of staff, continual phone calls or letters, repeatedly changing the substance of the enquiry or raising unrelated concerns.

### 3.3 *Unreasonable Persistence*

- 3.3.1 Customer complaints will always be thoroughly investigated and if necessary escalated for resolution through the appropriate channels.
- 3.3.2 Customers may persist in disagreeing with the action or decision taken in relation to their complaint or contact us persistently about the same issue.
- 3.3.3 Examples of actions grouped under this heading may include persistent refusal to accept explanations relating to what we can or cannot do and continuing to pursue an issue without presenting any new information. The way in which these customers approach us may be entirely reasonable, but it is their persistent behaviour in continuing to do so that may not be.
- 3.3.4 Business Stream may consider the actions of customers to be unacceptable when they take up what we regard as being a disproportionate amount of time and resource.

## **4 Managing Unacceptable Actions**

- 4.1 Business Stream may restrict contact with customers to being in person, by telephone, fax, letter or electronically or any combination of these.
- 4.2 The measures that Business Stream takes in reaction to unacceptable actions will depend on the duration and repetition of the actions.
- 4.3 The threat or use of aggressive or abusive behaviour, which may include physical violence, verbal abuse or harassment, towards any of our employees is likely to result in the immediate ending of all direct contact with the complainant. Incidents may be reported to the police. This will always be the case if physical violence is used or threatened.
- 4.4 Employees will end telephone calls if they consider the caller to be aggressive or to be abusive. The employee taking the call has the right to make this decision, tell the caller that the behaviour is unacceptable and end the call if the behaviour does not stop. All instances of this kind of behaviour should be reported immediately to the employee's line manager. All employees working in the Contact Centre will receive guidance on how to deal with aggressive or abusive callers.
- 4.5 Business Stream does not tolerate correspondence that is abusive to staff. When this happens Business Stream will write to the customer advising that it considers their language offensive, unnecessary and unhelpful. We will ask the complainant to stop using such language and state that we will not respond to any future correspondence from the customer if it includes unsuitable language.
- 4.6 Where correspondence from a complainant contains allegations against a Business Stream employee and after investigation they are found to be entirely unsubstantiated then this may be deemed an unacceptable action.
- 4.7 In situations where unacceptable actions are repeated or continuous or by themselves individual actions are sufficiently serious, Business Stream may

restrict the contact that such a complainant may have with our employees. For example, this may mean that any future contact can only be made to named individuals or must be by electronic or written communication. For any such restrictions to apply they must be authorised by the Head of Customer Experience.

## **5 Policy Availability and Review**

This Policy is available on our website and will be provided free of charge on request from any customer. This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, at least annually, to make sure that the aims of the Policy are being achieved.

## **6. Restrictions on application of policy**

This policy does not prevent any statutory rights a person may have to seek information from us or to require us to review our decisions, in particular, in terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

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