



PROACTIVE
COMPLAINTS
MANAGEMENT

TRAINING • COACHING • CASE MANAGEMENT

Unreasonable Complainant

How often have you labelled a complainant as unreasonable?

Consider for a minute why you have labelled that individual as unreasonable, is it because the complainant:

- Won't stop complaining? Or
- You are of the view that you have addressed their concerns? Or
- They are now involving other people in their dispute? Or
- Because you have reached the end of your tether and you just want them to stop? Or
- They have a tendency to threaten you and your staff and behave in an outrageous manner?

The above reasons are not exhaustive and importantly they above reasons could also be present in your reasoning why you have labelled an individual an “*unreasonable complainant*”.

Below is a definition of what Unreasonable Complainant Conduct is defined as – this definition was provided by the NSW Ombudsman and looks like this:

Definition of an unreasonable complainant:

Unreasonable Complainant Conduct can be defined as any behaviour by a current or former complainant which because of its nature or frequency, raises substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues for the parties to a complaint;

Unreasonable demands:

For example, demanding more reviews than provided for in the review policy of the organisation, demanding a different outcome without demonstrating that the original decision was wrong, making unreasonable demands generally (e.g. that the matter be given priority, that there be a new investigation or that the outcome be changed, or about how the complaint was handled)

Unreasonable lack of cooperation:

For example, failing or refusing to identify the issue of complaint (where the complainant is capable of identifying the issue) or providing disorganised information (where the complainant is capable of organising the information).

Unreasonable arguments:

For example, expressing irrational claims/beliefs/conspiracy theories, making vexatious complaints, or illogical or unrealistically denying any responsibility for actions or inaction.

Unreasonable behaviour:

For example, making threats of harm to self, complaint handlers or third parties, making baseless attacks on the intentions, motivations, ethics or conduct of complaint handlers, using abusive language that goes beyond what is reasonable to expect a complaint handler to put up with, expressing unreasonable anger, aggression or violence, or lying or being intentionally misleading.

As can be seen by the above definition there is a litmus test on what constitutes an unreasonable complainant it may be mindful to consider this definition before we start to label individuals as unreasonable when in fact they are only trying to find someone who can assist them to resolve their concerns.

Next week we will be looking at - *"10 Steps to responding to threats, hostility and aggression"*

For further information please contact Steve Aivaliotis on 0418313303 or via email steve@proactivecm.com.au or check out our website www.proactivecm.com.au