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1. Introduction
The Steering Group will deal with complaints, comments, and questions as part of their day-to-day management of the forum. The Steering Group may delegate such management to a staff member should they consider it suitable.

Comments and questions are normally expected to be small in number, and the majority are handled quickly and informally wherever possible or formally using the complaints procedure if required.

However, there are occasions when complainants, commentators, or inquisitor’s behaviour crosses over into an unreasonable manner. The consequences are the actions of the complainants, commentators, or inquisitor, begin to impact negatively on the day-to-day running of the forum and directly or indirectly the overall well-being of the members of the forum.

* 1. In order to protect the integrity of the forum and the steering group, chair will uphold the standards of courtesy, language and reasonableness with persons who wish to express a concern raise a question or pursue a complaint.
	2. The Chair and the steering group will also protect the well-being of all steering group members, staff and reps from the consequences of vexatious comments, questions and complaints.
	3. Forum name will deal fairly, honestly, openly and transparently with those who make persistent or vexatious complaints, questions and comments.
	4. Those who harass, threaten, or use inappropriate language towards or concerning any member of the forum, staff or steering group member, will be deemed at the chairs discretion to be vexatious.
	5. The following non exhaustive list may also the discretion of the chair become vexatious:
	1.5.1 Repeat complaints or questions over the same over or similar issues, where the forum has already dealt with that subject matter.
	1.5.2 Questions, comments or complaints that are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific or repetitious.
	1.5.3 Correspondence regardless of the method used, that is prolific, such as excessive e-mail, posts on social media or telephone contact about a concern or complaint.
	1.5.4 Complainants, commentators and or inquisitors, who post negative comments, questions or complaints online.
	1.5.5 People who insist on pursing multiple complaints, which are unsubstantiated or request reviews and appeals, repeatedly, even after the forum has dealt with them, or the chair believes that the complaint reaches the standard of being vexatious, or whom have an unrealistic expectation of outcomes.
	1.5.6 Any person who had an insistence upon pursuing complaints comments or questions in an unreasonable manner, or with the use of inappropriate language.
	1.5.7 Any person who has an insistence on only dealing with the chair or other named person irrespective of the issue and the level of delegation in the forum to deal with such matters.
	1.5.8 Repeatedly pursuing a complaint, or asking the same questions when the outcome is not satisfactory to the complainant or inquisitor.
	1.5.9 Actions that are, or appear to be, targeted over a period of time on one or more members of the steering group, staff, or reps.
	1.5.10 Peoples actions that cause on-going distress to an individual.
	1.5.11 Questions, comments or complaints that rise to the level that they have a significant adverse effect on the forum
	1.5.12 Complainants, Commentators or Inquisitor’s, actions can be perceived intimidating and oppressive by the recipient or the forum. This could include persistent demands, questions, and criticisms, whilst when viewed in isolation, would be acceptable but has a cumulative effect over time of undermining confidence, well-being, and the mental health of the targets.

# 2. Process

Once a person or persons are identified as vexatious or harassing the Chair will write to inform the complainant, commentator, or inquisitor that their behaviour is now considered to have reached the level of vexatiousness or harassment. Any active role they were playing within the forum will come to an immediate end.

2.1 All future in person meetings will be refused.
2.1.1The forum may agree to an in person meeting at its discretion, if it is with two members of the steering group or one and a member of staff, and notes of those meetings will be taken.

2.2 All communication with the complainant, commentator or inquisitor to the forum will only be dealt with through a single point of contact, as specified in the written notice.

2.3 In the case of physical, or verbal aggression the forum may take advice from a legal adviser. The forum may also consider taking advice regarding pursuing a case under anti-harassment legislation.

2.4 New complaints raised by the vexatious complainant that have already been investigated by the forum will not be reinvestigated.

2.5 New comments or questions received through the single point of contact, will at the chair’s discretion be considered for a response.

2.6 Should the Complainants, Commentators or Inquisitor’s behaviour continue after the written notice, the forum will consider an outright ban on the person or people.

2.6.1If such action is taken the chair or single point of contact will confirm in writing.

2.6.2If the persons or people’s behaviour is modified and is then resumed at a later date the forum will consider a ban of the person, along with advice being sought from legal advisers.

# 3. Appeals

Any complainant, commentator, or inquisitor found to be vexatious, may lodge an appeal in writing to the single point of contact specified in their written notice, within 28 days.

3.1 If an appeal is lodged the steering group will consider the appeal at their next meeting.
3.2 After the meeting the chair or the single point of contact will let the appellant know the outcome in writing.

# 4. Bans

Any person ending up in a outright ban, will not have any questions, or comments responded to.
4.1 Any further complaints may be considered by the steering group, depending on the matter.
4.2 Any banned person may write to the single point of contact to request attending a forum event, the steering group will consider these requests on a case by case basis, but reserve the right to protect the forum, its staff, reps, and other members by refusing access.

Approved: Insert date

Responsibility of: Steering Group/Directors/Trustees

Next review date: Insert date