



## Unacceptable Behaviour and Unreasonable Demands Policy

<b>Updated on:</b> July 2024	<b>Next review:</b> July 2025
<b>Owner:</b> Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)	
<b>Authorised by:</b> LAWRS' Management Committee	

**Principle:** The Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS) is committed to providing all its service users, staff, volunteers and trustees with a safe, inclusive and collaborative environment and uphold the highest ethical, professional and quality standards in the support we provide to Latin American migrant women. Our staff and volunteers are expected to treat service users with courtesy, respect and fairness. Similarly, we expect our staff and volunteers to be treated in the same way. We have a duty to protect the welfare and safety of everyone at LAWRS. Where Service users behave unacceptably or make unreasonable demands, we will refer to this policy

**Purpose:** The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidance on what LAWRS expects from its Service users as well as to provide examples of conduct that will always be unacceptable. This Policy describes what we consider unacceptable or unreasonable behaviour and it sets out the required standards of conduct for all of those accessing our services and/or activities. It also describes what are the consequences of displaying these types of behaviours.

**Coverage:** Service users at LAWRS. (Behaviours of Staff, Volunteers and Trustees will be covered by LAWRS' Code of Conduct)

### Content:

1. Introduction
2. Unacceptable behaviour
  - a. Examples of Unacceptable behaviour
3. Unreasonable demands
  - a. Examples of Unreasonable demands
4. Unreasonable frequency or duration of contact
  - a. Examples of unreasonable levels of contact
5. Consequences for unacceptable behaviour and unreasonable demands.  
If we decide to stop supporting you

## **1. Introduction**

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The Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS) is a UK human rights-based organisation supporting Latin American migrant women (LAMW) displaced by poverty and violence who continue to experience these problems alongside exploitation, discrimination and abuse. LAWRS emerged as a direct response to the social injustices and abuses that LAMW experience and, as a self-led women organisation, we have a solid base in the daily realities of migrant women's and girl's lives.

We deliver our mission "to pursue equal rights and social justice for all Latin American women and migrant women in the UK" through work at two interconnecting levels: practical and strategic. The former focuses on survival, security, safety, wellbeing and social protection needs. The latter lobbies, advocates and campaigns for human rights and social justice for migrant women in the UK.

We understand Service users' situation could be stressful and leading to frustration, but our staff and volunteers have the right to do their jobs without being treated badly.

It is the responsibility of Service users to familiarise themselves with the details of this Policy and its guidance.

## **2. Unacceptable behaviour**

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We understand that people may act out of character in times of distress or due to frustration. However if that frustration becomes aggression or abuse towards our staff and volunteers, we won't accept that.

Our staff and volunteers have the right to undertake their work free from aggression or abuse and we expect them to be treated with courtesy and respect. Aggressive or abusive behaviour may include:

- threats of physical harm or actual physical harm
- behaviour or language (verbal or written) that may cause staff to feel offended, afraid, threatened or abused
- swearing
- insulting or degrading language
- personal grudges toward certain staff
- making serious allegations against staff without any evidence
- discrimination like racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia or homophobia

### **a. Examples of unacceptable behaviour**

- threats, verbal abuse, shouting, obscene/ derogatory remarks and rudeness
- racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist comments, or other harassment based on personal characteristics
- repeatedly demanding disciplinary action be taken against staff
- recording meetings or telephone conversations without consent

## **3. Unreasonable demands**

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A demand may be unreasonable if handling it could take up an excessive amount of staff or volunteer time. As a charity, with limited resources to respond, this could stop other

cases from being handled in time.

We may decide a demand is unreasonable if, for example, you:

- demand responses within an unreasonable timescale
- insist on seeing or speaking to someone more senior or a particular member of staff when that is not possible
- keep changing issues or raising unrelated ones
- demand help for something outside our boundaries and/or support areas
- ask for sensitive or confidential information we aren't allowed to share
- make lots of complaints without giving us the chance to resolve them, or make an unreasonable number of data protection rights requests

#### **a. Examples of unreasonable demands**

- demanding to speak to someone on the same day when that person isn't available
- demanding an immediate call back
- keep raising the same issue when we've already helped you or we can't help more
- contact lots of volunteers or staff to try and get a different outcome

### **4. Unreasonable frequency or duration of contact**

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The number of times you contact us, or the duration of each contact, can cause problems for our staff and volunteers.

The level of contact may become unacceptable when the amount of time spent talking to an individual on the telephone, or responding to, reviewing and filing emails or written correspondence, means we struggle to deal with that case, or with other people's cases.

#### **a. Examples of unreasonable levels of contact**

- making a lot of calls in one day
- frequent emails about the same issue or repeatedly sending us emails with large amounts of information attached that is not needed when a matter is closed
- sending in new complaints before we have had an opportunity to address earlier complaints
- repeatedly asking us to look at the same issue when we have already addressed it through this process or another
- repeatedly making very long calls to us

### **5. Consequences for unacceptable behaviour and unreasonable demands**

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We'll give you a chance to change your behaviour, by warning you and reminding you of this policy.

If you continue we might:

- end the conversation and, if visiting one of our offices, ask you to leave

- limit how much time we spend supporting you
- restrict or end contact on the matter
- restrict contact on all matters
- end contact entirely for a period of time
- report incidents to the police (for example, if violence has been threatened)
- take any other action that we consider appropriate (in extreme cases, this may include blocking calls and returning correspondence)

Where a staff or volunteer is considering the above or have had to take immediate action (for example, end a phone call), they should discuss this with their line manager/ supervisor, who will then consider with staff/ volunteer which action is appropriate (if any). We will let the Service user know about the action we are taking and the reason for it. This may include how long restrictions will be in place.

In making our decision, we may consider:

- how it affects our staff
- how it affects the Service user (including their personal circumstances and any reasonable adjustments)
- the extent to which we are able to engage or assist
- the extent to which the process or subject matter has been exhausted

This process may be reconsidered by us if the individual commits to behaving with courtesy, respect and fairness and:

- some time has passed
- there is a more suitable alternative available
- we receive evidence that there were exceptional reasons for the behaviour

#### **a. If we decide to stop supporting you**

If we decide to stop supporting you it means you can't access one or more LAWRS' services or activities - so we might not respond to any contact from you.

We'll give you a chance to change your behaviour before we stop supporting you - unless your behaviour threatens the safety of our volunteers and staff or other people.

We'll always try to tell you why we've stopped supporting you.

Approved by LAWRS' Management Committee:

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**Chair Signature**

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**Secretary Signature**