

What steps can you take to reassure staff caught on the middle of persistent and complex complaints; so they do not feel attacked abused or as though they are in trouble?

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- interpreting the brief
- remember the basics
- get it in perspective
- “vexatious” ?
- reassurance from effective mechanisms
- accepted norms
- “unreasonable behaviour” ?
- policy

interpreting the brief:

“caught in the middle”

“persistent”

“complex”

unreasonable / unacceptable behaviour

remember the basics:

- skills and strengths
 - clear expectations
 - flexibility and discretion
-
- be fair
 - fair process

get it in perspective:

- you're not alone
- it's uncommon

over-arching principles

- consider the merits
- judge complaint (not complainant)
- do not assume mental ill-health
- be sensitive to diagnosed mental ill-health
- embrace ombudsmen

“vexatious” ?

“persistently taking legal action regardless of merits solely to harass or subdue an adversary”

- usually it's personal
- usually no mental ill-health
- usually some basis to the claim
- often the behaviour is obsessive

reassurance from effective mechanisms:

public statements of

- customer service
- protecting colleagues
- use of resources
- managing expectations
- managing risk

the accepted norms:

recognise the range and extremes of behaviours

from anger and frustration to verbal abuse and
violence

“unreasonable behaviour” ?

- aggressive or abusive
- unreasonable demands

unreasonable / unacceptable behaviour policy

- defines unacceptable behaviours
- exceptional circumstances
- zero tolerance
- telephone?
- writing ?
- threats
- restrict access
- review
- appeal
- terminate all contact

it's all about behaviours

reassure staff through:

- operational processes and mechanisms
- “living” strategic framework