

Guidelines on Communication, Conduct and the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

1. DEALING WITH INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

Principle

The Ombudsman's Office treats all persons fairly, respectfully and impartially. At the same time, it expects complainants to communicate in an objective, respectful and cooperative manner and to provide the cooperation necessary to clarify their concern.

Inappropriate conduct

Inappropriate conduct by complainants may occur where behaviour interferes with the work of the Ombudsman's Office or compromises the safety or wellbeing of staff.

This may include, in particular:

- insulting, threatening or aggressive language
- excessive or repeated contact without new information or issues
- repeated requests for reconsideration despite a final assessment
- obstructive behaviour, such as withholding relevant information or refusing to cooperate
- abusive complaints, including submissions that are clearly unfounded or appear intended to cause harm or to place an undue burden on the Ombudsman's Office or the other party

Graduated approach

1. Notice and clarification

Where possible, the Ombudsman's Office will first draw the complainant's attention to the behaviour, explain the expectations and invite them to adjust their conduct.

2. Written notice

If inappropriate conduct continues, the Ombudsman's Office may issue a written notice describing the behaviour and outlining possible further steps.

3. Measures

Where necessary, the Ombudsman's Office may take proportionate measures, including:

- limiting communication channels (for example, written communication only)
- limiting the frequency of contact
- suspending the handling of a matter until the required cooperation is provided

- discontinuing or declining mediation activities

4. Safety-related measures

Where threats are made or conduct poses a risk to staff, contact may be terminated immediately and, where appropriate, external authorities may be involved.

Documentation

Relevant steps taken, measures applied and the reasons for them are documented by the Ombudsman's Office.

Review

Measures are reviewed regularly and lifted once their purpose has been achieved or the relevant conditions no longer apply.

2. USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Principles

All assessments, inquiries and decisions are carried out by the Ombudsman's Office itself. Human judgment remains essential at all times. AI is used only in a supplementary manner and does not replace professional responsibility or the independent judgment of staff.

Use by the Ombudsman's Office

Not permitted:

- substantive assessment of complaints or automated case handling
- processing of personal or confidential data using public or unsecured AI services

Permitted (supportive use only):

- linguistic editing, translations and general summaries
- research activities that do not involve personal or confidential data

Information for complainants

Responsibility

Complainants may use AI to assist with their submissions. However, they remain responsible for the accuracy, lawfulness (including compliance with data protection and copyright requirements) and traceability of all submitted content.

Data protection and confidentiality

Public AI services may store or further process data. Entering sensitive or confidential information may involve risks. The Ombudsman's Office assumes no responsibility for such risks.

Copyright and sources

AI-generated content may be subject to copyright protection or may have an unclear origin.

Accuracy

AI systems may produce inaccurate, misleading or fabricated information.

Review of the guidelines

These guidelines are reviewed regularly and updated to reflect legal, technological and organisational developments.