

Dutch Spotted Sheep Society - Unacceptable Actions Policy: **Managing member contact in a fair and positive way**

February 2024

Who we are and what we do

The Dutch Spotted Sheep Society is a charity (Charity Number 1171992), which is to promote the science and practice of agriculture by encouraging the Dutch Spotted Sheep by breeding, promoting, and management and by protecting the purity of the breed, encouraging their use, appreciation, well-being, and protection in the UK. Dutch Spotted Sheep includes sheep known as “Nederlands Bonte Schaap”, in their country of origin or elsewhere.

Introduction to this policy

We believe that everyone has the right to be heard, understood, and treated with respect and dignity. We also believe that our staff and trustees have the same rights. Occasionally the behaviour or actions of individuals using our services make it difficult for us to deal with them. In a small number of cases, the actions of individuals become unacceptable because they involve abuse of our staff/trustees or processes.

When this happens, we will take action to protect our staff and trustees.

This Policy explains how we will approach these situations.

The actions we consider to be unacceptable

We recognise that people may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. We also understand that there may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances that have led to individuals contacting us. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because an individual is forceful or determined. However, we do consider actions that result in unreasonable demands on our office or unreasonable behaviour towards our staff and trustees to be unacceptable. It is these actions that we will manage under this Policy.

Aggressive or abusive behaviour

We understand that you may be angry with the issues you have encountered but if that anger escalates into aggression towards our staff, appointed personnel acting on behalf of the Society or trustees, we consider that unacceptable. Any violence or abuse towards our staff, appointed personnel or trustees is not accepted. Violence and aggression is not restricted to physical harm alone; it includes behaviour or language (verbal or written) that cause our staff, appointed personnel and trustees to feel threatened, abused or intimidated. Language which is designed to insult or degrade, or which is racist, sexist or homophobic is unacceptable.

Unreasonable demands

Demands become unacceptable when it starts to impact substantially on the work of our office.

Examples include:

- repeatedly demanding responses within unreasonable timescales.
- insisting on speaking to a particular member of staff when that is impossible.
- repeatedly contacting us in respect of decisions we have taken and with which you disagree.

Unreasonable levels of contact

Sometimes the volume, frequency and duration of contact made to our office staff or trustees, on Society or personal devices by an individual causes problems. This can occur over a short period of time or longer.

We consider that the level of contact has become unacceptable when the amount of time spent talking to an individual, or responding to, reviewing and filing emails or written correspondence impacts on our ability to deal with that issue, or with other individuals.

Examples of how we will manage unacceptable behaviour

The threat or use of physical violence, verbal abuse or harassment towards Dutch Spotted Sheep Society staff, appointed personnel or trustees is likely to result in us ending all direct contact with the individual. This may also result in the refusal of services and the revoking of membership of the individual.

We will always report to the police instances where physical violence is used or threatened. We will not deal with correspondence (in any format) that is abusive or contains unsubstantiated allegations about Dutch Spotted Sheep Society staff or trustees. Where we can, we will return the correspondence, explaining why we consider it to be offensive and we will ask individuals to stop using such language.

Our staff or trustees will end telephone/video calls if they consider the caller to be aggressive, abusive or offensive.

The individual taking the call has the right to make this decision.

They will tell the individual that they consider their behaviour to be unacceptable, and will end the call if the behaviour does not stop. Where individuals repeatedly phone, text, email, visit, send large volumes of documents where their relevance is unclear, or raises repeated issues we may:

- limit the number of telephone calls to set times and set days, or put an arrangement in place for only one member of staff/trustee to deal with calls or correspondence from that individual in the future.
- restrict contact to writing only; our staff will quickly terminate any telephone calls
- return documents to the individual or, in extreme cases, advise the individual that further irrelevant documents will be destroyed.

Communicating our decision to you

When a staff employee or trustee makes an immediate decision in response to offensive, aggressive or abusive behaviour, the individual will be advised straight away and at the time of the incident.

Where the Board of Trustees make the decision, the individual will receive our reason in writing, the restricted contact arrangements put in place under this Policy, and, if relevant, the length of time these restrictions will remain in place.

The process for appealing a decision to restrict contact

A decision can be reconsidered.

An individual can appeal a decision to restrict contact by writing to the Society Secretary.

The Society contact details are at the end of this policy and on our website.

We will only consider arguments that relate to the restriction. Where possible, the trustees not involved in the original decision will carry out the review and will consider, based on the

information available, whether the decision to restrict contact was appropriate. Once these considerations have taken place, the individual will be advised in writing whether the restricted contact arrangements still apply or a different course of action has been agreed.

How we record and review a decision to restrict contact

We record all incidents of unacceptable actions by individuals. Where it is decided to restrict an individual's contact, an entry noting this is made in the relevant DSSS files.

The status of individuals with whom restricted contact arrangements have been put in place will be reviewed on a regular basis.

A decision to restrict contact may be reconsidered either on request or on review.

Policy availability and review

Copies of this policy are available online at www.dutchspottedsheep.co.uk or on request from the Society Secretary.

How to contact us:

Dutch Spotted Sheep Society

Society Secretary

Redbrae

Wigtown

Newton Stewart

DG8 9DJ

Email: secretary@dutchspottedsheep.co.uk

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to make sure that its aims are being achieved.