



h Council Staff "In Tears" Over Email Abuse



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Scarborough Man

## Scarborough Council Staff "In Tears" Over Email Abuse



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Staff at Scarborough Council have been "reduced to tears" by a handful of persistent email abusers, the authority's legal director has told councillors.

Lisa Dixon told the council's Standards Committee today (Tuesday 18 December) that "six or seven" individuals currently find themselves on the council's list of people deemed to be vexatious.

It relates to before the email screening process was brought in by the council. She told the committee that emails from these people were diverted before they reach their intended target, including councillors, but that if the person had a genuine issue or complaint it was then forwarded on.

Mrs Dixon was responding to a question by committee member Cllr Tony Randerson during a discussion on the council's Regulations of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) policy.

Cllr Randerson pointed out the policy gave the council powers to monitor emails of "employees" of the authority but he questioned if this also covered councillors.

He said:

*"The policy makes no mention of granting any authority the powers to look into a member's private emails from constituents."*

Mrs Dixon said the council's policy "is lawful and robust" and that all councillors sign up to an email policy when they are elected that grants the council powers to monitor emails.

She added:

*"The council has a vexatious complainants policy agreed by the full council and what that says is where complainants are using the email system to pass defamatory or vexatious complaints then the council will take steps."*

People the council deems to be vexatious are warned that they could find their emails blocked if they persist with their actions. If they do not cease the council then takes action.

The emails remain monitored in case the person has another legitimate complaint that needs to be dealt with by the authority.

Mrs Dixon added:

*"If you had read some of the emails that we have acted upon and the language that is used and the abuse our officers get then, well, we have a duty to protect our staff from the harm that is being caused by these people.*

*I've had officers in tears in my office due to the emails they have been getting from some of these people.*

*To put it in context I think there is six or seven currently declared [as vexatious].*

*There are about 110,000 people in this borough. So that's the proportion we are dealing with."*



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**zara, on 18th December 2018 1:57pm**

I feel for the Scarborough Council staff, not because of pathetic e mails that pathetic people MAY have sent them but because they are now portrayed as pathetic individuals crying over written words!! Yes, i have been in jobs where comments were made that were not nice, written and verbal but i never once broke down in tears and to be honest i doubt if any of the staff did.. Just an excuse by the council executive to pry and spy. By the way i do know people in the council and have never heard anyone say they were in tears. Most people are intelligent enough to deal with written unpleasantness.

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