

Council Committees and Board Support



ETHICS COMMITTEE

Survey and Spatial New Zealand continues to receive regular enquiries and complaints from the public about surveyors and survey firms. However, in the vast majority of these, no prima facie case is established and rarely does a complaint progress beyond the initial committee review.

Thirteen complaints were considered by the Ethics Committee in the 2018/19 year – seven of these were carried over from 2017/18 and six new complaints were received. Twelve complaints were resolved in 2018/19 with just one being carried over into the 2019/20 year. The Committee also monitored conditions imposed by Council on two surveyors in relation to complaints lodged in 2016/17.

As in past years, recurrent themes in complaints received by the Committee are:

- a lack of appropriate terms of engagement with clear expectations, and/or
- failure to communicate with the client.

In line with the *Conduct of Members Policy*, up-to-date terms of engagement should be used when dealing with all clients. The use of a comprehensive and accurate terms of engagement, along with setting and explaining clear expectations to the client when it comes to work should significantly reduce the number of complaints to S+SNZ. These matters were recently covered in an ethics plenary session at Conference 2019.

A couple of additional matters are also worth noting. The first matter relates to complaints from neighbours of properties with surveying work underway. These could be easily avoided by considering the impacts of work on neighbours and engaging with them. The second matter relates to a sense of frustration that some complainants have after first dealing with other parties such as local councils and tribunals over matters involving surveyors, and S+SNZ subsequently becomes the avenue of last resort.

The current composition of the Ethics Committee, its Terms of Reference and the *Conduct of Members Policy* can be found at <https://www.surveyspatialnz.org/members/governance>.