



Complaints Procedure

Policy and Standard Operating Procedure

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INTRODUCTION

This procedure sets out the Charity's approach to the handling of complaints and is intended as an internal guide which should be made readily available to all staff and volunteers.

POLICY

The Complaints Manager for the Charity is the (Chair).

In the event of the complaint being made about the Complaints Manager or any actions taken by him/her, the matter will be referred to the Chairman of Trustees/Directors, who will appoint an appropriate person to investigate the complaint.

PROCEDURE

RECEIVING OF COMPLAINTS

- On receipt of a complaint being received The Charity Chair will be informed and the complaint recorded.
- Complainants will be encouraged to put their complaint in writing.
- All complaints, written and verbal will be recorded, and written complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days of receipt.

PERIOD WITHIN WHICH COMPLAINTS CAN BE MADE

- The period for making a complaint is normally:
- 3 months from the date on which the event which is the subject of the complaint occurred
- Complaints should normally be resolved within 6 weeks.
- The Chair has the discretion to extend the time limit if the complainant has good reason for not making the complaint sooner, or where it is still possible to properly investigate the complaint despite extended delay.

ACTION UPON RECEIPT OF A COMPLAINT

- Complaints may be received either verbally or in writing and must be forwarded to the Chair who must:
- acknowledge in writing within the period of 3 working days beginning with the day on which the complaint was made or, where that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable.
- include an offer to discuss the matter in person. The discussion will include agreement with the complainant as to how they wish the complaint to be handled.
- advise the complainant of potential timescales and the next steps.

- make a written record, where the complaint is made verbally and a copy will be provided to the complainant.
- ensure the complaint is properly investigated.
- liaise with his / her counterpart where the complaint involves more than one organisation. The (Secretary) to agree responsibilities and ensure that one coordinated response is sent.
- advise the complainant within 3 working days, where the complaint has been sent to the incorrect organisation, and ask them if they want it to be forwarded on. If it is sent on, advise the complainant of the full contact details
- provide a written response to the complainant as soon as reasonably practicable ensuring that the complainant is kept up to date with progress as appropriate.
- provide an update report to the complainant with an estimate of the timescale, where a response is not possible within 10 working days.
- The final reply will include a full report and a statement advising the complainant of their right to take the matter to the Trustee/Directors if required.

UNREASONABLE COMPLAINTS

Where a complainant becomes aggressive or, despite effective complaint handling, unreasonable in their promotion of the complaint, some or all of the following formal provisions will apply and will be communicated to the complainant:

- The complaint will be managed by the Chair who will be the only contact for the complainant.
- Contact will be limited to one method only (e.g. in writing)
- Place a time limit on each contact
- The number of contacts in a time period will be restricted
- A witness will be present for all contacts
- Repeated complaints about the same issue will be refused
- Only acknowledge correspondence regarding a closed matter, not respond to it
- Set behaviour standards
- Return irrelevant documentation
- Keep detailed records

FINAL RESPONSE

This will include:

A clear statement of the issues, investigations and the findings, giving clear evidence-based reasons for decisions if appropriate

- Where errors have occurred, explain these fully and state what will be done to put these right, or prevent repetition
- A focus on fair and proportionate outcomes for the complainant, including any remedial action or compensation
- A clear statement that the response is the final one.
- An apology or explanation as appropriate.
- A statement of the right to further the complaint, together with the relevant contact detail – i.e. the Chairman of Trustees/Directors

ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS

OPERATION FLORIAN will establish an annual complaints report, incorporating a review of complaints received, along with any learning issues or changes to procedures which have arisen. This report is to be made available to the Trustees

This will include:

- Statistics on the number of complaints received
- Justified / unjustified analysis
- Subject matter / categorisation
- Learning points
- Methods of complaints management
- Any changes to procedure, policies or care which have resulted

CONFIDENTIALITY

All complaints must be treated in the strictest confidence.

OPERATION FLORIAN must keep a record of all complaints and copies of all correspondence relating to complaints.