

The Association of Charity Independent Examiners

Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To ensure the Charity has an effective system in place to manage complaints, suggestions and compliments.
- 1.2 To ensure the Charity complies with any legal requirements, regulations, guidelines and best practice.
- 1.3 To ensure that a complaints and compliments process is fair and transparent and does not discriminate directly or indirectly.

2. Complaints

- 2.1 The Charity understands complaints to be an expression of dissatisfaction requiring a response, communicated verbally, electronically or in writing.
- 2.2 The Charity aims to put things right that have gone wrong and learn lessons to avoid the problem happening again.
- 2.3 A full record will be held of all complaints received regardless of the level of seriousness and means of communication. This record will be maintained by the Chair.
- 2.4 Complaints by staff will be addressed via the Grievance process in the staff handbook.

3. Procedure

- 3.1 When a complaint is raised to staff, staff will make an effort to resolve it immediately to the satisfaction of the complainant.
- 3.2 Staff will report the complaint to the most senior member of staff and the complaint will be logged.
- 3.3 Formal acknowledgement of the complaint will be sent within 5 working days of receipt to the complainant via letter or e-mail.
- 3.4 An acknowledgement will include:
 - An invitation to meet and discuss the complaint
 - Who will be investigating the complaint.
 - How the investigation will be handled – the response should state what the investigation will be focussed on.

- A time limit for the investigation to be concluded. This should be 28 days, however, some cases may take longer and the complainant will be made aware of this.
- The complaints procedure and contact details of bodies that can be accessed in the event of dissatisfaction with the outcome of the investigation.
- A summary of the issue from the complainant's point of view.
- Details of the evidence and sources consulted in order to investigate the issue fully and fairly
- A presentation of the findings for each issue clearly and concisely described
- A conclusion, stating clearly whether the issue is "upheld", "partially upheld" or "not upheld", unless it is ineligible, in which case the reason for this will be given, e.g. out of time or out of jurisdiction.
- An explanation of the outcome and whether any remedial action or learning points arise from the investigation of that issue.
- An apology where the issue is upheld and shortcomings or failings have been found.

3.5 The complaint will be closed once confirmation has been received that there is satisfaction with the outcome.

4. Compliments

4.1 The receipt of a compliment is an opportunity to celebrate and recognise success. All compliments will be shared with staff and trustees.

5. Suggestions

5.1 Suggestions are in response to seeing a means of changing practices for the better. Suggestions are not complaints but in some circumstances, if they are not considered and actioned they could lead to a complaint. Suggestions should be documented and the outcomes of such suggestions recorded to show consideration.