



Complaints Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the procedure Association for Cultural Enterprises will follow on receiving a complaint from a service user, an organisation, or member of the public.

Its purpose is to provide a means to resolve disputes between Association for Cultural Enterprises and any complainant. All complaints will be investigated thoroughly. This complaints policy applies to anyone not working for the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Members or Service Users
- Partners, Stakeholders and Sponsors
- members of the public
- other organisations.

Aims and Objectives

The main object of the procedure is to deal with complaints as quickly and appropriately as possible.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Provide easy access for complainants by enabling all appropriate staff to receive and respond to complaints.
- Provide a rapid, open, fair, conciliatory response which meets the need of the complainant and is fair to staff.
- Ensure a means of providing feedback to managers in order that, where appropriate, lessons are learned, and services can be improved thereby preventing a recurrence of incidents and complaints

We will ensure that all written information regarding this policy and procedure and regarding individual complaints are available in the most appropriate format.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, either written or spoken. A complaint can be made by an individual or a group. You may wish to complain if you are not satisfied with the way you have been treated, the service you have received, or the actions of an individual or group, either from the Association for Cultural Enterprises or at an event or activity run by us.

Principles of Association for Cultural Enterprises procedure

- We recognise that complaints are an important part of member/customer feedback.
- All complaints will be investigated fully and fairly.
- If the complainant is not happy with the result of the response to the complaint, they will have the right to appeal.
- Association for Cultural Enterprises is committed to ensuring that its services are of the highest quality. The complaints procedure enables us to respond clearly and properly to complaints and to know when and why people are not satisfied with its services, so that it can improve them.

Please note that this policy does not cover unreasonable and vexatious complaints. Furthermore, complainants are not entitled to the details of any sanctions imposed on



staff arising from their complaint, irrespective of the nature of the complaint and whether it is upheld.

Making a Complaint

A complaint can be made in a number of ways:

- by completing the form available on our website
- by telephone
- in person
- in writing
- by email

The complaint may be made directly by the individual involved or with the help of an appropriate third party such as their carer, social worker or an advocate.

If you're complaining on behalf of someone else, include their written consent with your letter (if you're making your complaint in writing) as this will speed up the process.

But consent is not required if you're making a complaint in the name of:

- a deceased person
- someone who lacks the capacity to make their own decisions

Making a Complaint on Behalf of Someone Else

Sometimes concerns are raised informally through a trustee, member of staff, or another third party, or a person may not wish to have their name attributed to a complaint.

Where someone makes a complaint on behalf of another person, or wishes to remain anonymous, the following principles will apply:

- Formal complaints made on behalf of another person require the explicit consent of the individual concerned, except where the individual lacks capacity.
- Where no consent is provided, or where the person does not wish to be identified, the matter will be treated as informal feedback or a concern rather than as a formal complaint.
- All such concerns will still be logged and considered by the organisation to identify any potential issues or patterns but may not be investigated in full as a formal complaint without the complainant's consent.

Association for Cultural Enterprises aims to be open and responsive to all forms of feedback, whether formal or informal, while respecting individuals' privacy and preferences.

The Procedure

As soon as a complaint is received it must be recorded on the organisations Complaints Log by the member of staff who receives the complaint. The Complaints Log must be updated by the member of staff dealing with the matter at every stage of the proceedings.

Step 1

As soon as a complaint is received, the relevant person, or their line manager (as appropriate) should make every effort possible to sort out the issue immediately by providing the information required or by taking appropriate action.



Step 2

If the complaint cannot be resolved within ten working days, the matter shall be formally escalated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Association for further investigation and resolution.

A letter (or appropriate communication) will be sent to the complainant within 3 working days setting out the following:

- contact details for the CEO
- confirmation that the matter is being investigated
- the timescale

Once the investigation is complete the results will be sent in writing (or appropriate format) by the CEO.

Appeal

If the complainant feels their complaint has not been adequately addressed, they can choose to escalate this to the Chair of the Board of Trustees as below:

chair@culturalenterprises.org.uk

The request must be made within 10 working days of receiving the outcome. The Chair of the Board will investigate if correct procedure has been followed in reaching a response, and that all points of the complainants feedback have been addressed. The Chair of the board will provide a full response within 20 working days.

This will be our final response to a complaint or appeal.

Confidentiality

Any information received/used in the complaints process is covered by Data Protection Guidelines. All personal data will be kept safe and secure.

No information will be shared with other organisations without the complainant's permission unless we are legally required to do so.

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be logged and investigated as thoroughly as possible in the circumstances. Any poor practice etc. identified will be actioned accordingly.

Service Improvements and Performance Monitoring

Managers should use the issues raised in individual complaints to explore and, where appropriate, initiate service improvements.

A report setting out anonymised details of complaints logged, and action taken will be submitted to the Board for scrutiny at their quarterly meetings. The Board will support services in making any necessary changes identified.

Complaints monitoring

Managers should use the issues raised in individual complaints to explore and where appropriate, initiate service improvements. Issues arising from complaints, problems and other user feedback should be a standard item for discussion at team meetings.