

Complaints Procedure

Openness

A summary of the complaints policy shall be on public display. See **Appendix 1**

Receiving Complaints

Complaints received need to be recorded.

The person who receives a complaint by phone or in person should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address/e mail and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to the centre (for example: hirer, member of which group)
- Written and emailed complaints will be copied or printed off and placed on the complaints file

For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see **Appendix 2**

Resolving Complaints

Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. Many complaints about minor matters can be immediately resolved

- On receiving the complaint it will be recorded in the complaints file see **Appendix 3**. If it has not already been resolved, an appropriate person will investigate it and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Written and e mail complaints should be acknowledged within a week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply.

Whether or not the complaint is justified, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

If several complaints are made about the same minor matter, or if the matter is not deemed to be minor, the manager shall notify the Senior Management Team of the issues.

Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the chairman.

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The chair may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether or not the complaint is upheld, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

External Stage

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage.

Information about the kind of complaints in which the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx

A report will be generated re every complaint and these will be kept on file **see Appendix 3**

Adopted on: 29 January 2015

Last reviewed:.....[date]

Complaints Policy

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at Petersfield Community Association knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely manner
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

Contacting us

Written complaints may be sent to Petersfield Community Association at Petersfield Community Centre, Love Lane GU31 4BW or by e-mail at petersfieldcc@btconnect.com

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 01730 262081 or in person to any of the centre's staff or trustees via the office.

What Happens Next?

Hopefully your complaint can be easily resolved. If this is not the case you will be kept informed about what is happening, until the issue is resolved.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Responsibility

Minor complaints will be dealt with (and logged) by the office staff overseen by the Manager. If you are unhappy with the resolution of your complaint, you can ask for it to be reviewed at board level or contact the chairman directly.

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the board of trustees

Review

The full Complaints policy is available on request from the office. This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on:.....[date]

Last reviewed:.....[date]

Appendix 2 - Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation
e.g "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal

