



Policy Title: **Complaints Policy**

Policy number FOUR

Policy approved by Escape Committee:.....

Review:.....

Controlled Copy

Purpose of Policy: Escape support group views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or persons that has made the complaint.

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Escape.

Policy applies to: The committee, members and staff

Policy Statement:

- 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 Escape knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- 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

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

Procedures and people responsible

Written complaints may be sent to Escape support group at Escape Support Group. Unit H, Mill Lane, Creech St Michael, Taunton, Somerset. TA3 5PX. or by e-mail at teamleader@escapesupportgroup.com

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 01823 442160 or in person to any of Escape's staff, volunteers or trustees at the above address. Complaints may be brought to the attention of a trip organiser if situation arises whilst on an event organised by Escape.

Receiving Complaints

Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

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

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Escape (for example: client, member)
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

Complaints against a member of staff should be made directly to the chairperson. The contact telephone number and email address is available in the Escape Newsletters , Website or from the office.

Resolving Complaints

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to chair of the committee or trustee within 7 days

On receiving the complaint, the receiving staff or committee member records it in writing. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action to investigate and resolve the complaint if possible.

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

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within 7 days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within 14 days. 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 the complaint is justified or not, 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.

A confidential file should be held containing records of the complaint, the investigation and its resolution.

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

Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Committee may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not be investigated by the chair or vice chair.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually and discussed at a committee meeting to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.