

Complicité

COMPLAINTS POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

Complicité 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 organisation that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To ensure that everyone that Complicité 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 that helps us to improve what we do

Definition of a complaint

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

Where complaints come from

Complaints may come from any person or organisation that has a legitimate interest in Complicité, including:

- Audience members
- Artists, creatives, and industry partners
- Funders, donors, and stakeholders
- Volunteers and casual staff

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

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Negative comments received on social media will not be treated as a formal complaint but be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and falls outside the scope of this policy.

This policy does not cover complaints from permanent staff members, who should refer to their contract for information about Complicité's Discipline and Grievance procedures.

Confidentiality

Complicité is committed to handling complaints sensitively and in compliance with the UK GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and Data Protection Act 2018.

- Personal data relating to complaints will only be shared with those necessary for the investigation.
- Complaint records will be retained for 3 years unless a legal requirement dictates otherwise.
- Complainants have the right to request access to their complaint records under GDPR.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Board of Trustees.

Designated Complaints Person

Executive Director, Susie Newbery, is Complicité's Designated Complaints Person and all complaints should be directed to her. In the event that the received complaint relates to the Executive Director then the Chair of the Board will deal with the complaint.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Written complaints may be sent to Susie Newbery, Executive Director, susie@complicite.org

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 020 7485 7700 or in person to the Executive Director or any of the trustees, or by post to our registered office address: Complicité, Studio 15, Jolt Studios, 27 St. Aldate Street, Gloucester, GL1 1RP.

Receiving complaints

The person receiving a complaint should do the following:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Complicité
- 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

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Further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see **Appendix 1**

Resolving Complaints

Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If that person has received the complaint, 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 Susie Newbery (Executive Director) within one week. She will then delegate an appropriate person to investigate the complaint and to take appropriate action.

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 a week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply. A copy of this complaint's procedure should be attached.

Ideally the complainant 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 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.

See **Appendix 2** for a timetable for dealing with complaints.

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 Chair of the Board.

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgment 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.

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Ideally the complainant 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 the complaint is upheld 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.

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

See **Appendix 2** for a timetable for dealing with complaints.

Variations of the Complaints Procedure

The Board 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 also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends, which may indicate a need to take further action.

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APPENDIX 1 - PRACTICAL GUIDE 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 the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal

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APPENDIX 2 - TIMEFRAME FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINT

