



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Whilst we make every effort to meet members' expectations, circumstances may arise where an individual has a concern and wishes to bring this to our attention of an Office Bearer: Chair; Vice-Chair; Secretary; Treasurer; Communications Officer. We will take all reasonable steps to resolve the situation, in everyone's best interests.

For urgent concerns, such as situations where an individual's safety might be at immediate risk, take prompt and appropriate action to address the issue where possible, and notify an Office Bearer or Key Holder at the first opportunity.

Scope and Limitations of Complaints

Complaints must be reasonable and directly related to the behaviour or actions of a fellow Shed member, or to matters concerning the functioning and operations of the Shed. Complaints should ideally pertain to incidents that occur on Shed premises or during official Shed activities. To ensure fairness and accuracy, it is preferred that complaints which involve individuals are corroborated by witnesses present at the time of the incident. Complaints deemed unrelated to the Shed or its members will not be considered under this procedure. The investigating panel of office bearers will determine the extent to which a complaint is related to the Shed or its members and its validity. If no agreement is reached, the Chair's decision on the matter will be final.

INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

Anyone who has a concern should initially raise this with an Office Bearer or Key Holder at the time or raise it at one of our Saturday teatime gatherings, as this will enable us to respond and deal with an issue quickly.

We will seek to resolve this and meet any reasonable expectations the individual may have, ideally to his satisfaction and all concerned. If unable to, the Office Bearer / Key Holder will make a written note of:

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- The complainant's name and contact details, unless he is unwilling to provide these.
- The nature of his concern and anything that he might wish to be done about it.
- The circumstances surrounding the complaint, including the time, location, actions taken, and the details of any individuals present or involved.
- Advise the complainant that their concern will be passed to the Chair to oversee and manage.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS

Where an individual wishes to make a formal complaint, he should advise an Office Bearer and be provided with the Chair's email address, in order to make the complaint in writing. Such correspondence should be marked 'Private and Confidential'.

To help resolve the complaint as quickly and effectively as possible, the complainant should submit it promptly and include the following details:

- Name, address, telephone number and e mail.
- If you do not wish to be contacted in a particular way, please let us know and we will of course respect this.
- As much information as possible, such as what happened, where, when (date/time), who was present and any action taken, and by whom.
- What it is you felt to be unsatisfactory.
- What you believe should be done to address your concern.

Receipt will be acknowledged, if possible, within 7 days via email or in person. The complaint will then be investigated and kept amongst Office Bearers only. If necessary, specialist advice will be sought. Where clarification or further information is felt to be necessary, this will be requested from the complainant along with an explanation of the reasoning behind the request.

A written response will be sent within 14 days. If this is not possible, a holding reply will be sent after 14 days advising when we estimate the investigation will be completed. The complaint response will explain our findings and what action we will be taking/have



taken, subject to the constraints of the Data Protection Act, which will almost certainly not allow us to disclose sensitive personal information.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, he or she may appeal the decision, by writing to the Chair, the contact details of whom will be included in our response. Appeals must be submitted within 28 days of our response to the complaint.

The appeal should be specific about why the individual feels the decision made was wrong and provide the facts and information necessary to demonstrate this.

A decision will be notified within 28 days on behalf of the Shed and will be final.

Complaints Against an Office Bearer

If a complaint is about an Office Bearer, including the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, or Communications Officer, the complainant may submit their concern directly to another Office Bearer who is not the subject of the complaint. In such cases:

- The complaint will be referred to an independent third party, such as a neutral Office Bearer, a designated senior member of the Shed, or an external advisor, to ensure an unbiased investigation.
- The individual handling the complaint will follow the same process outlined in the Formal Complaints section, ensuring confidentiality and fairness.
- If the complaint is against the Chair, the complaint should be submitted to the Vice-Chair, who will oversee the investigation or appoint another Office Bearer to do so.



- If a conflict of interest arises (e.g., multiple Office Bearers are involved) an independent mediator may be consulted.

The complainant will be informed of any actions taken within 7 days, while ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act and maintaining confidentiality.

WIDER ACTION

Irrespective of the outcome of any complaint, we will consider if there is any requirement in respect of wider action the Shed needs to take in the common interest of its members.

Consideration will also to be given to whether any changes should be made to policies, procedures, training etc to see if anything might reasonably be done to prevent a similar issue arising in future.

ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

Anonymous complaints will be recorded and investigated based on the facts available. However, we recognise that some anonymous complaints may be malicious. Everyone involved in the Shed has the right to raise concerns, but they also have the right to be protected from unsubstantiated or harmful allegations.

To ensure fairness, we strongly encourage anyone wishing to complain to provide their contact details and the requested information. This will also allow us to share the outcome with them.

POTENTIAL COMPENSATION CLAIMS

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If a complaint may potentially result in a claim for compensation, such as damage or loss to property, or personal issue, our insurers are to be notified by the Shed secretary.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All complaints, formal and informal, will be treated as confidential and any communication on this issue, including responding to the complainant, will be subject to compliance with the Data Protection Act.

AVAILABILITY

This policy is to be made publicly available in the "Shed Folder" and on our website. A copy will be given to anyone who advises that he wishes to submit a complaint. A copy will also be available in the Shed Folder.