

Complaints Policy for Service Users

WIRKSWORTH ARTS FESTIVAL takes seriously any expression of dissatisfaction regarding service we have provided and view complaints as a positive opportunity to think through and address problems. This document sets out WIRKSWORTH ARTS FESTIVAL's complaint procedure which reflects the values with which we operate to ensure we are alerted to problems, can offer redress for any substantiated complaint and revise practices in response to the feedback received.

A complaint does not have to be written, it may be made in person, over the phone or by email. In the event of a complaint being received the following procedure should be followed;

Details of the complaint must be passed to an appropriate Trustee, or if the complaint directly refers to them, it should be passed to the Chair. The complainant must be informed who is dealing with the complaint and when they will receive a response. Where the complaint is made by telephone, full details must be taken.

It is the responsibility of the person dealing with the complaint to fully investigate the complaint. This may include discussing the situation with the worker or volunteer involved (if appropriate) and/or contacting the complainant for further information.

Basic information about the complaint must be recorded on a Complaint Form and a substantive response, in whatever format the complaint has requested, produced within 5 working days. A copy of this response should also be kept with the Complaint Form.

The response must offer the complainant a further review if they remain dissatisfied, and where the complaint is justified, an apology and details of what action WIRKSWORTH ARTS FESTIVAL will take to rectify the situation.

Every 12 months the Board of Trustees must review all complaints received and identify any trends emerging. The report will be passed to the chairperson for presentation at the next Board of Trustees meeting.

The procedure set out in the steps below does not address complaints made by workers (dealt with through grievance and disciplinary procedures). The Board of Trustees will ensure that all complaints are investigated and if upheld, redress will be made.

Where the complaint is against the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the same procedure will be followed but with the Vice-Chair substituting for the Chair role at all stages.

This policy only addresses complaints which concern the services offered by WIRKSWORTH ARTS FESTIVAL and/or the way in which people are treated. However, a record may be kept of other verbal dissatisfaction expressed for monitoring purposes.

Making an Initial Complaint – Stage 1

The complainant should be invited to speak to an appropriate Trustee or the Chairperson to discuss the complaint. Permission should be sought to pass on the complainant's details if they wish to discuss the complaint. This can be done in person or by phone and the Trustee/Chairperson should keep a record of the conversation on the complaints monitoring sheet.

At this stage all possible attempts should be made to resolve the complaint on the same day and in any event as soon as practicable after the complaint is made. The outcome can be given either verbally or in writing as appropriate and the level of redress should also be detailed where appropriate. The complainant should be informed of the next stage of the complaints procedure should they remain dissatisfied.

Stage 1 should be completed within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.

Taking the Complaint Further – Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcomes of their initial complaint they should be invited to make a written complaint to the Board of Trustees and informed that the complaint will be referred to a Complaints Panel.

Complaints Panel

The Board of Trustees will appoint a Complaints Panel consisting of not more than 4 people including one member of the Board of Trustees. Volunteers with appropriate experience may be co-opted. There will be consideration to disability, gender and race balance.

The panel will notify the complainant in writing that they are dealing with the matter. The panel will review the events in stage one and may seek further clarification from any of the parties involved. This may include interviewing the complainant if necessary.

The panel will notify the complainant of their decision and reasons for the decision within 15 days of having received the complaint – unless they notify the complainant of a reason for delay.

The panel's decision is final and the panel will report their findings and decision to the next meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Redress

If the Chairperson or Complaints Panel find that the complaint is upheld, redress will be offered to the complainant. In deciding the level of redress the Chairperson or Complaints Panel should make their decision based on the facts of each case and the loss or inconvenience incurred by the complainant.

Options include:

- An apology, written or verbal from the Chairperson.
- An undertaking and subsequent report on improving or developing policies/procedure where these appear to be at fault/absent.
- Agreement to undertake specific work on behalf of a user.



Recording and Monitoring Complaints

All complaints will be recorded and kept securely. The Chairperson will make a report once a year to the Board of Trustees summarising the nature of complaints received and how they were resolved.

Agreed by the Board of Trustees August 2018