

# Complaints Policy August 2021

## Introduction

North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples 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 organisation] that has made the complaint.

The aims of this policy are:

- 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 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.

## Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples Group –encompassing both our fund raising and work.

## Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any individual, volunteer or organisation who has a legitimate interest in North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples Group, including the general public if something is perceived to be improper. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

## Confidentiality

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

## Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the board of trustees of NORTH MIDLANDS LGBT OLDER PEOPLES GROUP.

## Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

## Complaints Procedure

Written complaints may be sent to NORTH MIDLANDS LGBT OLDER PEOPLES GROUP at 1 Linley Road, Stoke on Trent ST4 6X or by e-mail [olgbt2009@gmail.com](mailto:olgbt2009@gmail.com). Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 07757 750255 or in person to any of NORTH MIDLANDS LGBT OLDER PEOPLES GROUP's trustees at the same address as above or at any of our events.

## Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose. Complaints received by whatever means must 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 NORTH MIDLANDS LGBT OLDER PEOPLES GROUP, e.g. donor, volunteer, sponsor
- 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

## Resolving Complaints

**Stage One** 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 the NORTH MIDLANDS LGBT OLDER PEOPLES GROUP Chair within ten working days.

On receiving the complaint, the Chair records it in the complaints Logbook. If it has not already been resolved, an appropriate person should be delegated to investigate the complaint and take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, that person should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond. Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within ten working 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 a month. 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.

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

The Board of Trustees 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. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening. If the complaint relates to a specific person, that person should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. Ideally, complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. 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.

**External Stage** As NORTH MIDLANDS LGBT OLDER PEOPLES GROUP is an English registered charity, the complainant can complain to the English Charity Regulator at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Charities Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website.

## Variation 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 a Chair or trustee should not also have the Chair and/or trustee involved as a 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.

----- **End of policy** -----

This policy gratefully acknowledges the use of the following website <https://www.thehopefoundation.org.uk/complaints-policy-procedure/>

### Version History

17/08/2021	Reviewed and readopted without amendment by OLGBT Board
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