



North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples Group
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Complaints Policy Updated October 2023

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.

North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples Group aims to:

- Have a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use
- Ensure everyone knows what to do if a complaint is received
- Deal with a complaint promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially
- Respond in the right way - for example, with an apology where we have got things wrong and information about any action taken

North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples Group aims to resolve complaints informally and as quickly as possible. If the complaint has not been resolved informally then a formal complaint can be raised.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction related to anything undertaken by or on behalf of the North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples Group. For example:

- Dissatisfaction with a meeting, event or activity we have provided
- Complaints about the behaviour of a member or volunteer
- General concerns about what the Charity has done or failed to do

Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any individual or organisation who has a legitimate interest in North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples Group, including our members, volunteers and the general public. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, text, 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.

Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the board of trustees of North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples Group.

It is the responsibility of North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples Group to:

- deal reasonably and sensitively with any complaint
- respond within the periods of time set out in the procedures below
- take action where appropriate
- Inform the complainant of the outcome

It is the responsibility of the complainant to:

- submit complaints promptly.
- submit complaints in good faith and for good reason
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible
- allow North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples Group a reasonable time to deal with the matter
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond the control of the North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples Group

Time

Complaints should be submitted as soon as practically possible and usually within four weeks of the matter being complained about.

If a complaint is submitted later than this the board of trustees may reasonably refuse to proceed with an investigation unless there is a good reason for the delay in the complaint being made.

Resolving Complaints

Informal Stage

Complainants should attempt to resolve matters directly with the person(s) concerned where possible.

If this is not appropriate or the response is not satisfactory a complaint can be raised with any board member of the North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples Group. Complaints can be raised verbally or via any of the means of contact listed on our website and in our regular electronic mailings.

If the complaint is about a board member this should be referred to another member of the board.

When a board member receives a complaint they will:

- Keep a record of the facts of the complaint including the complainant's name and contact details
- Note the relationship of the complainant to North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples Group, e.g. member, volunteer, partner organisation, donor
- 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
- Promptly inform the chair of the North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples Group of the complaint

Every reasonable effort will be made to resolve the complaint promptly.

If the issue is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Formal Stage

Complainants should submit a formal complaint if:

- Their complaint has not been resolved to their satisfaction at the informal stage
- Or the complaint is considered to be too serious to be dealt with informally

A formal complaint must always be submitted in writing.

On receiving a formal complaint, the Chair will

- make a record of the complaint which will be kept securely with our other board papers.
- acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (email, text, electronic message or letter)
- appoint one or more members of the board to promptly and impartially investigate the complaint.
- ensure the complainant has access to a copy of this complaints policy

Every reasonable effort will be made to investigate the complaint promptly.

The complainant will be kept informed of progress including who is investigating the complaint and the timescale for completion of the investigation.

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

Ideally, complainants should receive notice of the outcome of their complaint within six weeks. If a longer investigation is required, the complainant will be informed of the timescale for this.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate matters, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Appeal to the Board

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved, they can request that their complaint be reviewed at a full meeting of the board of trustees.

The complainant should submit their appeal in writing to the board within two weeks of receiving the outcome of their complaint.

The matter will be considered at the next regular meeting of the board of trustees. The board may decide to conduct further investigations before responding to the appeal. The complainant will be kept informed of this.

After full and fair consideration, the board will respond to the complainant in writing, setting out their conclusions any further action that they have taken.

Complaining to the Charity Commission

The North Midlands LGBT Older Peoples Group is a registered charity. A complaint can be submitted to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Charities Commission will involve itself in can be found on their website.

Action Following Complaints

Where complaints against members are upheld, the board may decide to remove the person from membership or place conditions upon their future involvement

Volunteers may be removed from a volunteering role or removed from volunteering entirely

In the event of a member standing for election to the board of trustees the membership voting at the election may be informed of any complaints that have been upheld against them in the past two years

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

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

Complaints are rare but must always be dealt with promptly and fairly

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

Version History

17/08/2021	Reviewed and readopted without amendment by OLGBT Board
25/10/2023	Amended version approved by OLGBT board