

CABA's Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Policy

Our policy is to investigate all complaints fully and resolve them wherever possible.

2. The definition of a complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about CABA's policy or actions. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. The Complaints Policy is for the use of volunteers, members of the public, suppliers and people who use CABA's services.

If staff have any reason to complain about the provision of services to clients, they should use CABA's Grievance procedure.

3. Why we have a Complaints Procedure

Complaints, if handled properly, can lead to better working relationships with our partners and clients. To help achieve this, our Complaints Procedure lets people know that they can complain, that we will consider their concerns fairly and objectively; and that, where possible we will resolve them. Complaints are also a form of market research. They can tell us where we are meeting our objectives, if our objectives are appropriate, whether there are areas where we have no objectives but where it might be appropriate to have some, or where we need to change the way we work more generally.

4. Monitoring and learning from complaints

So as to learn from complaints and to show that we are following these procedures, we need to record complaints, which we do in a Complaints Log kept by the PA to the Chief Executive. At the end of each year, this information is analysed, summarised and presented to the Board, along with recommendations if necessary.

5. Who handles complaints?

Our complaints procedure has four steps, which follow our line management system. The intention is for complaints to be resolved at stage one and the rest at stage two.

Stage 1	Member of staff receiving complaint
Stage 2	Team Leader, Manager or Chief Executive
Stage 3	Chief Executive/ Trustee Board. If the complaint is against the President the complaint will be heard by one or both of the Vice Presidents
Stage 4	President- to act as arbiter

People are free to complain to the Charity Commission at any time about CABA's charitable activities. However, CABA would prefer the opportunity to resolve issues with the complainant beforehand, as many complaints can be resolved without the need to involve the Charity Commission.

6. Getting the complaint to the right person in CABA

Complaints made in writing should be passed to the relevant person.

For all complaints the recipient of the complaint should:

- Note the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Tell the complainant that we have a Complaints Procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next
- Complete the Complaints Form. This should be passed to the Chief Executive's PA so they can be logged.
- Pass this information to the relevant person within one working week

7. Timetable

Complaints must be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within 5 working days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of our Complaints Procedure should be attached.

To meet our standards, complainants should receive a definitive reply within 20 working days, 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.

8. Replying to the complaint

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.

All replies should set out the procedure to be followed if the complainant is unhappy with CABA's response.

9. Stage 2 Complaints – complaints that are taken further

Should the complainant decide to take matters further and contact the Line Manager, Manager or Chief Executive that individual should:

- Acknowledge receipt of the request within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should confirm who will deal with the case and say when the complainant can expect a reply. Complainants should receive a reply within 20 working days. If this is not possible, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
- Keep the person who dealt with the original complaint, at stage one, informed of what is going on
- Investigate the facts of the case. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at stage one.

10.1 Replying to the complainant (Stage 2 Complaints)

The procedure is very similar to Stage 1 Complaints. The reply should describe what has been done to investigate the complaint, the conclusions drawn from the investigation, and the action taken as a result of the investigation. Should the Line Manager, Manager or Chief Executive disagree with the findings of the original

investigation, the letter of reply should say so. CABA should apologise and where possible say what is being done to ensure that the problem does not happen again.

All replies should set out the procedure to follow if the complainant is unhappy with CABA's response i.e. they can take their complaint to a third stage, to be reviewed by a sub-committee of the Board of Trustees. If the sub committee are unable to come to a decision, the matter will get passed to The President, who will act as an arbiter.

10.2 Recording action regarding complaints

The action taken needs to be recorded in the box at the bottom of the complaints form.

11. Stage 3 Complaints

Repeat steps under stage two complaints. Whatever the outcome, the reply should set out the process taking the complaint further, i.e. the complainant does not feel that the issue has been resolved satisfactorily, they may ask for advice from the Charity Commission.

11.1 Recording Stage 3 complaints

Stage 3 complaints need to be recorded in the same manner and linked with the stage 1 and 2 records.

12. Who handles complaints about the President or Trustees?

If the complaint is about the President, one or both of the Vice Presidents will manage the complaint. If the complaint is about the Trustees generally, the President will manage the complaint. These stages must be expedited swiftly so that there is no suspicion that the Trustees are failing to deal with a complaint about themselves.

14. Keeping a balance

CABA does not receive many complaints, so this Policy and Procedure needs to be seen in that context. There may be times when someone does not want to go as far as to make a complaint, but they have suggestions or comments about how things could be done better. CABA will be receptive and act upon them where possible.

Agreed by Senior Management Team: December 2010
Approved by Board: March 2010
Review date: December 2012