

The Arts Society Sevenoaks Complaints Policy and Procedures

General Principles

The Arts Society Sevenoaks ("TASS") takes all complaints seriously.

A complaint is different from a comment or expression of dissatisfaction. It is a formal claim that TASS has failed to meet a commitment, standard, regulation or law. TASS may choose not to respond to complaints or feedback that is abusive, offensive or harasses a volunteer or one or more members of the Committee.

- In order for complaints to be managed effectively, care will be taken to ensure that all Committee members and volunteers are aware of the procedures for managing complaints and about their role in these procedures.
- The policy and procedures will be easily accessible whenever required and shall be posted on the TASS website.
- The policy and procedures will be reviewed biannually by the Committee.
- Any complaints which are made should be treated as confidential unless the Committee resolves that it is in the best interests of TASS or a legal obligation to do otherwise.
- Complainants will be treated with understanding and respect, as should any person against whom a complaint is made.

Procedures

To whom should a complaint be addressed?

- Complaints must be made in writing by the complainant (this can include e-mail but not text messages or similar).
- In the first instance a complaint should be addressed to the Secretary.
- The Secretary should bring any complaint to the attention of the Committee and the Committee should consider whether it is necessary to obtain any legal advice in relation to the complaint.

Timescale

All complaints should be dealt with promptly and without undue or unnecessary delay.

When a complaint is initially received a written acknowledgement should be given to the complainant as soon as possible and a more substantive written response should follow within 14 days.

Action to be taken when a complaint is received

- On the first occasion that a complaint is received the Secretary should create a Complaints Register folder and make a full note of the complaint and keep this in the Register. Any subsequent complaints should be dealt with and recorded in the same way.

- The Committee should seek to resolve the complaint as soon as practicable and ideally no later than five days after the second Committee meeting following receipt of the complaint.
- The Committee may, at their discretion, decide the complaint is not of sufficient merit to progress further than an initial response.
- If the matter complained of involves possible criminal activity the Committee should consider whether it should be referred directly to the police.
- The Committee should consider the matter at the next Committee meeting or, if swifter action is required, convene a special meeting to consider it. Where circumstances permit and the matter is less serious the Committee may discuss the complaint using e-mail or some other form of communication which is less than a physical meeting provided it is clear that a majority view has been reached on the response to be given.
- The Committee may at any time decide whether the complainant ought to meet with them to discuss the matter or that the matter be dealt with without doing so.

Follow Up Action:

The Committee is responsible for ensuring that:

- Any follow up action is properly implemented taking due regard to fairness and respect.
- The outcome of the complaint process is conveyed in writing to the Complainant.
- Consideration is given to any lessons learnt and whether it would be appropriate to take any action to avoid a recurrence of the incident that led to the complaint, or any other action to improve the running of TASS.
- The Secretary will record the outcome of the complaint in the Complaints Register folder.

END