



PRCA

Complaints Against Staff Handling Policy

The PRCA 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.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint.
- To publicize the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- To make sure everyone involved with the PRCA 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.
- That appropriate action is taken if the complaint is upheld.

3. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of PRCA staff's activities and/or behaviours.

Complaints may come from any individual, volunteer or organisation, including the general public, if something is perceived to be improper. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should refer to Company's Grievance Procedure.

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any and all relevant data protection requirements. Responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Management Board of PRCA, with Standards Committee being the point of escalation. This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

4. Complaints Procedure

Complaints may be sent in confidence to PRCA named person managing HR (complaints manager):

- by e-mail to karen.wilkinson@prca.org.uk
- in person to any of Company staff, Management Board members, Standards Committee members, Steering Committee Members at any of our events or otherwise
- over the telephone to any of Company staff, who will offer a callback from Complaints Manager, on the contact telephone number provided on our website(s)

5. Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have, such as social media.

Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded, with the complainant's knowledge and permission.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- write down the facts of the complaint
- take the complainant's name, email and telephone number
- note down any relationship between the complainant and Company, e.g. of. role of person
- tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure, and where the process can be found
- tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words

6. 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 it is possible and appropriate. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to a manager within 48 hours if possible.

On receiving the complaint, the manager records it by sending to the Complaints Manager. If it has not already been resolved, they pass it to the Complaints Manager to investigate it and to 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 two working days from receipt. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaint's procedure should be attached. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a couple of weeks. 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 by a member of the Management Board.

At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Board most senior level. The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply. The complainant should be notified accordingly.

The Board may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so or get an independent investigator to. 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, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond to the Management Board member. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within two weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent to the complainant 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 Management Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

Further Stage

Company is registered in England and Wales and has a published Code of Conduct it follows. If a complainant is still not happy about the way their complaint has been handled by the PRCA, the further escalation can be taken to the Standards Committee. This will go to the Chair of Standards Committee.

7. Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Management Board may vary the procedure if there is a sound reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about a Management Board member should not have that Management Board member involved as a person leading a Stage Two review.

8. Learning from Complaints

While complaints are regrettable and to be avoided through good practice, the PRCA is committed to learning from any mistakes, and encourages its employees to be open to feedback and not be defensive and take advantage of any training or personal development suggested to help avoid that type of complaint occurring ever again. Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

| Date | Status/Summary of Changes | Approved By | Signature | Next Review |
|---------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| November 2023 | | | | November 2024 |