

GREAT GLEN OADBY & WIGSTON U3A

DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AGAINST MEMBERS

If a complaint is raised against a member by a fellow u3a member or a member of the public the following procedure will apply.

The complaint should be drawn immediately to the attention of the Chairman (*) and the matter should be reported to the next committee meeting. If the matter is considered straightforward, it will often best be to try to resolve the complaint informally. The Chairman may for instance ask a Group Leader to speak to the member. A Group Leader may if appropriate with a member of the Committee present issue a verbal warning about future conduct, to be confirmed in writing by the Committee. If informal resolution is impracticable, or the complaint relates to a repeated problem or to a serious offence, such as:

- sexual / racial abuse, discrimination, harassment or bullying
- dangerous or violent behaviour
- fraud
- theft
- malicious damage
- conduct that brings the u3a into disrepute or is prejudicial to the u3a or the running of the u3a

the Chairman will put into effect the complaints procedure set out below.

The Chairman will obtain readily available background and will contact the member, normally via a face-to-face meeting, to inform the member of the nature of the complaint and that the complaint will be investigated prior to a formal hearing before a panel of Committee members. The Chairman may decide and notify the member of immediate action (such as suspension from group activity) pending the outcome of the investigation. The Chairman will confirm the key points in writing to the member after the meeting. The Chairman will assure the member that, insofar as is practicable, the matter will be handled in confidence.

The Chairman will arrange appropriate action to investigate the complaint. The Chairman will convene the panel (of two or three Committee members, including a note-taker) at a suitable time and will advise the member that the member may be accompanied by a supporter (a relative, colleague or friend but not a legal representative) at the Hearing. The Hearing will consider the evidence obtained through the investigation and will question and hear from the member and, if the member so wishes, from the supporter. In certain circumstances, for example where the facts of a matter are in dispute, the Panel may hear evidence from witnesses. The Hearing will then consider in private session the evidence and the submissions, and will determine the appropriate action. This may include:

- No action
- Oral warning (to be confirmed in writing) about future conduct
- Written warning stating clearly the consequences of any repetition of the offence
- Exclusion from an interest group
- Termination of u3a membership

Summary notes of the Hearing will be taken and retained in confidence for the record. The Panel's decision should be notified in writing within five working days of the Hearing. The member should be advised of the right to appeal against the outcome within five working days of receipt of the written notification.

Appeals must clearly state the grounds upon which they are based. The following are the only grounds upon which appeals will be considered:

- Relevant evidence or submissions were not considered by the Panel
- Fresh evidence has come to light since the Hearing that might change the decision of the Panel
- The matter was not handled in accordance with procedure.

If the member lodges a timely appeal that complies with any of the above grounds the Chairman will arrange for this to be heard by a panel consisting of at least two Committee members not involved in the original Hearing, as soon as is reasonably possible. Similar arrangements will apply as for original Hearings.

The Committee, and any others who need to know (such as Group Leaders or members of the public who raised complaints), will be notified of the results of Hearings and Appeals but not the details of the proceedings.

If there is illegality involved then the relevant authorities should be informed.

If relevant the insurers should be advised via the Trust officers.

(*) If the Chairman is unavailable, read 'the Vice-Chairman', and if the Vice-Chairman is also unavailable, 'an Officer of Great Glen, Oadby & Wigston u3a' in place of all references to the Chairman in this document.

Approved by committee January 2021

Reviewed February 2023

Next Review February 2025

Change of Name April 2024