

Leicester U3A – COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES (*see also appendix 1 for committee only*)

Policy statement

The complaints procedure is intended to provide a fair structure for making and dealing with complaints. It embodies the following principles:

- people making complaints have the right to be treated with courtesy and not suffer discrimination;
- people making a complaint are entitled to assistance from a friend to advocate on their behalf;
- complaints are to be treated with an open mind and will be investigated without prejudice;
- complaints are to be treated seriously and to be dealt with in a timely manner;
- there is a general expectation that the matter will be handled confidentially;
- complaints are stressful for both the complainant and those being complained against, all affected should be treated sensitively;
- those being complained against have the right to hear the complaint being made against them as soon as practicable after the event(s) being complained about. They can then respond while events are still fresh in the minds of all those concerned;
- anonymous complaints will not be investigated;
- abusive and offensive comments will not be accepted as complaints.

Procedures for dealing with problems/complaints

These notes should be read in conjunction with TAT Advice Sheet 'TAT C05 Sorting out Problems'

What to do if you have a complaint

First steps

The first aim should be to try to resolve the matter informally. If you have a complaint then ideally you should speak to the person(s) concerned to see if the matter can be sorted out between you. If this fails or you do not feel able to approach them directly yourself, then the next step depends on whether the problem arose in a group or not.

Complaints within groups

If the problem has arisen in a group, then you could raise the matter with the group convener who may deal with it informally themselves or refer it to the Groups Coordinator, or you could raise the matter directly with the Groups Coordinator yourself. The Groups Coordinator will try to resolve the matter in an informal way.

Complaints that cannot be resolved informally (except those against the committee as a whole)

Except where the complaint is against the committee as a whole, if it has not been possible to resolve the matter informally, then you should raise it with either the Chair or the Secretary who, possibly in consultation with other members of the committee, will appoint a Trustee (the Designated Trustee) to investigate. If the complaint has arisen in a group, then the Designated

Trustee will normally be the Groups Coordinator. If the complaint is against a member or members of the committee, then they will be informed that a complaint has been made but will take no part except as determined by the Designated Trustee.

Complaints against the committee as a whole

If the complaint is against the committee as a whole, then a meeting between you, accompanied if you wish by up to two friends, and the committee will be arranged at which you will be able to put your complaint and the meeting will attempt to come to a resolution of the problem.

Subsequent steps by the Designated Trustee

General Principles

The aim should be to resolve the issue as speedily as possible and at as early a stage as possible consistent with fairness to all parties. It is important that written records are kept at each stage, particularly of the precise nature of the complaint and the response of the other party or parties. All those involved need to be aware that the matter has to be treated confidentially.

The procedures to be adopted are at the discretion of the Designated Trustee but normally will comprise the following:

- listening to and recording the nature of the complaint and the outcome desired; • listening to and recording the response of the other people concerned;
- consulting any others who may have knowledge of the facts;
- holding an informal meeting of all those concerned to try to resolve the problem and, if appropriate, reach an agreement on how to avoid it in future.

If the problem can be resolved in this way, the Designated Trustee will make a brief confidential report to the committee with statements of the complaint, the response and its resolution. This will apply to cases of misunderstanding or where there is a case to answer but the issue is relatively minor.

If the Designated Trustee considers that the complaint is a continuation of an earlier one or if a resolution has not been reached, then the matter will be referred to the committee with a report of the reasons for this, again including statements of the complaint and response. The Designated Trustee may, but need not, make a recommendation on the action to be taken.

Notes for the Designated Trustee are given in Appendix 1. [Committee Meeting, 9th October 2015, Item 2.2.2.]

Adopted October 2015

Reviewed November 2021

Next Review due November 2024