



# Complaints Procedure

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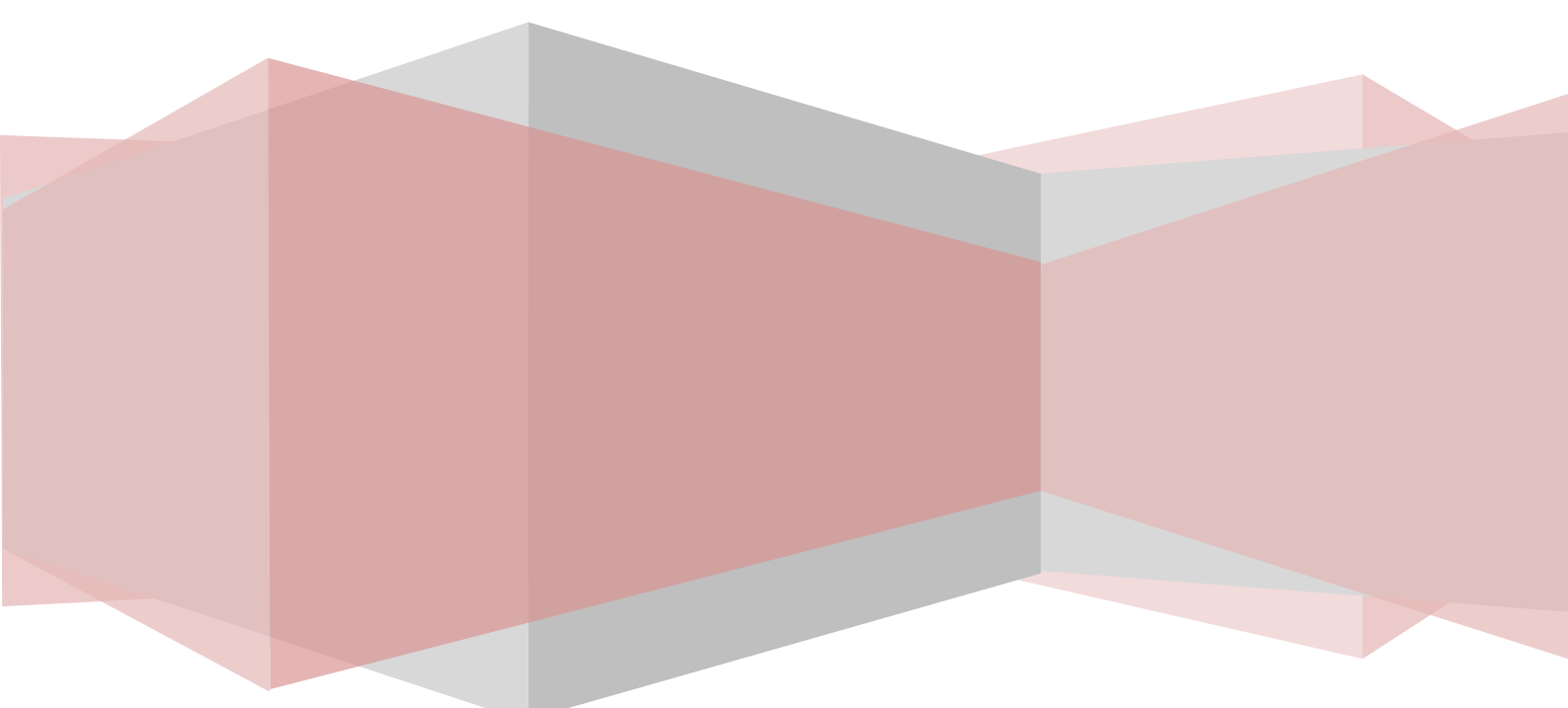
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Approved by Trustee: ..... Date: .....  
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Recorded by Office: ..... Date: .....  
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Reviewer: ..... Date: .....



## Review Record

Reviewer	Trustee Approved	Changes Made	Version No.	Date
Alan Webb				

## Complaints Procedure

### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 The standard definition of a complaint is: “Any expression of dissatisfaction that needs a response”. Whilst the Connections Bus Project aims to work to a high standard there will be occasions when those we work with, and provide services to, are dissatisfied and wish to make a complaint. It is therefore important that the charity has a procedure through which such people can have their complaint thoroughly investigated.

1.2 It is to be expected that most complaints will arise primarily through the delivery of our youth services to communities, and most of these will be reported to staff working on the bus or in the community. However, there may also be dissatisfaction with the way we deal with others such as funders and contractors. These are most likely to be made to staff involved in administration work. Whatever the origin of the complaint it is essential that it is properly dealt with, with the aim of ensuring that the complainant is satisfied with the result. This procedure sets out the way complaints should be dealt with.

1.3 Most complaints can be dealt with locally and informally, at the time they are made. However, some can not and for these there are two stages to the process. The first of these provides an opportunity for a local resolution of any problems that may arise, and it is expected that the majority of complaints will be sorted out at this level. Where the problems cannot be resolved to the complainant’s satisfaction at a local level, stage two of the process will be followed. This involves the investigation of the complaint by the Management Committee.

1.4 Reference should be made to the Project’s Child Protection Policy and Disciplinary Procedures. Where a complaint relates to either of these areas then these policies take precedence over the Complaints Procedure.

## 2.0 Complaints Procedure

### Minor Complaints

#### 2.1 Informal procedure

Some complaints can be regarded as minor, that is, they do not appear to justify applying the formal procedure and can be resolved simply and informally, and at the time they are made. Staff will need to use their judgement in deciding on such cases but in any event, it would be good practice to inform the Project Manager of these.

#### 2.2 Formal Procedure: Stage One

2.2.1 If the complaint is not resolved informally at the time at which it is made, the Project Manager should be informed. The Project Manager will then try and resolve it by informal means, but if not successful the “Formal Procedure: Stage One” should be instituted.

2.2.2 The formal procedure must commence with a letter of acknowledgement or other response, orally or by phone, being made to the complainant within ten working days of the date of the complaint being made. Every effort should then be made by the Project Manager to resolve the complaint as speedily as possible and to the complainant's satisfaction, within 20 working days of the complaint being made. All communications with the complainant, whether verbal or written, must be recorded and copies of written documentation (including emails) kept.

2.2.3 On resolution a final letter should be sent by the Project Manager to the complainant. This will summarise the complaint, the action taken, and the resolution reached with the complainant. A "Complaint Form" (Appendix A) must also be completed and be placed in the Complaints file.

2.2.4 Most complaints will be resolved satisfactorily following this "Formal Procedure: Stage One" process. However, some will not be resolved and in these cases the letter to the complainant should advise them that, if they remain dissatisfied, they can ask for their complaint to be investigated by the Management Committee. A time limit (14 days) should be suggested for them to request this.

### **2.3 Formal Procedure: Stage Two**

2.3.1 When it has not been possible to resolve a complaint in the manner described above, the complainant may request that the charity investigates the complaint. The complainant must make their request, in writing, to the Chair of the Trustees. The receipt of such a request by the Chair will institute the "Formal Procedure: Stage Two".

2.3.2 The Chair will inform and consult fellow trustees on the action to be taken. The assumption must always be that the Management Committee will be involved and, or kept informed of such complaints, but in some cases where sensitive issues are involved the trustees will have to judge whether it is appropriate to do so. In such cases the Trustees will also follow the steps outlined below.

2.3.3 Resolution may be achieved simply through written/email discussion by the Committee and, or trustees and, as appropriate, the complainant. However, if the complaint is serious, a meeting may need to be arranged to discuss it. It may be agreed that the complainant will have an opportunity to put their case at such a meeting. The Management Committee and, or Trustees will also allow submissions from other parties (e.g. members of staff), should this be appropriate.

2.3.4 The Management Committee and, or Trustees will, after hearing all the facts, make a decision on the case. This will be either to:

- a. uphold the complaint or
- b. reject the complaint.

In either case the Committee and, or Trustees will send the complainant a final letter setting out the reasons for the decision reached, and the actions taken (if appropriate). If actions are taken they are likely to involve either staff and, or procedures.

2.3.5 The complainant will be notified within 21 days, in writing, of the Management Committee's and, or Trustees' decision.

2.3.6 The decision of the Management Committee and, or Trustees, is final.

2.3.7 All communications with the complainant, whether verbal or written, must be recorded and copies of written documentation (including emails) kept. A "Complaint Form" (Appendix A) must also be completed and be placed in the Complaints file.

### **3.0 Review**

The Project Manager should review the complaints file regularly, and take the lead in advising staff in relation to handling of complaints. The Project Manager should always ensure that members of staff are made aware of complaints made about them or their actions, and discuss these with them in a constructive way.

### **4.0 Reporting**

4.1 All complaints reported to the Project Manager or recorded in the complaints file will be reported to the Management Committee at the next Management Committee Meeting.

4.2 All reported and recorded complaints will be acknowledged in the project's annual report, along with the method of their resolution and result.

# Appendix A

## Complaint Form

Complaint made by (include contact details):	Complaint made to:
Venue, date and time:	
Nature of complaint:	
Action taken to resolve:	
Complainant Satisfied: YES/NO	Referred to (if required):
Complainant Signature:	Staff signature:
Date:	Date: