

The Enfield Society

Complaints Procedure

Scope

1. This Complaints Procedure is intended as an informal way of resolving complaints. No decision made under the Procedure is intended to affect the legal rights of those concerned, or to give rise to any admission of legal liability by the Society.
2. The individuals involved in the Enfield Society (the **Society**) are composed of President(s), Vice Presidents and the members of the Management Committee (**Trustees**). It also has volunteers who perform specific functions for the Society. Collectively, all these positions are **Volunteers**; the Society has no employees. Finally, the Society has **Members**. who may or may not be Volunteers. Not all Volunteers are Members.
3. The services and activities the Society provides and operates can be accessed by members of the public, who are otherwise not connected to the Society.

What is a complaint?

4. The Society operates a number of events for its Members and the general public, as well as offering for sale goods and services. A complaint can be made by anyone attending a Society event (such as a talk or organised walk), making a purchase from the Society, or otherwise attending or involved with an activity organised by the Society, if they believe that the standard of service they have received falls short of what may reasonably be expected . Additionally, if someone feels the Society, or any of its Volunteers or its Members, has fallen short of providing an adequate standard of behaviour in relation to the affairs of the Society a complaint can be raised with the Society. A complaint may not be made against decisions of the Management Committee or the policies of the Society.
5. A complaint can also be made by any Volunteer of the Society about the way they are being treated by other Volunteers or Members.
6. The Management Committee will determine if a complaint is less or more serious. It will do this by reference to the nature of the complaint. Complaints arising from the sale of goods will normally be deemed less serious, whereas complaints about the personal behaviour of its Volunteers or Members are likely to be more serious. Complaints where there has been a potential breach of the law or the standards expected of Charity Trustees will always be deemed serious.

How to report a complaint

7. Complaints should be raised as soon as possible following an incident where the behaviour or service provided has fallen short of expected standards. In serious cases where there is a possibility that a criminal offence has been committed, the matter should be referred to the Police first and then the Society.
8. Complaints must be notified in writing to the Chairman, giving as much detail as possible of the matter complained of. If the Chairman is the subject of the complaint, then the complaint should be notified to one of the other Officers in the following sequence: Vice Chairman, Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer, other Trustee. Contact information for the Officers is available from the web-site, enfieldsociety.org.uk. If circumstances require a complaint to be made to an ordinary Trustee, the complainant can take reasonable steps to report the matter to any Trustee of their choosing. It is the duty of that Trustee to bring the matter to attention of the other members of the Management Committee as soon as possible.

9. Complainants should indicate that the matter being raised is a complaint. If there is doubt the Trustee receiving the complaint will clarify the status.
10. A complaint is the responsibility of the Management Committee as the governing body of the Charity and not the Trustee to whom it was reported.
11. The Society shall send the complainant a confirmation that the complaint has been received within 10 days of it being lodged.

How the Society investigates complaints

12. The Society must investigate the complaint to determine if it is upheld or dismissed. Investigations should be completed within 30 days of the receipt notification being sent to the complainant. If circumstances indicate that the 30 day time period cannot be met, the complainant will be given a revised completion date before the first 30 days have elapsed.
13. Less serious complaints will normally be investigated by an individual nominated by the Management Committee. The Society will convene a panel of three from the Management Committee to investigate serious complaints. In all circumstances those investigating complaints must have no prior knowledge of the complaint beyond the understanding that a complaint has been raised.
14. Complaints relating to the sale of goods will normally be investigated by the Volunteer for Publications Sales or the Group Leader for the Membership and Publicity Group. If the complaint relates to the behaviour of that Volunteer, as opposed to faulty goods or service, the Management Committee will ask a member of the Management Committee to carry out the investigation.
15. Complaints relating to one of the Society's Special Interest Groups will normally be investigated by the member of the Management Committee who also leads the Group. If the complaint concerns that Group Leader, the Management Committee will appoint another of its members to carry out the investigation.
16. Where a complaint involves allegations about the conduct of a Member or Volunteer (the **Affected Volunteer**), that individual must be given written notice of the complaint and must be given the opportunity to comment in writing on the allegations before any conclusion is reached
17. At the conclusion of the investigation the complainant will receive a written report from the Society. A copy of the report will be sent to any Affected Volunteer.

What happens if a complaint is upheld

18. If a complaint is upheld (found to be justified) the Society must act to remedy the situation. In all circumstances the complainant will receive a written apology.
19. Redress for complaints should be aimed at putting right so far as possible the situation complained of. Redress may include a refund of monies received, but it is not within the scope of the Procedure to award compensation for personal injury or for loss of any kind.
20. Redress for serious complaints should be discussed by the Management Committee. Serious complaints upheld against Volunteers may result in the Volunteer being barred from further volunteering with The Society. Serious complaints upheld against Members may result in their membership of The Society being revoked under the Rules of the Charity (clause 1 D ii).

Appeals

21. Decisions in relation to less serious complaints will not be afforded the right of an appeal.

22. In serious cases (a) the complainant will have the right of an appeal if the complaint is dismissed and (b) any Affected Volunteer will have the right of an appeal if the complaint is upheld . An appeal must be lodged with the Society, using the same process as in paragraph (8) within 14 days of receiving the report of the investigation. Appeals will be considered by three members of the Management Committee not involved with the original investigation and will normally be completed within 30 days of the appeal being lodged. Any such appeal will be dealt with solely by a reconsideration of the information on which the original decision was made.
23. In exceptional circumstances, where there are insufficient members of the Management Committee unconnected with the complaint, an appeal may be heard by other Volunteers from the Society.
24. The appeal result will be notified to the complainant and, where relevant, any Affected Volunteer, in writing. The appeal is final.

8 Communications

25. All communications under this Procedure will be in writing, either by e-mail or in hard copy form sent by post or delivered by hand.

8 Records and reporting

26. Following the completion of this Procedure, complaints will be noted in the minutes of the Management Committee.
27. Complaints will be reported in the Annual Report without reference to any personal details. The Annual Report will indicate the number of less serious and more serious complaints as separate figures.
28. All documents relating to complaint investigations and any appeals will be kept by the Society for seven years after the complaint is closed. At the end of this period all documents will be securely destroyed.
29. Documents will be kept in a secure place. If files are stored on the Society's IT system they will be encrypted.
30. Under normal circumstances only the Trustees will have access to the documents.

Procedure adopted by the Management Committee on 12 January 2023