



# Complaints Policy

| Version | Date     | Changes  | Changed by        |
|---------|----------|--|-------------------|
| 1.0     | 31/01/09 | Last update  | Karen Priestley   |
| 1.1     | 04/11/11 | Separation of Policy Statement and procedure.<br>Structural and text amendments. | Sian Payne        |
| 1.2     | 10/11/11 | Remove track changes<br>Add contents   | Sian Payne        |
| 2.0     | 25/01/14 | Reviewed   | Sian Payne        |
| 3       | 06/02/17 | Reviewed and updated   | Lucy Lamb         |
| 3.1     | 15/02/17 | Reviewed and updated   | Simon Baker       |
| 4       | 15/08/24 | Reviewed and updated   | Tom Montrose Moss |

|                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Prepared by</b>    | Simon Baker       |
| <b>Authorised by</b>  | Laura Wilkinson   |
| <b>Effective from</b> | August 2024       |
| <b>Last reviewed</b>  | August 2024       |
| <b>Reviewed by</b>    | Tom Montrose Moss |
| <b>Next review</b>    | August 2027       |

# Introduction

LGBT Foundation strives to provide a variety of services to a very high standard as expected by all our service users. If we fail to do this we want to know about it. This will enable us not only to deal with the specific problem, but also to prevent it happening again.

We encourage complaints, comments and compliments as feedback upon which we can develop and improve the services and functions we deliver. We will strive to respond to all of these in a positive manner, dealing with complaints in the manner set out in this document.

## Scope

This document sets out our policy regarding complaints and the procedures we will follow when we receive a complaint from a service user, an organisation, or member of the public. It does not address complaints regarding staffing or volunteering issues or recruitment and selection which are covered by separate procedures.

This document describes the process LGBT Foundation will take when a complaint is raised. This includes the process for recording, investigating and responding to complaints, as well as the appeals process. Complaints are likely to be in one or more of the following areas:

- a) Dissatisfaction with our services;
- b) Disputes between a service user or member of the public and LGBT Foundation regarding policy, procedures or activities;
- c) Issues or concerns relating to the behaviour or conduct of LGBT Foundation staff and volunteers.

## Procedure

This procedure should be followed in all instances where a complaint is made to LGBT Foundation. Where this occurs, a copy of the policy may be provided to the service user, organisation or member of the public. The stages of the complaints procedure will be explained to the complainant.

## Recording Complaints

All complaints are recorded and stored using digital forms that are either made available on LGBT Foundation's website or are in the case of volunteers, provided as part of their induction packs. The forms for these are as follows:

- [General Complaints Form](#) - for members of the public or service users to communicate issues or concerns about our services
- [Volunteer Conduct Form](#) - record any concerns raised about a volunteer's conduct. This could be due to a volunteer not behaving in line with our values, our volunteer agreement, or other behaviour that causes concern.
- [Volunteer Concern Form](#) - to record any concerns raised by a volunteer. This includes concerns that have been raised informally.

All submissions are logged within Salesforce and are kept on file for at least 12 months and no more than seven years (in line with LGBT Foundation's internal GDPR record keeping compliance policies), including those which were resolved informally. All complaints shall be treated with due regard to the confidentiality policy and the demographics of every complainant (with their permission) will be recorded and used by LGBT Foundation as part of the complaints review process.

Submission made via the Volunteer Conduct and Volunteer Concern forms are handled within the volunteering team and are dealt with in a promptly manner in line with volunteering policies. For submissions made via the General Complaints form, there is a formal three stage process.

## Stage 1: Informal Complainant

The term informal is not to be used to infer that this should be dealt with any less seriously, it merely refers to the method by which the complaint is made and is not a reason to not take appropriate actions or impose relevant sanctions where necessary.

The complainant will be invited to submit either a verbal complaint to the most appropriate member of staff either in person or by telephone or submit a written complaint via the general complaints form hosted on our website. When all submissions are made, they are first logged onto Salesforce and administered for allocation by designated LGBT Foundation employees. The designated employee administering the process will pass the complaint on to the most appropriate person who is at Manager level or above, who will investigate the matter and attempt to resolve the matter as soon as possible or within 5 working days. The member of staff conducting the investigation may pass the complaint onto a third party (another member of staff) at any point to expedite the conclusion of the complaint.

The person leading the investigation should keep a record of all conversation(s), including details of the complainant's name, address and telephone number. The Complaints Record in Salesforce (see appendix 1) must be used to create a full record of the complaint and complainant. All action taken must be documented on the log.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, or if an informal complaint is not appropriate, the complaint should move on to Stage 2.

# Stage 2: Formal Complaint

The complainant will be asked to follow up their initial complaint in writing to the CEO, who will then delegate this to the most relevant member of the Directors team. If the complainant is not able to put their complaint in writing, they will be offered an interview with the CEO. The role of the Director or Managing Director (or nominee) at this meeting will be confined to putting the complaint in writing, seeking the complainant's approval of the written submission, and obtaining the complainant's signature to indicate agreement with the contents. The complainant may choose to work with a third-party representative at this stage and throughout the process.

LGBT Foundation will endeavour to make necessary adjustments to support complainants in the reporting and recording of complaints.

The Director/Managing Director or nominee will investigate the complaint and attempt to resolve it. If the complaint involves a member of staff or volunteer, the Director/Managing Director or nominee will offer the member of staff or volunteer an opportunity to put forward their account.

The Director/Managing Director or nominee will ensure that all complaints receive a response in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the written complaint. This target time may need to be extended in situations when the investigation stage requires a longer period of time. In this situation the complainant will be kept updated with progress and estimated timeframes. The results of the investigation will be given to the CEO prior to the complainant.

A written response to the complaint will summarise what investigations have been carried out and what action, if any, is proposed to resolve the matter. A copy of this correspondence will be kept by LGBT Foundation and should be attached to the Complaints Record on Salesforce.

If a response in writing is inappropriate, the complainant will be offered an interview with the Director/Managing Director or their nominee to provide the response verbally. This meeting should be held within 10 working days as before. This target time may need to be extended in situations when the investigation stage requires a longer period of time. In this situation the complainant will be kept updated with progress and estimated timeframes.

If the complainant is not satisfied at this stage they should ask for the matter to be dealt with under stage 3 of the complaints procedure.

## Stage 3: Formal Complaint

Where the matter is not resolved by Stage 2 the Director/Managing Director should immediately convene a complaints committee comprising of one staff member (not previously involved in the matter) and one Trustee.

The Complaints Committee shall consider the complaint and all materials relating to the investigation. After due deliberation they shall decide on what course of action should be taken (if any). The decision of the Complaints Committee will be final.

The decision of the complaints committee shall be forwarded to the complainant in writing.

## Complaint involving Chief Executive

Where the complaint is against the Chief Executive the same procedure should be followed, but with a Trustee taking on the role and function of the investigator at all stages.

## Exceptional Circumstances

Where a complainant pursues staff and/or volunteers outside the scope of the law i.e. threatening behaviour, actual or physical bodily harm etc. this shall normally render their complaint invalid and it shall not be acted upon in any way.

If the behaviour of a complainant towards staff or volunteers is sufficient to warrant involving the police, this behaviour shall normally render their complaint invalid and it will not be acted upon.

Complainants who engage in behaviour that could be regarded as “vexatious litigation” in a legal context shall not have their complaints dealt with. The Chief Executive shall be responsible for identifying complainants acting as such and shall submit this information to the Senior Management Team and this information shall be recorded for future reference, using a Complaints Log. If at any point in the future, an individual or organisation recorded in this way makes another complaint, consideration shall be given to whether or not to disregard that complaint.

The decision to dismiss complaints without investigation should not be taken lightly or liberally and must be escalated to the Senior Management Team before a decision is made. A record of disregarded complaints must be kept for reporting to the Board of Trustees.

Anonymous complaints will not be investigated.

# Appendix 1:

## COMPLAINTS SALESFORCE RECORD



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A-000055

| Status                          | Stage 1         | Owner                      | Tom Montrose-Moss |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Person Completing Report - Name | Administrator 1 | Complaint Recipient - Name | Employee 1        |
| Person Completing Report - Role | Administrator   | Complaint Recipient - Role | Employee          |

**▼ Complainant - Details**

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Complaints ID                            | A-000055   |
| Complainant                              | Anon -     |
| Date Initial Complaint Received          | 15/08/2024 |
| Method Complaint Received                |            |
| Details About The Complaint              |            |
| Complainant - Adjustments Required       |            |
| Complainant - Demographic Form Consent?  |            |
| Other Complaint Policy Adherence Needed? |            |
| Complaint Constitutes a GDPR Breach?     |            |
| Require Report To Charity Commission?    |            |

**▼ Complaint - Stage 1**

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Stage 1 - Nominated Person            |  |
| Stage 1 - Investigation Details       |  |
| Stage 1 - Outcome of Investigation    |  |
| Stage 1 - Actions Identified          |  |
| Stage 1 - Complainant Notified Date   |  |
| Stage 1 - Complainant Notified Method |  |
| Stage 1 Processing Time in Days       |  |

**▼ Complaint - Stage 2**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Stage 2 - Request To Escalate Date      |  |
| Stage 2 - Acknowledge Escalation Date   |  |
| Stage 2 - Acknowledge Escalation Time   |  |
| Stage 2 - Nominated Person              |  |
| Stage 2 - Investigation Details         |  |
| Stage 2 - Outcome of Investigation      |  |
| Stage 2 - Actions Identified            |  |
| Stage 2 - Complainant Notified Date     |  |
| Stage 2 - Investigation & Response Time |  |
| Stage 2 - Complainant Notified Method   |  |
| Stage 2 - Verbal Response Meeting Date  |  |
| Stage 2 - Verbal Response Meeting Time  |  |

**▼ Complaint - Stage 3**

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Stage 3 - Request To Escalate Date    |  |
| Stage 3 - Acknowledge Escalation Date |  |
| Stage 3 - Acknowledge Escalation Time |  |
| Stage 3 - Person To Chair Panel       |  |
| Stage 3 - Complaints Panel Members    |  |
| Stage 3 - Investigation Details       |  |
| Stage 3 - Outcome of Investigation    |  |
| Stage 3 - Complainant Notified Date   |  |
| Stage 3 - Panel & Response Time       |  |
| Stage 3 - Complainant Notified Method |  |

Created By Tom Montrose-Moss, 15/08/2024 12:41

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