
30. Complaints Policy



Complaints Policy of Action 21

<http://www.governancecode.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Principle-6-Resource-3-Model-Complaints-Policy-and-Procedure.pdf>

Action 21 views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person that has made the complaint.

1. Our policy is:

- 1.1 To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- 1.2 To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- 1.3 To make sure everyone at Action 21 knows what to do if a complaint is received
- 1.4 To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- 1.5 To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- 1.6 To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

2. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Action 21.

3. Where Complaints Come From

- 3.1 Complaints may come from customers, donors, members of the local community, other organisations
- 3.2 A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.
- 3.3 This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use Action 21's Discipline and Grievance policies.

4. Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

5. Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with The Board of Trustees.

6. Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints may be sent to:

Action 21 Unit 3 Milverton House, Court Street, Leamington Spa CV31 2BB

E-mail info@action21.co.uk

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 01926 339077 or in person to any of Action 21's staff, volunteers or trustees.

Appendix 1 - Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Action 21 (e.g. Customer, volunteer)
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

Appendix 2 - Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation e.g. "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal