



# **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

OCT, OCP and all  
Hub Charities

## **1.0 Values Statement**

Oasis is committed to continuous improvement and seeks to work in an open and transparent way. We recognise that we won't always get things right and when that happens we want the opportunity to say sorry, address concerns to put them right, and learn from them.

## **2.0 Responsibilities**

- 2.1 Oasis aims to provide an excellent service, but there may be occasions when people are not happy about something and, if this is the case, it is important that we are informed.
- 2.2 The aim of the Complaints Procedure is to give clear details of what steps can be taken to try and get things put right where there is a problem.
- 2.3 The Complaints Procedure also gives us the chance to keep an eye on the quality of service we provide so that we can continually work to improve it.
- 2.4 This Procedure applies to all complaints relating to staff and volunteers delivering projects and services on behalf of Oasis.

## **3.0 Scope**

- 3.1 Anyone who receives or requests a service from Oasis or is affected by decisions we make can use the complaints procedure. This includes young people, parents and carers, and community members. NB All staff who wish to make a complaint should do so under one of the following policies: Grievance or Whistleblowing.
- 3.2 The Procedure is also open to people who may be acting on the complainant's behalf, such as an advice agency or a solicitor; but we do encourage people to try to sort things out with us first.
- 3.3 People can complain about any aspect of our service which they are unhappy about; for example, if it is felt that a member of staff has not behaved reasonably towards them, or a person feels unfairly excluded from an activity or programme.

## **4.0 Approach**

- 4.1 Our approach to complaints is underpinned by the Oasis ethos and 9 habits. The way in which we handle complaints is a great opportunity for us to remember again that we have a responsibility to ensure that we treat people with respect, openness and care. This desire is borne out of two of our five ethos values – our commitment to treat people equally, respecting differences; and our commitment to healthy and open relationships. To create and maintain healthy, open relationships and to ensure we remain committed to treating people equally, we seek to intentionally focus on being patient, honest, humble and forgiving. For instance, in the process of discussing a complaint, we will need to act humbly and honestly, particularly if we need to recognise that we have not necessarily got something right. Equally, it is our intention that being forgiving will form a

central part of the way in which we listen to, discuss and deal with complaints together.

When responding to complaints, we aim to:

- Be impartial and fair
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation by an independent person or panel
- Address all the points at issue and provide an effective and prompt response
- Where possible, respect complainants' desire for confidentiality, but complainants should know that this is not always possible and is often detrimental to achieving a mutually acceptable solution
- Treat complainants with respect
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the complaints process
- Consider how the complaint can feed into our improvement evaluation processes

- 4.2 Complainants have every right to make a formal complaint whenever they wish to, but in the first instance it can often be quicker and easier for everyone if the problem can be sorted out informally.
- 4.3 To try and resolve a problem informally, the best course of action is to contact and talk to the project manager, if this is appropriate, and let them know what the issues or concerns are. The project manager will inform the complainant of the length of time it should take for the problem to be sorted out, and hopefully a solution will be reached.
- 4.4 We will always endeavour to deal with complaints sympathetically, but there are some things we will not be able to give information about. For example, it would be wrong for us to discuss the details of someone else's circumstances as this would be a breach of confidentiality.

## **5.0 Formal Process**

- 5.1 If the complainant has a complainant against a member of staff or volunteer, and if this problem has not been sorted out informally, they should write to the Hub/Team Leader. Complaints about Hub/Team Leaders should be sent to the Community Director for that region. Complaints about any of the senior leadership team should be sent to the Chief Executive Officer. Any complaint about the Chief Executive Officer should be sent to the Oasis Community Partnerships Board Chair.
- 5.2 If it is not possible to put a complaint in writing, the complainant should feel able to make a complaint in person – which we will then record in writing. If a complaint is made in person, the member of staff or volunteer who takes the complaint will check with them that it is correctly recorded and they will normally be asked to sign it. In this way, everyone is clear what the complaint is about.
- 5.3 When we receive a formal complaint, we will write to the complainant within five working days to acknowledge that the complaint is being dealt with.
- 5.4 The Hub/Team Leader (or designated member of the senior leadership team) may call a meeting to clarify concerns and seek a resolution. The complainant

may be accompanied to this meeting and should inform Oasis of the identity of their companion in advance.

In certain circumstances, Oasis may need to refuse a request for a particular individual to attend any such meeting – for example, if there is a conflict of interest. If this is the case, Oasis will notify the complainant as soon as they are aware, so that the complainant has the opportunity to arrange alternative accompaniment.

- 5.5 If further investigation of the complaint is required the Hub/Team Leader will appoint an investigating officer to undertake this task. This investigating officer will meet with or receive statements from the complainant, the organisation (or individual staff member or volunteer), as well as any relevant witnesses. The outcome or conclusion of this investigation will be sent to the complainant in writing within five working days of the conclusion of the investigation.
- 5.6 An investigation may result in recommendations ranging from no further action, to progressing to a disciplinary procedure (in the case of complaints against individual staff).
- 5.7 If the complainant is not happy with the response they will be able to use the Appeals Procedure.

## 6.0 **The Appeals Procedure**

- 6.1 If the complainant feels that staff have not resolved their complaint satisfactorily, they can appeal to the Chief Executive Officer. This should be done within 10 working days following receipt in writing of the conclusion of the investigation. [If complaint was handled by CEO, appeal is to the board chair]
- 6.2 After receiving an appeal the Chief Executive Officer will write to the complainant within 10 working days to acknowledge receipt of their letter.
- 6.3 The Chief Executive may call a meeting to clarify concerns, and seek a resolution. The complainant may be accompanied to this meeting, and should inform Oasis of the identity of their companion in advance.

In certain circumstances, Oasis may need to refuse a request for a particular individual to attend any such meeting – for example, if there is a conflict of interest. If this is the case, Oasis will notify the complainant as soon as they are aware, so that the complainant has the opportunity to arrange alternative accompaniment.

- 6.4 The Chief Executive will write to the complainant within 10 working days of the meeting to let them know the decision of the appeal.

## 7.0 **Confidentiality**

- 7.1 We will, as far as possible, respect the confidentiality of the complainant. Whilst we are looking into their complaint, their name will not be divulged any more than is absolutely necessary within the organization.

7.2 Those making complaints will appreciate, however, that if their complaint involves a community member, a member of staff or volunteer, it may be very difficult for us to look into this without talking to the person concerned. If we are asked not to talk to a particular person, we will try and respect that, but it will probably not be possible for us to take any action to tackle the problem.

7.3 It will not normally be possible for us to deal with anonymous complaints as it is obviously difficult for us to check things with the person making the complaint.

## 8.0 **Getting Independent Advice**

8.1 We would always hope that a problem can be sorted out informally.

8.2 However if a complainant feels it is important for them to get independent advice before they decide whether to complain to us formally or not, or at any point in the formal process, we would support this.

Advice agencies include:

- Welfare Rights Service
- Citizens' Advice Bureau
- Law Centre
- Solicitor

## 9.0 **Improving our services**

9.1 We always welcome suggestions and ideas on how we can improve our service and to that end would encourage people to speak to a member of staff, a volunteer or to write to us.

9.2 Complaints can also help us improve our service. All formal complaints made to the organisation are recorded and reported to the Chief Executive Officer, who will subsequently inform the Board of Trustees, of changes or improvements the organisation may be taking as a result of complaints received.

## Change Control

Version	Date	Amended by	Recipients	Purpose
1.0	30/08/2019	Kat Simmonds		Updated to new format, and updated for community contexts
1.1	19/12/2019	Danielle Welch and Kat Simmonds	OCP policy group	Further updates to formal complaints procedure

### Approvals

This document requires the following approvals.

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Name	Position	Date Approved	Version
Dave Parr	OCT CEO		

### National/Local Policy

- This policy must be localised by Hubs
- This policy must not be changed, it is a National Policy (only change logo, contact details and yellow highlighted sections)

### Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Name	Position	Date	Version
All OCP Hub/Project Leads			
All OCT Heads of Service			
All OCP/local Hub project staff			