

STONEWALL COMPLAINTS POLICY

Comment, compliment or complaint - we want to hear from you. Get in touch anytime by emailing feedback@stonewall.org.uk If you are unhappy with anything at Stonewall - be it an event, department or activity; you have the right to complain. In fact we encourage it. Here we'll explain the steps you need to take to get your complaint heard.

Purpose

Stonewall has a clear procedure for responding to any complaints about our events, spaces, activities or people. Complaints are treated seriously and dealt with fairly, and are an opportunity for us to learn and improve how we work. Most concerns can be informally resolved by talking to our members of staff, or event participants. Sometimes it may not be possible to resolve concerns through these channels. The Stonewall Complaints Procedure is used to set out what needs to be done to make a formal complaint, and to investigate the complaint. It is a legal offence under the Equality Act 2010 to victimise (treat someone less favourably) anyone for seeking to protect or claim redress for discrimination or harassment.

Support and Adjustments

Any investigation under this procedure will be undertaken with appropriate discretion, care and consideration. All steps in the process will remain fair and in line with Stonewall's equal opportunities policy. Reasonable adjustments to the procedure will be made to accommodate those defined as disabled under the Equality Act 2010.

Protection of Confidentiality

We are committed to dealing with complaints discretely, protecting the confidentiality of those involved. No Stonewall staff member, volunteer or Trustee should comment publicly on any incident that is being dealt with under this procedure, and no formal reports will be published. Where redress applies that will impact on the wider community, the method of announcement will be explained to the people involved in the complaint.

Recording Complaints

We will keep records of:

- The matter of complaint
- Any incident report, or referral to a Stonewall Disciplinary Procedure
- Any redress imposed and the reasons for it
- Whether an appeal was lodged and its outcome. These records are to be kept confidential and retained in line with the above Complaints Procedures and the General Data Protection Regulations.

Copies of any meeting records will normally be given to any people involved in the complaint.

What do we mean by 'complaint'?

A complaint is an expression of concern, difficulty or difference of opinion for which a formal response is being requested. This may include:

- Dissatisfaction with the response given after raising an informal complaint
- A complaint about a very serious matter

Conflict of Interests

In the event of a complaint involving Stonewall staff, volunteers or Trustees, we will ensure that the incidents are dealt with fairly. To avoid any real, or perceived bias in the investigation and decision making of any complaints, the Stonewall Trustee Board will have the authority to delegate decision making to any other trustees, and may involve independent, external investigators. All efforts will be made, where possible, to ensure that no person involved with, or closely connected to the complaint has a decision making role in this procedure.

Formal Proceedings

Stage 1: Report of Complaint

1.1 A complaint is sent to feedback@stonewall.org and reviewed by the Adviser to the Complaints Procedure

1.2 A complaint will be considered a formal complaint if it is about a matter which falls within Stonewall's control or remit, and requires a formal response or redress

1.3 A complaint should include

- details of the concern,
- the date(s) and time when this occurred,
- name and contact details for the complainant

1.4 The complaint should, where possible, be submitted within 28 working days of the incident in question.

It is recognised in some cases, particularly cases of harassment and bullying, a report may not be submitted within 28 days. All complaints will be reviewed, and reasons for delays fairly considered.

1.5 The complaint is recorded in the Complaints Log

1.6 The Stonewall Complaints Adviser (or nominee) is notified of & reviews the complaint with any relevant initial evidence and decides:

- The complaint should be dismissed as it there is no merit or the information is factually incorrect
- The complaint can be quickly and simply resolved, and a resolution offered
- The complaint needs to be investigated

1.7 The complainant will be informed of this decision, in writing, within 15 working days of receiving the complaint.

This communication must include:

- Details of the complaint
- A copy of this Complaints Procedure
- Information about what will happen next 3.

Stage 2: Investigation Stage

2.1 A complaints investigator will be appointed by the Complaints Adviser. The investigator will be a Stonewall manager not previously involved in the case who has undergone complaints investigation training.

2.2 The complainant, and any person who may be subject to a complaint (including Stonewall delegates, or Stonewall department managers) will be informed, in writing, of the investigation, confirming:

- The details of the complaint
- The name and contact details of the complaint investigator
- A minimum of 2 working days' notice will be given for any meetings

2.3 The complaints investigator will review all evidence, and may request additional evidence as required to determine the details of the complaint.

2.4 The complaints investigator will present the complaint, evidence, findings and recommendation to the Complaints Adviser.

2.5 The Complaints Adviser will review the findings and documents and decide one of the following:

- The complaint has been found not justified and no further action will be taken
- The complaint has been partly or fully justified, and make recommendations to seek resolution and, where appropriate, redress.

2.6 The complainant will be informed of this decision, in writing within 15 working days.

Stage 3: Appeal Stage

3.1 An appeal against the decision of the complaints investigation can be considered on one or more of the following grounds:

- There is evidence a significant procedural error in the investigation of the complaint, which significantly contributed to the outcome
- Significant new evidence has come to light which could not have been made available during the initial investigation

3.2 Appeals should be made to the Chief Executive within 10 working days of notification of the decision.

3.3 The Chief Executive, or their nominee, will determine the most appropriate method of conducting the review and communicate in writing the result of the appeal and the reasons for the decisions taken within 28 working days.

3.4 Possible outcomes of an appeal are:

- The appeal is rejected and the original decision is upheld
- The appeal is upheld and the complaint redress is modified

3.5 If your appeal is not upheld we will write to you to explain this.