

Complaints Policy and Procedure

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Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. COMPLAINTS

1.1 Complaints definition

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction made by a user, volunteer, or another member of the Group Hug system management team. All complaints should be taken seriously and handled using the complaints procedure below. Group Hug Volunteers will strive to deal with any issues promptly, politely and when appropriate, confidentially.

2. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

2.1 Volunteers and Volunteer supervisors receiving complaints

- Any Volunteer or Volunteer Supervisor receiving an informal complaint should try to resolve the issue immediately, if possible. Alternatively, formal complaints should be recorded in writing and details made of the nature of the complaint, the person/persons involved, the time, place, and date.
- The Volunteer or Volunteer Supervisor should inform the relevant Group Level Manager of the complaint, who will then determine if the issue can be resolved locally. If it can, the Group Level Manager should record the complaint and monitor any further incidents. If it cannot be resolved locally, it is then escalated to a System Level Manager for further guidance and support.

3. COMPLAINTS PROCESS

We aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially
- we respond in the correct way; for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken if appropriate etc.
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service and review annually our complaints policy and procedures

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with promptly. Our aim is to:

- resolve concerns quickly



- keep matters as low-key as possible
- be clear what the complaint is about
- establish what the customer wants, which may simply be an apology
- be polite, honest and sensitive
- carry out the necessary actions and make a record of the details
- forward complaints on to the next stage in the complaints procedure if the problem cannot be resolved

Complaints can differ widely, both in nature and complexity and sometimes need to be dealt with formally. To help us deal with any complaint more effectively, you will need to follow the simple step-by-step complaints procedure and log the following information within the Group Hug App to let us know.

We need to know:

- exactly what the problem is and how it has occurred, giving as much information as possible
- how it has affected you
- what you consider should be done to rectify the issue

4. HOW WE WILL DEAL WITH YOUR COMPLAINT

4.1 Stage one – Complaint

We will acknowledge your complaint within 7 working days of receipt and provide you with the name and contact details of the person responsible for investigating the matter on your behalf.

4.2 Stage two - Investigation

The person responsible for the investigation will write to you with their findings and resolution as soon as possible.

4.3 Stage three - Appeal

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, you may seek an appeal to the appropriate person, usually the System Level Management Team, who has not been previously



involved. Letters of appeal must be received within **10 working days** from the date on the letter of investigation, findings and resolution (these will always be sent by email or first-class post).

4.4 Timescale

Any such appeal will result in the details of the investigation being reviewed by the appropriate person and you should be informed of the outcome (i.e., whether your appeal has been upheld or rejected) within 10 working days.

If more time is required before such a review can be finalised, you will be kept informed of the progress and a date will be given of when you should expect a full response.

**Some more complex complaints may take longer to investigate. Where this is the case, you will be kept informed of progress at agreed intervals and a full response will be sent to you as soon as possible*

5. RESPONSIBILITY

The General Manager of Group Hug has overall responsibility for ensuring that complaints regarding employees and services are handled appropriately.

5.1 Complaints against Volunteers

Complaints about Volunteer behaviour or attitude will be handled by the appropriate line manager and will be dealt with in accordance with Group Hug's Disciplinary Procedure.

In the instance of a complaint against a Volunteer, you will not be given details of the actions we have taken as this information is covered by our data protection and confidentiality policy. But please be assured we take these complaints very seriously indeed and will ensure that appropriate action is taken.

5.2 Complaints against the Managers and Supervisors

Where a complaint is made against a Manager or Supervisor at Group Level, these complaints should be logged in the same way through the Group Hug app, selecting the appropriate Level when completing the complaint.

5.3 Complaints against System Level Support Management



- Your complaint should be logged in the same way through the Group Hug App and again selecting the appropriate Level and role for your complaint
- The same 3 stage investigation will be carried out by another member of the System Level Management team in this instance.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any complaint will be treated in the strictest confidence and only those investigating will have access to the details. Naturally, during any investigation, the details of the complaint may need to be discussed with the relevant individuals concerned, but your personal details will not be disclosed without your prior approval.

7. ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

If you wish to make a complaint anonymously, it will be treated as a comment, as we will be unable to advise you of the outcome of the investigation.

8. VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

Group Hug reserves the right to take appropriate action with what it considers to be vexatious complaints.

9. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

This Policy shall be deemed effective as of 16th May 2021. No part of this Policy shall have retroactive effect and shall thus apply only to matters occurring on or after this date.