

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

This policy applies to all complaints made against One Voice Blackburn and its associated groups and projects.

Stage One – Informal Resolution

One Voice Blackburn expects that before seeking to use formal procedures, the complainant:

- will have raised the issue with the relevant staff member/consultant within the organisation and
- will have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution.

Where a minor problem arises at source, or where a minor complaint is made directly and verbally this should be dealt with at source with explanation and mediation being the key forms of resolution.

Stage Two - Formal Procedure

The Trustees of One Voice Blackburn shall have a discretion, which will be exercised reasonably, not to allow a written complaint to be pursued where an Informal Resolution has not been sought.

- The Complainant must put the complaint in writing using the One Voice Blackburn templates. The complaint should be addressed to the Chairman of One Voice Blackburn.
- The Chairman of One Voice Blackburn will acknowledge receipt of the complaint by letter, or email and pass the complaint to a nominated senior member of the organisation as appropriate for investigation.
- An investigation of the complaint will be carried out by the nominated senior member of One Voice who will report to the Chairman.
- The Chairman will discuss the matter with the complainant. This may be during a meeting or over the telephone. Whenever reasonably possible, such discussion will take place within 20 working of the complaint being received.
- The Chairman of One Voice will then put their findings in writing and indicate what steps, if any, should be taken in order to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 20 working days.
- A copy of the Complaint Form and the written response will be submitted to the Trustees of One Voice Blackburn
- Where a complaint relates to the Chairman of One Voice Blackburn, one of the other Trustees will handle the complaint. Otherwise, the procedure for the Stage Two will remain the same.

Stage Three – Trustee Hearing

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the first and second stage, the complainant may request that the complaint be considered by the full set of Trustees of One Voice Blackburn who have not previously been involved in the complaint.

A request to use the third stage must be in writing, addressed to the Chairman of One Voice Blackburn within 10 working days of the Stage Two response being sent to the complainant and must set out briefly the reasons why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response.

The Chairman of One Voice Blackburn will put in writing its response to the complainant's reasons for requesting the Appeal. One Voice Blackburn will do this within 15 working days.

At the end of that 15-day period (whether or not the Establishment has responded to the complainant) One Voice Blackburn will convene a hearing of the Complaint Appeals Panel. That hearing will be held as quickly as practicable given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the complainant, One Voice Blackburn and the Trustees of One Voice Blackburn. Whenever possible, the hearing will be held within 15 working days of the end of one Voice Blackburn's response time.

The following are entitled to attend the Panel hearing, submit written representations and address the Panel:

- the complainant/s and/or one representative;
- the Chairman of One Voice and/or one representative; and
- any other interested person whom the Trustees consider to have a reasonable and just interest in the appeal and whose contribution would assist in their decision-making.

The Trustees Hearing will formulate its response as quickly as reasonably possible, aiming to do so within 10 working days.

The Trustees Hearing findings and recommendations will be:

- sent in writing to the complainant
- sent, where relevant, to the person complained about; and
- available for inspection in the One /voice Blackburn's offices

Accountability

The Chairman holds delegated responsibility for discharging the sound application of all establishment policies.

The Chairman of One Voice Blackburn should inform their Trustees and Leads of all matters relating to serious breaches of this policy including any major incident to be addressed under this policy promptly, preferably prior to action being taken insofar as is reasonably practicable.

Evaluation and Review

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout all One Voice Blackburn groups and projects.

The Directors will monitor the operation and effectiveness of arrangements referred to in this policy at each Meeting.

Date of Last Review: March 2023

Date of Next Review: March 2025