



Norfolk
Community
Arts

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Introduction

We are committed to providing high quality activities and services. Whoever you deal with at NORCA, you can expect to be treated politely, fairly and to be made to feel welcomed and valued. However, sometimes we may get it wrong. You have a right to complain and to be taken seriously if you feel that we haven't done something right or if you feel there is room for improvement with our services and/or our activities.

The aim of this Policy and Procedure is to outline how people can make a complaint and to ensure that any complaint is dealt with in a fair way to the satisfaction of the complainant where possible.

This Policy and Procedure states clearly what the responsibilities of NORCA are in relation to the response given to any complaint made and gives guidance to NORCA staff, volunteers and Trustees who may have to deal with complaints.

This Policy and Procedures outlines the following: -

1. What you can expect from the organisation if you make a complaint
2. Who can make a complaint
3. How to make a complaint
4. How complaints are dealt with (including timescales)
5. How to take the matter further

1. What you can expect from the organisation if you make a complaint

What you can expect from us

- You have the right to have a readily accessible complaints procedure
- You have the right to have your complaint listened to and to be treated seriously
- Complaints will be dealt with sensitively and appropriately
- You have the right to complain without fear of being judged, bias or prejudice
- All complaints will be investigated thoroughly and promptly
- Where possible complaints will be resolved quickly, fairly, and effectively and if relevant, relationships damaged by the concern/issue repaired
- To be informed of any action taken to remedy the concern/issue
- You have the right to take the matter further if you are not satisfied with the initial response from the investigations

What we will do

- We will endeavour to work in the spirit of partnership and openness
- We will conduct our complaints procedure in a fair, transparent and impartial manner
- We will commit to learning from complaints and use what we have learnt to inform our organisational planning and development, to improve our services and activities
- Staff will be enabled and empowered to appropriately handle complaints
- We will endeavour to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of the complainant, where possible
- We will have an effective system for recording, monitoring, and evaluating complaints received
- We will ensure that information obtained through the complaints procedure is kept confidential in line with NORCA's GDPR policy

2. Who can make a complaint

Any person who is currently involved in our activities/services or has been involved with our activities/services can make a complaint. Complaints may also be received from members of the public.

Children under the age of 18 must nominate a representative to make the complaint on their behalf. NORCA must satisfy themselves that there are reasonable grounds for the complaint being made by a representative, and that the representative is making the complaint in the best interest of the child.

Some categories of complaint cannot be dealt with by this policy and procedure. Any concerns about abuse must follow the procedures and guidelines in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and our Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy.

Complaints that are vexatious, malicious, or frivolous will not be investigated.

NORCA operates a zero-tolerance policy towards violence and aggression. The safety of staff, volunteers and Trustees is paramount at all times. Staff, volunteers, and Trustees have the right to do their work without fear of being attacked either physically or verbally.

Complaints must be made within 12 months of the event/incident concerned.

3. How to make a complaint

a) Verbally/informally – face to face to a member of staff.

b) By email to admin@norfolkcommunityarts.org.uk The email must include the complainants name, contact details, the date of the event/incident, the location of the event/incident, the nature of the event/incident, the names, contact details and consent of any witnesses, and what the complainants preferred outcome to be.

c) Filling out a Complaints form. Forms can be obtained by emailing admin@norfolkcommunityarts.org.uk

4. How complaints are dealt with

Verbally/informally: -

NORCA will respond verbally within 7 working days – either face to face or over the telephone. The complaint will be recorded for our records, but a written response will not be provided.

Email/Complaints form: -

Stage 1

NORCA will acknowledge the complaint in writing within 5 working days, outlining the steps to be taken in the investigation, the estimated time limit for the completion of the investigation and the name of the member of the Senior Management Team who will be investigating the complaint. Every attempt will be made to conclude the investigation and to give a formal response within 30 working days however if this is not possible the complainant will be kept up to date with the new timescale. Investigations should not exceed 3 months from receipt of complaint.

On conclusion of investigation and a decision made, NORCA will contact the complainant in writing including the following details: -

- The outcome of the investigation
- An explanation of how the complaint has been considered, based on facts
- Whether the complaint is in full, or in part, upheld
- The conclusion reached
- An apology if appropriate
- Any remedial actions to be taken as a result, to avoid recurrence
- Organisational learning and development as a result of the complaint, if relevant
- Contact details of Executive Director/Trustees (should the complainant be dissatisfied with the response to their complaint and want to take it further)

The complaint, the investigations and the final decision will be recorded and logged in line with NORCA's GDPR Policy.

If it is determined that the complaint does not meet the criteria for investigation, then the complainant will be contacted in writing within 5 working days of making the decision that it is not being investigated and why.

Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome in the Stage 1 process, they have the right to escalate the complaint to NORCA's Executive Director.

The Executive Director will decide whether to uphold the outcome from the Stage 1 process. The Executive Director will contact the complainant in writing within 10 working days of their decision and the reasons for it.

Stage 3

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome in the Stage 2 process, they have the right to escalate the complaint to NORCA's Chair of the Trustees (or a nominated Trustee)

The Chair of the Trustees will decide whether to uphold the outcome from the Stage 2 process. The Chair of the Trustees will contact the complainant in writing within 10 working days of their decision and the reasons for it. The Chair of the Trustees decision is final.

External Regulator

As a charity, NORCA is regulated by the Charity Commission.

The Charity Commission will take up complaints where it decides that there is serious risk of significant harm to or abuse of the charity, its assets, beneficiaries, or reputation and if it considers it needs to intervene to protect them.

If a complainant feels that their complaint meets these criteria, they have the right to contact the Charity Commission.

To contact the Charity Commission in England and Wales, go to www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity

Procedure/policy reviewed – Apr 23

Next Review – Nov 24