



Complaints Policy

Introduction

Norwich Pride's charity objectives are delivered entirely by volunteers. Our volunteer induction process provides clarity around the charity's behaviours and values set out in the induction pack that volunteers sign up to. The charity expects everyone involved in Norwich Pride to demonstrate those behaviours and values. As a charity, we are regulated by the Charity Commission and must comply with UK laws such as the Equality Act 2010. If serious breaches occur, the impact on the charity could be disastrous, therefore everyone involved must hold themselves to the expected standards.

This policy provides various options and routes for anyone to raise concerns and highlight behaviour that are not in line with the charity's behaviours and values. People who raise complaints have the right to be heard and treated with respect throughout the process. Norwich Pride is committed to dealing with complaints swiftly and robustly.

Definition of Feedback

Feedback can be informal and positive and therefore does not necessarily require a formal response or outcome to rectify a criticism. When you give us feedback, we listen to what you say and use the information to improve or strengthen our service.

Each year post Pride we will survey people for their feedback, and so that is one way to let us know your comments. It is great to receive such positive responses, but we are always looking at ways we can improve.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is a criticism and an expression of dissatisfaction made to Norwich Pride related to our event or volunteers that requires a formal response. When a formal complaint is made it imitates a 'process' of response, which is outlined below.

Norwich Pride's responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within a stated period of time;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- take action where appropriate.

A Complainant's responsibility is to:

- raise concerns promptly and directly with a Trustee at Norwich Pride;
- bring their complaint, in writing, to Norwich Pride's attention normally no later than 8 weeks of the issue arising;
- explain the problem as clearly, fully but as succinctly as possible, including any action taken to date, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking;
- allow Norwich Pride a reasonable time to deal with the matter;
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Norwich Pride's control.



Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and Norwich Pride maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality in order to be able to fully investigate the complaint (with each complaint judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

Complaints Procedure

Before a formal complaint is made, if the issue is between individuals or groups of people, we hope that the parties involved can resolve the issues informally between themselves, a conversation highlighting the concerns can often lead to amicable results, as individuals may not be aware of the consequences of their actions. It is understandable that people hold differing opinions and healthy tensions, and radical candour may be required at times. Mediation (see definition on page 3) may be an option to consider before making a formal complaint, but if these avenues of reconciliation are not possible or exhausted or the complaint is about a Norwich Pride event rather than individuals the procedure for complaints is outlined below.

Stage 1

In the first instance, if you are unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write to complaint@norwichpride.org.uk

This inbox is monitored by a Trustee who has been nominated to be the Norwich Pride Complaints Handling Officer.

If the complaint is about this individual, then the Chair of the Board of Trustees will take responsibility, as these two roles will not be filled by the same person.

In your email you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking.

You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt. You should get a written response and an explanation within 25 working days.

Planned Outcome

Norwich Pride's aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently, timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.



Recommendations for action could be specific training is required, admit responsibility and provide written points of reflection to the Trustees and/or write a note of apology to the complainant.

If deemed more serious allegations against an individual are upheld by the Complaints Handling Officer, disciplinary action, suspension, or removal from post are possible outcomes for that person. Any such action would need to be agreed by a majority of Trustees, either at a regular Trustee meeting or an extraordinary Trustee meeting.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint because you believe there was an irregularity in the assessment of, and/or in the process of dealing with the complaint, or you have further information that was not previously available, then you can appeal by writing a further email to the complaint inbox. Norwich Pride may seek external advice and/or seek a discussion with the complainant if a satisfactory resolution does not appear immediately possible.

Further to this action, a further written response will be provided, within 30 working days of the written appeal.

Mediation

Mediation is a voluntary meeting where someone who is not involved in the complaint can try and help people get things sorted out between them. The mediator acts as a kind of go-between by meeting with the people involved in the complaint and helping them talk to each other calmly and thoughtfully. The mediator tries to make sure both people get to talk but also to listen to try and resolve ongoing issues.

The mediator is not there to judge anyone or to say one person is right and the other wrong, or to tell those involved in the mediation what they should do. The mediator is in charge of the process of trying to resolve the problem but not in charge of the outcome.

Norwich Pride will try to identify volunteers who have some experience and are willing to act as mediators but they will not necessarily be trained. There may be times we look outside the organisation for help and support, especially in more complex cases.

Vexatious complaints

A vexatious complaint is one that is pursued, regardless of its merits, solely to harass, annoy or subdue somebody or an organisation; something that is unreasonable, without foundation, frivolous, repetitive, burdensome or unwarranted.

If the Complaints Handling Officer deems a complainant to be vexatious, a recommendation will be made for Trustees to agree to cease communicating with the complainant, because the complaint is closed.

Monitoring and Reporting

Trustees of Norwich Pride will monitor the number and types of complaints and address any systemic or volunteer issues that arise.