



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Purpose

Hope Valley Climate Action (HVCA) takes complaints seriously. We know we're not perfect and that we can learn from our mistakes. Often issues can be resolved informally. But sometimes it is necessary to act formally.

The purpose of this policy statement is to describe how HVCA deals with all formal written complaints. It applies to anyone working on behalf of HVCA, including trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

The complaints procedure follows two stages:

Stage 1

Once a complaint has been received in writing a letter of acknowledgement must be sent by the Lead to the complainant within 5 working days. The complainant must be told who is dealing with the complaint, what action is being taken, and when s/he can expect to receive a full reply - which must be within 20 working days.

This reply must assure the complainant that their complaint has been taken seriously. If the complaint is upheld, the complainant must be given a full apology and details of what is being done to prevent a recurrence.

The letter must also inform complainants of their right to ask for a review if they are not satisfied and how to access the second stage.

Stage 2

The process of reviewing the complaint is similar to Stage 1, but now the lead is the Chair of Trustees. The implication is that the complaint was not adequately addressed in Stage 1 and the lead must take this into account and that the crux of the complaint has been addressed.

The response to the complainant must contain an explanation, apology if required, information about remedial actions, and satisfactory assurances that the complaint has been investigated fully.

Checklist for good practice

- Check if there have been any previous complaints from this person.
- Contact the complainant to clarify the complaint and to explain the procedure at each stage.
- if financial loss has been incurred, HVCA's Treasurer and insurers must be informed.
- Check whether the complainant needs support.
- Ensure that the lead undertaking the investigation is not implicated in the complaint.
- Brief yourself on the background to the complaint and obtain relevant documents.
- Consider whether legal advice is needed before proceeding.
- Conduct any interviews in as informal and relaxed a manner as possible.
- Draft a report setting out the evidence together with your conclusion.