

Complaints Policy

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Why a Complaints Policy?

Subud Britain wishes to be open to complaints.

Bapak advised us to promote an atmosphere of peace, harmony and respect and to give a voice to all parties concerned in disputes.

The Complaints Policy is intended to provide a route for complaints to be investigated by Subud Britain, so that anyone wishing to make a complaint will be confident that they will be treated fairly, the investigation will be unbiased, and Subud Britain will make an appropriate attempt to put things right, repair relationships, learn and improve for the future.

What should members and the public know?

Complaints may come from anyone with a legitimate interest in Subud Britain, e.g. members, parents of young members, service providers, hirers and the public. Any person making a complaint should be informed how their complaint will be processed by Subud Britain.

All officers, committee members and helpers of Subud Britain should know what to do if they receive a complaint. The complaints procedure should be publicised so anyone asking or searching the Internet for a way to complain will find the procedure.

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded in writing.

Written complaints may be sent to Subud Britain National Office at 7 Grafton Close, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR14 1PA or by email, admin@subud.org.uk.

Verbal complaints may be made directly by phone to the National Secretary on 0870 444 2604 or in person to any of the Group Chairs or Trustees.

What complaints does this policy cover?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Subud Britain.

A complaint may concern any officer, committee member, helper, volunteer or member of Subud Britain.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

What complaints does this policy not cover?

This policy is not intended to deal with criminal offences. All criminal offences should be reported immediately to the police.

This policy is not intended to deal with personal disagreements that do not involve Subud Britain.

The procedure below does not cover complaints specifically from or about employees of Subud Britain. A complaint against an employee of Subud Britain will be addressed under Subud Britain's Disciplinary Procedure. A complaint by an employee of Subud Britain will be addressed under Subud Britain's Grievance Procedure.

If the complaint is against behaviour that may require action under the Safeguarding Policy, it must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. A note will be kept on the Complaints Log that this complaint is now being dealt with by our Designated Safeguarding Officer and the team working with him / her, including the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding and the National Helpers.

Responsibility

The Board of Trustees of Subud Britain has overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation. This policy is reviewed and updated as required.

Confidential information should be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

The procedures below may be varied for good reason, for example to avoid a conflict of interest or if a greater level of confidentiality is needed.

Procedure for dealing with complaints

1. Receiving Complaints

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Subud Britain
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see Appendix 1

2. Processing Complaints

The complaint should be passed to the National Secretary immediately, whether or not it has already been resolved. National Council appoints one National Helper and one Trustee to organise investigation of the complaint. The National Secretary should acknowledge the complaint within a week, and say who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The complaint should be recorded in the complaints log.

In the event that the National Secretary has a conflict of interest, the complaint should be processed instead by the National Chair or a Trustee.

3. Resolving Complaints

Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

If the complaint has not already been resolved, an appropriate neutral person should be delegated to investigate it and to take appropriate action. This may be the National Chair, a National Executive, Trustee or National Helper.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

The resolution of the complaint should be recorded in the Complaints Log.

Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at a national meeting of Subud Britain, which may be the National Council, National Dewan or Board of Trustees as appropriate.

The investigation may be re-opened if appropriate, with the same or another neutral person delegated to review the previous findings, communicate with the persons involved, and re-investigate the complaint.

The resolution of the complaint should be recorded in the Complaints Log.

Appeals

Every member has the right to appeal against the outcome of an investigation of a complaint. The basis of an appeal should normally relate to one of the following areas:

- that Subud Britain's rules and regulations had not been followed correctly
- that the resulting action was inappropriate
- that the need for action was not warranted
- that new information regarding the complaint has arisen

An appeal should be put in writing to the National Chair or Board of Trustees. The letter should contain the grounds for appeal and should be lodged within 30 days of receipt of the result of the investigation of the complaint.

An appeal will be arranged and will be heard by a panel appointed by the National Chair and the Trustees. At the hearing, both the complainant and the person complained about may bring a companion who is a volunteer Subud member to support them.

If the panel decides to re-open the investigation, the case should be investigated by a different person to those who investigated it previously.

The decision taken at this appeal stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate

to seek external assistance with resolution, i.e. using a professional mediation or arbitration service.

The resolution of the appeal should be recorded in the Complaints Log.

Appendix 1

Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaint

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation
- E.g. "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Give clear and valid reasons if requests cannot be met
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal