

Complaints Policy: Public Health Collaboration

Introduction

Public Health Collaboration (PHC) views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future. We take complaints seriously and endeavour to treat everyone fairly and to find a satisfactory resolution.

- Our policy is to provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use.
- To make our complaints procedure easily accessible from our website
- To ensure that everyone at PHC knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To investigate all complaints fairly and in a timely way
- To gather information so that we can improve what we do

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of PHC encompassing our fund raising and advocacy work and our projects namely The Lifestyle Club (TLC), Food Addiction Resources (FAR), Real Food Rebellion (RFR) and Real Food Runners (RFRu).

Confidentiality

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

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Board of Trustees of Public Health Collaboration.

Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Complaints Procedure

Publicised Contact Details for Complaints

Written complaints may be sent to Public Health Collaboration c/o Reed Smith, The Broadgate Towers, 20 Primrose Street, London EC2A 2RS or by email to info@phcuk.org. Verbal complaints may be made to any of PHS's staff, volunteers or trustees.

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

Complaints Policy: Public Health Collaboration

- Note the relationship of the complainant to PHC, e.g. donor, volunteer, participant in one of PHC's projects.
- 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 email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

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 should be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the PHC Director within five working days.

On receiving the complaint, the Director records it in the complaint's logbook. If it has not already been resolved, they will delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within five working days. The acknowledgement should 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 a month. If this is not possible, because, for example, an investigation has not been completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

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

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 Board level.

At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Board of Trustees. The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

Complaints Policy: Public Health Collaboration

The Board of Trustees may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. The person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One should be kept informed with what is happening.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. Ideally, complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. 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 decision taken at this stage is final, unless the board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

External Stage

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Details of their contact details can be found on their websites. <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

Variation in Complaints Procedure

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about a Chair or trustee should not also have the Chair or trustee involved in as a person leading a Stage Two review.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify trends which may indicate a need to take further action.