

Complaints Handling Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This policy is intended to ensure that The Circus Hub handles complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively and to provide guidance for anyone who wishes to make a complaint.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to formal written complaints received from the public, staff, volunteers or clients about the Circus Hub products, services, procedures, representatives or attenders and that are handled by Circus Hub representatives including staff (paid and volunteer), contractors, our Board of Trustees or externally appointed representative.

Comments and feedback will be considered as an opportunity to improve the services provided but will not be treated like a complaint following the process described in this policy.

1.3 Organisational commitment

The Circus Hub expects all staff and Circus Hub representatives to be committed to fair, effective and efficient complaint handling.

2. Terms and Definitions

Complaint

A formal written expression of dissatisfaction made about the Circus Hub's products, services or staff, or dissatisfaction with the handling of a complaint.

Complainant

Person making the complaint.

Complaint handling/management system

All policies, procedures, practices, staff, hardware and software used by the Circus Hub in the management of complaints.

Dispute

An unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside of our organisation.

Feedback

Opinions, comments and expressions of interest or concern, made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about us, about our services or complaint handling system where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. Feedback and comments are not complaints.

3.Guiding principles



3.1 Facilitating complaints

People focus

The Circus Hub is committed to responding fairly, effectively and efficiently to complaints about our products, services, staff and complaint handling.

Anyone making a complaint will be:

- provided with information about our complaint handling process and how to access it
- listened to, treated with respect by the Circus Hub representative and actively involved in the complaint process where possible and appropriate
- provided with reasons for our decision/s
- and where appropriate, provided with options for redress or review.

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people making complaints are not adversely affected because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

Anonymous complaints

We accept anonymous complaints if there is a compelling reason to do so and will carry out a confidential investigation of the issues raised where there is enough information provided.

Accessibility

We will ensure that information about how and where complaints may be made to or about us is well publicised on our website. We will ensure that our systems to manage complaints are easily understood and accessible to everyone, particularly people who may require assistance.

If a complainant prefers or needs another person or organisation to assist or represent them in the making and/ or resolution of their complaint, we will communicate with them through their

representative if this is their wish. Anyone may represent a person wishing to make a complaint with their consent (e.g. advocate, family member, legal or community representative, member of Parliament, another organisation).

No charge

There are no charges or costs for the complainant or their representative.

3.2 Responding to complaints

Early resolution

Where possible, we will endeavour to resolve complaints informally and at first contact with us.

Responsiveness

We will promptly acknowledge the receipt of a complaint. Any concerns raised in complaints will be dealt with within a reasonable time frame.

We will assess and prioritise complaints in accordance with the urgency and/or seriousness of the issues raised. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.

We are committed to managing people's expectations, and will inform them as soon as possible, of the expected time frames for our actions.

We will advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to deal with any part of their complaint. We will also advise people as soon as possible when we are unable to meet our time frames for responding to their complaint and the reason for our delay.

Objectivity and fairness

We will address each complaint with integrity and in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner. We will ensure that the Circus Hub representative handling a complaint is in no way implicated by the complaint under investigation. Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, will be managed responsibly.

We will assess each complaint on its merits and involve people making complaints and/or their representative in the process as far as possible.

Responding flexibly

Circus Hub representatives are empowered to resolve complaints promptly and with as little formality as possible. We will adopt flexible approaches to service delivery and problem solving to enhance accessibility for people making complaints and/or their representatives.

Confidentiality

We will protect the identity of anyone making a complaint where this is practical and appropriate.

Personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed or used by us as permitted under the relevant privacy laws or other relevant confidentiality obligations.

3.3 Managing the parties to a complaint

Empowering of Circus Hub representatives

All Circus Hub representatives managing a complaint are empowered to implement our complaint management system as relevant to their role and responsibilities.

Those involved are encouraged to provide feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of our complaint management system.

Managing unreasonable conduct by complainants

As well as our commitment to the complainant, we are also committed to ensuring a neutral environment for the Circus Hub representative investigating a complaint and to avoid significant disruption to:

- our ability to do our work and perform our functions in the most effective and efficient way possible
- the health, safety and security of our staff, and
- our ability to allocate our resources fairly across all the complaints we receive.

We will not accept any unreasonable behaviour from a complainant that shows disrespect to our representatives or significantly disrupts the Circus Hub's handling of the complaint or the normal operations of the Circus Hub.

We will take proactive and decisive action to manage any conduct that negatively and unreasonably affects us and will support our representatives to do the same in accordance with this policy.

4 Accountability and learning

4.1 Analysis and evaluation of complaints

We will ensure that complaints are recorded in a systematic way so that information can be easily retrieved for reporting and analysis by management and the Board of Trustees.

4.2 Monitoring of the complaint management system

We will continually monitor our complaint management system to:

- ensure its effectiveness in responding to and resolving complaints
- identify and correct deficiencies in the operation of the system, and
- monitoring may include the use of audits, complaint satisfaction surveys and online listening tools and alerts.

4.3 Continuous improvement

We are committed to improving the way our organisation operates, including our management of the effectiveness and efficiency of our complaint management system. To this end, we will:

- support the making and appropriate resolution of complaints
- implement best practices in complaint handling
- recognise and reward exemplary complaint handling by staff
- regularly review the complaint management system and complaint data, and
- implement appropriate system changes arising out of our analysis of complaints data and continual monitoring of the system.

Complaints Handling Procedure



1 Receive

Unless a complaint is resolved at the outset, we will record the complaint and its supporting information. The record of a complaint will document:

- Contact information of the person making a complaint and the date received
- Issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want
- Any other relevant information, and
- Any additional support the person making a complaint requires.

2 Acknowledge

We will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly, and preferably within 5 working days. When appropriate we may offer an explanation or apology.

Consideration will be given to the most appropriate medium (e.g. email, letter) for communicating with the person making a complaint.

3 Assess and investigate

3.1 Initial assessment

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, we will confirm whether the issue/s raised in the complaint is/are within our control. We will also consider the outcome/s sought by the person making a complaint and, where there is more than one issue raised, determine whether each issue needs to be addressed separately.

When determining how a complaint will be managed, we will consider:

- How serious, complicated or urgent the complaint is
- Whether the complaint raises concerns about people's health and safety
- How the person making the complaint is being affected
- The risks involved if resolution of the complaint is delayed, and
- Whether a resolution requires the involvement of other organisations.

3.2 Investigating the complaint

The complaint will be investigated as appropriate. We may gather information about the issue, person or area that the complaint is about, and/or investigate the claims made in the complaint. The actions taken will be tailored to each case as relevant.

The complainant will be provided with a time frame for the investigation of the complaint and will be updated in case of a delay.

4 Determine outcome and provide reasons for decision

Following the investigation into the issues raised, we will contact the complainant or their representative and advise them about:

- The outcome of the complaint and any action we took
- The reason/s for our decision
- The remedy or resolution/s that we have proposed or put in place, and
- Any options for review that may be available to the complainant, such as an internal review, external review or appeal.

5 Close the complaint: document and analyse data

5.1 Document

We will keep records about:

- How we managed the complaint
- The outcome/s of the complaint (including whether it or any aspect of it was substantiated, any recommendations made to address problems identified and any decisions made on those recommendations), and
- Any outstanding actions to be followed up, including analysing any underlying or root causes.

5.2 Analyse data

We will ensure that outcomes are properly implemented, monitored and reported to the General Manager and/or the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Complaints Procedure

**This section will be available on our website*

The Circus Hub (trading name of the Wellington Circus Trust) aims to resolve complaints as quickly and fairly as possible and will treat all complaints as confidential. When a complaint is made to a staff member or Board of Trustee member of the Circus Hub, the following procedures are followed.

Complaint about a staff member, contractor, or volunteer of the Circus Hub

If the complaint is about a staff member or contractor to the Hub such as a: Trainer, Rigger, Front desk person, Administrator, Financial Officer, General Manager or a Board member:

- If the behaviour of concern is causing immediate danger to others in the Hub, please inform the nearest Trainer or Front Desk Person immediately.
- All other complaints can be first registered with the General Manager (GM) by written note or email.
- If the complainant does not feel comfortable presenting the complaint to the GM, they are able to approach the Board of Trustees for a confidential discussion.
- In cases where the complainant is comfortable to approach the GM, the information about the complaint will be given to and assessed by the GM. The GM will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 business days.
- A meeting between the GM (or Trustee) and the complainant (person making the complaint) may be required to ensure the details are accurate.
- If and where possible the complaint will be resolved by the GM. The complainant will be informed of the result if requested and appropriate.
- If the GM decides support is needed in resolving the complaint, a request will be made to the Board of Trustees for it to be discussed at the next available Board meeting or may call a Board meeting to specifically deal with the complaint. This may require the complaint to be formalised in way of a written account of the event which must include:
 - The complainant's name
 - A contact telephone number and/or address
 - Date and time of the incident
 - Written details of the complaint
 - The outcome that the complainant wants as a result
- The complainant will be informed of the date of that meeting and will be informed as quickly as possible of the resolution decided upon by the Board.
- If the complainant is at any time asked to attend a meeting with the GM or a Board of Trustee member to discuss the complaint, please know that a support person/s is welcome.

Complaint about our products or services, or procedures

If the complaint is about our product or services, or our procedures:

- If the concern is causing immediate danger to others in the Hub, please inform the nearest Trainer or Front Desk Person immediately.
- For all other complaints, they can be first registered with the following people by written note or email:
 - Front desk person
 - Trainer
 - Administrator
 - General Manager
- If the matter can't be resolved immediately by a staff member or if the matter is of serious concern to the immediate risk to safety and security, information about the complaint will be given to and assessed by the General Manager (GM). This may require a meeting with the complainant (person making the complaint) to ensure the details are accurate. If and where possible the complaint will then be resolved by the GM. The complainant will be informed of the result if requested and appropriate.
- If the GM decides support is needed in resolving the complaint, a request will be made to the Board of Trustees for it to be discussed at the next available Board meeting or may call a Board meeting to specifically deal with the complaint. This may require the complaint to be formalised in way of a written account of the event which must include:
 - The complainants name
 - A contact telephone number and/or address
 - Date and time of the incident
 - Written details of the complaint
 - The outcome that the complainant wants as a result
- The complainant will be informed of the date of that meeting and will be informed as quickly as possible of the resolution decided upon by the Board.
- If the complainant is at any time asked to attend a meeting with the GM or a Board of Trustee member to discuss the complaint, please know that a support person/s is welcome.

Complaint about a breach of our Rules or Code of Conduct by a student, client, volunteer or other person visiting the Hub

If the complaint is about an alleged breach of our Rules or our Code of Conduct by a student or other person visiting the Hub that is not staff or a contractor of the Circus Hub:

- If the behaviour of concern is causing immediate danger to others in the Hub, please inform the nearest Trainer or Front Desk Person immediately.
- For all other complaint of alleged breach, they can be first registered with the following people by written note or email:
 - Front desk person
 - Trainer
 - Administrator
 - General Manager
- Information about the complaint will be given to and assessed by the General Manager (GM). This may require a meeting with the complainant (person making the complaint) to

ensure the details are accurate. If and where possible the complaint will be resolved by the GM. The complainant will be informed of the result if requested and appropriate.

- If the alleged breach is a matter of serious concern to the health and safety of The Circus Hub's staff, students, clients, or visitors, we may restrict or suspend the access to the Circus Hub and other activities to the individual who committed the alleged breach while the investigation is undertaken.
- If the GM decides support is needed in resolving the complaint, a request will be made to the Board of Trustees for it to be discussed at the next available Board meeting or may call a Board meeting to specifically deal with the complaint. This may require the complaint to be formalised in way of a written account of the event which must include:
 - The complainants name
 - A contact telephone number and/or address
 - Date and time of the incident
 - Written details of the complaint
 - The outcome that the complainant wants as a result
- The complainant will be informed of the date of that meeting and will be informed as quickly as possible of the resolution decided upon by the Board.
- If the complainant is at any time asked to attend a meeting with the GM or a Board of Trustee member to discuss the complaint, please know that a support person/s is welcome.

Contact Info:

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