Complaints policy

Updated December 2023

Complaints

We strive to do our best for all our members and anyone who comes into contact with NLS. Sometimes things can go wrong. By letting us know, it gives us the opportunity to improve and put it right for you.

What is a complaint?

- A complaint means that something hasn't happened in the way you expect. Something might have gone wrong or not happened in the way we have stated it should happen.
- This procedure won't cover any complaints that are between the employer (NLS) and an employee - this would be covered through our grievance process which can be found within the employment contract.
- This procedure doesn't deal with any safeguarding issues -they are covered by our safeguarding policy.
- A complaint related to security, or a serious antisemitic matter may also be referred to CST and/or the police.

Who can make a complaint?

- We would typically expect to receive complaints from members of our community, but we may also receive complaints from anyone visiting NLS or engaging with it in any other way.

When we may not entertain a complaint

There may be rare occasions when we choose not to respond to a complaint, in-formal or formal. These rare occasions might include:

- When someone unreasonably pursues a complaint to which we have already responded.
- When a complainant is being abusive, discriminatory or offensive in their manner.
- When a complainant is harassing a staff member.
- When someone does not engage with the investigation process.

In such circumstances, complainants may be given information on where to take their complaint outside of NLS, but we may choose not to respond to continuing communication. We will always inform them of our decision to do this.

What we will do once we receive a complaint

Fortunately we receive very few complaints, but when we do we take them seriously. Because we are a small organisation, we don't have a dedicated complaints team but we do have a Council, voted in by our members to look after the community and the organisation. Once we have received a complaint we'll get in touch, so you know we've got your complaint, and we will aim to deal with it quickly.

Timeline
Within four weeks we will get back to you, either with the result of our investigation, or we will let you know what stage our investigations have reached. Within eight weeks we will write to you with our final response.

There may be times where it could take longer than eight weeks, but we will let you know if we need extra time and will keep you up to date with what's happening. We'll let you know the outcome once the investigations are complete.

Further detail of the procedure that we will follow
Our complaints procedure has three stages. All stages of the complaints procedure will be recorded by keeping written notes of all discussions, interviews, meetings, and hearings. A record of complaints will be maintained by the Honorary Secretary. Complaints will be reviewed annually by Council in order to identify any trends or broader issues.

Stage 1: Informal complaint

Where it is possible, we would strongly encourage individuals to raise their concerns directly and informally before having recourse to the complaints procedure, in order to facilitate a prompt, effective, and lasting resolution. We would hope that most concerns can be resolved informally but recognise that this might not always be possible.

Stage 2: Formal complaint

1. Where the complainant has been unable to resolve their complaint informally, the complainant should set out their complaint in writing to the Chair using the email chair@nottinghamliberalsynagogue.com or by post c/o the synagogue.
2. The Chair will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days and fully respond to the complaint within twenty working days. The Chair will normally meet with the complainant and other appropriate parties to determine an appropriate response with the aim of resolving the complaint if possible. Any meeting will have notes taken for review and approval by both parties.
3. If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the response from Stage 2, they should proceed to appeal against the decision under Stage 3.

Stage 3: Appeal of formal complaint

1. Where the complainant has been unable to resolve their complaint at Stage 2, the complainant should set out their complaint in writing to the President within twenty working days of the completion of the Stage 2 process. The president can be emailed c/o info@nottinghamliberalsynagogue.com or letters may be posted c/o the synagogue
2. The President will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days. The President will determine who in Council is most appropriate to manage the complaint. The complaint should be heard by an appointed group of three members of Council who have not previously been involved in the complaint. Any meetings will have notes taken for

review and approval by all parties. During the investigation the Panel will hear the case made by the complainant in full. Both parties will be able to ask questions and call witnesses.

3. The appointed group will have full authority to make a final recommendation on the complaint, which will be ratified by Council. the appointed group may:
   • dismiss the appeal in whole or in part;
   • uphold the appeal in whole or in part;
   • propose further action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
   • make proposals to ensure that problems of a similar nature do not recur;
   • recommend appropriate internal management action.
4. An outcome letter setting out the decision will follow within eight weeks of receipt of the complaint. The decision of Council will be final, and no further correspondence will be entered into.
5. A record of the complaint, investigation and resolutions agreed will be kept for three years.

What if I'm not happy with the outcome?
If you don't agree with our final response, or are not willing to allow more time you can contact the Chair within eight weeks of our final response.

Delegation and substitution

1. Any person with functions under this policy may nominate an appropriate Council member to exercise those functions (either generally or specifically), provided that the other has had no involvement in either the consideration of the complaint or its substance and that the Chair and President may only delegate their functions to a member of Council.
2. In the event of a complaint concerning the Chair, the President or Vice-Chair will appoint the panel to hear the complaint. In case of necessity, the Honorary Secretary will act in place of the Chair, President or Vice-Chair.

Review of policy
Council will review the terms and operation of this policy every two years.

Publication of policy
The policy will appear on the NLS website.