

Cirencester U3A

Complaints Procedure

In any organisation, complaints can occur from time to time and may include issues from members that have arisen from an external organisation or individual. It is important that members know where to turn for help, advice and support, so that whatever the issue, it can be dealt with quickly, objectively and appropriately.

In dealing with the complaint Cirencester U3A will operate to the following principles:

- All complaints will be dealt with quickly and fairly.
- All information gathered and any actions identified and agreed will be documented as required.
- All investigations and documents will be kept confidential at all times. Information will only be shared with those who have a genuine need to receive it and this will include Trust staff and volunteers, as required.
- All situations will be dealt with discreetly and by showing respect for the parties and views involved.
- Complaints and the associated issues should be resolved informally at the lowest level and only escalated to a formal procedure if this proves impossible.
- Those dealing with the complaint will try to de-escalate the situation and settle issues without having to resort to formal action where possible.
- For more serious issues, the U3A Committee may need to liaise and share information with the Third Age Trust and seek advice and guidance about procedural issues. Any information shared will be confidential.
- Decisions made will be based on the facts and evidence gathered.

Informal process:

In the first instance, complaints should be directed to the relevant Group Leader or committee member as per the flow diagram on page 3.

In most cases, it is hoped that complaints can be dealt with informally as detailed below:

1. An informal resolution will be attempted by holding a discussion with each party concerned. The purpose of this will be to understand the problem and hear each party's views. The parties may decide to put their concerns or complaints in writing and for the sake of clarity this is often helpful.
2. The situation with both parties will be summarised by the person handling the complaint, then any required changes identified to ensure it does not happen again. Finally, agreement will be sought from both parties that the issue is resolved, either because the proposed changes are agreed or because both parties feel that the issue has been resolved by the discussions.

Formal process:

If the person handling the complaint or one of the complainants feels that the situation warrants a more formal approach, then the following approach should be taken:

1. The person handling the complaint will ask for the complaint to be put in writing and will inform the Cirencester U3A Committee that a complaint is pending.
2. Once the complaint has been received the person handling the complaint will investigate the complaint and associated issues and document the results.
3. The person handling the complaint will then prepare a proposal for a resolution of the complaint including any actions necessary.
4. This proposed resolution will then be reviewed with the relevant Committee member to gain approval, then discussed with the complainant and a resolution sought.
5. In the event that the person who raised the complaint is still not satisfied then the complaint will be brought via the relevant committee member to the Chairman.
6. The Chairman will convene a sub-committee meeting of 3 committee members with the complainant to hear the complaint and the documented details and a proposed resolution will be discussed.
7. If resolution is not agreed, then the Chairman will seek advice and support from National Office and put this to the full committee. Their decision will be final.
8. This final proposal for resolution of the complaint will be put to the complainant by the Chairman plus one designated committee member.

Additional details:

- The timetable for the formal process will be short, within 14 days.
- If appropriate an invitation for the person who complained to attend a meeting with the Committee will be issued by letter advising them of the date and venue of the meeting. They will be allowed to bring a companion, if they wish, who will also be bound by confidentiality.
- If the party involved advises that there is additional information or there are witnesses to the incident(s) who are willing to give representations and who had not been contacted, they will ask those witnesses to contact the committee to agree to giving a statement relating to the specific incident(s) that they have witnessed.
- All parties will be informed as to the outcome of the investigation in respect of whether the complaint has been upheld or not upheld.
- If the issue has been upheld, the letter will also specify what action will be taken as a result.
- The meeting must be minuted and remain confidential to the Sub Committee until after any appeal to National Office has been concluded and thereafter confidential to the full Committee.

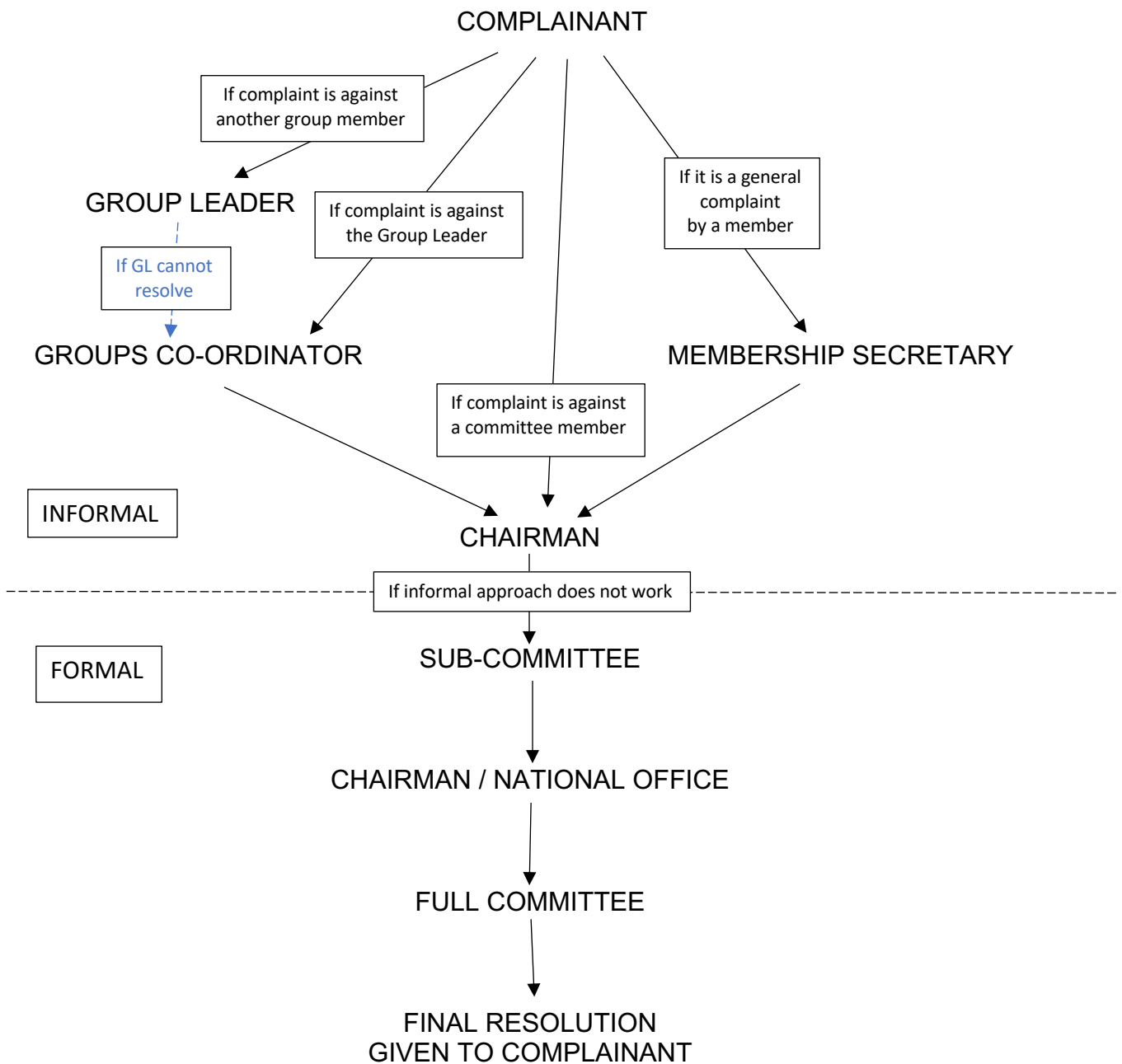
Reviewing our Procedure

This procedure was adopted at a meeting of Cirencester U3A Committee on 11th December and will be reviewed at least every 3 years.

Signed: A.R. Natt
Chairman, Cirencester U3A

Date: 11th December

Date for Review: December 2022
Complaints Flow diagram...



NB. FEEDBACK TO BE GIVEN TO COMPLAINANT AT ALL STAGES AND AGREEMENT SOUGHT BEFORE PROCEEDING TO NEXT STAGE.