

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

The Become United (BU) views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person [or organisation] that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at BU knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- To gather the information that helps us to improve what we do

Definition of a Complaint

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

Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any individual, volunteer, or organisation who has a legitimate interest in BU, including the general public if something is perceived to be improper. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email, or in writing. This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should refer to BU's internal policy on such matters.

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 BU.

Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints may be sent to

- E-mail at: info@becomeunited.org.uk
- Verbal complaints may be made by phone to: 07950687252
- In-person to any of BU's staff or trustees at the same address as above or any of our events.
- **Receiving Complaints**
- Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have, such as social media.
- Complaints received by telephone or in-person need to be recorded.
- 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 BU, e.g. donor, volunteer, sponsor
- 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

Resolving Complaints

Stage One

If a volunteer wishes to formally raise a problem about a member of staff, the organisation, or another volunteer, they should do so at the earliest opportunity.

The issue should be raised with the volunteer's supervisor (Mohammed Towhasir) unless the issue is related to that person, in which case they should talk to another Trustee.

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. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the BU Director within five business days.

On receiving the complaint, the Director records it in the complaints Logbook. If it has not already been resolved, they 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 acknowledgment should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaint 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 fully 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 conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two

If the issue cannot be resolved at the verbal stage, the volunteer can make a formal complaint in writing to the BU. If the matter has already been discussed with that person, then the complaint should be made to another Trustee.

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at the Board level.

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

The Board may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt

with the complaint at Stage One. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of 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.

If there is a problem with a volunteer that has not been resolved informally

The BU aims to support our volunteers so that they can enjoy their volunteering and meet any standards required. It is hoped that if volunteers find they are struggling with their role, they will ask their supervisor for additional support or training.

The introductory period of volunteering is designed for a volunteer and BU to establish whether or not the role is suitable for the volunteer. If problems arise during that time and BU does not consider that additional support and training will overcome the issues then the volunteer role can be ended at any stage during that period. This should not be regarded as a failure for the volunteer. If possible, another, more suitable role could be explored.

If the discussion has not resolved a problem, or if a complaint is made about a volunteer, any of the following measures may be used, depending on the severity of the problem. BU reserves the right to judge the severity of a problem.

Stage 1 – Discussion

The volunteer's supervisor or another suitable person will discuss the issue with the volunteer, try to identify its possible causes, and try to find a way to resolve the situation.

If necessary, the BU may be able to provide extra support or training or to review the volunteer's current role.

Stage 2 – Written stage

If the issue hasn't been resolved through discussion, or if a serious problem has arisen, the volunteer will be contacted in writing, outlining the problem and any action that might be taken to resolve it, with deadlines as appropriate.

If at this stage, the BU does not believe that it will be possible to find a solution, this will be made clear.

Stage 3 – Ceasing volunteering

The BU reserves the right to require the volunteer to stop volunteering, if necessary with immediate effect. In this case, the volunteer will receive an explanation of why this decision has been reached. The decision of the Board is final.

Variation of the 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 and/or trustee involved as a person leading a Stage Two review.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

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

Policy Name and Number	
Effective From	01/06/2024
Version Number and Date	Version 3 & 2 June 2024
Review date	1 June 2024
Designated Person	Dewan Choudhury (with DBS)
Second Designated Person	Mohammed Towhasir (with DBS)

Revisions

Version Number	Date	Changes	Author (Name and Job Title)
Version 1	01/06/2022	First Written	Dewan Choudhury Project Manager
Version 2	01/06/2023	Review	Dewan Choudhury Project Manager
Version 3	01/06/2024	Review	Dewan Choudhury Project Manager