

**Stonewall**

# ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

**This resource is produced by Stonewall, a UK-based charity that stands for the freedom, equity and potential of all lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQ+) people.**

At Stonewall, we imagine a world where LGBTQ+ people everywhere can live our lives to the full.

Founded in London in 1989, we now work in each nation of the UK and have established partnerships across the globe. Over the last three decades, we have created transformative change in the lives of LGBTQ+ people in the UK, helping win equal rights around marriage, having children and inclusive education.

Our campaigns drive positive change for our communities, and our sustained change and empowerment programmes ensure that LGBTQ+ people can thrive throughout our lives. We make sure that the world hears and learns from our communities, and our work is grounded in evidence and expertise.

To find out more about our work, visit us at [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

**Registered Charity No 1101255 (England and Wales) and SC039681 (Scotland)**

Stonewall is proud to provide information, support and guidance on LGBTQ+ inclusion; working towards a world where we're all free to be. This does not constitute legal advice, and is not intended to be a substitute for legal counsel on any subject matter.

# Stonewall

## FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

# FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

## July 2022

Comment, compliment or complaint - we want to hear from you. Get in touch anytime by emailing [feedback@stonewall.org.uk](mailto:feedback@stonewall.org.uk) if you are unhappy with anything at Stonewall - be it an event, department or activity; you have the right to give feedback. In fact, we encourage it. Here we'll explain the steps you need to take to get your feedback heard.

We seek to deal with comments and complaints in a respectful, open, timely and responsible way within the constraints of our resources. This is integral to our commitment to transparency and accountability. In turn we expect people who provide feedback to communicate their concerns fairly and appropriately.

### Purpose, scope and definitions

Stonewall has a clear procedure for responding to any complaints about our events, spaces, activities or people. Complaints are treated seriously and dealt with fairly, and are an opportunity for us to learn and improve how we work. Most concerns can be *informally* resolved by talking to our members of staff, or using the [contact us](#) page on our website. Sometimes it may not be possible to resolve concerns through these channels. The Stonewall Complaints Procedure is used to set out what needs to be done to make a formal complaint, and to investigate the complaint.

### Support and Adjustments

Any investigation under this procedure will be undertaken with appropriate discretion, care and consideration. All steps in the process will remain fair and in line with Stonewall's equal opportunities policy. Reasonable adjustments to the procedure will be made to accommodate disabled people.

### Protection of Confidentiality

We are committed to dealing with complaints discretely, protecting the confidentiality of those involved.

No Stonewall staff member, volunteer or Trustee should comment publicly on any incident that is being dealt with under this procedure, and no formal reports will be published. Where an action results from a complaint that will impact on the wider community, the method and process for announcing that action will be explained to the people involved in the complaint.

### Recording Feedback and Complaints

Depending on the nature of the feedback received, this would usually be passed to the relevant team for them to review and an acknowledgment email would be sent to the person to thank them for their feedback. If the feedback requires further review or is a complaint, the matter may be passed to an independent person outside of the team or that team's director or relevant LT member to review and respond.

We will keep records of:

- The matter of complaint
- Any associated incident report, or referral to a Stonewall Disciplinary Procedure
- Any action agreed as a consequence of the complaint and the reasons for that action being taken
- Whether an appeal was lodged and its outcome. These records are to be kept confidential and retained in line with the above Complaints Procedures and Stonewall's Data Retention Policy.

Copies of any meeting records will normally be given to any people involved in the complaint.

## What do we mean by 'complaint'?

A complaint is an expression of concern, difficulty or difference of opinion for which a formal response is being requested. This may include:

- Dissatisfaction with the response given after raising an informal complaint
- A complaint about a very serious matter

If volunteers, beneficiaries, users of a Stonewall service or members of the public have complaints about Stonewall, its staff or partners that relate specifically to the welfare of children and adults at risk, they should follow the procedures set out in Stonewall's UK Safeguarding Policy and Global Safeguarding Policy. However, our position is that if a person wanting to raise a concern is not clearly within the scope of those procedures, they should seek advice from the [Designated Safeguarding Lead](#) and seek clarification.

## Conflict of Interests

In the event of a complaint involving Stonewall staff, volunteers or Trustees, we will ensure that the incidents are dealt with fairly. To avoid any real or perceived bias in the investigation and decision making of any complaints, the Stonewall Trustee Board will have the authority to delegate decision making to any other trustees, and to involve independent, external investigators. All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that no person involved with, or closely connected to the complaint has a decision-making role in this procedure.

# Formal Proceedings

## Stage 1: Report of Complaint

1.1 A complaint is sent to [feedback@stonewall.org.uk](mailto:feedback@stonewall.org.uk) and reviewed by the Adviser to the Complaints Procedure. You may also mail your complaint to Stonewall, 192 Saint John Street, London, EC1V 4JY. Please be respectful when you give your complaint. We will not respond to feedback that is abusive or offensive. We define abusive and offensive as anything with degrading, threatening or insulting language (including homo-, bi-, transphobic, sexist/misogynistic and racist language).

1.2 A complaint will be considered a formal complaint if it is about a matter which falls within Stonewall's control or remit and requires a formal response or redress.

1.3 A complaint should include

- details of the incident giving rise to the concern,
- the date(s) and time when this occurred,
- name and contact details (mailing address and contact phone number) for the complainant

1.4 The complaint should, where possible, be submitted within 28 working days of the incident in question. It is recognised in some cases, particularly cases of harassment and bullying, a report may not be submitted within 28 days. All complaints will be reviewed, and reasons for delays fairly considered.

1.5 The complaint is recorded in the Complaints Log

1.6 The Stonewall Complaints Adviser (or nominee) is notified of & reviews the complaint with any relevant initial evidence and decides whether:

- The complaint should be dismissed as there is no merit or the information is factually incorrect
- The complaint can be quickly and simply resolved, and a resolution offered
- The complaint needs to be investigated

1.7 Usually, the complainant will be informed of this decision, in writing, within 15 working days of receiving the complaint. There may be times when it takes longer to review a matter, and where this is the case, the complainant will be kept updated about expected timeframes.

This communication must include:

- Details of the complaint
- A copy of this Complaints Procedure
- Information about what will happen next.

## Stage 2: Investigation Stage

2.1 A complaints investigator will be appointed by the Complaints Adviser. The investigator will be a Stonewall manager not previously involved in the case who has undergone complaints investigation training.

2.2 The complainant, and any person who may be subject to a complaint (including Stonewall delegates, or Stonewall department managers) will be informed, in writing, of the investigation, confirming:

- The details of the complaint
- The name and contact details of the complaint investigator

A minimum of 2 working days' notice will be given for any meetings

2.3 The complaints investigator will review all evidence, and may request additional evidence as required to determine the details of the complaint.

2.4 The complaints investigator will present the complaint, evidence, findings and recommendation to the Complaints Adviser.

2.5 The Complaints Adviser will review the findings and documents and decide whether:

- The complaint has been found not justified and no further action will be taken
- The complaint has been found partly or fully justified

Where the complaint has been found partly or fully justified, the Adviser will also make recommendations to seek resolution and, where appropriate, redress.

2.6 The complainant will be informed of this decision, in writing within 15 working days.

### Stage 3: Appeal Stage

3.1 An appeal against the decision of the complaints investigation can be considered on one or more of the following grounds:

- There is evidence a significant procedural error in the investigation of the complaint, which significantly contributed to the outcome
- Significant new evidence has come to light which could not have been made available during the initial investigation

3.2 Appeals should be made to the Chief Executive within 10 working days of notification of the decision.

3.3 The Chief Executive, or their nominee, will determine the most appropriate method of conducting the review and communicate in writing the result of the appeal and the reasons for the decisions taken within 28 working days

3.4 Possible outcomes of an appeal are:

- The appeal is rejected and the original decision is upheld
- The appeal is upheld and the complaint redress is modified

3.5 If your appeal is not upheld we will write to you to explain this.

All complaints are reported to the Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis via our internal reporting process.

## Related Stonewall Policies

Depending on your feedback or complaint the above plus one of the below policies may be purposeful for you:

Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure  
UK Safeguarding Policy  
Global Safeguarding Policy.

## External Regulators

For fundraising issues, you can contact the [Fundraising Regulator](#). If your complaint relates to an issue regarding fundraising activity in Scotland you should contact the [Scottish Fundraising Regulator](#).

For corporate charity issues this is the [Charity Commission for England and Wales](#) or, in Scotland, the [OSCR](#).

For complaints relating to data protection, please refer to our [Data Protection Policy](#). You can also contact the [Information Commissioners Office](#).

For advertising issues, you can contact the [Advertising Standards Authority](#).

## Policy Review and Sign off

Policy owned by	Chief of Staff
Approved by	FARC/Full Board
Date Approved	October 2022
Date of last review	May 2022
Date of next review	June 2023
Date of next three-year review	December 2024