



GROUNDWORK NORTHERN IRELAND

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Action	Updated by	Approved by Committee	Approved by Board	Review Date
Review	H Pollock			

GROUNDWORK NORTHERN IRELAND



Complaints Policy and Procedure

1 Policy

- 1.1 Groundwork Northern Ireland (GWNI) views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person that has made the complaint.
- 1.2 GWNI's policy is:
 - a) To provide a fair complaints procedure that is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
 - b) To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
 - c) To make sure everyone at GWNI knows what to do if a complaint is received
 - d) To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
 - e) To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
 - f) To gather information that helps us to improve what we do
- 1.3 A complaint is defined as a formal representation by a member of the public or a partner or other organisation regarding dissatisfaction with the standard of work or behaviour provided by GWNI.
- 1.4 All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.
- 1.5 This policy provides a mechanism for dealing with external complaints quickly and satisfactorily, by:
 - a) Detailing the procedures involved
 - b) Providing guidance on who to contact at each stage of the complaint.
- 1.6 All staff receiving a complaint from an external source will ensure that the complaint is dealt with according to the procedure detailed below

Procedure

1 Procedure for Making a Complaint

- 1.1 In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about, such as a course facilitator or trainer.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 The individual raising a complaint should verbally raise any problems / issues as soon as is reasonably practicable and attempt to resolve the issue at the earliest opportunity; this can be by phone to 028 9074 9494, by downloading this policy from GWNI's website or in person to any staff member, volunteer or trustee, or at any of our events or activities.
- 1.4 On receiving the complaint, the staff member will record it in the complaints log.
- 1.5 If it has not already been resolved, the complaint will be delegated to an appropriate person to investigate and take appropriate action.
- 1.6 If the complaint relates to a specific person, they will be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.
- 1.7 Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within one week.
- 1.8 The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply; a copy of this Complaints Policy should be attached.
- 1.9 Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks, 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.
- 1.10 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.
- 1.11 In the event of a complaint being upheld, GWNI's Chief Executive will ensure that appropriate actions are taken and that any learning is incorporated into future programmes.

2 Appeal

- 2.1 If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved, they can appeal the outcome.
- 2.2 Requests for an appeal should be made in writing within one week of receiving the report from the investigation stating clearly the grounds for the appeal.
- 2.3 The appeal request will be passed to the Chief Executive Officer who will acknowledge the request within one week of receipt.
- 2.4 The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the appeal and when the complainant can expect a reply.
- 2.5 If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.
- 2.6 The person who originally dealt with the complaint should be kept informed of what is happening.

- 2.7 Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks, 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.
- 2.8 Whether the appeal is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the appeal, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the appeal.
- 2.9 In the event of an appeal being upheld, GWNI's Chief Executive will ensure that appropriate actions are taken and that any learning is incorporated into future programmes.
- 2.10 The decision taken at this stage is final.

3 Complaints Relating to Third Parties

- 3.1 Where the complaint has arisen during an event facilitated by another organisation, the above procedure will also apply.
- 3.2 The other organisation will, where applicable, be informed of the complaint and how it is being dealt with.
- 3.3 In the event that the issue remains unresolved after the procedure above has been followed, and only where relevant and appropriate, the individual may seek to refer the matter to the other organisation.
- 3.4 The decision reached by the other organisation will be final.

4 Communication of Complaints Policy

- 4.1 Staff members should make it clear to their clients at the beginning of a project that should any problem arise they are free to make use of the Trust's complaints procedure.
- 4.2 Clients do not need to be routinely issued with a copy of the Complaints Policy; however, they should be made aware of it.

5 Procedure for Handling a Complaint

- 5.1 The staff member who receives the complaint should initially try to resolve the matter with the complainant.
- 5.2 Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.
- 5.3 The complainant should be encouraged to provide a written account using the Complaint Form at Appendix A so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.
- 5.4 If the complainant doesn't want to complete the form, the person who receives the complaint should:
 - a) Record the facts of the complaint
 - b) Record the complainant's name, address and telephone number
 - c) Record the relationship of the complainant to GWNI
 - d) Inform the complainant of the Trust's Complaints Policy
 - e) Inform the complainant of the next steps and the likely timescale



Groundwork Northern Ireland

Complaint Form

Groundwork NI is committed to providing high standards of customer service at all times. If we fail to meet your expectations, we want to hear from you so that we can improve our service. Completing this form will help us to do so.

1 Your name: _____

2 Is your complaint on behalf of an organisation or group? YES / NO
(Please circle as appropriate)

If yes,

Name of organisation/group: _____

Position you hold:/relationship to group _____

3 Address (for correspondence): _____

_____ Post Code

4 Phone: _____

5 **Your complaint** (continue on a separate piece of paper if necessary). Please include dates, times, details and names of individuals involved:

6 What do you think Groundwork NI did wrong or failed to do?

7 What would you like to see happen?

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Once completed please return this form to:

Groundwork NI
63-75 Duncairn Gardens
Belfast BT15 2GB

OR email: info@groundworkni.co.uk