



Policy Manual - HOGF

Grievances and Complaints Policy

2021

Welcome to our Policy Manual

Please take the time to familiarize yourself with these policies. Hopefully you will find them fair, easy to read, and understandable. Should you have any questions please ask.

You will always find the most recent version of this Policy Manual on the website.

Please complete the acknowledgement and return to me.

Many thanks.

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McClean Nortey
Executive Officer

Receipt and Acknowledgment of Policy Manual

I confirm that I have received and read a copy of our Policy Manual.

I understand that the policies described in it are subject to change from time to time.

I also understand that I will be consulted before significant changes are made and that I will have an opportunity to review and comment on these changes.

Name

Signature

Date

Grievances and Complaints Policy

Instructions on making, receiving and acting on grievances and complaints

This policy deals separately with:

- A. Complaints from the Public
- B. Grievances from staff members

Meanings

In this policy the following meanings apply:

- **Complaint** – *this is a concern raised by a service user/Public*
- **Service user** – *essentially anyone who is external to the organization, and includes a service user, sponsor, customer, funding body, or member*
- **Grievance** – *this is a concern raised informally or formally by a staff member*
- **Staff member** – *may be paid or unpaid*

A. Complaints (from service users)

We value the opinions of all service users. The Executive Officer will ensure that staff members are familiar with the process to be undertaken in response to complaints, and that they are adequately resourced to have them dealt with promptly.

In general, when dealing with complaints:

- All public have a right to make a complaint without fear of recrimination.
- The public is encouraged to raise the issue with the staff member involved.
- The public and staff member to consider the complaint fully and work towards a prompt and successful resolution.
- Where this cannot be resolved then the administrator or Executive Officer should be involved.
- The Administrator will relay the decision to the Executive Officer, or request the assistance of the Executive Officer.
- Documentation pertaining to the resolution of complaints remains the property of the organization.
- If no resolution achieved the complaint can be taken to the Board.

B. Grievances (from staff members)

Informal grievance

In general, by expressing an informal grievance the staff member is exercising a right to be heard by their supervisor without prejudice and to express a genuine concern about a matter which affects their employment.

In general, an informal grievance won't be acted-on unless warranted by the Executive Officer according to the immediacy and gravity of the concern.

Formal grievance (other than for industrial or unlawful matters)

A formal grievance is a matter which will be treated more formally, and is usually instigated by a staff member in writing. A formal grievance will involve a response from the Executive Officer.

The principles of natural justice will be observed throughout the resolution process. This means that before a decision is taken about them, staff members have the right to be informed about the nature and content of the grievance, have the right to be heard and have the right to have an unbiased decision maker.

The Administrator must ensure that the following steps are taken in managing a formal grievance with the aim of resolving the concerns within 10 working days:

1. The formal grievance must be documented.
2. Any other staff member/s named in the formal grievance will be given the opportunity to respond.
3. The substance of the response will be relayed to the complainant.
4. If the complainant wishes to proceed further the Administrator will negotiate a joint meeting of the parties if possible. Each party will be entitled to bring a support person and an independent mediator may be engaged.
5. Either party may veto the mediation stage but in so doing they understand that the Executive Officer may then chose to disregard the complaint.
6. The Administrator will respond in writing to the complainant when the management of the formal grievance is at an end.

The Administrator will ensure that complaints about the Executive Officer are relayed to the Board.

In assessing the gravity with which the organization should respond to a formal grievance, the Administrator will take into account:

- the imperative that all complaints be treated seriously and sensitively;
- any likelihood that the complaint might be frivolous or malicious;

- the effluxion of time since the “event” or “act” (giving rise to the complaint) occurred;
- the willingness and capacity of all parties to participate in good faith;
- the likelihood that the matter could rapidly escalate, or be publically damaging to the organization’s reputation, or give rise to potential claims of victimization by the complainant;
and
- any risk to the complainant from the person about whom the complaint is lodged.

Unlawful acts

Where the Executive Officer believes that the substance of a grievance, complaint, concern, observation or allegation refers to an act by a staff member which is reasonably likely to be unlawful then the Executive Officer will relay that concern promptly to the police or relevant authority.

Industrial matters

Where a paid staff member raises an issue in relation to an industrial matter to which there is not a ready resolution in the workplace then the Executive Officer will engage with the staff member and their advocate with an aim to negotiate an end to the matter.

In so doing the parties agreed that:

- the rules of natural justice will be extended to both parties
- each may be represented by an advocate
- where resolution cannot be reached then the ruling of an industrial tribunal will be regarded as final

Disciplinary provisions

Staff members who don’t follow this policy may be disciplined under the Staff Disciplinary Policy.