



East Grinstead Museum Complaints procedures

What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether made orally or in writing.

The Museum will adopt a Staged Approach to Complaints

The staged approach is designed to ensure that every effort is made to deal with complaints informally in partnership with the complainant. The formal stages should only be triggered in exceptional circumstances:

- Stages 1 and 2 are the **informal stages**. In the case of a complaint the Museum Manager should be the first point of contact and the majority of issues should be resolved at this stage. If there are still concerns the matter should be discussed with the Chair of Trustees.
- Stage 3 is the **formal stage** involving the Chair and a panel of trustees.

Our principal aim is to deal with complaints:

- ◆ Openly
- ◆ Fairly
- ◆ Promptly
- ◆ Without prejudice

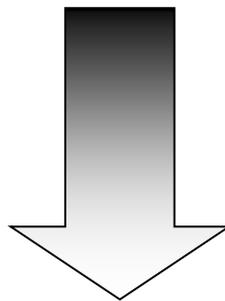
Our procedures for dealing with complaints will:

- ◆ Be publicised and available to complainants
- ◆ Be simple to understand and follow
- ◆ Be focused on outcomes
- ◆ Have established time limits for action
- ◆ Keep people informed at all stages
- ◆ Where necessary, respect people's desire for confidentiality
- ◆ Be carefully monitored and evaluated
- ◆ Provide information to the Museum's management team so that the Museum's procedures can be improved

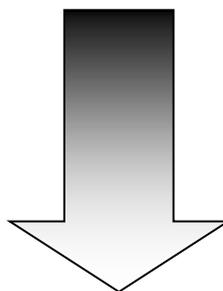
An Overview

Stage One
Complainant to discuss concerns informally with the Museum Manager

**Stage One
(Complaints about the Manager)**
Complainant to discuss concerns informally with independent Trustee, Dorothy Hatswell



Stage Two
Discuss concerns informally with the Chair of Trustees



Stage Three
Make a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of Trustees who will then convene a Complaints Panel

Guidance on the Each Stage of the Procedure

Stage One: Discuss concerns informally with the Museum Manager

- ◆ Complainants are advised to speak to the Museum Manager so everyone has a clear picture of the situation from all points of view. Most problems can be resolved at this informal stage.
- ◆ If the complainant indicates that he/she would have difficulty in discussing a complaint with the Museum Manager, the complaint should be referred to a trustee. In the event of the complainant being about the Manager, it will be directed to an independent Trustee.
- ◆ The person who is dealing with the complaint should ensure that the complainant is reassured that the matter will be investigated and is clear what action has been agreed. All staff and volunteers should be aware of the need for confidentiality.
- ◆ A brief record of any telephone calls, meetings and agreed actions should always be kept although it is not always necessary to provide the complainant with a written record at this stage.
- ◆ If either the complainant or the person dealing with the complaint feels the matter needs to be taken further, the Chair should be contacted.

Stage Two: Discuss concerns informally with the Chair of Trustees

- ◆ More serious concerns which remain unresolved at the end of Stage 1 should be referred to the Chairman immediately, by the person dealing with the complaint. He will then investigate the matter further. Any meetings that are held with the complainant in relation to the complaint should be arranged within 10 working days. However, more complex complaints may require an extension to this time limit.
- ◆ A log of all contacts relating to the complaint should be kept.
- ◆ The Chair must communicate the outcome to the complainant either verbally or in writing. Any agreed actions should be put in writing.
- ◆ If, as a result of the investigation, issues arise relating to staff discipline or capability, details should remain confidential to the Chair. However, the complainant should be informed that the Museum has taken appropriate follow-up action.

Stage Three: Make a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of Trustees who will then convene a Complaints Panel

- ◆ Trustees should only proceed with this formal stage of the Complaint Procedure, if they have received a complaint in writing addressed to the Chair of trustees and all previous stages have been exhausted.
- ◆ Acknowledgement of the written complaint should normally be sent by the Chair of Trustees within 5 working days.
- ◆ The trustees will convene a panel of three trustees who have not previously been involved in the complaint. The panel will usually meet within 15 working days of receiving the complaint.
- ◆ The Chair of the panel should notify the Museum Manager/Chair of trustees and the complainant as to whether they will be invited to attend the panel meeting. Alternatively, the panel may decide to consider written material only. All parties must be treated equally. For example, if the Museum Manager is invited to the meeting, so must the complainant.
- ◆ If the complaint relates to a staff disciplinary or capability matter about which the trustees have already taken action, the panel should focus on how the original complaint was managed to avoid prejudicing any ongoing disciplinary or capability procedures.
- ◆ The Museum manager/Chair of Trustees and complainant should be informed of the Panel's decision in writing within 10 working days.
- ◆ This is the final stage in the Museum's Complaints Procedure.