



Complaints Policy

Statement

Astwood Bank Community Group (the Community Group) is a Community Interest Company (CIC) that is committed to providing a quality service in a way that builds the trust and respect of the whole community of Astwood Bank and the surrounding area. The Community Group aims to continue to improve its service by listening and responding to the views of community members, by responding positively to complaints and by putting any mistakes right. Therefore, the Community Group aims to ensure that it:

- Treats a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with its service which calls for an immediate response.
- Deals with complaints promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially.
- Responds by resolving the complaint in the right way. This could include an explanation, or an apology where the Community Group have got things wrong, or information on any action taken.
- Learns from complaints, uses them to improve its service, and reviews annually its complaints policy and procedures.

Definitions

The Community Group define a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction that relates to the Community Group as a company and/or to an individual director or volunteer, and that requires a formal response'.

Responsibilities

The Community Group intends that the formal complaints procedure ensures that it handles all complaints fairly, consistently and, wherever possible, resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

The directors of the Community Group will:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing.
- respond within a stated period.
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint.
- take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, to the Community Group's attention, normally within 1 week of the issue arising.
- raise concerns promptly and directly with a director.
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date by the Community Group.
- allow a reasonable time to deal with the matter.

- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond the Community Group's control.

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the directors of the Community Group, who will review regularly and update as required.

Confidentiality:

Except in exceptional circumstances, the Community Group and the complainant should make every attempt to maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the Community Group will explain such a situation to the complainant.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Community Group directors may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest. For example, in the event of a complaint about the Chair as an individual, it would be inappropriate for the Chair to investigate or review the complaint.

Informal Resolution

The Community Group recognise that most community members will raise any concerns informally. The Community Group's aim is to resolve all informal concerns quickly through mediation with the complainant.

In many cases, the person responsible for the issue is the best person to resolve the complaint, as they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

The complaint information for any complaints that the Community Group successfully resolves on an informal basis should be passed to the Community Group Chair immediately where possible, and within five working days. On receiving the complaint, the Chair records it in the complaints Logbook and no further action is necessary.

Where the Community Group are unable to satisfactorily resolve a complaint informally, then they will direct the complainant to the formal complaint procedure.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 1

If the customer is unable to resolve the issue informally, they should write to the Community Group via email or letter. Complainants can find contact details on the 'contact us' section of the Community Group website.

In their letter, the complainant should set out the details of their complaint, the consequences for them as a result, and the remedy they are seeking. If their complaint concerns a director or volunteer, they should state the name of the individual concerned.

The Community Group will acknowledge the complaint within 7 working days of receipt. This acknowledgement will outline who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a response. Ideally, the complaint should receive a response to their complaint within twenty working days of receipt. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, the complainant will receive an interim response describing what the Community Group is doing to deal with the matter, when the complainant can expect a full reply and from whom.

On receiving the complaint, the Chair records it in the complaints Logbook. They delegate an appropriate person to investigate the complaint and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific director or volunteer, that director or volunteer should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Stage 2

If the complainant is not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint, they can write to ask the Community Group to review their complaint and the response.

The Community Group will acknowledge the request within 7 working days and formulate a response within 20 working days.

The Community Group aim to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore the Community Group may require longer to fully investigate any concerns raised. Consequently, timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative.

If a matter requires more detailed investigation, the complainant will receive an interim response describing what the Community Group is doing to deal with the matter, when the complainant can expect a full reply and from whom.

On receiving the complaint, the Chair records it in the complaints Logbook. They delegate an appropriate person to investigate the complaint and to take appropriate action. This will be a different person from the person who investigated the complaint at Stage 2. If the complaint relates to a specific director or volunteer, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Stage 3

If the complainant is not satisfied with the subsequent reply, they have the option of writing to the Chair of Directors, stating the reason why they remain dissatisfied with the outcome.

The complainant must do this within 10 days of receiving the written response.

The Chair will normally respond within 15 working days to inform the complainant of the action which will be taken to investigate the complaint, and when they can expect to hear the outcome of the investigation.

The outcome of the investigation at Stage 3 will represent the Community Group's final response.

External Stage: Complaints to the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Community Group's final response, and if they are an eligible complainant, as defined by the Regulator of Community Interest Companies (RCIC), they can refer their complaint to the RCIC, free of charge.

For more information, please contact the RCIC at:

CIC Regulator
1st Floor
Companies House
Crown Way
Cardiff
CF14 3UZ

Call 24 hour voicemail service on 029 2034 6228

Email: cicregulator@companieshouse.gov.uk

Full details can be found at: [How to Complain to the CIC Regulator](#).