

**If we have failed to provide a service to you or if you are dissatisfied with the service that you have received then please tell us. In most cases we hope to be able to resolve these with the person you have been dealing with and will use your feedback to help us make improvements.**

**We encourage you to follow the procedure outlined in Section 3.**

## **1. Aims**

This is the complaints policy of InterACT Church and Community Partnership (InterACT – also referred to as “We”, “Us” and “Our”).

The aims of this policy and related procedures are to provide a framework for the resolution of complaints which:

- allows for their resolution informally and sets out InterACT’s formal procedures where this is not achievable
- is easily accessible and publicised, simple to understand and use, and impartial and non-adversarial
- enables a full and fair investigation where appropriate
- respects people's desire for confidentiality
- addresses all the points at issue and provides an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary
- provides information to the Trustees and Management Team so that services can be improved
- helps to create a culture of safety, equality and protection.

Definitions used in the document can be found on page

## **2. Scope and application**

This policy applies to all areas of the work of InterACT and to any matter, including the sale of goods and the provision of services, about which a member of the public is unhappy and seeks action by Us.

For the purposes of this policy, any reference to InterACT also includes our employees, volunteers or subcontractors.

We have a separate policy specifically designed for minors. The text of this policy is included in the appendix of this document. There are also separate grievance and whistleblowing policies to cover concerns that members of staff, volunteers or freelancers may have.

InterACT will not normally investigate anonymous complaints.

If appropriate, InterACT will acknowledge that a complaint is upheld, wholly or in part. In addition it may offer:

- an explanation;
- an admission that it could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that InterACT will try to ensure that the event complained of will not happen again and an explanation of the steps taken in this respect;
- an undertaking to review policies and/or procedures;
- an apology.

The following are not considered to be Complaints and should therefore be directed to the appropriate person:

- General questions about our goods **AND/OR** services;
- Returns of damaged, faulty, incorrect or unwanted goods for exchange or refund in accordance with our Sales of Goods Terms and Conditions, where there is no further complaint;
- Matters concerning contractual or other legal disputes;
- Formal requests for the disclosure of information, for example, under the Data Protection Act

### **3. Making a Complaint**

#### **3.1 Raising Concerns/ Informal Complaints**

We hope and expect that most complaints can be resolved informally without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. We encourage You to raise concerns and complaints with Us quickly by contacting the person You have been dealing with and/or the Project Manager\*, who will work with You to try and find a resolution.

If We have been unable to find a resolution informally, or if Your complaint is regarding the Project Manager, You should follow the procedure set out below.

#### **3.2 All formal Complaints should be made in one of the following ways:**

In writing, addressed to \*Vanessa Brown (Project Manager), Stainbeck Church, Stainbeck Road, LEEDS, LS7 2PP; alternatively to the Chair of Trustees at the same address, and marked Private and Confidential.

By email, addressed to Vanessa Brown at [vanessa@interact.uk.net](mailto:vanessa@interact.uk.net); alternatively to the Chair of Trustees at [chair@interact.uk.net](mailto:chair@interact.uk.net).

By contacting Vanessa Brown by telephone on 07961 535 767.

If you prefer to use a complaint form, please ask us or download one from [www.interact.uk.net/policies](http://www.interact.uk.net/policies)

When making a complaint, please provide the following information in as much detail as is reasonably possible:

- Your name, address, telephone number and email address (We will contact You using Your preferred contact method as Your Complaint is handled);
- If You are making a Complaint on behalf of someone else, that person's name and contact details as well as Your own;
- If You are making a Complaint about a particular transaction, the time, date and circumstances of the transaction or the relevant invoice number;
- If You are making a Complaint about a particular employee, volunteer or subcontractor of ours, the name and, where appropriate, position of that employee, volunteer or subcontractor;
- Further details of Your Complaint including, as appropriate, all times, dates, events, and people involved;
- Details of any documents or other evidence You wish to rely on in support of Your Complaint;
- Details of what You would like Us to do to resolve the Complaint and to put things right. (Please note that whilst We will make every reasonable effort to accommodate such requests, We are not bound to take any action beyond that which We may be contractually or otherwise legally obliged to take.)

## **4. How We Handle Formal Complaints**

InterACT operates a two-stage formal complaints-handling procedure. Our aim is to always resolve Complaints to the satisfaction of the person making the complaint at Level One, without further recourse to Level Two. If that person is not satisfied at the end of Level One, they may escalate their Complaint to Level Two.

### **4.1 Timescales**

3.1.1 InterACT aims to resolve all complaints efficiently and promptly, and someone who wants to make a complaint is encouraged to bring their concern to Our attention as soon as possible. Whenever possible, a complaint should be raised within three months of the incident, or where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. InterACT will however consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply. A complaint raised outside this timescale should therefore include details of the issues which led to the delay.

4.1.2 Timescales for each stage of Our Complaints Procedure are set out below. These will be followed wherever practicable to do so. It is expected that the management of every complaint will progress in a timely manner. Where there are exceptional circumstances resulting in a delay to the timescales for a stage of the Complaints Procedure (such as other bodies investigating aspects of the complaint), We will notify You and inform You of the new timescales as soon as possible.

4.1.3 If You commences legal action against InterACT in relation to You complaint, We will consider whether or not to suspend the Complaints Procedure until those proceedings have been concluded.

## **4.2 Level One:**

4.2.1 Upon receipt of the Complaint, the Project Manager or the Chair of Trustees will log the Complaint in Our system and will acknowledge receipt of it in writing within 14 days, giving You a reference number.

4.2.2 When We acknowledge receipt of the Complaint, We will also provide details of the Complaint Handler. This may be the person to whom the original Complaint was directed (as above) or the Complaint may be assigned to another appropriate member of Our team.

4.2.3 If the Complaint relates to a specific employee, volunteer or subcontractor, that person will be informed of the Complaint and given a fair and reasonable opportunity to respond. Any communication between You and the employee, volunteer or subcontractor in question should take place only via the Complaint Handler, and We respectfully ask that You do not contact the employee, volunteer or subcontractor in question directly concerning the Complaint while We are working to resolve it.

4.2.4. If We require any further information or evidence from You, the Complaint Handler will contact You as quickly as is reasonably possible to ask for it. We ask that You use reasonable efforts to supply any such information or evidence quickly in order to avoid delaying the complaints handling process. If You are for any reason unable to provide such information or evidence We will use all reasonable efforts to proceed without it, however please be aware that We will not ask for further information or evidence unless We consider it important to the successful resolution of the Complaint.

4.2.5 We aim to resolve Level One Complaints within 21 days, however in some cases, particularly if the Complaint is of a complex nature, this may not be possible. If this is not possible for any reason, You will be informed of the delay, the likely length of the delay and the reasons for it.

4.2.6 At the conclusion of the Level One Complaints Procedure, regardless of the outcome, We will provide You with full details of our investigation, our conclusions from that investigation, and any action taken as a result. You will also be reminded of Your right to appeal our decision and escalate the complaint to Level Two in the form of an Appeal.

### **4.3 Level Two:**

4.3.1 If You are not satisfied with the resolution of Your complaint at Level One, You may appeal the decision within 21 days, and have the complaint escalated to Level Two. Appeals are handled by the Trustees.

4.3.2 Appeals, quoting Your original Complaint Reference, should be directed to Your original Complaint Handler who will forward the request to an appropriate Appeal Handler. Receipt of Appeals will be acknowledged in writing within 14 days. When We acknowledge receipt of Your Appeal We will also provide details of Your Appeal Handler.

4.3.3 If Your Complaint relates to a specific employee, volunteer or subcontractor, that person will be informed of Your Appeal and given a further opportunity to respond. Any communication between You and the employee, volunteer or subcontractor in question should take place only via the Appeal Handler and We respectfully ask that You do not contact the employee, volunteer or subcontractor in question directly concerning the Complaint while We are working to resolve it.

4.3.4 If We require any further information or evidence from You, the Appeal Handler will contact You as quickly as is reasonably possible to ask for it. We ask that You use reasonable efforts to supply any such information or evidence to Us quickly in order to avoid delaying the complaints handling process. If You are for any reason unable to provide such information or evidence We will use all reasonable efforts to proceed without it, however please be aware that We will not ask for further information or evidence unless We consider it important to the successful resolution of Your Complaint.

4.3.5 We aim to resolve Level Two Complaints within 30 days, however in some cases, particularly if Your Complaint is of a complex nature, this may not be possible. If this is not possible for any reason You will be informed of the delay, the likely length of the delay and the reasons for it.

4.3.6 At the conclusion of the Level Two procedure, regardless of the outcome, We will provide You with full details of our investigation, our conclusions from that investigation, and any action taken as a result. Our decision at this stage is final.

## **5. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

5.1 All Complaints and information relating thereto are treated with the utmost confidence. Such information will only be shared with those employees, volunteers or subcontractors of InterACT who need to know in order to handle Your Complaint.

5.2 We may ask for Your permission to use details of Your Complaint (with Your personal details removed) for internal training and quality improvement purposes. If You have given such permission, You may revoke it at any time by contacting Vanessa Brown, whose details are provided in Section 2.

5.3 All personal information that We may collect (including, but not limited to, Your name and address) will be collected, used and held in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and Your rights under that Act.

## **6. Questions and Further Information**

If You have any questions or require further information about any aspect of this Complaints Policy or about our Complaints Procedure, please contact Vanessa Brown by post at Stainbeck Church, Stainbeck Road, LS7 2PP, by telephone on 07961 535 767, or by email at [vanessa@interact.uk.net](mailto:vanessa@interact.uk.net).

## **7. Policy Responsibility and Review**

6.1 Overall responsibility for this Complaints Policy within InterACT and the implementation thereof lies with The Trustees.

6.2 This Complaints Policy is regularly Reviewed and updated as required.

6.3 This Complaints Policy was adopted on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

6.4 This Complaints Policy was last Reviewed on (not applicable).

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## **Appendix 1: Text from Complaints Procedure for Minors**

### **Young People's Concerns and Complaints Procedure and Information**

Any Problems, Concerns, Complaints or Suggestions? If so, we'd would like to hear.

#### **How do I make a complaint?**

- By talking about it – or by writing it down if you find that easier.
- You can do it by yourself, as part of a group, or through your parents.

#### **To whom?**

- To anyone on the staff.

#### **Does it matter what the issue is?**

No, it can be a big problem or a small one. By discussing it, you may come up with some positive ideas to resolve the issue.

### **What will happen next?**

- If possible, the staff member will deal with it in person. If not, he or she will go on your behalf to someone who can help.

### **Do others have to know?**

- If You are worried about confidentiality, tell the staff – they will understand and explain their response and any action which they may need to take.
- Even if you find the issue hurtful or embarrassing, don't worry – it will only be discussed by staff who can help you.
- It may not be possible to maintain confidentiality on some issues which staff may need to refer because there is a danger of harm to yourself or someone else.

### **What happens if the complaint is not resolved?**

- If you feel that you have not been able to sort out a complaint on an informal basis you have the right to make a formal complaint. You may wish to involve your parents or guardians at this stage if you have not already done so.
- You or your parents should write to Vanessa Brown, who oversees the work of InterACT, or if you don't want to write to Vanessa, you should write to the Trustees. Write out the complaint and what you want to be done about it. We may suggest a meeting to discuss the complaint but will in any case give you a written answer explaining what has been decided. You will not get into trouble for making the complaint.
- We will keep a record of serious complaints and what happened to those complaints and will review them from time to time.
- Your parents can also use InterACT's formal complaints procedure.

## **Appendix 2: Text from InterACT Complaint's Form**

If we have failed to provide a service to you or if you are dissatisfied with the service that you have received then please tell us. In most cases we hope to be able to resolve these with the person you have been dealing with and will use your feedback to help us make improvements.

We encourage you to raise concerns and complaints with us quickly by contacting the person you have been dealing with and/or the Project Manager\*, who will work with You to try and find a resolution.

If we have been unable to find a resolution informally, or if your complaint is regarding the Project Manager, you can use the form below. You can find our full complaints procedure at [www.interact.uk.net/policies](http://www.interact.uk.net/policies), or ask us to give you a copy.

InterACT Church and Community Partnership  
Complaints Policy

Adopted on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Last Reviewed July 2022

Your name\*:

Your address\*:

Your telephone number\*:

Your email address\*:

\*We will contact you using your preferred contact method as your Complaint is handled.

If you are making a Complaint on behalf of someone else, please include that person's details as well as your own

If you are making a complaint about a particular transaction, please give us the time, date and circumstances of the transaction or the relevant invoice number:

If you are making a complaint about a particular employee, volunteer or subcontractor of ours, please give us the name and, where appropriate, position of that employee, volunteer or subcontractor:

Please provide us with further details of your complaint including, as appropriate, all times, dates, events, and people involved:

(feel free to add additional pages if needed)



Please provide us with details of what You would like Us to do to resolve the Complaint and to put things right. (Please note that whilst We will make every reasonable effort to accommodate such requests, We are not bound to take any action beyond that which We may be contractually or otherwise legally obliged to take.)

Details of any documents or other evidence you wish to rely on in support of your complaint should be sent with this form:

In writing, addressed to Vanessa Brown (Project Manager), Stainbeck Church, Stainbeck Road, LEEDS, LS7 2PP; alternatively to the Chair of Trustees at the same address, and marked Private and Confidential.

AND/OR

By email, addressed to Vanessa Brown at [vanessa@interact.uk.net](mailto:vanessa@interact.uk.net); alternatively to the Chair of Trustees at [chair@interact.uk.net](mailto:chair@interact.uk.net)