

Managing complaints

Procedure

1. The purpose and scope of this procedure

- 1.1. The UKMT aims to provide high-quality products and services which meet the needs of our beneficiaries. We believe we achieve this most of the time; if we are not getting it right then we want to know.
- 1.2. To ensure that our services remain at a high and improving standard, we have developed this procedure through which you can let us know if you are not satisfied with our products or services.
- 1.3. If you are unhappy with the way an individual member of staff or volunteer has behaved then please refer to our [Code of Practice and Grievance Procedure for Volunteers](#).

2. If you are not happy with our products or services

- 2.1. If you are unhappy about any aspect of our products or services then please contact the relevant member of staff or the Executive Director (director@ukmt.org.uk).
- 2.2. The member of staff may be able to respond straight away but we aim to at least acknowledge all such correspondence within three working days.
- 2.3. When a matter is more complicated then we will give you at least an initial response within five working days.

3. Grievance procedure

- 3.1. A grievance is a perceived or real issue which causes resentment, suffering or distress and which may be regarded as grounds for complaint. The UKMT is committed to encouraging an open environment in which all volunteer members and staff can express themselves freely and responsibly, where issues raised are responded to in an appropriate and timely manner and where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Above all, we are committed to providing fair and honest settlement of any grievance.
- 3.2. Grievance procedures may sound rather formal but they are intended to solve problems and promote fairness in relation to the treatment of volunteers and staff and to ensure that, as far as possible, volunteers have the same rights as paid staff.
- 3.3. It is hoped that difficulties can be resolved through face-to-face communication. Where this is not possible, the purpose of these procedures is to provide an orderly resolution of joint problems in a fair and open way.

3.4. Informal discussions

- 3.4.1. In the first instance, if any volunteer has a grievance about their volunteering role, organisation or a colleague they should discuss it informally, as soon as possible, with their Volunteering Manager or Executive Director. If the grievance is with one of those mentioned above, the grievance should be passed to another team member. The manager should take the grievance seriously and ensure that everything is done to try and resolve the issue informally. It is hoped that the majority of concerns will be resolved at this stage.

3.5. Formal procedure

3.5.1. Stage 1

- 3.5.1.1. If a volunteer feels that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions, they should put the complaint in writing to the Volunteering Manager or the Executive Director. If the complaint involves UKMT staff, the complaint should be put in writing to the Executive Director or a Trustee.
- 3.5.1.2. A volunteer who has a grievance about how they have been treated by a member of staff or another volunteer should draw the matter to the attention of the Director, who will carry out an investigation, except when the person complained about is the Director or a member of the Board of Trustees, in which case the Chair or a Vice-Chair will take on the investigation.
- 3.5.1.3. A member of staff who has a grievance about how they have been treated by a volunteer should draw the matter to the attention of the Director, who will carry out an investigation, except when the person complained about is a member of the Board of Trustees, in which case the Chair or Vice-Chair will take on the investigation. If the person complained about is the Chair then the Vice-Chair will take on the investigation.
- 3.5.1.4. Potential grievances should be reported in a timely manner, ideally within three months.
- 3.5.1.5. A meeting will be held between the volunteer, the Volunteering Manager and the Executive Director (or another appropriate person) to respond to the complaint raised. The meeting will be an opportunity for the volunteer to explain their complaint and share how they would like it to be addressed. The volunteer has a right to be accompanied to the meeting.
- 3.5.1.6. Following the meeting, the Volunteering Manager or Executive Director will give a written response within five working days of the meeting outlining how the complaint will be responded to. If the complaint is against a member of staff or volunteer or requires further investigation, the Volunteering Manager or Executive Director will carry out further meetings or investigations. In this case, the five working days limit may need to be extended. The response will follow this meeting and include a reference to the right to proceed to stage 2.

3.5.2. Stage 2

- 3.5.2.1. If the volunteer feels the issue has still not been resolved satisfactorily, the volunteer must raise the matter, in writing, with the Executive Director or any Trustee. The Executive Director, or a Trustee appointed by the Board of Trustees, will invite the volunteer to a meeting where they can discuss the matter and establish how best to resolve the situation. The volunteer has a right to be accompanied to the meeting.
- 3.5.2.2. Following the meeting, the Executive Director or appointed Trustee will give a written response within five working days of the meeting outlining how the complaint will be responded to. If the complaint is against a member of staff or volunteer or requires further

investigation, the Executive Director or appointed Trustee will carry out further meetings or investigations. In this case, the five working days limit may need to be extended.

- 3.5.2.3. Appeals against the findings of investigations or actions that result from investigations should be made to the Chair (if they have not previously been involved), or the UKMT Secretary. Consideration may be given to involving an independent external party, such as a conciliation service, during the appeal. The appeal process will review the initial investigation to ensure this has been completed thoroughly and conducted fairly. If the appeal finds that the investigation has not been completed thoroughly or conducted fairly, then a further investigation by the Chair (or Secretary) will take place. If the appeal is deemed to have been properly investigated, the original decision will stand. The Chair's (or Secretary's) decision is final.
- 3.5.2.4. In the event that the relevant investigating or appeals person is unable to perform their role, an independent person will be appointed by the Board of Trustees.

3.5.3. The role of the Charity Commission

- 3.5.3.1. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. Its website explains that its primary focus as regulator 'is to work closely with charities to ensure that they are accountable, well run and meet their legal obligations in order to promote public trust and confidence'.
- 3.5.3.2. The Charity Commission does not act on complaints related to disagreements between individuals, but it will investigate if a volunteer's concerns relate to the organisation's wider work or the fulfilment of its charitable aims <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>.
- 3.5.3.3. Many potential grievance issues can often be resolved informally. An investigation into the grievance will take place, starting with informal discussion. Where some form of formal action is needed, what action is reasonable or justified will depend on all the circumstances of the particular case. Possible actions include requests to follow this code of conduct, prevention from performing some volunteer roles, and the requirement to stand down as a volunteer.