

1 Our Aim

UNA-UK are committed to upholding the same values it champions, working in a transparent, accountable and fair way that builds trust and respect.

We aim to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is a clear and accessible process
- Complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- UNA-UK deals with it promptly, politely and sensitively
- The complainant is kept informed throughout the process on action being taken
- UNA-UK uses this opportunity to learn, improve and adapt

Complaints may come from any individual or organisation regarding the conduct of UNA-UK. This policy provides guidelines for submitting a complaint about our services, facilities, staff or volunteers. This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should refer to UNA-UK's internal policy on such matters.

2 Definition of a complaint

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction expressed to UNA-UK in writing via email. All staff should have sufficient knowledge to be able to identify an "expression of dissatisfaction" even when the word "complain" or "complaint" is not used.

3 Complaints

The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

4 Responsibilities

UNA-UK's responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- provide a timeframe for a response;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint; and
- take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, on one's own behalf and in writing, to UNA-UK's attention;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date and providing evidence when possible;
- allow UNA-UK a reasonable time to deal with the matter; and
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond UNA-UK's control.

5 Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and UNA-UK 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 facts). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

6 Complaints Procedure

A record must be maintained by UNA-UK at each stage of the procedure.

Stage 1

All formal complaints should be directed to info@una.org.uk. Should a complaint be made via another method (for example, by telephone or face-to-face), the complainant will be advised to follow the official complaints procedure. Should the complaint be emailed to a UNA-UK member of staff, director or trustee, the complaint will be directed to info@una.org.uk to follow the official process. The complainant will be informed of this at the time.

Complaints should outline all details available to the complainants and provide evidence where possible, including any action taken to date to resolve the matter. Please note that complaints must be made by individuals (except for individuals authorised to make a complaint on behalf of a registered company) and cannot be made on behalf of others.

Stage 2

Upon receipt, UNA-UK will aim to respond to complaints within 5 working days of receipt and will seek to resolve the issue at hand. If due to the nature of the complaint or capacity of the UNA-UK team, a response within this timeframe is not possible this will be explained to the complainant within 5 working days of receiving the complaint. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, the complaint will be escalated to the Head of Outreach or COO to respond accordingly. Should the complainant feel their matter has not been satisfactorily resolved, the complaint will be escalated to Stage 3.

Stage 3

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and/or Chief Operations Officer (COO) will be notified of the complaint. Please note that, in some circumstances, they may already be aware of the complaint should they have been required to provide some information in addressing the issue to this point.

The CEO and/or COO will determine whether the complaint requires a response at this stage, or further escalation to Stage 4. Should they decide it would be productive for a response at this stage, they will attempt to resolve the issue. Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the response, the complaint will be escalated to Stage 4. The complainant will be notified of this.

The CEO and/or COO may determine that the complaint should be escalated to Stage 4 without their intervention. If this is decided, the complainant will be notified.

Stage 4

The complaint will be presented to the UNA-UK Board at the subsequent Board Meeting, unless it is deemed that in waiting for the subsequent meeting will put any of UNA-UK, staff members, the complainant, or any other interested party at risk, at which point an emergency meeting may be called.

UNA-UK Board will be presented with all information made available to UNA-UK since the beginning of the complaint to arrive at a decision as to how the complaint should be addressed. The decision taken at this stage is final.

The decision will be communicated to the complainant in writing at the earliest convenience following the decision.

External Stage

Should the complainant be dissatisfied with the decision of the UNA-UK Board the complainant has the right of appeal to the relevant regulator. UNA-UK is a UK registered charity (registration number 1146016). More information on how to submit a complaint can be found on the UK government website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

UNA-UK may vary the procedure for good reason, for example to avoid a conflict of interest.