



Hilldrop Area Community Association External Complaints Procedure

May 2021

Policy No. 06	This policy was adopted by HACA in June 2018 and will be reviewed at least every 2 years.	Date of Review: May 2021
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If you have a concern regarding the suitability of staff to care for children, report this as soon as possible to the Play Project Manager, Head of Centre, or Chair of Trustees. Contact details can be found on our notice boards and website. The complaint may be written or verbal. Management will then follow the procedure outlined in the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

Introduction

Hilldrop Area Community Association (HACA) is committed to providing an excellent service. One of the ways in which we can improve what we do is by listening and responding to external views. HACA values feedback from members of the public and complaints are monitored, evaluated and reported on to the Board of Trustees. We aim to resolve any concerns quickly.

Requests for guidance or support in completing our complaints procedure can be emailed to office@hilldrop.org.uk

Who can make a complaint?

- Any member of the public who has used a service at Hilldrop Community Centre
- User group leaders
- Parents/carers and children attending Hilldrop Play Project

Separate procedures exist for:

- Staff, trustees and volunteers: please refer to the relevant handbook

Informal Complaints Procedure

In the first instance, concerns should be raised verbally with any member of staff that is deemed appropriate. The staff member will ensure that the Head of Centre is made aware of the issue, who will then decide on

any action steps to be taken or, if deemed necessary, to escalate the issue. The complainant may request to be contacted by the Head of Centre and/or to receive feedback.

For any concerns regarding a specific member of staff, the identity of the complainant will not be revealed.

Formal Complaints Procedure

If the complaint has not been resolved using the informal processes, or if it is inappropriate to use the informal procedure because the complaint is of a serious nature, proceed to a formal complaint.

Formal complaints must be made in writing, either by emailing office@hilldrop.org.uk or by letter addressed to: Head of Centre, Hilldrop Community Centre, Community Lane, London, N7 0JE

The written complaint should include clear detailed reasons for the complaint, an indication of the desired resolution or outcome, and copies of any relevant documentation.

The Head of Centre leads the formal complaint process and will acknowledge, monitor and respond to the complaint in writing. If the complaint relates to the Head of Centre, it may be addressed to the Chair of Trustees who will then lead and follow procedures.

HACA aims to acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days, then investigate and report on the outcome and any resulting action within 20 working days of receipt. These timescales may be extended in certain circumstances e.g. where the issues raised by a complaint are serious/complicated or because of seasonal office closure.

Process to be followed:

1. Complaint acknowledged

Complaint to be acknowledged by the Head of Centre within 5 working days of receipt.

2. Complaint investigation, outcome and action

An investigation is to be undertaken by the Head of Centre. At their discretion, the Head of Centre may meet with the complainant to discuss the concerns and desired resolution. They may also meet with other individuals as part of the investigation if appropriate e.g. individuals who may be witnesses. The Head will reach a determination and report the outcome and any resulting action to the Chair of Trustees.

3. Complaint response

The Head of Centre will respond in writing to the complainant informing them of the outcome and any resulting action. HACA aims to provide a written response within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint.

Appealing and Requesting a Review of a Formal Complaint

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome or any action taken relating to the formal complaint then they have the right to request a Review on one or more of the following grounds, that:

- New material evidence has come to light which was not reasonably available at the time of the complaint investigation.
- Belief that the outcome of the complaint was manifestly unreasonable and/or any resulting action was disproportionate.
- The complaint procedure was not followed.

The request for a Review must be made in writing to the Chair of Trustees within 20 working days of the date of the written response to the complaint. It should explain clearly the reasons for the request including the grounds upon which it is based and any relevant documents.

The Chair of Trustees will consider the request for a Review and determine whether it meets one or more of the above grounds. If the request does not meet one or more of the above grounds, HACA will decline the request.

If the request is accepted, the Chair of Trustees will undertake a Review and reach a decision on it. The Chair will undertake an investigation similar to the process outlined above.

If the Chair of Trustees was involved in the initial complaint investigation, the Review will be led by an alternative trustee.

The outcome of a Review will be either to:

- Uphold the complaint outcome and/or any action.
- Substitute an alternative outcome and/or action.

The outcome of the Review will normally be sent in writing within 5 working days of it being decided upon by the trustee. The decision at this stage is final.

However, if the complaint regards the Play Project and the complainant wants to take it further, they are to contact Ofsted by phone 0300 123 1231 or write to – The National Business Unit, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD or visit their website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

General principles applying to the Informal and Formal Complaints Procedure

- HACA aims to deal with complaints in a fair, reasonable and timely manner.
- Complaints will be handled sensitively and with due consideration to confidentiality for both members of the public and staff. Dealing with a complaint or Review may involve discussion and liaison with staff and other users of the centre.
- Staff named in a complaint or Review may be informed of the substance of the complaint or Review and where appropriate may receive a copy of the complaint or Review. They may have the right of reply as part of any investigation.
- Complaints are overseen by the Chair of Trustees to ensure consistency, fairness and independence.