

Stone and District U3A Grievances and Complaints Procedure

In an organisation the size of our U3A it is perhaps inevitable that people will have differences of opinion and possibly feel aggrieved or badly treated. It is difficult to define every situation but key features would be a persistent pattern of behaviour that has the effect of demeaning the member(s) against whom it is directed. This document sets out the approach of our U3A in dealing with these situations as they arise.

The underlying principles of this approach are that

- wherever possible these situations should be handled and resolved informally, if need be with the help of **other U3A members who are not personally involved with the situation.**
- where this is not possible a formal complaint may be raised which will involve Committee members and in some situations regional officers.

Informal Resolution

The purpose here is to resolve the issue by constructive dialogue; there need not be any conclusion of "right or wrong" but an agreement as to how to remedy the situation going forward.

Issues with member(s) of a particular group should be handled initially by the Group Leader who may also request assistance from the Groups' Co-ordinator. Example issues might be disruptive/inappropriate behaviour or attendance without a current membership.

If members are unhappy with a Group Leader they should seek to resolve the matter by discussion with the Group Leader and may also request assistance from the Groups' Co-ordinator. Example issues might be inappropriate behaviour or poor organisation of the group.

Issues between members from different groups or members and committee members should be discussed between the members concerned and a committee member not otherwise involved in the issue. Example issues might be members not acting in accordance with membership rules or committee members acting inappropriately.

Inappropriate behaviour between committee members should be raised and discussed at committee meetings. If a situation arises where no independent committee member is available the issue should be raised with the Regional Trustee.

If the situation cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, then a formal complaint can be made, as detailed below.

Provided that an attempt has been made at informal resolution, any member still aggrieved may raise a formal complaint. This should be made in writing and submitted to the chair or the secretary of the committee, with the proviso that if both of these individuals are involved in the original issue, the complaint shall be made to any other committee member, or the Regional Trustee if all committee members are involved with the original issue.

A sub-committee consisting of three committee members/Regional Trustee nomination will then arrange to meet with all the parties concerned and determine a response to the complaint. Adequate notice will be given of meetings and individual members may attend with a friend for support.

This sub-committee will have the power to issue verbal or written warnings as felt appropriate and if need be to rescind a member's membership, either temporarily or permanently as provided for in the constitution clause 5 (iv).

Record Keeping

The U3A committee will keep a record of all formal complaints made, including the type of complaint and the eventual resolution. A report will be made to the AGM summarising this information, but ensuring that confidentiality is maintained.

Criminal Activity

Any suspected criminal activity should be reported to the Police and will not be investigated by the U3A until the Police have concluded the issue to their satisfaction.