

# SUSTAINABLE HACKNEY COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE



A person can make a complaint about:

- A Steering Group member of Sustainable Hackney
- A member of Sustainable Hackney
- An independent worker or consultant hired by Sustainable Hackney
- A volunteer of Sustainable Hackney who is supported by a signed Volunteer Agreement with Sustainable Hackney

A complaint can be about:

- the conduct of any of the above four groups of people
- the conduct of the organisation Sustainable Hackney

Sustainable Hackney will not respond to complaints made anonymously.

Anyone wishing to complain should follow the procedure below and Sustainable Hackney will resolve any complaint as soon as possible. Complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the values set out in our constitution.

A number of timeframes are set out in this procedure. It is Sustainable Hackney's intention to try to deal with any complaint within these timeframes. However, the voluntary nature of our organisation and availability of interested parties may make this impracticable. The investigators will advise the complainant where the timeframe is likely to be exceeded.

## **Stage 1: Oral complaint and informal resolution**

The complainant should raise the issue verbally and informally with the individual or individuals concerned and, if the complainant is an independent worker or volunteer as described above, they should also raise it with the relevant Steering Group member supervisor. If the complaint is about an independent worker's or volunteer's supervisor the complainant should raise it with another Steering Group member.

The purpose is to make sure that the conduct of concern is made explicit to the individual/s concerned, allowing them an opportunity to provide information and / or an explanation and / or an informal apology and / or make changes.

If both parties agree that they will meet to discuss the conduct of concern then both parties can be accompanied by a person of their own choice.

## **Stage 2: Written complaint and formal resolution**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage One they should make a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of Sustainable Hackney. The letter should set out the complaint, the circumstances and enclose any available evidence. If the conduct of concern is the Chair's, the complainant should write to the Vice Chair. The complaint should be made as soon as possible following the conduct of concern and within 14 working days.

The Chair (or Vice Chair if the complaint is about the Chair) will write to the complainant as soon as possible after receiving the complaint to acknowledge it and set out who will investigate the complaint and what will happen next.

The Chair (or Vice Chair) will investigate or arrange for another or up to three other members of the Steering Group to investigate the complaint. This may involve arranging face-to-face or telephone interviews with the complainant and any other parties involved. The complainant may be accompanied by a person of their choice and must notify the person investigating the complaint in writing of their choice before any meeting. The investigator(s) will make a record of the discussions at these meetings.

The investigator(s) will consider their findings and write to the complainant with their decision and any recommendations and aim to do this within 28 working days of receipt of the complaint.

## **Stage 3: Complaint Appeals Panel**

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage Two they should write to the Chair (or Vice-Chair) to appeal as soon as possible and within 14 working days of the date of the Stage Two letter stating why they are not satisfied with the decision.

The Chair (or Vice-Chair) will establish a Complaints Appeal Panel of two or three members of the Steering Group, who have not been previously involved in the matter to review the findings and, if they decide it necessary, carry out further investigations.

The Chair (or Vice Chair if the complaint is about the Chair) will write to the Complainant to acknowledge it and set out what will happen next. The Chair (or Vice-Chair) (who may or may not be involved in the Appeals Panel) will advise the complainant of the contact details of the Chair of the Appeals Panel as soon as possible.

The Complainant may be accompanied at any further investigations by a person of their choice and must notify the Chair of the Appeals Panel in writing/by email of their choice before the Appeals Panel meets. Following completion of the review and any further investigations, the Appeals Panel will consider their decision, the rationale and any recommendations in private. The Chair of the Appeals Panel will then write to the complainant with the appeal decision. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final.

The Appeals Panel aims to conclude the appeal within 28 days of receipt of the complainant's letter of appeal.