

Complaints Procedure

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are committed to providing quality advice, information and support to people experiencing homophobic, biphobic or transphobic hate crime, domestic abuse, sexual abuse or people experiencing problems with the police. In addition to this core area of service provision, we also advise organisations, through consultancy, training, and research on safety issues and the experiences of LGBT+ people. Galop also produces publications on issues relevant LGBT+ community safety.
- 1.2 We welcome complaints, comments, suggestions and feedback from our service users, other stakeholders and members of the public on any aspects of our work. This document sets out how complaints can be made and how we will respond to them.

2. Aims of the Procedure

- 2.1 We are committed to learning from complaints and using them to improve the service we provide. From time to time, individuals or organisations may feel they have a complaint against Galop; an individual worker; a management committee member or about the way Galop operates or delivers its services. Our aim is to provide a speedy, just and open investigation into the issue, with the outcome communicated to those involved. The investigation is subject to our confidentiality policy, which is available on request.
- 2.2 This procedure is not available for use of individuals or organisations who have already commenced legal proceedings against Galop in relation to the matter in dispute or a related matter.

3. What is a Complaint?

- 3.1 A complaint could be about any of the following:
 - Failure to provide a particular service which it would be reasonable to expect us to provide
 - The way in which a problem, situation or project was handled
 - Speed and/or manner in which one or more of our services was delivered
 - Fairness and equality of our policies and/or practice
 - Effectiveness of any of our procedures

4. How do I Complain?

- 4.1 Written complaints can be made to us: letter or email.

By email: info@galop.org.uk

By letter: Resource for London, 356 Holloway Road, N7 6PA

Alternatively you can tell a Galop worker by telephone or face to face.

5. General Principals

- 5.1 If a help seeker or other potential complainant is unhappy with the service they receive in the first instance, the member of staff dealing with them should try to deal with the issue there and then. Staff are encouraged to attempt to resolve any concerns before they reach the status of a formal complaint; encouraging a help seeker to make a complaint is not a substitute for inaction.
- 5.2 If resolution is not possible, the member of staff should inform the relevant Head of Service about the problem in writing to ensure that the service user's dissatisfaction is known about at the appropriate senior level within the organisation. The Head of Service will then record it in the complaints log and notify the Chief Executive that an investigation into a complaint is being undertaken.

6. Procedure

- 6.1 If the help seeker wishes to make a formal complaint, the following procedure will be used:

6.2 Stage One:

- In the first instance the complaint will be directed to the relevant Head of Service, who will send an acknowledgement letter within three working days detailing the nature of the complaint and giving clear information on when a response can be expected.
- The Head of Service should aim to complete the investigation and send a written response within 15 working days of the complaint.
- If it is not completed by that time, an update should be given to the complainant, with a further update each week until the investigation is concluded.
- The final letter of response should outline how it was investigated, whether the complaint was upheld, what action has or will be taken, including lessons learned and how this learning will be implemented, and how to initiate a stage two complaint if the complainant is not satisfied with this outcome.

6.3 Stage Two:

- Upon receiving a stage two complaint, an acknowledgement letter should be sent within three working days, explaining that the matter is to be referred to the Chief Executive. In the Chief Executive absence, a member of Galop's Senior Management Team who has not been involved in the matter previously, can be delegated to deal with a stage two complaint.

- All information relating to the complaint, including the stage one investigation, will be passed to the Chief Executive, who will personally investigate the matter and should aim to fully respond to the complaint within 20 working days of receipt of the stage two complaint.
- If the investigation is not completed by that time, an update should be given to the complainant, with a further update each week until the investigation is concluded.
- The final letter of response should outline how it was investigated, whether the complaint was upheld, what action has or will be taken, including lessons learned and how this learning will be implemented, and how to initiate a stage two complaint if the complainant is not satisfied with this outcome.

6.4 Stage Three:

- Upon receiving a stage three complaint, an acknowledgement letter should be sent within three working days, explaining that the matter is to be referred to the Management Committee.
- The letter should explain that the matter will be considered by a Complaints Panel composed of three members of Galop's Management Committee.
- The complainant will be asked if they wish to personally present their case to the Panel.
- They have a right to be accompanied by a friend or supporter.
- The hearing will take place within 21 days of receiving a stage three complaint. If necessary, witnesses may be called.
- The panel has full delegated authority to make a decision. There is no right of appeal to the decision made.
- Following the hearing, a letter should be sent to the complainant within 10 working days outlining the decision, any action taken or planned as a result and outlining their right to approach the Charity Commission and Companies House to make a further complaint.
- In exception circumstances, a complainant may insist that the complaint be heard by a Complaints Panel, without it being considered within stage one and two.
- Each case will be considered on its own merits, however in most case it is appropriate to refer the complaint back to an earlier stage.
- If the complainant wishes to explore this option, it should be explained to them that there is no right of appeal to decisions made at stage 3.