



Comments Compliments and Complaints Policy

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Statement of policy

The Greenbank Project (referred to as Greenbank) is always looking to improve on what it provides and all comments, compliments or complaints help us evaluate and improve our service. The aim of this policy and procedures is to provide a clear framework to help any person who wishes to make a comment on Greenbank's services; and to support any person who has experienced dissatisfaction with Greenbank's services and wishes to articulate their concerns. The framework will also help Greenbank to respond effectively.

Who might use this policy?

Students, parents, customers, employers, local residents, employees and others who wish to make a comment or compliment or express a dissatisfaction.

Compliments and comments

A number of systems are in place to help you make a comment:

- A suggestion system is in place in reception areas.
- Via email to info@greenbank.org.uk
- Via feedback questionnaires or focus groups

Greenbank will inform users of its services of any resulting actions to improve services via publication of survey results and through display of actions on notice boards or via line managers.

Complaints policy statement

It is Greenbank's policy that it will handle complaints confidentially, fairly and promptly. An initial response will be made within 14 days. A further, more detailed response will be made if appropriate. Information on how to take the complaint further will be provided if you are not satisfied with Greenbank's response.

Every attempt should be made in the first instance to resolve a complaint informally through prompt, direct, sensible dialogue between those immediately concerned.

Responsibilities for implementing the policy

All staff have a responsibility for receiving complaints, treating them seriously and making sure they inform their line managers of the complaint. Staff should deal with them promptly and appropriately.

Managers and team leaders have a responsibility to contribute towards an investigation into a complaint when it is considered appropriate.

The Chief Executive or senior managers are responsible for dealing with complaints which

have reached the formal stage and might become involved informally in dealing with other complaints. The Chief Executive also has a responsibility to keep a record of all formal complaints and Greenbank's response and to report annually to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that the complaints policy and procedures are operating effectively and for monitoring formal complaints. Board of Trustees will also become involved if a complaint is directly against the Chief Executive, or where there is an appeal against Greenbank's response to a complaint.

Procedures for implementing the complaints policy

Raising a concern or making a complaint

Stage 1: Informal stage

The complainant should normally identify their dissatisfaction informally to an appropriate member of staff (e.g. course tutor, guidance officer, sports leader etc.). The complaint must be made as soon as possible and in any case not longer than four weeks after the reason for the complaint. A concern or complaint can be raised in person, via telephone or in writing.

If the member of staff is unable to resolve the issue, it will be referred to the team leader or manager. Relevant managers will be involved as required in dealing with the complaint. If the complaint is about a particular member of staff it is a requirement that the member of staff is made fully aware of the complaint and the identity of the complainant as soon as possible, except in circumstances that will always be communicated to the Chief Executive. Complaints made directly to the Chief Executive will also follow this initial procedure.

The person dealing with the complaint will investigate. In the first instance one of the following outcomes is possible:

- The complaint is not upheld
- An amicable solution is found that is suitable to both parties
- If some or all of the complaint is justified, appropriate measures are taken
- The complaint is found to be sufficiently serious to warrant direct referral to the formal stage

The outcome of any of the above will be recorded.

Stage 2: Formal stage

Formal complaints should always be made in writing to the Chief Executive or other senior manager, except where the complaint is directly against the Chief Executive in which case it should be put in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Complainants must identify themselves in order that a complaint can be investigated. Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated.

Complainants may be asked to complete a complaints form to provide further details if a written complaint does not clarify the reasons for the complaint and why, if appropriate it was still unresolved at stage 1.

The Chief Executive will appoint an appropriate senior manager to investigate the complaint. When the results of the investigation are known, the Chief Executive will take

one of the following decisions:

- Uphold the complaint in whole or part
- Dismiss the complaint
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If the complaint is wholly or partially upheld, the Chief Executive will:

- Find an amicable solution that is suitable to both parties
- Decide on an appropriate course of action to resolve the complaint

The outcome of the above will be recorded.

Response times to complaints:

All complaints, whether informal or formal, will be dealt with as quickly as possible. In the case of formal complaints to the Chief Executive and informal complaints received by any member of the senior management team, Greenbank commits itself to an initial response in writing within 14 days, followed by a further, more detailed response, if appropriate.

Appeal

If the complainant wishes to appeal against the decision made by Greenbank at the formal stage 2, the complainant can take the issue to an appeal panel which will involve a higher level of seniority.

The following will be taken as grounds for an appeal:

- New information that directly relates to the complaint has become available since the original complaint was made
- It can clearly be shown that the process was not followed correctly and this has affected the outcome of that process

Appeals are not possible for complaints if:

- They fall outside the areas set out above
- There is a more appropriate form of complaint or redress (e.g. a complaint to an exam board)
- The issue is subject to legal proceedings

The appeal panel will normally consist of up to 3 independent staff members or Board of Trustees members.

The Complainant has the right to be represented at the panel by a friend or advocate. Notice will be given of an appeal hearing.

Each party is given the right to make a statement and ask questions. The decision of the panel is binding on all parties, who must be informed of the outcome as soon as possible and within 14 days of the hearing.

Taking a complaint further

Should the complainant remain dissatisfied they may seek legal advice from the appropriate body or contact the ombudsman. This does not affect statutory rights.

Where the complaint relates to a service provided with funding from the Education and

Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the complainant is dissatisfied with Greenbank's handling of the complaint, a further complaint can be lodged with relevant funding body.

Complaints made against staff or volunteers concerning safeguarding

If the complaint is about the harm or potential harm of a child or adult by a staff member or volunteer at Greenbank, Greenbank has a statutory duty to refer the employee or volunteer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Therefore, this type of complaint cannot be dealt with by Greenbank's internal procedures. Greenbank will co-operate with any statutory bodies relating to such an investigation.

This procedure is a statutory requirement and cannot be dealt with through informal/formal complaints procedures.

Greenbank must make a referral to the DBS when the following two conditions apply:

- Greenbank withdraws permission from an individual to engage in regulated activity with children and/or adults, or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which is not regulated activity.

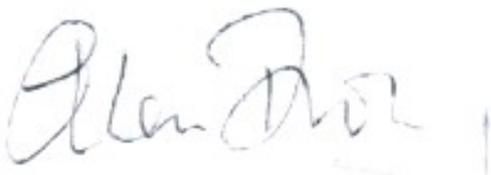
And

- They think that the individual has carried out one of the following:
- Been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring offence)
- Taken action or inaction in relation to children or vulnerable adults that has harmed them or put them at risk of harm
- Satisfied the harm test in relation to children and/or vulnerable adults

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Agreed by Greenbank Board of Trustees



Dr Alan Irving, Chairman