

EASY READ
centre

COMPLAINTS
PROCEDURES

Date these procedures came into effect: 21/05/2021

Date these procedures must be updated by: 01/01/2022

Written by: Torrin Wilkins.



Here we set out our complaints procedure.



It applies to all members of Centre. Members of the public can also use it to make a complaint.

Centre

Words like "us", "we", and "our" all mean Centre. This document only applies if we have your information.

Whilst we have tried to include as much information in this guide as possible, you may need to look at our longer length version for all the information about our complaints procedure.

People mentioned in the procedure:

Our Complaints Team:



George James:

The Head of Complaints is George James who you can reach at

headofcentrecomplaints@gmail.com

Vacant

Vacant:

The Deputy Head of Complaints is vacant.

Complaints Committee:

Louise Jenifer



Louise is Chair for Centre in the South East. She is a history student, who in her spare time enjoys reading up on political philosophy and theory. She is also the Policy Officer for Dartford Labour and supports the Labour Leave campaign.

Adam McCartan:



Adam is Chair for Centre in Northern Ireland. He is an International Relations and History student at Aberystwyth University and originally came from Northern Ireland.

Ashley Routh:



Ash is our Health spokesperson, and a former councillor. Ash is an active member of the Green Party, and is currently studying Speech and Language Therapy at Sheffield University, and is particularly focused on trans healthcare provision.

Pastoral care officer:

Jasneet Samrai:



Jasneet is the Equalities Spokesperson and the Pastoral Care Officer for Centre. They have also worked as a campaign organiser, helping to elect 3 MEP's.

Stopping issues from occurring:



- We will try to create an environment within Centre where people feel safe and we learn from any mistakes we make.

Who to make a complaint to:



You can make a complaint to either our Head of Complaints, George James, or our Deputy Head of Complaints, Billy Boulton. They are both independent of Centre.

How to make a complaint:



Make a complaint using the “complaints and safeguarding” page on our website. You can then include details of your issue in the form.

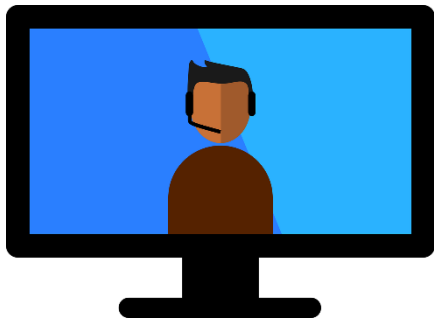
You should then only talk to us about your complaint with the member of our complaints team dealing with it.



You can make a complaint alongside other people if you both mention each other when making a complaint.



You will then receive an email to tell you we have received your complaint. If you don't receive anything within a few days, send our Head or Deputy Head of Complaints to check if they have your complaint.



Your complaint will be given a random number. This number along with the basic nature of your complaint, for instance bullying, will be sent to our Director. At the end the Director will be informed if any action needs to be taken by them.



If the Head or Deputy Head of Complaints leaves within this process the next person to hold that position will take over investigating the case. Once they are in the position, they will then have three months in which to investigate the case.



If you lose your email address during this process, then you should contact the head of complaints with your complaint number to change future emails to that address with your case number.

Anonymity:



You should not mention the person you made a complaint about publicly after submitting your complaint. However, you can discuss what happened if you don't include details that mean other people know who they are. This lasts for three months after submitting a case to us unless the person the complaint is against has left Centre or if the police are contacted in which case it lasts up until their investigations has concluded. This does not stop you from discussing details with the police, social services or councillors for issues such as mental health.



Where this information goes:

Once we receive your complaint, we will act on it as soon as possible. The only person who will see your full complaint is the person you originally sent it to, either the Head or Deputy Head of Complaints. We will then make it so no one else looking at the complaint knows who you are. The only case where information will be shared is if the information needs to be shared with the authorities, the police or anonymous information with our complaints committee. We may make anonymous records of your complaint after it is completed.

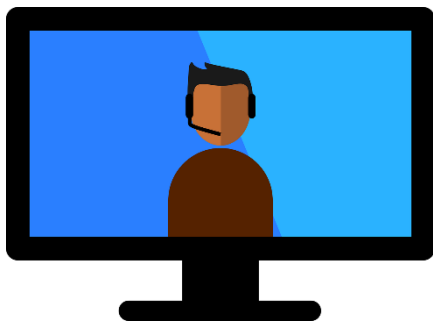


Dealing with complaints:

The person you have submitted your complaint to will let you know we have received your complaint within three days. Your full complaint should be completed within three months apart from appeals. They should also keep you up to date with your complaint.

Pastoral support:

Regardless of whether you are a member of Centre, you can always receive pastoral support from Centre. This may necessary if the person is under 18 or a vulnerable adult. This can include when submitting a complaint, throughout the process and after the process is complete if requested.





Initially responding to the complaint:

The first step for the complaint will be to acknowledge they have the complaint within three days and for the Head or Deputy Head of Complaints who received the complaint to get the membership list from the Director, the Deputy Director, or the Membership Officer. They will then email the person the complaint is against to let them know of the complaint.

Anonymising the complaint:

Anonymising the complaint will involve any details that may be used to identify the person such as their name, gender and age being anonymised so any details that go before the Complaints Committee will be purely about the case itself.

To do this, each case will be assigned a number using Excel and the people within the case will only be referred to as person A, person B, person C and so on. The random number will be used for every email sent by the Head or Deputy Head of complaints during the process.

Complaints against members of our team:



We will suspend members of our team if there is a complaint against them until the process has been completed. The Head or Deputy Head of Complaints will inform them within five days that they have been suspended.



If the Head of Complaints is the person the complaint is against, then the Deputy Head of Complaints will take on the roles originally carried out by the Head of Complaints in the process set out below.

Complaints by or against former members:

If the person making the complaint, or the person the complaint is against, leaves Centre then the complaint will still go through the complaints system.

This is to ensure we do not allow people into Centre that could harm our members and members who have broken the rules are not allowed to remain within Centre.

However, this means there will be no emails sent during the complaints process to former members if the complaint is against them.

Investigating the complaint:

The Head or Deputy Head Complaints then compiles any evidence on the complaint.

This includes a description of the complaint. any evidence supporting the complaint and statements from any witnesses.

It can also involve emailing questions to the person who filed the report and those involved in any potential issue.

Both at the start and the end of an investigation, both the person the complaint was against and the person who submitted the complaint will be told by email.

Clear breaches:

When there is a clear breach of safeguarding, our code of conduct, our safeguarding code of conduct or our privacy policy, then our Head or Deputy Head of Complaints must immediately suspend that member.

Once this has taken place, any appropriate actions or repercussions will be put in place.

Possible breaches:

If its unclear as to whether there is a breach of safeguarding procedures; our code of conduct or our safeguarding code of conduct, then the complaint will go to our Complaints Committee.

This allows the person the complaint has been made against to appear in front of the committee along with the person who made the complaint, who can write down what happened anonymously which will be...



...alongside any evidence gathered by the Head or Deputy Head of Complaints. Appearances are held remotely unless a physical meeting is needed and meetings will be recorded. There will then be a secret vote which will look at whether safeguarding rules or code of conduct were broken based on the balance of probabilities (whether it is more than likely the complaint is true). They also consider any previous complaints in the past four years to make their decision. Once this has taken place, any appropriate actions or repercussions will be put in place.

- Drinking during meetings.
- General unkindness or disrespectful behaviour towards another member of Centre or a member of the public.
- Using Centre social media accounts for personal purposes rather than their role within Centre.
- Agreeing to partnerships without a vote by the Centre team.

This will lead to:

An apology which may also include training during which time the person will be temporarily suspended as a member of Centre. If the person has already been suspended, for any reason, then this should instead result in their membership of Centre being revoked and a permanent ban.

- Breaking [GDPR](#) rules.
- Bullying or cyberbullying.
- Harassment.
- Defamation/libel.
- Intimidation.
- Violent behaviour.
- Posting content of a violent nature.
- Breaking our safeguarding rules.

This will lead to:

A temporary suspension of the persons membership, this can be permanent depending on the nature of the incident. If the person has already been suspended, for any reason, then this should instead result in their membership of Centre being revoked and a permanent ban. This often depends on the scale of the incident.

- Breaking the law.
- Rape.
- Assault by penetration.
- Sexual assault.
- Taking photos or videos of members without their consent.
- Discrimination, bullying or derogatory behaviour based on: age, gender, sex, disabilities, sexual orientation, race, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnerships, religion, pregnancy and maternity or other characteristics.
- Sexual harassment.

- Physical, emotional, sexual, discriminatory, financial or material and psychological abuse.
- Homophobia.
- Islamophobia.
- Racism.
- Transphobia.
- Antisemitism.
- Sending unwanted messages of a sexual nature.
- Ableism.

This will result in their membership of Centre being revoked and a permanent ban.



Once an outcome has been decided:

The Head or Deputy Head of Complaints will email both the person the complaint is against and the person who made the complaint to let them know of the outcome and any next steps. This could include training, an apology or removing them as a member either forever or for a short period of time.

Breaches of the law:

When a breach of the law is believed to be involved, then the issue will be reported to the police by the Head of Complaints. If this happens Centre will wait until the police investigation has been completed. If this takes more than 6 months, then we will follow up with the police to check when an internal investigation can take place.

Appeals:

If either the person who made the complaint or the person who was complained against is unhappy...

...with the outcome of the case, then an appeal can be made. This would go to the Complaints Committee and decisions can only be appealed once or, under exceptional circumstances, where new evidence has been found.

Malicious complaints:

If a person makes three or more complaints that are proven to be untrue, the person can be reported for making malicious complaints.



Learning lessons from breaches of Safeguarding or the Code of Conduct:

To learn the lessons from any breaches or near misses we will keep anonymous records of complaints. This involve storing the information on a password protected Excel document that only the Head or Deputy Head of Complaints can access. The records will be kept for four years and, after that, date, this will be deleted.