

Centre

Investigations
into minor issues

Safeguarding and
Complaints

Centre

Date these procedures came into effect: 31/12/2021

Date these procedures must be updated by: 01/01/2023

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This document sets out: The minor issues procedure for Centre, what to do if you have a minor issue, what will happen if someone has raised a minor issue about you and how these are dealt with.

Who is covered by this policy? This policy is applicable to all members of Centre. This includes the: Administration, Spokespeople, Regional/State Chairs, ex-members of centre and members of Centre Students. You can also raise a minor issue as a member of the public. You can either raise a minor issue about an incident that has happened to you or someone else.

People mentioned in the procedure.

See our full safeguarding, complaints and pastoral care team:

<https://centrethinktank.co.uk/safeguarding-complaints-and-pastoral-careteam/>

What counts as a minor issue? Investigations are for issues that don't break the code of conduct or safeguarding measures. If there is any doubt it should be reported as a complaint.

Who to tell? We have a team within Centre that deals with investigating minor issues, either of which you can tell. This can either be our Head of Complaints or our Deputy Head of Complaints. However, the Deputy Head should only be used if there is a conflict of interest with Head. You can tell either person and both have previously undergone Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS). Our complaints team is independent of Centre, and it includes our Head of Complaints and the Deputy Head of Complaints. These members are not allowed to have a position anywhere else within Centre to maintain their independence.

Methods to report a minor issue. Issues should be reported through the minor issues form on our website in the complaints and safeguarding hub. This form can include your name, email address so you can be kept up to date with the process, whether you are a member of Centre, whether the issue is about you or someone else, whether you would like to remain anonymous, whether you have done anything to try to resolve the issue, an explanation of the minor issue, URL of the post if it is a social media post, any additional evidence you want to send us, the name of the person or people you would like to raise the minor issue about, how old they are, whether they are a member of Centre, what region they live in, what position they live in, what you would like to see from the minor issue being raised, whether it is a joint report, who is making the report with you, if it is an appeal and whether you agree with the privacy policy.

Any communications about the minor issue should then take place only through the contact details provided by the person raising the minor issue and the email for the member of the complaints team dealing with your case. To raise a joint minor issue, both people must mention the other person raising the minor issue alongside them in their report.

The first email you will receive from our complaints team will simply acknowledge that we have received your report of a minor issue. If a member of our complaints team does not get back to you within a few days to acknowledge they have received your minor issue, you can contact them by email. Our Head of Complaints, George, is at Centresafeguarding@gmail.com and our Deputy Head of Complaints, can be emailed at CentreDeputysafeguarding@gmail.com.

At both the beginning and the end of the minor issues process the Head or Deputy Head of Complaints, depending on who is managing the case, should send a small report to the Director stating the random number given to the minor issue. At the start it should simply say the rough nature of the minor issue without any names or anything that could be used to identify the individual involved. At the end of the process, they will simply need to be told what action needs to be taken.

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 minor issue number to change future emails to that address with your case number.

Anonymity. You should not mention the details of the people or person that the minor issue has been raised about publicly or to members of our team. However, you are free to discuss details of the case if identifying details about the person you have raised a minor issue against are not included. This lasts for three months after submitting a case to us unless the person the minor issue was raised 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 the information is received by us, we will act as quickly as possible to respond to it. These procedures are enacted by our Head or Deputy Head of Complaints. Depending on who the minor issue goes to, only the person you send the minor issue to will see who has made the complaint. The information will be anonymised by them to ensure no one else dealing with the complaint knows who the person raising the minor issue is. The only case in which the information will be shared is if the information needs to be shared with the authorities, the police or anonymous information with our complaints committee. Once an investigation has taken place with any further reports of minor issues or complaints if necessary, anonymous records will be kept so we can ensure our procedures learn from incidents in the future.

Dealing with minor issues. When a report of a minor issue is received by the Head or Deputy Head of Complaints, they have 3 days in which to acknowledge the report and the issue must be resolved within three months of the report being made excluding any appeals. They must also keep the person who made the report up to date with its progress.

Pastoral support. Members of Centre or those outside of Centre may also get support from the Pastoral Care Officer during the process or more broadly during their time in Centre if they wish. This may necessary if the person is under 18 or a vulnerable adult. This can include when submitting an issue, throughout the process and after the process is complete if requested.

Initially responding to the minor issue. The Head or Deputy Head of Complaints should send an email to the person who reported the minor issue within 3 days to acknowledge the report has been received. The Head or Deputy Head of Complaints should request a copy of the latest membership data from the Director, the Deputy Director or the Membership officer to do this. This can be used to email the person

that the minor issue has been raised against to tell them that there has been a minor issue raised regarding them.

Anonymising the report. The Head or Deputy Head of Complaints first ensures that the information of the person making the report is anonymised. This 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 issue 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 by or against former members. If the person raising the minor issue, or the person the minor issue is about, leaves Centre then the minor issue will still go through the 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 minor issues process to former members if the minor issue is raised about them.

Investigating the minor issue. The Head or Deputy Head of Complaints then compiles any evidence on the minor issue. This includes a description of the reported issue and any evidence supporting the report. It can also involve emailing questions to the person who filed the report and those involved in any potential issue.

The Head or Deputy Head of Complaints should then email both the person who submitted the minor issue and the person the minor issue was raised about to inform them that the investigation has begun. Once the investigation is completed, both the person who raised the minor issue and the person the minor issue was raised should then be emailed again to inform them.

Clear minor issues. If there is a clear decision on the subject, then the issue can either be referred as a complaint or appropriate measures or repercussions can be put in place.

Unclear minor issues. The issue may be unclear in which case it goes to the Complaints Committee. This committee is made up of Mathew Hulbert, Ashley Routh and Louise Jenifer. This allows the person the report has been made by to appear in front of the committee along with the person who raised the minor issue, who can write down what happened or the issue 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 there was an issue based on the balance of probabilities (whether it is more than likely the minor issue raised is true). They also consider any previous complaints or minor issues in the past four years to make their decision. Once this has taken place, any appropriate actions or repercussions will be put in place. If the issue is found to be serious then it may then be reported as a possible safeguarding or code of conduct breach.

Once an outcome has been decided. The Head and Deputy Head of Complaints will email both the person who submitted the minor issue and the person the minor issue has been raised about explaining the outcome of the case and what the next steps are. If this involves the issue being serious enough that it needs to go through the complaint's procedure, the issue should be moved onto the complaints procedure.

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 process. If either the person who raised the minor issue or the person who the minor issue was raised about is unhappy with the outcome of the case, then an appeal can be put forwards. This would go to the Complaints Committee and decisions can only be appealed once or, under exceptional circumstances, where new evidence has been found.

Learning lessons from investigations into minor issues. To learn the lessons from any breaches or near misses we will keep anonymous records of minor issues which will remain anonymised. 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.

Ensuring these measures are kept up to date. These measures will be kept up to date to ensure our organisation can prevent mistakes from happening or to learn from them if they do occur. They will be reviewed once a year, if an incident occurs or if there is a 'near miss'.

Availability of these measures. To ensure these measures are accessible to those that may need to consult them or to go through the processes in this document, this will be available on our website. A copy of this policy will also be sent to every member of the Centre when it is updated via email.

Have any ideas to make these procedures better? Let us know by submitting any ideas on the "Contact" page of our website.