



Complaints Policy and Procedures

Agreed March 2019

Update agreed by Trustees May 2024

Who we are and what we do:

The Mill provides a welcoming, positive, accessible and inclusive space at the heart of Walthamstow, and works with the community locally to make things happen. We don't run services or decide what should go on here, but provide the space, facilities and some resources. All our groups, events and activities are brought to us by local people who want to make something happen in Walthamstow.

What is the purpose of this document:

The aim of this document is to ensure that The Mill acts appropriately and consistently when a complaint is received. It also aims to set out the procedure that should be followed when a member of staff, trustee or volunteer becomes aware that a complaint, verbal, written or on social media, is being made.

Responsibility:

Overall responsibility for this policy lies with the Board of Trustees. The Centre Manager is responsible for the implementation of this policy with support from the Administration Officer.

Depending on the nature of the concern, an external investigation may have to take place. This will not be necessary for most cases, but will apply where the police or another external agency has a statutory duty to investigate; for example, theft, fraud or allegations of abuse.

The Policy:

The Mill views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person, group or organisation that has made the complaint.

Our aim is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure staff, trustees and volunteers at The Mill know what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way

- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

What is a Complaint?:

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of The Mill, including the building, staff, volunteers and trustees and Mill activities.

Where Do Complaints Come From? :

Complaints may come from anyone with an interest in The Mill, for example; volunteers, members of the local community, tenants, room hirers. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email, in writing or through any other mode of communication with The Mill.

What happens if someone makes a complaint?

The person who receives the complaint should (where possible) try to deal with the issue raised quickly and informally (seeking guidance from a member of staff if helpful). If the complainant wishes to make a formal complaint, they should be given a copy of The Mill Complaints Policy and Procedures and a [Complaints Form](#) to complete which should be returned to the Centre Manager or Administration Officer to investigate. The form may be handed in at reception or sent by email to info@themille17.org and will be acknowledged within 14 days.

Resolving Complaints

Formal Procedure - Stage One :

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the complainant will receive a reply within 28 days which should include :

- the action taken to investigate the complaint
- the conclusions from the investigation
- any action taken as a result of the complaint.

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by the Chair of Trustees at Stage Two.

Formal Procedure - Stage Two

At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of the Trustees and the complainant will receive an acknowledgement within 14 days letting them know who is dealing with their complaint. The Chair, or a suitable impartial person or persons they have designated (other than the person who took the Stage One decision), will consider the appeal and issue a decision in writing. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with

the person who dealt with the issue at Stage One. The person who dealt with the original issue at Stage One will be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive response within 28 days. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full response will be given. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe:

- the action taken to investigate the complaint,
- the conclusions from the investigation
- any action taken as a result of the complaint

The decision made at this stage is final.

Confidentiality:

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements. The complainant should not discuss the matter publicly to allow for a proper investigation to take place.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Trustees may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading at Stage Two review.

External Stage - Stage Three

The complainant may complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx

Fig 1.

[Complaints Process Flowchart](#)