Complaints Procedure

We aim to provide service to a standard acceptable to all our users. If we fail to do this we want to know about it. This will enable us to not only deal with the specific problem, but also avoid it happening again.

Our complaints procedure sets out how to take up matters you think are unsatisfactory about the service you have received from us.

This statement will be displayed in English and will be made available to groups/individuals on request and where necessary can be interpreted into another language or medium of communication.

1. **Introduction**

1.1 This policy sets out the procedure we will follow when we receive a complaint from users of our services and organisation or members of the public. It does not address complaints made by staff or volunteers (dealt with through grievance and disciplinary procedures) nor job applicants (recruitment procedure).

1.2 This procedure is meant to provide a means to resolve a dispute between WRDA and any complainant. It requires staff and management committee members at every stage to resolve the complaint. Complaints are likely to be in one or more of the following areas:

A. Dissatisfaction with our service, such as inadequate work, problems with service provision, unacceptable delay or failure to deliver a service etc.

B. Disputes between user and the organisation regarding policy, procedures or activities.

C. Discourtesy or unhelpfulness on the part of staff.

D. Dissatisfaction with research processes.

**2.0 The Procedure**

2.1 When someone wishes to register a complaint, the following procedure should be adopted (where the complaint is against the Director, the same procedure will be followed, but with the MC Chair substituting for the Director’s role at all stages.)

2.2 Preliminary Stage: The complaint should be received either via completion of a complaints form or by a request to make a verbal complaint.

2.3 Stage 1:

A. The complainant should be invited to speak to the Director to discuss the complaint with them. This can be done in person or by phone, whichever is appropriate. The Director should keep a record of the conversation on the complaints monitoring sheet. The Director will endeavour to resolve the matter.

B. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, or where it is not possible to use Stage 1 above (for example if it is not convenient for them to phone or visit the office) then refer to Stage 2 below. Stage 1 should be completed within 5 working days of the complaint.

2.4 Stage 2

A. The complainant should be asked to put their complaint in writing to the Director, marked Private and Confidential, providing as much detail of the complaint as possible.

B. If the complainant is not able to put their complaint in writing the complainant will be offered an interview with the Director. The role of the Director at this meeting will be confined to putting the complaints in writing, obtain the complainants approval for the contents of this, and ask the complainant to sign to indicate they agree with the contents.

C. The Director will then investigate the complaint and attempt to resolve it.

D. The Director may delegate any aspect of the investigation to a nominee.

E. If the complaint involves a member(s) of staff, the Director should offer the opportunity for the member of staff to put forward their account, either by written statement or by presentation to the Panel.

F. The Director will ensure that all complainants will be offered an interview with the Director to provide the response verbally. This meeting should be held within 10 working days as before, a written record of this interview will be kept and signed by the complainant.

G. If the complainant is not satisfied at this stage they should ask for the matter to be dealt with under Stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

2.3 Stage 3

A. Where the matter is not resolved by stage 2, the Director should immediately refer the complaint to the MC Chair (including sending her all documents relating to the complaint) who will convene a complaints sub panel.

B. The complaints sub panel will comprise of the Chair of the MC and a further two MC members who will be referred to a Complaints Officer.

C. The complainant will be informed immediately by the Chair that this is being done and that the Panel will also be contacting the staff member(s) against whom the complaint is made.

D. The panel will review the decision made at Stage 3 and may seek further clarification from any of the parties involved.

E. The complaints panel will notify the complainant of its reasons and decision within 15 working days of having received notice of the complaint. The panel’s decision will be final. The complaints panel will be responsible for ensuring records of the meeting are kept and the complaints monitoring form is completed.

F. The Chair will be responsible for reporting the panel’s findings to the next meeting of the MC.

2.4 Stage 4

A. This stage is only necessary if the complainant wishes for the final decision to go to arbitration.

B. The complainant will be notified that if they remain unhappy with the decision the complaint can be passed to an agreed external organisation for arbitration.

C. The arbitration will be confined to establishing if the complaints procedure has been followed and ensuring that the complainant has been dealt with fairly.

**3.0 Recording and monitoring complaints**

3.1 All complaints will be recorded and kept on file, including those, which were resolved without being put in writing. The complaints monitoring form shall be used to do this. All complaints shall be treated with regard to the Confidentiality Policy.

3.2 The Director will make a report once a year to the MC summarising the nature of complaints and how they were resolved.

**4.0 Ensuring the effectiveness of the procedure**

4.1 All MC members will receive a copy of the complaints procedure.

4.2 Existing and new workers will be introduced to the complaints procedure via induction. The procedure will be reviewed annually and amendments should be proposed and agreed by the MC.