

Museums Association Complaints Policy

The Museums Association (MA) is committed to providing a quality service for its members and working in an open and accountable way. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our members, customers and stakeholders including responding positively to complaints and by putting mistakes right. The MA holds the Code of Ethics for Museums and expects its members, staff and trustees to abide by it, in particular with regard to upholding the highest levels of institutional integrity and personal conduct at all times. (www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1155827)

Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially
- we respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc
- we learn from complaints and use them to improve our service.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly. Our aim is to:

- resolve complaints informally wherever possible
- enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred where appropriate.

However, if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Definition

The MA defines a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction (with the MA, a member of staff, or a trustee) that relates to the MA's work and that requires a formal response'.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the MA's Code of Ethics for Museums (www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1155827) and its Disciplinary Regulations (www.museumsassociation.org/about/disciplinary-regulations).

Purpose

The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

The MA's responsibility is to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing
- respond within a stated period of time
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint
- take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint in writing to the MA's attention normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising
- explain the problem as clearly as possible, including any action taken to date
- allow the MA a reasonable time to deal with the matter
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond the MA's control.

Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and the MA maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality. Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

Monitoring and reporting

MA trustees will receive annually an anonymised report of complaints made and their resolution and complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the MA's Privacy Policy.

Formal Complaints Procedure**Stage one**

In the first instance, if you are unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write to the director of the MA. If the complaint is against the director, you should write to the president of the MA. In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result and the remedy you are seeking.

You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within seven working days of receipt. You should get an initial response and an explanation within 15 working days. The MA aim to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently, timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative.

Our contact details can be found here: www.museumsassociation.org/about/contact

Stage two

If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint, then you can ask for your complaint and the response to be independently reviewed. If the complaint is against the director or a trustee, the president of the MA will appoint two trustees to investigate. If the complaint is against the president, the director of the MA will appoint two trustees to investigate.

Final stage

If you are not satisfied with the subsequent reply from the investigation, a panel comprising two trustees and/or executive will be appointed to hear the appeal. The decision of this appeal panel is final.