

# **Greigarious Community Arts & Singing (GCAS) SCIO**

## **- Complaints Procedure -**

**Regarding standards of service for both members (see also Managing Challenging Volunteer Situations) and audiences/participants alike.**

**GCAS recognises that :**

- Everyone who comes to any activities lead by or under the auspices of GCAS has the right to a high standard of service and respect (Reference GCAS Constitution and GCAS Code of Conduct).
- Members of any activities conducted by or under the auspices of GCAS and our audiences/participants have the right to complain if they are not happy with the standard of service or presentation they receive.

**The purpose of this policy and procedure is to:**

- Help us to provide a service of the highest standard to all those who come to any activities conducted by GCAS as members or as audiences
- Help us to deal with complaints in a positive way and use them to improve our work and performance
- Set out the issues that could be covered under this procedure
- Set out the steps that someone should take if they wish to make a complaint )
- Set out how we can deal with complaints in a fair and consistent way.

This policy and procedure applies to all members of Clydeside Singers, The Vibes and any other activities conducted/lead or under the auspices of GCAS and any audiences of those who come to see the group(s) perform.

**We will seek to deal with complaints by:**

- Defining clearly what we mean by a complaint
- Setting out a procedure that can be easily followed and understood
- Making sure that everyone knows about the policy and procedure
- Reassuring people that they will not be penalised in any way for using the complaints procedure and that we will respond positively to any complaints made in good faith
- Offering extra support to those who need help to make a complaint

- Taking a staged approach to complaints that takes account of the level of seriousness and the possibility of resolution at different points
- Investigating each complaint as objectively and fully as we reasonably can
- Keeping the complainant informed during the course of the investigation and of the outcome of his/her complaint
- Keeping clear records of complaints and of how they are resolved.

### **Complaints procedure. What do we mean by a complaint?**

A complaint is a statement from someone that he/she is not happy about the service, performance or support provided to him/her by the activity and would like this to be improved.

### **The complaint might be about:**

- The behaviour of another singing member (if this relates to allegations that someone may have harmed a vulnerable person or be at risk of doing so, protection procedures should be used)
- The level of service received
- The practice building or facilities
- Written information
- Lack of support received.
- A singing member feeling that he has been treated unfairly or in a way that is discriminatory
- A specific activity or outing
- Anything else related to the service provided by GCAS.

### **Procedure for making a complaint:**

#### **Stage One:**

If possible, the person should discuss the complaint with the CEO/Musical Director or GCAS Secretary.

The CEO/Musical Director or GCAS Secretary will, in the first instance, try to resolve the matter informally. This is often possible and can mean that the problem is sorted out simply and more quickly.

If an informal solution has been tried before and has not worked, or if the complainant does not feel that informal discussions are adequate or likely to be effective, stage two of the complaints procedure should be followed.

The complainant should put their concerns in writing to the CEO/Musical Director or GCAS Secretary. The CEO/Musical Director should give the written complaint to the GCAS Secretary within 24 hours. The GCAS Secretary should then acknowledge the complaint within two working days by sending a brief letter to:

- Thank the complainant for getting in touch
- Express regret that a complaint has been necessary
- Assure him/her that the matter will be investigated
- Set a provisional timescale for the investigation that is achievable but avoids delay as much as possible
- Explain when the secretary will next be in contact
- Offer a contact name (CEO/Musical Director or the GCAS Secretary) in case the complainant has any questions in the meantime
- Make any temporary arrangements that may be necessary pending the outcome of the investigation into the complaint.
- If the complaint is about a specific singing member, they should be informed within two working days (or as soon as possible) that a complaint has been made against him and the nature of the complaint. If the complaint is due to a poor performance the GCAS Board should be informed of the complaint and the procedure being followed by the CEO/Musical Director or GCAS Secretary. However, the person should not be informed if doing so would compromise anyone's safety or a police investigation.
- The GCAS Secretary should normally be responsible for investigating a Stage Two complaint. The GCAS Secretary should plan the investigation according to the nature of the complaint, taking into account any witnesses or specialist opinion that should be sought. As a minimum, the complainant should be interviewed. Any person who might be the subject of the complaint should also be interviewed, provided that doing so would not compromise anyone's safety or a police investigation.

- If the complaint is about a building, facilities or equipment, then this should be examined (Health and Safety Policy).
- If the complaint is about access to a service, the reasoning behind a decision to offer or not offer a particular service should be examined. (eg: related to a disability)
- If, at any point during the investigation, it appears that a criminal offence may have been committed and the complainant wishes to take the matter further, the matter should be reported to the police. Discussions should be held with the police about whether the investigation into the complaint can continue alongside their own enquiries.
- If it emerges at any point that a vulnerable person may have been caused significant harm or may be at risk of significant harm protection procedures should be investigated immediately.
- The GCAS Secretary should make notes of the investigation, including notes of any meetings that take place, and should write a report based on their findings. The report should state clearly whether the complaint is upheld or not, and should make recommendations about how the matter can be taken forward. The report should be shared with both the complainant and the GCAS Board and in the case of a group performance, the complaint would be addressed to the individuals concerned and/or the whole group.
- Any comments that either party may wish to make about the extent to which he/she accepts or rejects the findings of the report should be noted.
- Once a way forward has been agreed, this should be reviewed regularly.
- If either the complainant or a person who is the subject of the complaint is not prepared to accept the findings of the report, they should confirm this in writing.

**The matter then becomes a Stage Two complaint.**

- A complaint also progresses to Stage Two if it has previously (ie within the last 12 months) been handled and has resurfaced.

A Stage Two complaint may come about for one of two reasons.

- It may be a complaint that has escalated from stage one because the complainant or a person who was the subject of the complaint wishes to challenge the findings from a stage one investigation.

- Alternatively, it may relate to matters that were investigated as a stage one complaint within the previous 12 months and have resurfaced.
- Stage Two complaints should be investigated either by an appointed member of the GCAS Board or by a completely independent person who should be nominated by GCAS Board.
- The investigation should be commissioned by the CEO/Musical Director or GCAS Secretary and findings reported back to the GCAS Board.
- If a complaint is to progress to Stage Two, the complainant (this could be the original complainant or a person who was the subject of the original complaint) should again indicate in writing that he/she wishes to complain (or complain further) and should state the reason for this.
- The written statement should be presented to the Member or Independent Person appointed, who should then, within seven working days, respond in writing to the complainant in the same way as indicated in the stage one procedures.
- The procedure for the investigation and sharing of the report should be similar to that outlined in the Stage One procedure.
- Stage two is the final stage of the complaints procedure. If any party wishes to complain further following the completion of Stage Two, this should be taken up with an external party.
- Keeping a record of the complaint regardless of whether a complaint is dealt with formally or informally, accurate notes should be made by the CEO/Musical Director, GCAS Secretary or Member or Independent Person Appointed and should include minutes, notes and decisions.
- Copies of the final report should be given to the person making the complaint and to anyone who may be the subject of the complaint.
- If the complaint leads to any disciplinary action or a referral to a statutory authority, copies of the notes made during the investigation and the report of the investigation (together with any notes relating to the outcome) should be kept confidentially on the file of any person who is the subject of the complaint.

This policy and procedure should be reviewed every year:

- Date of writing: May 2019  
Date of next review: May 2020