



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Policy number	Governance Pol 4	Approved by Council	2 nd October 2020
Drafted by	Adrian Champion/Tony Doré	Review date	2nd October 2020

INTRODUCTION

The Geologists' Association (GA) receives occasional formal complaints relating to services or information supplied. This policy is intended to provide standardized resolution and reporting of complaints.

DEFINITIONS

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the GA where a response or resolution is expected or legally required.

Geologists' Association (GA) includes Rockwatch.

PURPOSE

This policy is intended to ensure that we handle complaints fairly, efficiently and effectively.

POLICY

RECEIVING COMPLAINTS

A complainant's responsibility will be to:

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

The GA's responsibility will be to:

- deal responsibly and sensitively with a complaint
- recognise the formal complaint in writing
- advise the outcome of the complaint within a stated period of time
- take action where appropriate

Anonymous complaints will only be accepted if there is a compelling reason to do so.

REPLYING TO COMPLAINTS

If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately. Where possible, complaints will be resolved verbally, at first contact. If immediate resolution is not possible the GA will promptly acknowledge receipt of complaints.

The GA is committed to managing people's expectations and will inform them as soon as possible about:

- the complaints process
- the expected time frames for our actions
- the status of the complaint and reasons for any delay

Policies and Procedures can only be established and amended by Council



Complaints will be investigated promptly with as little formality as possible. When appropriate we may offer an explanation or apology to the person making the complaint.

Complaints will be handled in an equitable and objective manner by an independent person, usually a non-involved member of GA Council, to avoid any conflict of interest. A team of up to three members of Council may be appointed, depending on the skill and experience needed to address the complaint. This team may consult with other parties (for example the President or Executive Secretary) as necessary. For particularly serious or difficult issues the team may opt to take external advice, e.g. with the Charities Commission.

Complaints and complainants will be confidential provided this is practical and appropriate.

All complaints will be kept confidential and personal information that identifies individuals will only be disclosed when permitted by privacy laws, GDPR and any related confidentiality requirements.

Where a person making a complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome of our review of their complaint, they may seek an external review of the GA's decision.

REPORTING OF COMPLAINTS

Complaints will be recorded systematically and an anonymized report given to the Executive annually.

Significant complaints should be reported to the Executive as they arise and where necessary also reported to Council.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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RESPONSIBILITIES

Complaints resolution and reporting is the responsibility of the Executive, with the assistance of the GA Office

PROCEDURE

The five key stages in our complaint management system are set out below

1 RECEIVE

Unless the complaint has been resolved at the outset, the GA Office will record the complaint and its supporting information. All complaints will be recorded in the Complaints Register.



Complaints Register

The record of the complaint will document:

- Contact information of the person making a complaint and the date received

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- Issues raised by the person making a complaint and the outcome/s they want
- Any other relevant information

2 ACKNOWLEDGE

The GA Council will acknowledge receipt of each complaint promptly, and preferably within 5 working days.

3 ASSESS AND INVESTIGATE

3.1 Initial assessment

After acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the GA Council will ensure the complaint is fully understood and confirm whether the issue raised in the complaint is within the GA's control. The GA Council will also consider the outcome sought by the complainant.

3.2 Investigating the complaint

After assessing the complaint, the GA Council will consider how to manage it. We may:

- Give the person making a complaint information or an explanation
- Gather information about the issue or
- Investigate the claims made in the complaint.

The GA Council will keep the person making the complaint informed of our progress, particularly if there are any delays. Which actions we decide to take will be tailored to each case and take into account any statutory requirements.

4 DETERMINE OUTCOME AND PROVIDE REASONS FOR DECISION

Following any investigation into the issues raised, the GA Council will contact the person making the complaint and advise them of the outcome of the complaint, any action taken and the reason for the GA's decision

5 CLOSE THE COMPLAINT: DOCUMENT AND ANALYSE DATA

All complaints will be reported to the GA Executive as they arise. Records of all complaints will also be kept and summarized annually for the Executive. Information reported should include:

- how the GA managed the complaints
- the outcome of the complaint including matters resolved at the time of the complaint
- Lessons learned, and any outstanding actions to be followed up
- the number of complaints received
- the root causes and any systemic issues or trends identified