



# Complaints Policy

Happy Valley Pride

Version: 3.0

Approved by: Trustees of Happy Valley Pride

Review Date: 23/06/2026

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## 1. Purpose

Happy Valley Pride is committed to creating a safer, inclusive, welcoming, and respectful environment for LGBTQIA+ people, allies, volunteers, staff, performers, traders, partners, and members of the wider community, as much as is reasonable within our power.

We welcome feedback, concerns, and complaints as an opportunity to improve our services, events, governance, and community engagement. This policy explains how individuals can raise concerns, how complaints will be handled, expected timescales, and how the organisation manages unreasonable or vexatious complaints.

Happy Valley Pride is a small, charitable organisation with a part-time staff team, which relies on voluntary support and partnerships with a range of service providers and venues across the locality – we therefore acknowledge that there will be circumstances when improvements may be necessary. Despite our safeguarding and risk assessment procedures, there will also be times when unexpected challenges arise. The organisation will always listen to concerns raised, take legitimate complaints on board and wherever possible will make amendments to its processes, procedures and risk assessments accordingly, within the limits of our organisational capacity to do so.

This policy aims to ensure that complaints are handled fairly, consistently, transparently, and in a timely manner.

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## 2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints about:



- The conduct of Happy Valley Pride staff, volunteers, trustees, or representatives acting on behalf of the organisation.
- Organisational decisions, actions, or omissions.
- The delivery of events, services, programmes, or activities.
- Accessibility, inclusion, or equality concerns relating to organisational activities.
- Communication and engagement with members of the public.

This policy does not apply to:

- Safeguarding concerns requiring immediate action.
- The conduct of third-party organisations.
- Criminal allegations or incidents that should be reported to the police.
- Employment grievances raised by staff.
- Volunteer management issues covered by separate volunteer procedures.
- Matters already subject to legal proceedings or regulatory investigation.

Where a complaint falls outside this policy, the complainant will be directed to the appropriate process wherever possible. Concerns about non-Happy Valley Pride personnel should be directed towards that person's employer.

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## 3. Principles

The organisation will:

- Treat complainants with dignity and respect.
- Take complaints seriously.
- Handle complaints confidentially where possible.
- Act fairly and impartially.
- Not discriminate on the basis of protected characteristics.
- Seek to resolve concerns informally where appropriate.
- Learn from complaints and improve practices.
- Protect staff, volunteers, trustees, and community members from abusive or threatening behaviour.

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## 4. Who Can Make a Complaint?



A complaint may be made by:

- Event attendees.
- Community organisations.
- Partners and stakeholders.
- Members of the public affected by the organisation's activities.

Complaints may be made by an authorised representative acting on someone's behalf where appropriate, only with written and verified consent by that person.

Anonymous complaints may be considered where sufficient information is provided, although the organisation may be limited in its ability to investigate or provide an outcome.

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## 5. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints should be submitted in writing wherever possible.

Complaints can be made via:

- Email: [info@happyvalleypride.com](mailto:info@happyvalleypride.com)
- Alternative accessible formats upon request to the above email address

The complaint should include:

- The complainant's name and contact details.
- A description of the issue.
- Relevant dates, times, and locations.
- Any supporting evidence.
- Details of any steps already taken to resolve the matter.
- The outcome sought.

Where a person requires support due to disability, language needs, literacy barriers, or other accessibility requirements, reasonable adjustments will be made wherever possible.

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## 6. Time Limits for Complaints



Complaints should normally be submitted within **three months** of the incident or issue occurring.

Complaints submitted after three months may still be considered where:

- There are exceptional circumstances.
- The complainant was unable to raise the matter earlier.
- The issue involves safeguarding, discrimination, or significant organisational risk.
- Evidence remains available to allow a fair investigation.

The organisation may decline to investigate complaints where:

- 12 months or more has passed.
- Relevant evidence is no longer available.
- Witness recollections are likely to be unreliable.
- Insufficient detail is provided or a lack of clarity in these circumstances, the organisation may ask for the complaint to be amended as appropriate.

The decision whether to investigate an out-of-time complaint as per the above will be made on a case-by-case basis.

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## 7. Complaint Handling Process

### Stage 1 – Acknowledgement

The organisation will:

- Acknowledge receipt of a complaint within **5 working days** and will inform the complainant which member of staff is investigating – this will be either the Operations Director or Artistic Director.
- Request additional information if required.

If the complaint is unclear or incomplete, timescales may be paused until sufficient information is received.

If a complaint concerns either the Operations Director or Artistic Director, it will be assigned to the Chair of trustees, who will assign two trustees to lead the investigation.

If a complaint concerns the Chair, it will be assigned to the Vice Chair, who will lead on the investigation with another trustee.



## Stage 2 – Assessment and Investigation

The organisation will:

- Review the information provided.
- Gather relevant evidence.
- Speak with relevant individuals where necessary.
- Consider policies, procedures, and applicable legal obligations
  
- Draw on the expertise of staff, Trustees and, where relevant, volunteers or freelance expertise, in order to expedite the process

The organisation aims to complete investigations within **30 working days** of acknowledgement.

However, some complaints may require additional time due to:

- Complexity of the issues.
- Availability of witnesses.
- Organisational capacity.
- Event schedules and seasonal operations.
- External investigations.
- Safeguarding or legal considerations.

Where additional time is required, the complainant will be informed and provided with an updated estimated timescale.

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## Stage 3 – Outcome

Following investigation, the organisation will provide a written response outlining:

- The issues considered.
- Findings.
- Any actions taken or proposed.
- Any recommendations for improvement.
- Information about further review options where available.

Possible outcomes include:

- Complaint upheld.
- Complaint partially upheld.
- Complaint not upheld.



- Unable to reach a conclusion due to insufficient evidence.

The organisation may not always be able to disclose specific actions relating to individuals due to confidentiality, employment, legal, or data protection obligations.

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## 8. Review Process

If a complainant believes that:

- Relevant information was not considered;
- The process was not followed correctly; or
- The outcome was unreasonable based on the evidence,

they may request a review within **20 working days** of receiving the outcome.

The review request must explain the reasons for seeking further consideration.

A review will normally be conducted by a panel not previously involved in the matter.

The organisation aims to provide a review outcome within **30 working days**.

The review decision will normally be final.

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## 9. Confidentiality and Data Protection

### Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy

All information relating to complaints is strictly confidential. Processing, handling, and storage of this data strictly adhere to the statutory requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and relevant UK data protection legislation.

Disclosure of information is strictly limited. Data will only be shared when a lawful basis is established, specifically to:

- Execute a full and proper investigation of the complaint.
- Satisfy mandatory statutory or legal obligations.
- Protect the vital interests and physical safety of individuals.
- Formulate, exercise, or defend formal legal claims.



Complaint records are subject to strict retention policies maintained under the Data Protection Act 2018.

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## 10. Safeguarding and Serious Concerns

Where a complaint raises concerns relating to:

- Safeguarding children or adults at risk;
- Serious misconduct;
- Hate incidents or hate crimes;
- Criminal activity;
- Immediate risks to health or safety;

the organisation may refer the matter to appropriate authorities and/or activate safeguarding procedures.

In such circumstances, this complaints process may be suspended or modified.

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## 11. Unreasonable, Persistent, or Vexatious Complaints

The organisation recognises that individuals have the right to challenge decisions and pursue complaints and our intention is to meet any challenge in good faith, and with a desire to find an appropriate resolution.

However, there may be occasions where a complainant's behaviour becomes unreasonable.

A complaint will not be considered unreasonable simply because:

- The complainant is upset or distressed.
- The complaint is strongly worded.
- The complainant has made multiple complaints about different issues.
- The complaint concerns discrimination, inclusion, or organisational accountability.

Examples of unreasonable behaviour may include:



- Repeatedly raising the same issue after all review processes have been exhausted.
- Refusing to accept reasonable evidence-based findings.
- Excessive, repetitive, or burdensome correspondence.
- Aggressive, abusive, discriminatory, or threatening language.
- Harassment of staff, volunteers, trustees, contractors, or community members.
- Publishing knowingly false allegations.
- Demanding outcomes that are outside the organisation's scope or reasonable capacity.

Where behaviour is considered unreasonable, the organisation may:

- Limit communication to a single point of contact.
- Restrict communication to written correspondence.
- Respond only to new and relevant information.
- Set reasonable limits on the frequency of contact.
- Decline to respond to repetitive matters already addressed.
- Close the complaint where no further meaningful action is possible.

Any such action will be proportionate, recorded, and communicated to the complainant.

Threats, harassment, discrimination, or abusive conduct towards staff, volunteers, trustees, or community members will not be tolerated and may result in communications being restricted or, where appropriate, referred to the police or other relevant authorities.

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## 12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

As an LGBTQIA+ Pride organisation, we are committed to ensuring that our complaints process is accessible, inclusive, and free from discrimination.

Reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 will be made where required to ensure equitable access to the complaints process. Complaints relating to discrimination, harassment, victimisation, accessibility, safety or inclusion will be treated with particular care and sensitivity.

The organisation will not tolerate retaliation against any person who raises a complaint in good faith.



## 13. Monitoring and Learning

The organisation will:

- Record the number of complaints received and the number of complaints upheld.
  - Monitor themes and trends to identify any priorities for action.
  - Use complaint outcomes to improve organisational practice.
  - Report anonymised complaint data to trustees at quarterly board meetings.
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## 14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or organisational needs.

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### Contact for Complaints

Email: [info@happyvalleypride.com](mailto:info@happyvalleypride.com)

Website: <https://happyvalleypride.com/>

Postal Address: Unit 10, The Town Hall, St George's Street, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, HX7 7BY

**Alternative formats and accessibility support are available on request.**