

South West Heritage Trust
Two-Stage Complaints Policy

4 August 2015



Introduction

The South West Heritage Trust is committed to providing the best possible level of service to our customers and partners in all aspects of our activity and business.

It is recognised, however, that there may sometimes be an area of service delivery that does not meet the required standard for users, customers, stakeholders or the general public.

We take complaints very seriously and will try to resolve them as quickly as possible.

To ensure we can respond effectively to complaints, a two-stage complaints procedure is in place. The procedure exists for two main purposes:

- To establish a defined level of expectation about how any complaints will be dealt with;
- To enable the Trust to respond in a considered way using a clear and timely process.

Complaints received and responses to them will be used by the Trust to assess how future development and delivery of services can be adapted, improved or refined.

How to Complain

You may complain in person to a member of staff, by telephone or in writing. If you do not wish to complain directly to a member of staff, please use the contact details given at the end of this document.

If complaining in person, the member of staff may refer the matter to a manager where appropriate or requested.

In all relevant cases please state that you are making a complaint rather than a comment or suggestion.

When to Complain

We recognise that a cause for complaint may arise in a broad range of circumstances and not necessarily on one given occasion. We would usually expect a complaint to be received within a month of the cause for complaint.

Procedure

Stage 1 – Frontline Resolution

If you have a complaint it will usually be appropriate to seek resolution to the complaint with a member of staff at the point of dissatisfaction arising. Staff take complaints very seriously and will deal with them as a matter of priority.

If appropriate or required, we will escalate a Stage 1 complaint to the appropriate level within the organisation. We aim to achieve resolution of Stage 1 complaints within five working days. We will keep you informed if we need longer than five working days. Resolution may take place either face to face, over the telephone or in writing.

If you are unhappy with the resolution or response you have received, you can ask for your complaint to be taken to Stage 2. You should do so in writing if this has not already happened at Stage 1. Contact details are provided at the end of this document.

Stage 2 – Investigation

We will use the Stage 2 investigation procedure in the following circumstances:

- a. Where you indicate that the Stage 1 process has not satisfactorily resolved the complaint for you.
- b. Where the complaint is technically complex or may not reasonably be resolved within five working days. In such cases we may, in consultation with you, decide to omit the Stage 1 process.
- c. In any other circumstance where the Stage 2 process reasonably seems the most effective route for resolving the complaint.

We will acknowledge your Stage 2 complaint in writing within two working days of receipt.

We will provide you with a formal response within 20 working days. If it is not possible to resolve your complaint within 20 days, we will give you as much notice of this as possible and will explain why any extension of time is required.

At Stage 2 your complaint will be dealt with by a member of the Senior Management Team and where appropriate by one or more members of the Board of Trustees.

If your complaint is about a member of the Senior Management Team, the handling of your complaint will include an appropriate member, or appropriate members, of the Board of Trustees.

If, following this two stage procedure, you are still not happy, we will write to you indicating further options for complaint, depending upon the nature and subject of your complaint.

Confidentiality

Any information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

We will retain your complaint confidentially on file for a reasonable period of time and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Matters of Complaint

Complaints may be about any direct activities of the South West Heritage Trust or subsidiary companies.

Complaints may be about:

- Operational activities
- Levels of service
- Conduct of staff, volunteers or trustees
- Any other issue, event or service area directly within the control of the Trust

If a complaint is about any area of service not directly within our control or jurisdiction, we will inform you of this fact. We will use a separate procedure in respect of issues relating to Safeguarding (ie children, young people and vulnerable adults).

Who to Contact

We want to resolve complaints quickly and effectively. Where possible, you should seek to resolve a complaint with a member of staff at the point of dissatisfaction.

If you do not wish to do this, or if you find the initial response inadequate, you should contact the Head of Business Services in the first instance. Contact details are as follows:

Phone (direct dial to the Head of Business Services): 01823 347411

Email (received by the Head of Business Services only): complaints@swheritage.org.uk

Address: South West Heritage Trust
Somerset Heritage Centre
Brunel Way
Norton Fitzwarren
Taunton, Somerset, TA2 6SF

When submitting a complaint in writing, please provide:

- Your full name, address and preferred methods of contact
- As full an account of the complaint as possible
- What the nature of the problem is
- How you would like the problem to be resolved

South West Heritage Trust is a charity and a company limited by guarantee registered in England.
Registered office: Somerset Heritage Centre, Brunel Way, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton, Somerset TA2 6SF
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