

## Whitworth & District u3a Complaints Policy

### 1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Whitworth & District u3a will handle complaints and grievances in a fair, consistent and timely manner, aiming wherever possible to resolve issues informally.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- u3a members
- Trustees and committee members
- External individuals or organisations raising concerns

### 3. Complaints vs Disciplinary Matters

Complaint: A concern or dissatisfaction raised by a member or external party.

Disciplinary matter: A suspected breach of the u3a Code of Conduct.

Where a complaint involves misconduct, the Code of Conduct will be followed instead.

### 4. Principles

The committee will ensure that:

- All complaints are handled promptly, fairly and objectively
- Informal resolution is attempted where appropriate
- Decisions are based on evidence and facts
- Confidentiality is maintained
- Appropriate records are kept

### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Committee has overall responsibility.

A designated Trustee will oversee complaints.

The Chair (or Vice Chair if required) will co-ordinate formal processes.

## **6. Informal Resolution**

Most concerns should be resolved informally.

Process:

- Identify the most appropriate person to handle the issue
- Hold informal discussions with all parties
- Seek a mutually acceptable outcome
- Agree changes to prevent recurrence

## **7. Formal Complaints Procedure**

Submitting a Complaint:

- Complaints must be submitted in writing
- Include details, dates, and desired outcome

Investigation and Hearing:

- Chair appoints investigator(s)
- Three-member sub-committee hears the complaint
- Meeting within 14 days where possible

## **8. Outcomes**

- No action
- Recommendations or procedural changes
- Warnings
- Exclusion from a group
- Termination of membership in serious cases

## **9. Appeals**

Appeals must be lodged within 7 days in writing.

A new panel will review and make a final decision.

The decision must be minuted and these minutes must be kept confidential.



The Committee's decision following any appeal is final and confidentiality must be maintained. Exceptions to this would be for gross misconduct issues that necessitated informing appropriate authorities and legal advice would be sought by National Office.

### **10. Confidentiality**

All complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

### **11. Review**

This policy will be reviewed periodically.

November 2025