



# **Policy and Procedure**

## **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

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<b>01</b>	<b>Complaints Policy &amp; Procedure</b>	<b>March 2016</b>		<b>Catherine Pickles/ Rob Ellis</b>

# COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

## Introduction

NASMA is committed to providing a high quality service for its members, employees and external stakeholders. We are committed to working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all our service-users. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our standards is by listening and responding to the views of our members, employees and external stakeholders, and by responding appropriately to complaints, and by putting our mistakes right.

Therefore NASMA aims to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy and straight-forward as possible;
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response;
- we deal with it promptly, professionally, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- we respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation or an apology where we have got things wrong, or by information on appropriate action taken to correct things;
- we learn from feedback and complaints and use them to improve our service;
- We review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

NASMA recognises that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly;
- keep matters low-key and confidential wherever possible;
- facilitate mediation between the complainant and the person(s) concerned.

An informal approach is appropriate when quick, straight-forward resolution can be achieved. However, if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

## General

NASMA defines a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction that relates to NASMA, a Board Trustee, or a member of staff and requires a formal response.

The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently, professionally, and wherever possible are resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

### **NASMA's responsibility will be to:**

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within a stated period of time;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- take relevant action to rectify the complaint where possible.

### **A complainant's responsibility is to:**

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

**Responsibility for Action:** The Board of Trustees and NASMA employees.

**Confidentiality:** Every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and NASMA maintain confidentiality about the issue. However the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (each complaint will be judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation and any required action will be explained to the complainant.

**Monitoring and Reporting:** The Board of Trustees will publish an annual anonymised report of complaints and resolutions on the NASMA website.

## **Formal Complaints Procedure**

### **Stage 1**

If you are unable to resolve the issue informally, you should put your complaint in writing to the NASMA Trustee who has been handling the issue, so that he/she has a chance to put things right. In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking.

Your complaint should be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt. You should get a response and an explanation within 15 working days of acknowledgement.

The contact details can be found on the NASMA website or you can request them from the NASMA Office Manager at: [office@nasma.org.uk](mailto:office@nasma.org.uk).

### **Stage 2**

If you are not satisfied with the initial response then you can write to the NASMA Chair and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed. If your complaint concerns the NASMA Chair and you are not satisfied with his response at Stage 1, you should write to the NASMA Vice-Chair (Governance & Operations). You can expect the NASMA Chair (or Vice-Chair as applicable) to acknowledge your request within 5 working days of receipt and expect a response within 15 working days.

NASMA's aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently, timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response explaining what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

### **Final Stage**

If you are not satisfied with the subsequent reply from the NASMA Chair (or Vice-Chair as applicable), then you have the option of writing to the NASMA Vice-Chair (Finance). The NASMA Vice-Chair (Finance) will appoint a suitable person to investigate the complaint. Such persons will be impartial and have no invested interest in the outcome of the complaint. Where the complaint concerns the NASMA Vice-Chair (Finance) you should contact the NASMA Vice-Chair (Communications) who will appoint a suitable person.

Should the complaint reach this Final Stage, the NASMA Vice-Chair (Governance and Operations) (or Vice-Chair Finance as applicable) will respond normally within 10 working days, to inform you of the action which will be taken to investigate your complaint, and when you can expect to hear the outcome of the investigation.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

*Last Reviewed: March 2016*

*With thanks to the Association for Learning Technology (ALT)*

NASMA Complaints Policy, March 2016