

# Complaints Handling Policy

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# Policy Outline

## 1. Introduction

As a quality-focussed organisation, Acorn Promotions is committed to the delivery of a high standard of supporter-experience-first fundraising and firm adherence to the Code of Fundraising Practice when interacting with the general public. On the rare occasion that one of our Ambassadors gets it wrong and generates a complaint from the public, the charity, or within the organisation, this document will outline necessary steps to conclude an investigation into a complaint, ensure clear lines of communication between the company and our charity clients, and do all in our power to rectify the situation for the prospective supporter.

## 2. Scope

Any complaint received from the public, a charity client or an internal source.

## 3. Purpose

To provide clear guidance and ensure complaints are dealt with in a professional, process-driven manner.

## 4. Governance and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Managing Director to oversee the investigation of all complaints, although investigative and disciplinary processes may be undertaken by another member of the Board of Directors.

# Investigating Complaints

## 5. A Complaint Made by a Member of the Public

### 5.1 To Acorn Promotions

In the case that a member of the public is unhappy with the way that they have been treated and chooses to make a complaint directly to Acorn Promotions, they shall receive a written response from a member of the management team within 2 working days. Usually, this response will notify them that an investigation is underway, and set out timescales of no greater than 15 working days for internal resolution before the member of the public is informed of the outcome of the investigation (in line with relevant ACAS guidance and the Data Protection Act 2018).

It is Acorn Promotions Policy to inform the charity client of this complaint, using the original complaint from the member of the public if possible, within one working day of its receipt. The Managing Director shall be provided with a copy of both of these communications within this timeframe, and shall carry out an investigation process in line with the remits of the Code of

Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. They shall then conclude the investigation process by providing a written report to the Client and to the Board of Directors within no longer than five working days.

## 5.2 To a Charity Client or the Fundraising Regulator

If a member of the public is unhappy with how they've been treated and chooses to make a complaint directly to the charity, it is the responsibility of the Charity Representative to notify Acorn Promotions of the complaint in writing within 2 working days. Charities may choose to offer a fuller response within their own internal SLAs, however it should be noted that a 15 working day period to conclude an investigation process will be necessary before Acorn Promotions are able to share the opinion of the complaint or likelihood of further actions. No member of the Acorn Promotions staff should communicate directly with the member of the public without the prior written consent of the Client.

Within one working day of being notified of a complaint, the Managing Director is responsible for collating any applicable evidence and carrying out an investigation within the limits of the Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, and conclude this investigation by writing a written report and providing any relevant evidence to the Client and the Board of Directors within no longer than five working days.

## 6. A Complaint Made by a Charity Client in the Process of Monitoring

If a charity representative witnesses behaviour they deem worthy of complaint in the process of external monitoring, they are asked to notify the most senior Acorn Promotions point of contact on site of this at their earliest opportunity to enable the Manager to rectify the behaviour in its immediacy. Further to this, they shall submit the complaint in writing to their designated point of contact within 2 working days. Within 2 working days of being notified of a complaint, the Managing Director shall carry out an investigation process within the remits of the Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures , and conclude this investigation by providing a written report and any relevant evidence to the Managing Director in no longer than five working days.

## 7. An Internal Complaint

A complaint may also be made internally by an Acorn Promotions Ambassador, Manager, or another member of staff who witnesses behaviour that they believe to be unacceptable and worthy of complaint. Staff are expected to follow Acorn Promotions' Whistleblowing Policy, notifying their Manager of the complaint in the first instance, or to a member of senior staff if the complaint is related to their Manager or if they feel it is appropriate to do so. The complainant should submit as much evidence of their complaint as possible alongside a written account of their complaint to relevant staff (as per the Whistleblowing Policy) within 1 working day.

The most senior member of staff notified will become the investigation lead, and shall carry out an investigation process within the remits of the Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance

Procedures, concluding this investigation by providing a written report and any relevant evidence to the Client and the Board of Directors within no longer than five working days.

## Following an Investigation

### 8. Deciding Upon Further Action

Following the receipt of a written investigation report, it is the role of the Board of Directors to review the investigation's findings independently. A discussion shall take place to determine whether the complaint is deemed to be upheld (i.e. that the investigation finds that there was wrongdoing on the part of the Ambassador) or not upheld (i.e. the investigation finds no evidence of wrongdoing), and further action will be decided. If a unanimous decision cannot be reached in this discussion, a member of senior staff may be used to break the deadlock, and the decision can be made on a majority basis.

The decision following the investigation will be fed-back in writing to all internal stakeholders, and it is the responsibility of the Managing Director to notify the charity of any forthcoming actions in writing, and in-line with ACAS guidance and the 2018 Data Protection Act. In cases where it may be necessary to notify the Fundraising Regulator of the outcome of an internal investigation, this responsibility shall also fall to the Managing Director, in conjunction with the Client. In the majority of cases, it is expected that a formal disciplinary process will be necessary in order to rectify a received complaint that has been upheld. However, it is important to note that each case will be judged on its own merits, and in cases, compulsory training may be a satisfactory outcome for all stakeholders. It is also important to note that even complaints deemed to be not-upheld may result in compulsory further training for the Ambassador to whom the complaint relates in order to reduce the risk of further complaint. Notification of necessary further training will be provided to all stakeholders in writing. It is the responsibility of the Manager to deliver this training and report back to all stakeholders that this is the case before the Ambassador undertakes any further interaction with the public.

### 9. Complaints Logging

Regardless of the source of a complaint, it is the responsibility of the Managing Director to ensure that the complaint is logged in the complaints log. Acorn Promotions are happy to share an anonymised analysis of the complaints log with charity clients, in addition to an in depth analysis of their own complaints upon request. The Board of Directors shall review the complaint log every 6 months in order to assess if Ambassadors' training needs are being met, and to put in place appropriate measures to ensure a reduction in complaints for the following period, facilitating a cycle of continuous improvement.

### 10. Removal from Further Solicitation

Any individual who makes a complaint shall be added to the Acorn Promotions "no knock" list where an address is available to minimise any further imposition.

## Further Information

### 11. Recommended Resources

11.1 This policy should be viewed in-line with CM002: Ensuring Excellence Policy and HR006: Investigation and Disciplinary Policy

11.2 For information regarding the Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, please see HR006: Investigation and Disciplinary Policy or ACAS regulation at: [www.acas.org.uk/investigations-for-discipline-and-grievance-step-by-step](http://www.acas.org.uk/investigations-for-discipline-and-grievance-step-by-step).

### 12. Change Control and Review

12.1 This policy document is a controlled document. Any changes shall follow the change control process.

12.2 Acorn Promotions commits to reviewing this policy annually, or more frequently if there is a change in any relevant regulation or legislation

### 13. Governance

13.1 Any breach of the Complaints Handling Policy, whether deliberate, or through negligence may lead to disciplinary action.