



Resolving Complaints

How The Scout Association seeks to resolve complaints

The information in this leaflet is for anyone who wishes to raise a concern or make a complaint about a matter associated with Scouting. The procedures set out here are for use equally by those within Scouting, and by others, such as parents, who may have concerns.

Concerns about Scouting

We hope that everyone who comes into contact with Scouting will have a positive experience. However, it is inevitable that on occasions, concerns may arise which require investigation. As the majority of Scouting activity takes place locally within a community it is expected that most of these concerns will be dealt with quickly and courteously in an informal way by local volunteer Leaders.

However, it is possible that a complaint may arise that requires a more formal investigation and response. The Scout Association is committed to seeking to resolve these complaints fairly and in the best interests of everyone involved.

This leaflet tells you how to access the Association's Complaints Procedure and explains how complaints are handled.

How do I make a complaint?

If your complaint is about a matter within a local Scout Group please contact the Group Scout Leader. The Group Scout Leader is the manager of Scouting activities within the Scout Group. They will listen to the complaint and will do their best to answer your concerns.

If you feel you do not want to discuss the matter with the Group Scout Leader, or if they cannot deal with your concerns, or if your query is more serious, then the District Commissioner will assist you. Their contact details are available from the Group Scout Leader or from the Scout Information Centre.

We have asked all those in Scouting to acknowledge receipt of any formal complaints within seven days. Our aim is to resolve all complaints within four weeks. However, this may take longer depending on the nature of the complaint. If the timescale needs to be extended, you should expect to be kept informed of progress.

Please understand that all Leaders and Commissioners are volunteers and undertake their Scouting roles in their spare time. It may take time for them to give you a substantive reply to your complaint.

What happens if I have concerns about how the original complaint was handled?

If after receiving a response to your complaint you are concerned that it was not handled appropriately, or still consider that you have not had a satisfactory answer, you may express these concerns to the next level of Scouting. If your concern was originally dealt with at Scout Group level this will mean contacting the District Commissioner. If it was originally dealt with by the District Commissioner, then the County/Area Commissioner should be contacted. The contact details for this person can be obtained by asking the local District Commissioner or by contacting the Scout Information Centre.

It is the policy of Scouting that the original response to a complaint may be reviewed just once. This means that once you have appealed against the initial consideration or outcome of your original complaint, and a review has been undertaken and a response made to you, the matter will be closed. No further appeal or review will be possible. Any appeal must be made within six months of being notified of the outcome of the original consideration. You may be asked to state clearly why you are unhappy with the outcome of the consideration of your complaint, or dissatisfied with the way it was handled.

Background information

As background to the consideration of your complaint, you will find it helpful to understand something of the purpose and structure of Scouting, which are summarised here.

The purpose of Scouting

The purpose of Scouting is to promote the development of young people (girls and boys) in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials, as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities.

The Scout method

The Scout method provides an enjoyable and attractive scheme of progressive training, based on the Scout Promise and Law, guided by adult volunteer Leaders. In practice the method is best seen when young people, in partnership with adults, are:

- . Enjoying what they are doing;
- . Learning by undertaking and participating in varied and progressive activities;
- . Making choices for themselves;
- . Taking responsibility for their own actions;
- . Working in small groups and teams;
- . Taking increasing responsibility for others;
- . Taking part in activities outdoors;
- . Sharing in prayer and worship;
- . Making and living out the Promise they make as Scouts.

Scouting's structures

Scouting is provided through Beaver Scout Colonies (6-8 yrs); Cub Scout Packs (8-10½ yrs); and Scout Troops (10½-14 yrs). These Scout Sections are organised into Scout Groups based in a local community and lead by a volunteer 'manager' – the

Group Scout Leader. In the absence of a Group Scout Leader one of the other Leaders will be designated as the Acting Group Scout Leader.

A number of Scout Groups in a defined geographical area form a Scout District led by a volunteer District Commissioner. Provision for Explorer Scouts (14-18 yrs) is also organised by the District.

A number of Scout Districts in a defined geographical area form a Scout County (designated Areas in Scotland and Wales) led by a volunteer County Commissioner (Area Commissioner in Scotland and Wales). Provision for members of the Scout Network (18-24 yrs) is also organised by the County/Area.

Further information

We hope you find this information valuable. If you require clarification or require advice on how to make a complaint, please contact the Scout Information Centre on 0845 300 1818 or by emailing: info.centre@scout.org.uk

June 2006

Published by The Scout Association, Gilwell
Park, Chingford, London, E4 7QW.
Incorporated by Royal Charter. Charity
Number 306101