



POLICY:	Complaints and Grievance
APPLICABLE TO:	All Members
VALIDATORS:	Trustees
APPROVAL DATE:	January 2024
REVIEW:	January 2026

1. Statement of Commitment

These procedures are to help safeguard the Blackpool Pride Festival from being brought into disrepute and also the reputation of its Members. We are committed to equality of opportunity and seek to act fairly.

2. Principles

These procedures should be used when we receive a complaint, either from our own membership or from someone outside the Blackpool Pride Festival organisation. Complaints may be general or made against an individual as an allegation and, amongst other things, can involve harassment, a lack of equal opportunities, or inappropriate behaviour or language.

All complaints and grievances should be dealt with according to these procedures. They should be dealt with sympathetically and an opinion should not be formed until an investigation has taken place. Any action will depend on the seriousness of the complaint.

We need to understand that any complaint about finances or violence must be taken particularly seriously, as they are likely to reflect on the Blackpool Pride Festival unless appropriate action is taken.

These procedures are also intended to help Members defend themselves from innuendo and from false, or irrelevant, complaints. They do not remove the right of any member to defend him or herself personally against such allegations.

3. Confidentiality

Although we advise Members never to try to handle a complaint on their own, Blackpool Pride Festival expects all Members and Volunteers to keep complaints confidential from those not involved in the complaint or grievance.



4. Types of Complaint

Complaints may come from a variety of sources and this list only serves as a guide.

- Some complaints will be oral and may be based on information that is second hand or on rumour. Try to listen and not pass comment. Explain that the complaint must be put into writing so that we can investigate it properly and never agree to keep the complaint confidential. Ask the complainant to write or email the Chair. If the complainant refuses to do this, you should contact the Chair with your understanding of the complaint so that it can be logged and so that you have fulfilled your responsibility.
- Some complaints will come via social media. The Chair should acknowledge the complaint and agree to investigate. They should then refer the complaint to Trustees. The Chair may decide to remove the complaint from public view until the investigation is complete.
- Some complaints may come directly through email. If you receive such an email, acknowledge it and forward the email to the Chair.
- Some complaints may come directly by letter. Should you receive such a letter, forward it to the Chair.

5. Investigating a Complaint

The Chair is the usual person who will investigate a complaint and will ensure the complaint is investigated fairly. They will liaise with other people, usually other Trustees, to make shared decisions based on fact and evidence. If the complaint concerns the Chair, another Trustee will take responsibility.

The basic steps of an investigation will be:

- Attempting to verify the facts and any available evidence.
- Agreeing on any action (if any) and whether to refer the matter to the next Trustee meeting.
- Keeping all parties informed of the progress of the investigation.

Contemporaneous notes of conversations should be taken as far as is practical by all involved.



6. The Outcome of a Complaint

The outcome will depend on the situation and most complaints can be resolved quickly and with the agreement of everyone involved. Should an allegation against a Member be proven, the Trustees may need to take further action. This will be done collectively and minuted as a confidential item. The Chair will write to the person involved with the decision.

Should the person wish to appeal against a decision, a panel of three other Members, chosen by lot, will hear what has happened and confirm or revoke the decision. The Chair will be invited to the meeting and the person involved may also bring a representative.

7. Whistleblowing

Members need to act prudently if making an allegation about another Member. Such allegations should not be made in an open forum, but should be discussed privately with the Chair who may request written confirmation of the allegation.

However, Blackpool Pride Festival expects its Members and Volunteers to report matters that pose a threat to the finances of Blackpool Pride Festival or to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children and in such cases the police may become involved. We have a separate Whistleblowing Policy that explains how such reports will be managed.

8. Public Concern

If a person from outside the Blackpool Pride Festival contact us to discuss an allegation or rumour they have heard, they must be directed to contact the Chair. However, as an overall rule, we will not discuss a complaint or allegation with a third party.

Should the press be made aware of a complaint or allegation and try to contact us, it is the Chair who will respond.

9. Policy Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Trustees to review formally the operation of this Policy annually and to ensure that it is in accordance with principles of other Blackpool Pride Festival Policies.