



## Complaints Policy

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**Last Reviewed: October 2014**

**Review date: October 2014**

### **What is a complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not.

### **Our policy covers complaints about:**

- a. the standard of service we provide
- b. the behaviour of our staff, freelance artists and board, and
- c. any action or lack of action by a staff or board member affecting other staff, volunteers, participants, partner organisations and audiences

### **Our complaints policy does not cover**

- a. comments or dissatisfaction about our policies or policy decisions
- b. matters that have already been fully investigated through this complaints procedure, or
- c. anonymous complaints.

### **Our standards for handling complaints**

SAA-uk is committed to providing the highest standards of education, training and performance. We endeavour to provide accessible, inclusive and efficient services for staff, volunteers, participants, partner organisations and audiences. However, it is recognised that there may be times when SAA-uk may fail to meet our usual high standards or a party acts in contravention of our Policies.

- SAA-uk would wish to be alerted as soon as possible to any cause for concern and will maintain clear procedures for dealing with complaints.
- The complainant will be treated courteously and fairly at all times.
- SAA-uk undertakes to deal with and resolve any complaint as quickly as possible.
- In all cases an initial response to a complaint and details of any further action will be made within 7 days.
- Procedures and guidelines for making complaints will be readily available from the SAA-uk office on request.
- All staff will be made aware of our complaints procedure.
- All staff will be made aware of what to do if they receive a complaint from a member of the public.
  
- We will not treat you less favourably than anyone else because of your:

- sex or marital status: this includes family status, responsibility for dependants, and gender (including gender reassignment, whether proposed, commenced or completed)
  - sexual orientation
  - colour or race: this includes ethnic or national origin or nationality
  - disability
  - religious or political beliefs, or trade union affiliation, or
  - other unjustifiable factors, for example language difficulties or age.
- Confidentiality **will be respected in all cases of a complaint.**
  - **An annual complaints report will be submitted to the Board by the Chief Executive (including a nil return). The Complaints Procedures will be reviewed at this time to ensure they remain fit for purpose**

By the nature of the work in which SAA-uk is involved there may be occasions where physical contact between an Artist and a student is entirely necessary and proper. We recognise that this is a sensitive area and will issue and regularly review guidelines to staff and students with two main functions of equal importance:

- to ensure the artist has the confidence to give professional advice and guidance to their students, without feeling vulnerable that their actions will be misconstrued, or that they will be subjected to vexatious complaints.
- to ensure students are equipped to identify what is, and what is not appropriate physical behaviour towards them and in what circumstances a tutor may need to use physical contact.

## Complaints Procedures

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### 1. Complaints against members of staff

Initially attempts should be made to resolve this with the member of staff concerned before entering a formal complaint.

If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved it should be put in writing to the Chief Executive. In the case of a complaint against the Chief Executive, the written representation should be addressed to the Chair of the Board.

Our standard is to respond within 5 working days or to detail the time scale and the reason why the complaint cannot be answered immediately as for example in the case of the member of staff being on leave or a more detailed investigation being required.

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive / Chair to discuss the complaint with the member of staff concerned and seek a resolution. The complainant will be informed in writing that this has taken place and formally appraised of any action resulting from this discussion.

If appropriate, the complainant may be invited to a 3 - way meeting with the Chief Executive / Chair in an attempt to resolve any difficulties or misunderstandings.

### 2. Complaints regarding the operation of SAA-uk / breaches of procedure or policy

In the first instance, complaints of this nature should be brought to the attention of the Chief Executive, in writing or in person. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response or there appears to be repeated non-compliance with stated policies this should be put in writing to the Chair of the Board. A written response detailing any action to be taken shall be given within 7 days or notice of the timescale provided. Should the complaint be of a nature that it cannot be dealt with in this way, or must await a full Board meeting, then the complainant will be informed.

*In extraordinary cases the Board may wish to meet with the complainant to ascertain full details.*

Following investigations and any meetings deemed necessary decisions taken will be formally notified in writing to the complainant.

### 3. Complaints against the Board

These should be raised with the Chair of the Board. If these remain unresolved or are of a particularly serious nature, there is the ultimate right to refer the matter to Companies House and/or the Charities Commission with whom SAA-uk is registered.

### 4. Complaints by members of staff or volunteers regarding the operation of the organisation, contravention of policies or against other members of staff

Initially attempts should be made to resolve this with the member of staff concerned or the line manager / contact person before entering a formal complaint. In the case of contravention of policy the matter should be discussed with the Chief Executive Officer.

If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved then the Grievance Procedure, as detailed in the

Staffing and Personnel Handbook, should be followed.

### **Guidelines for members of the general public wishing to make a complaint**

1. Approach the tutor or lead person in the event/activity you are taking part in and discuss your complaint with them. In most cases, you will be able to come to an amicable agreement and settle the problem satisfactorily.
2. If you are still not satisfied, you should contact the SAA-uk Chief Executive or General Manager by phone, e-mail or in person.
3. If you have done this and you still feel that your complaint is unresolved, you should make a written submission to SAA-uk within 28 days of completion of the event/activity where the complaint arose. This complaint will be handled by the SAA-uk management team. You will be sent a response within 7 days.
4. A dispute or complaint that cannot be settled amicably with the management team, or that involves the management team, will be referred to the Chair of the Board.

### **Confidentiality will be respected**

### **Guidelines for staff receiving a complaint from a member of the public**

1. All tutors/event co-ordinators who are approached with a complaint, must:
  - a. Take the complainant seriously and acknowledge their complaint
  - b. Behave politely
  - c. Make every effort to resolve the issue verbally
  - d. Report the complaint immediately to your SAA-uk contact person (contracted staff) or the General Manager (permanent staff)
  - e. Maintain a written record of the complaint and submit a copy to the General Manager
2. If the complainant is still unhappy, ask them to contact the Chief Executive to discuss it with them – provide the complainant with the relevant phone number and e-mail address.
3. The Chief Executive should make every effort to resolve the complaint verbally when contacted. If the complainant is still unhappy, ask them to submit a letter detailing the complaint in writing to the SAA-uk Management Team within 28 days.
4. When the letter is received, the SAA-uk Management Team is to discuss the complaint and send a written response back, including details of any actions taken. An initial response should be made within 7 days and a timescale given for any further action.
5. If the complaint is still not resolved, the SAA-uk Management Team must refer the complaint to the Chair of the Board.
6. The Chair is to decide the best course of action to resolve the complaint. Any actions/decisions taken by the Chair are to be communicated back to the complainant in writing as well as reported to the Board and the Chief Executive. The Chair may refer the matter to the Board if deemed necessary.

## **How to Complain**

You can make a complaint to South Asian Arts-uk in a number of ways:

- By telephone
- By email
- In writing or letter
- By fax
- Verbally with a Permanent member of SAA-uk Staff

**South Asian Arts-uk (SAA-uk)**  
**Suite 14**  
**Munro House**  
**Duke Street**  
**Leeds**  
**LS9 8AG**

**Tel: 0113 244 5523**  
**Fax: 0113 243 0255**

**Email: [info@saa-uk.org](mailto:info@saa-uk.org)**