Divine Retreat Centre
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Complaints Policy

And Procedure

(Reviewed Jan 2025)

Principles

Divine Retreat Centre is committed to taking all complaints seriously. All complaints will be investigated and a response given in as short a time frame as possible.

Policy covers complaints about	**Our Complaints Policy does not cover**
The standard of service you expect from us	Comments about our Policies or Policy decisions
Behaviour of Team Members when delivering this service	Matters that have already been fully investigated through this Complaints procedure
Any action or lack of action by our staff	Anonymous complaints

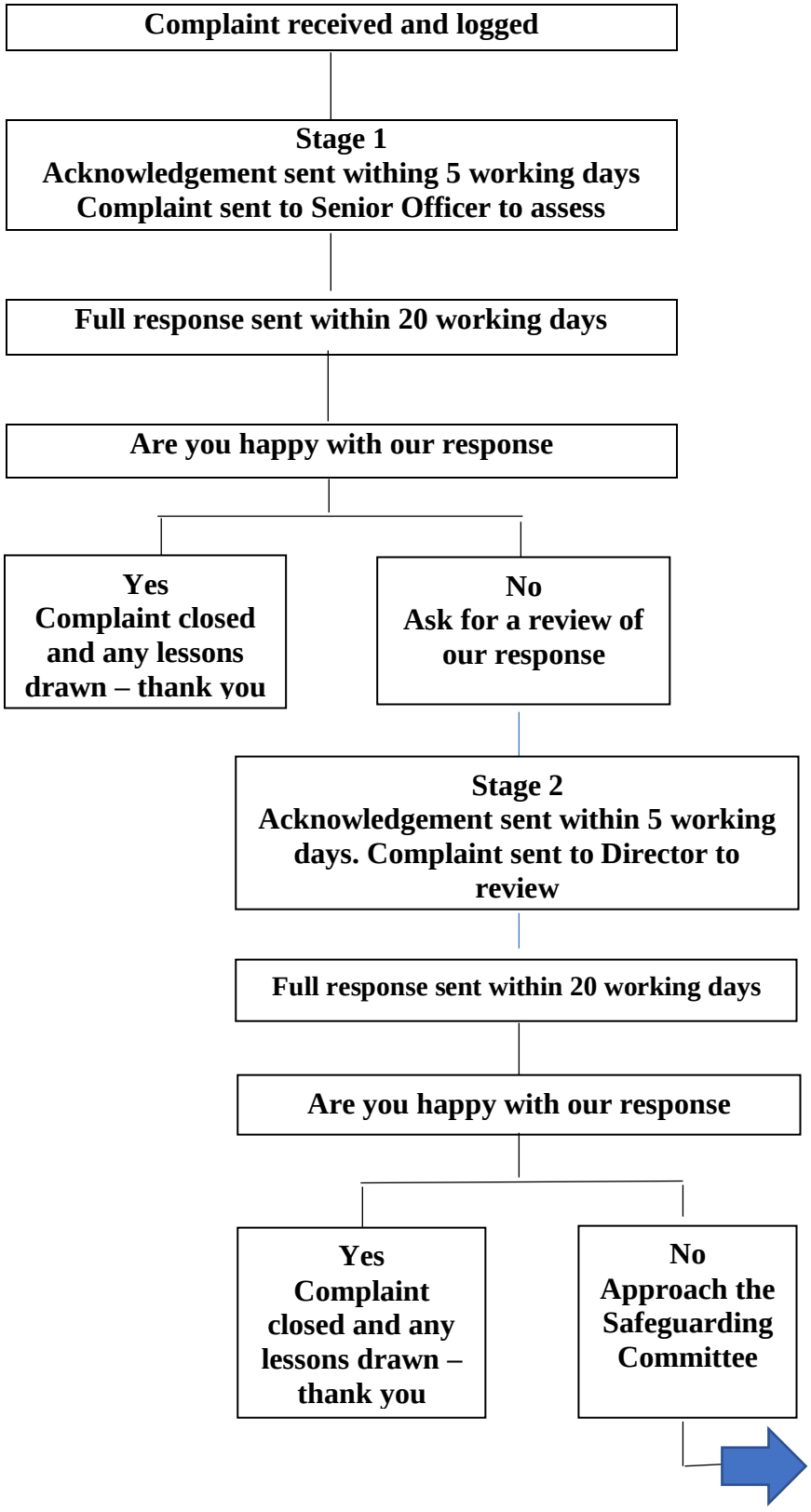
You can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect and fairness at all times. We expect that you will also treat our Team Members dealing with your complaint with the same courtesy, respect and fairness.

It will be dealt with confidentially (in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998) promptly and in conjunction with our Equality Policy, the individual will not be treated differently

Third Party Reporting

Complainants may wish to have a third party act on their behalf. A third party is any person or organisation acting on behalf of or making enquiries for the complainant. Where a third party is helping a complainant with a particular complaint, we need written consent to that effect.

How we will respond to your complaint



Scope

We assess that there are three different aspects of complaints from the public that need to be addressed. Each will require a different procedure.

- Complaint against a staff member or volunteer
- Complaint about the Centre itself
- Complaint against another guest

Procedures for a Complaint against a Volunteer

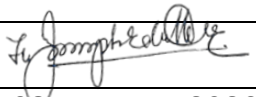
- This is most likely to come to our attention as a verbal report (either in person or by telephone) or by email.
- Unless the complaint is against the Safeguarding Officer, the initial response will be handled by the Safeguarding Officer and will in most cases follow the same mode as how the complaint was initially communicated. The response time guideline is within 48 hours of the complaint being received (under normal circumstances). In all situations a full written record will be maintained.
- In the event of a safeguarding issue, the safeguarding policy will take precedence and be followed.
- If it is the assessment of the Safeguarding Officer that the complaint does not have substance they will communicate this to the Complainant. If this is to the satisfaction of the Complainant, then it is up to the judgement of the Safeguarding Officer if the staff member referred to is informed. The written record will be destroyed within three months and it is not necessary for the Director to be informed. If the Complainant is not satisfied, then the complaint procedure is escalated to the Safeguarding Committee.
- If it is the assessment of the Safeguarding Officer that the complaint may have some substance, then they will notify the staff member or volunteer asking for their version of events. After hearing the alternative version, the Safeguarding Officer will inform the Committee who will decide if the Safeguarding Officer should continue in the process or if it needs to be handled by the Committee. A written record of action taken will be sent to the Complainant. This communication record will be retained. Any further communication will be undertaken by the Committee.
- In situations where a complaint is upheld, the policy relating to disciplinary procedures will be followed at either a formal or informal level. The Safeguarding Committee will be informed of the situation.
- If a resolution that satisfies all parties is not forthcoming an independent mutually acceptable external party can be approached. If a solution that satisfies all parties is not forthcoming, then the matter shall be referred to the whole Committee body.
- If the complaint is against the Safeguarding Officer, the role undertaken by the Centre Manager will be taken by the Committee. Their role will in turn be taken on by the Safeguarding Committee.

Procedures for a complaint against Divine Retreat Centre

- In most situations where a complaint is raised against Divine Retreat Centre, the Safeguarding Officer will be involved in the investigation, the exception being if the Safeguarding Officer is primarily responsible for the subject matter of the complaint in which case the Committee will deal with the complaint.
- Again, the initial response will be sent using the same form of communication as the complaint was received. If a resolution is reached at this stage, there is no need for further action.
- If a resolution is not reached, the Committee must be involved. The next step will be for a meeting or conference call between the Complainant, the Safeguarding Officer and the Committee. Notes will be taken of this meeting including action steps towards resolution.
- If resolution is still not achieved, the matter will be brought before the entire Committee Body for their input on next steps, most likely the involvement of a third party such as another Agency or Director.

Procedures for a complaint against another Guest

- This is most likely to come to our attention as a verbal report (either in person or by telephone) or by email.
- In most situations where a complaint is raised against another guest, the Safeguarding Officer will be involved in the response. It should however be made clear at the outset, that Divine cannot be held in any way responsible for the behaviour of an individual guest.
- If the complaint is about a safeguarding issue, the Safeguarding Policy shall be followed.
- If the situation merits it, the Safeguarding Officer may conduct further clarification with the Complainant and other relevant third parties. If he considers the complaint is not an appropriate matter for Divine to become involved in, he will refer to the Complainant with his reasoning.
- If this response is not to the satisfaction of the Complainant, then the designated Committee should be involved.
- If a resolution is still not achieved, the matter will be brought before the entire Committee Body for their input on next steps, most likely the involvement of a third party such as another Agency or Church Leaders

Date Adopted	**08 January 2025**
Signed	
Review due in	**08 January 2026**