



Forces Online CIO

Unit 5, Workshed Carriage Works
London Street, Swindon
Wiltshire, SN1 5DG.

Telephone: 0300 300 2288

Registered Charity: 1188955 (England & Wales) SC050678 (Scotland)



Definition: "Forces Online" means both Forces Online CIO Registered Charity (England & Wales) Reg No. 1188955 & Forces Online Scotland (Scotland) SC050678 Unless the Policy indicates it refers to Forces Online CIO or Forces Online Scotland.

Procedure for making complaint to Forces Online

Introduction

We aim to maintain high standards in all that we do but recognise that we can sometimes get things wrong, despite our best intentions.

Forces Online views a complaint as an opportunity, as well as a chance, to put things right for the person making the complaint, and to improve the services, activities & benefits that Forces Online offers. We would not be able to do so or learn for the future if we did not receive feedback when things go wrong. Therefore, we value and take seriously any feedback we receive.

Generally, the purpose of this Complaints Procedure is to resolve disputes informally without resorting to formal investigation or legal proceedings. We will try to explore every reasonable option to resolve complaints by working with the person making the complaint to agree an outcome which is satisfactory to them and Forces Online.

Whether your complaint is justified or not, our reply to you will describe the action we have taken to investigate the complaint, conclusions we have reached because of the investigation, and any action we have taken or are taking because of your complaint.

We will ensure that all information received and produced in connection with a complaint is treated as confidential and handled sensitively, that only those who need to know have access to that information, and that relevant data protection requirements are all met.

All complaint information is passed promptly to our CEO and he/she reports on them to our trustees within 1 working day.

The information below sets out our Complaints Procedure.

Complaint

A 'complaint' in this Procedure means any expression of dissatisfaction in relation to Forces Online that requires a response from the Forces Online CEO.

Where complaints may come from

Complaints may come from users of Forces Online's services or clients, customers, beneficiaries, members, donors, fundraisers, supporters, members of the local community or any other person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in Forces Online.

Complaints which cannot be dealt with under this Procedure

This Procedure is only for the above type of external complaint, not for complaints or grievances from staff, volunteers or trustees or anyone involved in an official work capacity for the organisation.

Whilst complainants are generally entitled to receive responses to a complaint and to challenge any responses received from Forces Online, it will not deal with complaints or challenges where in the reasonable opinion of Founder they amount to persistent, habitual, or vexatious complaints or challenges.

Forces Online expects any complainant to be polite and courteous. It will not tolerate aggressive, abusive, or unreasonable behaviour or demands.

How to make a complaint

First Stage

If you have a complaint, you can contact us in person on the virtualhub, by phone, letter, email or chat details of which can be found on <https://www.forcesonline.org.uk/contact-us> page on our website.

To help us investigate and address all complaints, we ask you to provide us with as much information as possible. This should cover:

- The reason for your complaint.
- Where, when and what you are complaining about happened.
- The name(s) of anyone involved (if known).
- What outcome you are hoping for (but we are not obliged to resolve the complaint in that way).
- Your contact details (name, address, daytime telephone number and/or email address).

Who you should contact within Forces Online will depend on how you to decide to make contact, and on who you wish to make a complaint about. We have indicated below who you can contact.

Verbal complaints

You can make a complaint by telephone or by speaking to us in person in any of the following ways, during office hours.

If your complaint is about any member of staff, volunteer or trustee, you can phone us on 0300 300 2288 and ask to speak to our CEO. They will either speak to you about the complaint or, if they are not the appropriate person to do so, they will arrange for the appropriate person to speak to you on the phone. Alternatively, you can speak (or arrange to speak) in person to the appropriate person about your complaint. There is a list of Officials including Trustees in the <https://www.forcesonline.org.uk/mediapack>.

If you do not feel that you can approach any of the above verbally for any reason, you can

instead write to us as follows.

Complaints in writing

If you would prefer to write to us, please send your complaint to us as follows:

Either by letter addressed as follows:

Len Chappell CEO/Founder

Forces Online

Unit 5 Workshed Carriage Works, London Street, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN15DG.

or by email to him at len.chappell@forcesonline.org.uk

Once that person has initially received your complaint, we will normally deal with it as follows:

Who the complaint is about

Who will investigate, deal with, and respond to you about it.

Any member of staff from

Len Chappell (CEO/Founder)

Forces Online CIO

Keith Shields (ASST CEO)

Phil Ellaway (Chair)

Forces Online

Timescales for all First Stage complaints made by phone, in person or in writing.

We will try to resolve the problem as quickly as possible but if we cannot do this (for example, if we need to investigate further), we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within the following timescale:

- By phone or in person, either immediately or on the same day if you phone us or contact us in person
- By email, within 24 hours if you contact us by email
- By letter, within 5 working days if you contact us by letter

Our acknowledgement will inform you of when we will next contact you either with a proposed resolution or update. It will also inform you of the name of the person dealing with your complaint. That person will then investigate and deal with it and then respond to you with their definitive reply.

You should receive that definitive reply within 4 weeks. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Second stage

If, for any reason, you are not happy with the resolution of your complaint under the First Stage procedure outlined above, you can bring this to our attention as follows.

Please address a letter to:

Founder

Forces Online CIO

Unit 5, Workshed Carriage Works, London Street, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 DG.

Alternatively, please email complaints@forcesonline.org.uk

Please set out clearly the details of the complaint, explaining why you were not satisfied with our response under the First Stage and what you would like us to do to put things right.

The Founder will send an acknowledgment within 2 working days and arrange for the Chair or Vice Chair of trustees to investigate your complaint and respond with a definitive reply within a further 5 working days.

Third stage

If you are still not satisfied with our response and wish to take your complaint further, please inform the Founder within 28 days of receiving the definitive reply we sent to you under the Second Stage. Please contact him/her by letter or email as required for the Second Stage (as above).

Your case will then be passed to a panel of at least 2 trustees (not including any trustee about whom the complaint was made or the trustee who investigated and responded to you under the Second Stage. The panel will further investigate your complaint and will contact you with their conclusions and any actions to be taken.

You can expect this to take a further 10 working days from the date on which we receive your letter or email request to implement the Third Stage.

Follow up

For us to make improvements to Forces Online and its' services and activities we may wish to contact you within a month of your complaint being dealt with in order to check that you were satisfied with our resolution. Any information you give will only be used to make improvements to Forces Online and its services and activities.

Taking your complaint outside Forces Online CIO

The Fundraising Standards Board

If your complaint is about our fundraising work or activities and you are not satisfied with our response, you are entitled to take it to the Fundraising Standards Board. This is the self-regulatory scheme that works to ensure that organisations raising money from the public do so honestly and properly. As a member of the Fundraising Standards Board, we are committed to abiding by any decision they reach on complaints that are escalated to them. Their contact details are:

Fundraising Standards Board, 65 Brushfield Street, London, E1 6AA

Tel: 0333 321 8803

Email: info@frsb.org.uk

Website: www.frsb.org.uk/complaints/make-a-complaint

Charity Commission

If your complaint is about any other aspect of our charitable work other than our fundraising work or activities, you may wish to contact the Charity Commission. However, we suggest that, before you do so, you consider whether it is appropriate to contact the Commission in the first instance rather than ourselves. The Commission has guidance on its website as to when to direct complaints to a charity and not to the Commission. Their contact details are:

Charity Commission Direct, PO Box 1227, Liverpool, L69 3UG

Tel: 0845 300 0218

Website:

www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx

and

www.charitycommission.gov.uk/contact-us/general-enquiries/report-a-concern-about-a-charity

Other Authorities

The Charity Commission guidance to the public states that:

- if you believe there is criminal activity within a charity, you should inform the police
- if you suspect fraud connected to a charity, you should report it using the Action Fraud Online Reporting Service at http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud or call 0300 123 2040
- if you have information about possible terrorist activity connected to a charity, you should report it to the Anti-terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321.

If a complaint relates to your personal data, it may be appropriate to contact the Office of the Information Commissioner.

A complaint could be directed to another regulator where it properly falls under its jurisdiction or remit. For example, a complaint could be made to the Advertising Standard Authority (ASA) where appropriate. If a charity is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) a complaint could be made to the CQC where the complaint relates to social care provided by the charity.

Change Record

Date of Change:	Changed By:	Comments:
01/12/2021	LC	Policy adopted by the Trustees 01/02/2021 ME PE
21/12/2023	LC/KS	Policy reviewed & updated LC/KS