



## Complaints policy and procedure

Policy Information	
Organisation	Underground Lights
Scope of policy	The policy applies to members of Underground Lights, stakeholders and partners, members of the public and funders of Underground Lights who have a concern about Underground Lights.
Policy operational date	December 2018
Date of approval	October 2019
Date of previous reviews	October 2021, October 2023, March 2025
Date of next review	March 2026

Underground Lights makes every effort to deliver high standards in everything we do. We take all concerns and complaints seriously and welcome all feedback as this provides us with opportunities to improve and maintain the standards we strive to achieve. Underground Lights will review all comments, feedback and complaints, and our feedback procedures on a regular basis. We report on feedback received in our annual report.

Underground Lights recognises a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standards of service or an action or omission by a member of staff or volunteer. If an expression of dissatisfaction or discontent cannot be resolved immediately then Underground Lights will take follow-up action and provide a response as outlined in this policy.

We recognise that we sometimes get things wrong. Your feedback will help us to resolve mistakes faster and learn how we can do things better to improve what we do and how we do it.

Everyone has the right to make a complaint regarding their experiences of Underground Lights' services and communications with any of our staff or volunteers and you will not be discriminated against because of it.

All formal complaints made to Underground Lights are recorded and reported to management, who will regularly advise the Board of Trustees of changes or improvements Underground Lights may be taking as a result of complaints received.

**Complaints procedures can:**

- Empower members by instilling confidence in them and giving them more influence over Underground Lights and the way it operates
- Enable Underground Lights to show that it is focusing on members' needs
- Help to promote Underground Lights well to the public by showing it is responsible and accountable
- Enable Underground Lights to demonstrate that it has an open, fair and honest approach
- Save time and effort by enabling problems or concerns to be tackled early
- Minimise the adverse effects of things that go wrong and reduce the chances of problems escalating
- Reduce the potential of future complaints
- Provide valuable information on Underground Lights' services
- Help to measure the quality of Underground Lights' services and give trustees and staff an opportunity to monitor and improve them
- Help find ways of being more responsive to unmet needs
- Enhance Underground Lights' reputation by helping communication, showing a considerate approach
- Help to foster a good reputation and confirm Underground Lights' commitment to excellence

**The complaints procedure applies to the following:**

- Members of Underground Lights
- Volunteers of Underground Lights
- Stakeholders and partners
- Funders of Underground Lights
- Members of the public/any person who has any contact with Underground Lights

**Who can make a complaint:**

- Any person who has any contact with Underground Lights' services may use the complaints procedure
- The complaint may be made directly or by a third party representing the interests of the person
- Complaints could come from Underground Lights members, from members of their family, from advocates or representatives, from professional workers in other agencies, or from a member of the public

**The key principles of this procedure are:**

- To treat people with dignity and respect
- To listen and seek to empower people by resolving complaints at the earliest point in the process
- To ensure the right to complain without victimisation
- To ensure objectivity, fairness and openness, the resolution of conflict and the ability to move forward

**The key purposes of this procedure are:**

- To improve the quality of the service
- To identify weaknesses and shortfalls
- To take remedial action where appropriate

**Examples of complaints:**

- Failure to provide a service to the expected standard
- Neglect or delay in answering a query or responding to a request for a service
- Failure to follow Underground Lights' agreed policy, rules or procedures
- Failure to take proper account of relevant matters in coming to a decision
- Discourteous conduct by a member of staff or volunteer; harassment, bias or discrimination

## **How to make a complaint**

The first thing to do if you are unhappy about any aspect of our services is to bring this to the attention of one of the staff members/volunteers. They will try to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible.

Please note that we endeavour at all times to treat our members with respect, and we expect the same standards of behaviour from our members.

There are two stages to the complaints procedure:

### **1. Informal stage**

You can make a complaint in the following ways:

- By talking to a member of staff – in person or by phone
- By text
- In writing – in an email, a letter or note

Please feel free to ask a member of staff or volunteer for help to make your complaint. Or you may choose someone else to assist you.

We will make a note of the complaint (including all correspondence) and any actions taken so that we keep a record.

We will try to resolve your complaint within five working days. If we can, we will put things right before this, but sometimes the member of staff will need to talk to other people in order to identify a solution.

If your complaint is not resolved then you can go to stage 2, the formal stage.

### **2. Formal stage**

If you wish to make a formal complaint it would be very helpful to put it in writing.

Let us know:

- What went wrong/what didn't happen
- How were you affected
- What you would like us to do to put things right

Please feel free to ask a member of staff or volunteer for help to make your complaint. Or you may choose someone else to assist you.

You should send your complaint to the Underground Lights Artistic Director/CEO or the Chair of Trustees. Your complaint will be logged and the Underground Lights Artistic Director/CEO OR Board of Trustees will ensure it is investigated. You should send your complaint to [info@undergroundlights.org](mailto:info@undergroundlights.org) or Underground Lights, c/o Belgrade Theatre, Belgrade Square, Coventry, CV1 1GS.

The investigation will:

- Establish the facts – this may involve talking to you and other people involved
- Understand why things went wrong
- Set out what should happen to put things right and ensure the same problem does not happen in the future.

We will try to keep you informed at all stages of your complaint.

### **Timescales for formal complaint**

We will confirm we have received your complaint within five working days.

The staff member/trustee responsible (The Investigating Manager) for investigating your complaint will report back to you within two weeks from the date we receive your complaint.

If there is any unavoidable delay to this timescale we will let you know and tell you when we will be able to complete investigations and let you have our decision.

The investigating manager will meet with any people they feel are relevant to the complaint including you, and gather any evidence/information to help inform their viewpoint.

Your complaint will be confidential and information about the complaint will usually only be shared with those who need to know in order to help resolve it. Occasionally, if the complaint is very serious, such as if it involved harm to yourself or to others, other people might have to be involved. This would be discussed with you at the time. We will handle all information in line with the Data Protection Act and our other policies and procedures.

When the investigating manager writes to you, they will explain:

- Whether your complaint has been upheld (agreed with) in full or in part (if there are several parts to your complaint)
- Why they have reached these decisions
- What action (if any) we will take to resolve the situation and prevent it happening again.

### **Putting things right**

If your complaint is found by us to be justified we will:

- issue you with a full written apology
- take action, where appropriate, to put right what went wrong

- try to prevent any similar problems happening in the future.

### **What to do if you're not satisfied**

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your formal complaint you can find out how to complain about a charity, a decision we've made or a service we've provided.

See more at:

How to complain

<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/how-to-complain/>

Guidance for the general public

<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/how-to-complain/complain-about-a-charity/guidance-for-the-general-public/>

Complaints about charities (CC47)

<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx>

### **Contact us:**

By email: [info@undergroundlights.org](mailto:info@undergroundlights.org)

In writing: Underground Lights, c/o Belgrade Theatre, Belgrade Square, Coventry, CV1 1GS.

## Underground Lights Complaints Form

<b>Your name:</b>
<b>Your contact details:</b>
<b>Details of your complaint:</b> <i>(You can raise a complaint verbally – in person or by phone. You can ask a volunteer, or member of staff from another organisation to help you complete this form)</i>
When
Where
What
Who was involved
<b>Who have you spoken to about this? Has anything been done or suggested to fix the problem?</b>
<b>What action would you like us to take to fix things?</b>
Signature

Date

For office use only	
Action:	Date(s)
Acknowledgement of complaint sent	
Update(s) provided ( <i>check with member how they would like to be kept updated</i> )	
Final response sent ( <i>target: within 2 weeks of date of complaint</i> )	