

South West Philharmonia & Chorus

Complaints Policy

Policy Version: 1.0

Date Adopted: 17.12.2025

Review Frequency: Annually

Next Review Due: September 2025

Approved by: Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

1. Purpose of the Complaints Policy

South West Philharmonia & Chorus (SWPC) is committed to delivering high-quality, inclusive and professional musical experiences. We recognise that, from time to time, concerns or complaints may arise.

This policy:

- Provides a clear and fair process for raising complaints
 - Ensures complaints are handled consistently, respectfully and transparently
 - Supports early resolution where possible
 - Protects the welfare of all involved
 - Helps SWPC learn and improve
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2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to complaints relating to:

- SWPC activities, rehearsals, performances and events
- Behaviour of participants, staff, volunteers or leaders
- Communication, organisation or administration
- Equality, diversity and inclusion concerns
- Health and safety matters
- Digital or online conduct

This policy applies to:

- Performers and participants
- Parents and carers
- Staff, freelancers and volunteers
- Audience members, supporters and partners
- Contractors and third parties

3. What Is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about:

- An action, decision or lack of action by SWPC
- The behaviour or conduct of someone involved with SWPC
- The standard of service provided

This policy does **not** replace:

- Safeguarding procedures
- Whistleblowing processes

- Disciplinary procedures

Where a complaint raises safeguarding or serious welfare concerns, it will be managed under the relevant safeguarding policy.

4. Principles for Handling Complaints

SWPC will handle complaints:

- Fairly and impartially
- Respectfully and without discrimination
- Confidentially, where possible
- In a timely and proportionate manner
- Without prejudice or retaliation

Raising a genuine complaint will not result in disadvantage.

5. How to Raise a Complaint

Complaints should normally be raised as soon as possible after the issue occurs.

Step 1: Informal Resolution (where appropriate)

Where possible, concerns should first be raised informally with:

- A member of the Management Team, or
- The individual responsible for the activity

Many issues can be resolved quickly at this stage.

Step 2: Formal Complaint

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, or is serious in nature, a formal complaint may be submitted.

Formal complaints should:

- Be made in writing (email or letter)
- Clearly outline the nature of the complaint
- Include relevant dates, times and details
- State the outcome sought

Formal complaints should be addressed to a member of the **Senior Leadership Team**.

6. Acknowledgement and Timescales

SWPC will:

- Acknowledge receipt of a formal complaint within **5 working days**
- Aim to provide a full response within **20 working days**

If additional time is required, the complainant will be kept informed.

7. Investigation Process

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Review the complaint and determine the appropriate response
- Appoint a suitable person to investigate where required
- Gather relevant information and statements

- Ensure the process is fair to all parties

Those involved will be given the opportunity to respond.

8. Outcomes and Responses

Possible outcomes may include:

- Explanation or clarification
- Apology
- Mediation or facilitated discussion
- Review or change of procedures
- Training or guidance
- Formal action under relevant policies

The response will be proportionate to the nature of the complaint.

9. Complaints Involving Safeguarding or Serious Misconduct

If a complaint:

- Involves a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- Raises safeguarding concerns
- Involves serious misconduct or criminal behaviour

It will be:

- Managed under the Safeguarding Policy

- Escalated to the appropriate authorities where required
 - Handled with priority and care
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10. Vexatious, Malicious or Repeated Complaints

SWPC recognises that complaints should be raised in good faith.

Complaints that are:

- Vexatious
- Malicious
- Repeated without new evidence
- Abusive or threatening

May be:

- Restricted in how they are handled
- Brought to an end following appropriate review

This decision will be taken by the Senior Leadership Team.

11. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All complaints will be:

- Handled sensitively
- Shared only with those who need to know
- Managed in line with data protection requirements

Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where investigation or safeguarding requires disclosure.

12. Recording and Learning

SWPC will:

- Keep appropriate records of complaints and outcomes
 - Monitor themes and trends
 - Use learning to improve practice, policies and communication
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13. Right to Appeal

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request a review by:

- A different member of the Senior Leadership Team

The outcome of this review will be final.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- Holds overall responsibility for the complaints process
- Ensures complaints are handled fairly and consistently
- Reviews this policy annually

Management Team

- Supports early resolution where appropriate
 - Implements learning from complaints
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15. Review of the Policy

This Complaints Policy will be:

- Reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team
 - Updated in response to learning, feedback or organisational change
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