

Whitehaven & District Amateur Operatic Society



Complaints Policy

WADAOS Complaints Policy

Policy Aims

The aims of this policy are:

1. To provide a clear procedure and framework for anyone wishing to make a formal complaint concerning either the Society or an individual member.
2. To ensure that all members know the steps taken should a complaint be made.
3. To publicise the existence of this policy so people know how to formally lodge a complaint.
4. To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely manner.
5. To make sure that, wherever possible, complaints are satisfactorily resolved for all parties.

This Policy includes:

1. Definition of a complaint.
2. Confidentiality.
3. Verbal Complaints.
4. Formal Complaints.
5. Unreasonable Complaints.

1. Definition of a Complaint

- 1.1 A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justifiable or not, about any aspect of WADAOS.
- 1.2 This may be against an individual member or the Society or against the Society as a whole.

2. Confidentiality

- 2.1 While formal complaints will be shared and discussed by the Committee, every effort will be made to handle the situation sensitively.
- 2.2 All business discussed by the Committee is confidential.
- 2.3 Information regarding complaints will only be shared to relative parties via official communication from the Committee.

3. Verbal Complaints

- 3.1 Where possible, issues or informal complaints concerning rehearsals or an aspect of production should be resolved by the Production Team or a Committee member within the cast.
- 3.2 WADAOS will only pursue formal complaints made in writing, verbal complaints will not be accepted.
- 3.3 Verbal complaints will be classed as informal.
- 3.4 If a verbal complaint is deemed serious, members should be directed to this Policy to lodge a formal complaint should they wish to do so.

4. Formal Complaints

- 4.1 All formal complaints will be classed as serious.
- 4.2 Formal complaints must be made in writing and addressed to The Committee or a Member of the Executive Committee.
- 4.3 Upon receipt of a formal complaint, acknowledgment will be given in writing to the complainant within seven days.
- 4.4 WADAOS is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and honestly, openly listening to, and taking into account the views of the complainant, whilst balancing the importance of acting in the best interests of the Society as a whole.
- 4.5 In line with Article 9 of the Constitution, the Committee will investigate the circumstances surrounding the complaint and discuss appropriate action to resolve the situation. Investigations may involve but are not limited to:
 - 4.5A Requesting individuals concerned to attend a meeting with select members of the Committee. Concerned individuals may bring an independent witness/mediator or advocate with them to this meeting. An agreed written account of the discussion will be made including any decision or action to take as a result.
 - 4.5B Giving an individual who has been complained against the right to respond formally in writing to any allegations. In this case they shall be given two weeks to do so. The anonymity of the complainant may be kept confidential by the Committee at this stage.
 - 4.5c Asking other Society members to give evidence or testimonials regarding the matter in question.
- 4.6 After any investigation and after individuals have had the right to respond.
- 4.7 As per the Constitution, the Committee may take any appropriate action, up to and including, suspension, or expulsion from the Society.

- 4.8 Where a serious complaint may have been made against a member of the Committee, a quorum of the Committee (excluding the member concerned) will appoint a designated sub-committee to investigate the complaint.
- 4.9 In line with Article 6 of the Constitution any member who is thought to be in breach of the Safeguarding Policies will be suspended immediately and an investigation carried out by the Safeguarding Officer. This will happen regardless of the state of production.
- 4.10 If a complaint suggests criminal activity the matter will immediately be referred to the police.
- 4.11 While WADAOS will take all formal complaints seriously, we do not expect our Committee members to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect individuals from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive, or threatening.

5. Unreasonable Complainants

- 5.1 Unreasonable complainants will be defined as ‘those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the Society, hinder our consideration of their or other people’s concerns or complaints and/or hinder our consideration of other important Society matters and decisions’.
- 5.2 A complaint may be regarded as unreasonable when the person making the complaint:
- 5.2A Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance.
 - 5.2B Refuses to co-operate with the Committee in addressing the complaint while still wishing their complaint to be resolved.
 - 5.2C Insists on the complaint being dealt with in their own time scale or in ways which are incompatible with our Complaints Policy, good practice or with the best interests of the Society.
 - 5.2D Makes unjustified complaints about individuals who are trying to deal with the issues and/or are trying to ensure they fulfil their roles & responsibilities within the Society or as appointed by the Society, and seeks to have them replaced
 - 5.2E Changes the basis of the complaint as an investigation proceeds.
 - 5.2F Repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed).
 - 5.2G Refuses to accept the outcomes or findings of any investigation into their complaint where the Society’s complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed.

- 5.3 A complaint may also be considered unreasonable if the person making the complaint does so either:
- 5.3A Maliciously
 - 5.3B Aggressively
 - 5.3C Using threats, intimidation, or violence.
 - 5.3D Using abusive, offensive, or discriminatory language.
 - 5.3E Knowing it to be false or using falsified information.
 - 5.3F Publishing unacceptable information in a variety of media such as in social media websites and newspapers.
- 5.4 After the Committee have concluded an investigation, a final decision and reason will be formally communicated to the members concerned in writing. As per Article 9 of the Constitution, the decision of the Committee will be final.
- 5.5 However, if individuals concerned remain unsatisfied with the result, they may request a further meeting with at least two select Committee representatives to discuss the outcome. An agreed written account of the discussion will be made to record any outcomes or action required.
- 5.6 It is important to note that final outcomes will only be overturned following such a meeting in exceptional circumstances and this course of action is a last resort and is in place to ensure all complainants are dealt with fairly, have appropriate opportunities to be heard and to have their complaint addressed in line with this policy and procedures.
- 5.7 It is not applicable if complainants simply don't like the outcome of their complaint, have already met with members of the committee and/or have had sufficient amount of time dedicated by the committee to their complaint.