

# Complaints Policy and Procedures

**Policy Approved By:** Board of Trustees

**Date Approved:** Jan 2026

**Next Review Date:** Jan 2027

**Responsible Officer:** General Secretary

## 1. Introduction

UMCUK is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) (Charity Number: 1115442) committed to promoting the welfare, culture, religion, education, and health of the Ugandan Muslim community in the UK. As a volunteer-led charity reliant on donations and community support, we value feedback and aim to resolve concerns promptly and fairly. This policy ensures transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in our services and operations.

It complies with Charity Commission guidance (CC47: Complaints about Charities) and our Constitution (Articles 10(1) on the Disciplinary Committee, 20(2)(h) on complaints handling, and 21 on openness and accountability). Serious complaints may be reported as incidents to the Commission if they involve harm, financial loss, or reputational damage.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a clear, accessible process for members, beneficiaries, donors, volunteers, and the public to raise complaints about our activities, services, or conduct.
- Ensure complaints are handled confidentially, impartially, and efficiently, with lessons learned to improve governance and operations.
- Promote trust and demonstrate our commitment to high standards, aligning with our charitable objects (Constitution Article 4).
- Distinguish complaints from internal disciplinary matters (handled via the Disciplinary Committee) or safeguarding concerns (handled via our standalone Safeguarding Policy).

### 3. Scope and Definitions

- **What is a Complaint?:** Any expression of dissatisfaction with UMCUK's actions, services, decisions, or conduct (e.g., event management, fundraising, volunteer treatment, or asset use). This excludes general feedback or requests for information.
- **Who Can Complain?:** Anyone affected by UMCUK, including members, beneficiaries, donors, volunteers, or the public. Anonymous complaints will be considered where possible, but may limit investigation.
- **Exclusions:**
  - Internal staff/volunteer grievances (handled via disciplinary procedures).
  - Safeguarding issues (refer to Safeguarding Policy).
  - Legal disputes (e.g., contracts) or matters under police investigation.
- **Frivolous/Vexatious Complaints:** Repeated or unfounded complaints may be declined, with reasons provided.

This policy applies to all UMCUK activities, divisions (Twale), and sub-committees.

### 4. Procedures

We aim to resolve complaints informally where possible, escalating only if needed. Timelines are guidelines; complex cases may take longer, with updates provided.

#### Stage 1: Informal Resolution

- Submit verbally or in writing (e.g., email to [info@umcuk.org](mailto:info@umcuk.org) or letter to the General Secretary at headquarters). Include details: what happened, when/where, impact, and desired outcome.
- Acknowledgment: Within 5 working days.
- Investigation: Handled by the relevant officer (e.g., divisional chair for local issues) or General Secretary. They will discuss with the complainant and involved parties.
- Response: Within 14 working days, explaining findings and actions (e.g., apology, process change). If resolved, record closed.

#### Stage 2: Formal Complaint

- If unsatisfied with Stage 1, or for serious issues, submit a formal complaint in writing to the General Secretary (or Chair if involving the Secretary).
- Acknowledgment: Within 5 working days.

- Investigation: Assigned to an impartial sub-committee (e.g., 3 trustees/members not involved, potentially including the Disciplinary Committee per Constitution Article 10(1)). They will:
  - Review evidence.
  - Interview parties confidentially.
  - Seek external advice if needed (e.g., Charity Commission).
- Response: Within 28 working days, with a written outcome, reasons, and actions. If delayed, provide updates.

### Stage 3: Appeal

- If still unsatisfied, appeal in writing to the Chair within 14 days, explaining why.
- Review: By the full Board of Trustees (excluding involved parties, per conflicts policy in Article 5.5). They may appoint an independent reviewer if complex.
- Final Response: Within 28 working days. This is UMCUK's final decision.

### External Escalation

- If unresolved, complainants can refer to the Charity Commission (for serious governance issues) or Fundraising Regulator (for fundraising complaints). We will provide details on how to do so.

All complaints are confidential, except where disclosure is required by law (e.g., safeguarding) or for investigation. Records are kept securely per GDPR (Constitution Article 14(5)).

## 5. Responsibilities

- **Complainants:** Provide clear details and cooperate.
- **General Secretary:** Log complaints, coordinate responses, maintain a central register.
- **Treasurer/Finance Sub-Committee:** Assist if financial-related.
- **Trustees/Board:** Oversee policy, review serious complaints, ensure learning.
- **All Volunteers/Members:** Report concerns promptly; promote a positive culture.

## 6. Monitoring and Review

- **Logging:** All complaints logged in a secure register (anonymous where possible), including outcomes and lessons.
- **Annual Review:** The Board reviews the register annually (at AGM or Board meeting) to identify trends, improve processes, and report in the Annual Report (Article 15).
- **Learning:** Use complaints to enhance services (e.g., training on common issues).

- **Serious Complaints:** Report as incidents to the Charity Commission if required (per Article 15(3)).

This policy will be reviewed annually or after significant changes/incidents. Amendments require Board approval and Charity Commission notification if material (Article 13). It is available on the UMCUK website and upon request.

For questions, contact the General Secretary at [info@umcuk.org](mailto:info@umcuk.org).