

## Introduction

Wellington Choral Society (WCS) is committed to providing an excellent service to its members, and others, working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. We aim to do our best to ensure that all members and others who access our services have a successful and enjoyable experience. We recognise, however, that sometimes mistakes can occur and things may not be done as well as they should. We are committed to ensuring that any complaints are dealt with fairly and effectively to the best of our ability and within our resources. We recognise that constructive complaints can be used actively to improve performance.

## Our Aim

Wellington Choral Society aims to resolve complaints quickly, fairly and effectively. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve is by listening and responding to the views of our members, and others, and in particular responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

We aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response;
- we deal with it promptly, politely and when appropriate confidentially;
- we will respond in the correct way – for example, with an explanation, or an apology or information on any action taken;
- we will learn from complaints and use them to improve the services that we offer;
- we review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

WCS recognises that any concerns raised may best be dealt with on an informal basis. In the first instance we would expect any complaint to be raised directly with the person(s) involved. If, however, concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved or the complainant feels unable to deal with it directly, then the Complaints Procedure detailed below should be followed.

## Definition

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with our services; whether justified or not; with WCS, with a member of the Society, or with a Trustee, that relates to WCS and that requires a formal response.

## Purpose

WCS's Complaint Procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

WCS's responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within a stated period of time;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- take appropriate action if required;

The complainant's responsibility is to:

- raise their concerns promptly and directly with the person concerned and if their concerns cannot be resolved satisfactorily informally, then to follow the complaints procedure as detailed;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow WCS a reasonable amount of time to deal with the matter as detailed in the formal complaints procedure;
- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond WCS's control.

## Monitoring and Reporting

Trustees of WCS will receive as necessary an anonymized report of complaints made and their resolution.

## Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and WCS maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality. Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

## Principles of the Complaints Policy

- The Designated Trustee will always be the Chair of the Society, unless the complaint is against the Chair, then the Secretary and Treasurer as Officers of the Society will handle such cases.
- The Wellington Choral Society Complaints Policy is based on the principle of a staged process (as detailed in the Complaints Procedure).
- If at any time during the investigation of a complaint matters arise which require investigation by external authorities the complaints procedure will be suspended until those investigations are concluded. Similarly, the complaints procedure should be suspended if a complainant is actively seeking legal redress.
- WCS may, at any stage of the formal complaints procedure, review a complaint and give a decision, without a formal investigation, where the Designated Trustee deems the complaint to be deliberately repetitive or vexatious. Examples of such complaints being unsubstantiated or repetitive complaints against an individual or service, or where a complaint has previously been investigated and appropriate action taken.

## Complaints Procedure

### Stage 1- For Members only

- 1.1 Having failed to resolve the issue themselves or being unwilling to try to do so, if the complainant is a member of the Society then they should approach their Voice Rep, with a view to the situation being resolved quickly. If a member feels that the matter should be handled confidentially then they should follow the procedure in 3.1 below.

### Stage 2

- 2.1 All complaints received from anyone other than a member of the Society should be dealt with by the Designated Trustee. Any member being approached by a complainant should advise them that they should address their concern in writing to the Designated Trustee and that full details of the Complaints Policy and Procedure is available from the Secretary or the website.
- 2.2 A Member, whose complaint cannot be resolved by the Voice Rep, or who wishes for confidentiality, should follow the guidance in 3.1 below

### Stage 3

- 3.1. Anyone wishing to make a formal complaint should request a copy of the formal Complaints Policy and Procedure from the Secretary or view/download a copy from the website. This will be sent on the day of request, wherever possible. If nothing further is heard from the complainant within 28 calendar days from this date the complaint will be regarded as closed.
- 3.2. Upon receipt of the Complaints Policy and Procedure, a formal letter of complaint should be written to the Designated Trustee. (email address available on website/home address from Secretary).
- 3.3. The letter should set out the details of the complaint, the consequences for the complainant as a result, and the remedy being sought.
- 3.4. The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt; a response and an explanation within 15 working days. The written response will also notify the complainant that they have 28 days in which to ask for the complaint and response to be reviewed if they are dissatisfied with the response they have received. This review will be undertaken by no less than three Trustees who have not been involved so far in the process. The Trustee responsible for the original response will also be part of the review team.

### Contact Details:

Designated Trustee – Chair of WCS: [michaelmaddock123@btinternet.com](mailto:michaelmaddock123@btinternet.com)

Secretary of WCS – [wellingtonchoralsociety@gmail.com](mailto:wellingtonchoralsociety@gmail.com)

6 Pear Tree Way  
Wellington  
TA21 9AB

Policy drawn up by: S J Ryan

Date: 30 October 2017

Adopted by WCS Trustees on ... Date : 8 November 2017

Signed by Chair:...See original in File Mike Maddock

Date: 8 November 2017

Review Date: November 2019