



Complaints Procedure

Who can make a complaint?

Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Aerobility about any provision of facilities or services that we provide.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as *'an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'*. A complaint may be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action'*.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Aerobility takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

How to raise a concern or make a complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Concerns should be raised with either a member of staff or a member of our Front Desk team. If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

Complaints against staff or volunteers, or about our activities, should be made in the first instance, to the Chief Executive. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints that involve or are about the Chief Executive should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees. Please mark them as Private and Confidential. For ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Chief Executive, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of facilities or services by Aerobility with the exceptions listed below.

Exceptions	Who to contact
Matters likely to require a Safeguarding Investigation	Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff will be dealt with under Aerobility's internal grievance procedures.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff may be dealt with under Aerobility's disciplinary procedures, if appropriate. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.
Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use our premises or facilities	Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against Aerobility in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Aerobility wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, or that it is dismissed. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review our policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the Chief Executive (unless they are about the Chief Executive). This may be done in person, in writing (preferably on the Complaint Form), or by telephone. The Chief Executive will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 working days.

Within this response, the Chief Executive will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The Chief Executive can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Note: The Chief Executive may delegate the investigation to another member of the senior management team but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the Chief Executive (or investigator) will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of their investigation, the Chief Executive will provide a formal written response within 14 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If the Chief Executive is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Aerobility will take to resolve the complaint.

The Chief Executive will advise the complainant of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

If the complaint is about the Chief Executive, or a member of the Board of Trustees (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled Trustee will be appointed to complete all the actions at Stage 1.

Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 – a meeting with members of the Board of Trustees, which will be formed of the first three, impartial, Trustees available. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Chief Executive within 5 working days of receipt of the Stage 1 response.

The Chief Executive will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 working days. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Chief Executive will write to the complainant to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 15 working days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the Chief Executive will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

The complaints committee will consist of at least three Trustees with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. The committee will decide whether to deal with the complaint by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the complainant's needs.

If the complainant is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the committee meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this complaints procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

At least 5 working days before the meeting, the committee will:

- confirm and notify the complainant of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the complainant is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the committee at least 2 working days before the meeting.

The committee will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded. The committee will also not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a complainant's own disability or special needs require it. Prior knowledge and consent of all parties attending must be sought before meetings or conversations take place. Consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The committee will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The committee can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the committee will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to Aerobility's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of the Committee will provide the complainant and Aerobility with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 working days. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Aerobility will take to resolve the complaint.

Complaint Form

Please complete and return to the Chief Executive who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Address:
Postcode: Email: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at Aerobility about it
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: