



## Quest Complaints Procedure

(Version 3)

**Approved: 2nd October 2010**

**Reviewed: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

**Next Review: Winter 2022**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the National Committee at the first full committee meeting of the year or earlier in response to changes in local or national policy / legislation.

## Introduction

Quest is a voluntary group for lesbian and gay Catholics, their friends and supporters. The services Quest provides include:

- local groups around the UK
- annual weekend conferences
- a 'contact us' phone line
- publications
- occasional other events and activities
- opportunities for members to organise and contribute to these
- a periodic bulletin for members

Those who work for Quest aim to provide a good service. To promote good practice in dealing with people in specific situations, Quest has a Constitution, and a range of policies to support our work. Details of these can be found on the website.

Inevitably, mistakes and misunderstandings arise, from time to time, and users and volunteers may feel the need to make a complaint. So the following guidelines have been agreed, to assist complainants and those responding to complaints in Quest.

## Informal Complaint

We recommend that, in the first instance, where possible, you make your complaint to the person responsible for the situation in which your concern has arisen. He or she may be able to resolve the matter quickly for you. For example: (1) in a Local Group – speak to the Convenor or a member of the Steering Group; (2) at an Annual Conference – to the Conference Organiser or a member of the Committee; (3) regarding a publication – to its Editor; (4) in the Committee – to the Chair or an Executive Officer; (5) concerning the administration of your membership – to the Secretary. Contact details for these persons – phone numbers or email addresses - may be found on Quest's website: <https://questlgbti.uk/>, in the Quest Bulletin, in your local newsletter, or by phone on: 0300 123 1989.

## **Formal Complaint**

If the above does not satisfactorily resolve the situation, or you feel the matter is serious, you can make a formal complaint. This is usually done by writing either a letter addressed to the Secretary – or, if you prefer, addressed to the Chair – at: Quest, BM Box 2585, London WC1N 3XX, or writing an email to either: [secretary@questgaycatholic.org.uk](mailto:secretary@questgaycatholic.org.uk), or: [chair@questgaycatholic.org.uk](mailto:chair@questgaycatholic.org.uk). You will firstly be sent an acknowledgment and a copy of this Complaints Procedure.

The Secretary will inform the Chair or Deputy Chair of the complaint. Then, either: (1) the Chair/Deputy Chair will appoint someone to contact you to discuss your concern, investigate the matter, keep a record of what happens and of any action taken to resolve the matter, and inform you of the outcome; or: (2) the Chair/Deputy Chair will deal with your complaint personally, following the same procedures. The Committee will be informed of all formal complaints, and of their outcome.

An offer may be made to appoint a Committee member, or a Quest member of your choosing, to support and advise you during the progress of your complaint, if appropriate. At any face to face meetings, at least two people will meet with you, at least one of whom will normally be a member of the Committee.

## **If a complaint is not satisfactorily resolved**

If you feel that your complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, you can ask for the matter to be referred to the Committee, who will receive and consider a report from those who have dealt with the case so far. The Committee may consider and decide on the matter, or it may appoint a panel - usually consisting of the Chair, or Deputy Chair, and two Committee members not previously connected with the case - to reconsider the evidence and any further representations from yourself. The panel will follow the procedure, described under "Formal Complaint" above, and make recommendations to the Committee, who will make a final decision on the matter.

## **Complaints regarding individuals**

If the complaint is about a particular individual, the individual concerned will be informed of the complaint, and who has made it, and be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation. He or she will also be offered the support and advice of a Committee member, or a Quest member of their choosing, during the progress of the complaint procedure. If the complaint is serious, the individual may be suspended, by the Chair or Deputy Chair, or by the Committee, until the matter has been investigated.

If a complaint against an individual is found to be upheld, the Chair, or Deputy Chair, may choose to give a verbal or written warning. If the offence is serious, the Chair/Deputy Chair may recommend to the Committee - who will decide on the matter - that the individual be dismissed from their work in Quest or from Quest membership. In all cases, the individual, and the Committee, will be given reasons for any action taken, and the individual is able to appeal against such disciplinary action.

Appeals against disciplinary action can be made to the Committee, who will receive and consider a report from those who have dealt with the case so far. The Committee will appoint a panel - usually consisting of the Chair, or Deputy Chair, and two Committee members not previously connected with the case - to reconsider the evidence and any further representations from the individual. The panel will follow the procedure, described under "Formal Complaint" above, and make recommendations to the Committee, who will make a final decision on the matter.

## **Generally**

Whoever deals with a complaint should aim to deal with it promptly, confidentially and adequately, following the guidelines given in this document.

When a formal complaint is made, records need to be kept of evidence received and action taken, and the complainant, the Chair, the Committee and any individuals involved should be informed of the progress of the complaint and of its outcome.

Complainants, and any individuals involved, may ask to see records of the complaint.

If someone dealing with a complaint feels unable to be objective, or knows of a conflict of interest, they should inform the Chair/Deputy Chair, and ask to be replaced.