



## COMPLAINTS POLICY

### Document control summary

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## **Complaints and Feedback Policy**

Your opinion is important to us and the AEP is committed to delivering the best possible services and support to you. To enable us to do this we need your assistance in letting us know what works well and what we can improve further. We welcome your feedback and complaints because they are an important way for us to learn and to improve our services in the future. The AEP's feedback and complaints policy is simple to access and we want you to know about it so you can use it to help us help you better.

### **What is a complaint?**

A complaint is when you tell us that you are not happy with something the AEP has done or failed to do. This includes services supplied by people or organisations acting on behalf of the AEP

### **Who can complain?**

You, or someone acting with your written consent, can make a complaint about the actions or decisions of the AEP that affect you as a member. Complaints can also be made about the actions or decisions of someone acting on behalf of the AEP that affect you as a member, for example a member of the national representative panel.

### **What is the time limit for making a complaint?**

You should normally complain within three months of the event(s) concerned or within three months of becoming aware that you have something to complain about.

### **How do I make an initial complaint?**

We encourage local resolution of complaints in the first instance. Experience tells us that when someone is unhappy with a service and wants to register it, this is best dealt with by those directly involved. This way, misunderstandings can be corrected and if actions need to be taken these can happen speedily and directly at the point of delivery. Your complaint should therefore be made in the first instance to the member of staff providing the service. If your complaint is about a member of the AEP's National Executive Committee or your local AEP representative then please use the AEP's Code of Ethics and Conduct procedures as set out in the [Members' Handbook](#) . A record of the complaint will be made to learn from it in the future. You can complain in writing or via email. Please contact the AEP office if you do not have the member of staff's details.

### **What if my complaint can't be resolved informally?**

If, despite our best endeavours, the matter cannot be resolved or you want to pursue a formal complaint, you can contact the AEP with written details of your complaint and we will apply the formal complaints policy. This enables us to assign an investigator and define the timescales for a formal response.

### **What happens next?**

Upon receiving your formal complaint the AEP will commission an investigation. You will be informed in writing of the name of the person undertaking the investigation and depending on the complaint, may be invited to make a statement or clarify your concerns. Every effort will be made to take any conflicts of interest into consideration when appointing someone to investigate the complaint.

### **How long will it take to investigate my complaint?**

Normally you will receive a written response from the person who has been commissioned to deal with your complaint within 25 working days. If it is necessary to extend this deadline you will be given a written explanation of the reasons for the delay. The written response to your complaint will be aimed at satisfying your concerns, offering an apology and explanation as appropriate, and setting out any action to ensure similar situations do not arise again.

### **Will my complaint be dealt with in confidence?**

The AEP acknowledges that information relating to complaints is sensitive and therefore needs to be handled carefully and circulated on a 'need to know' basis only. The AEP is committed to respecting the confidentiality of its members and service users and recognises their right to decide what information they choose to share with us. We also respect members' rights to know what information is held about them and the right to change this information if they believe it is inaccurate. For more information about the AEP's commitment please refer to the AEP's Privacy policy.

### **What if I am not happy with the outcome of my formal complaint?**

You must send a request for a review to the AEP office within 10 working days of the receipt of the response from the AEP specifying the grounds of the appeal.

It is important to note that this is not a re-investigation of the original complaint; rather it is to review whether we dealt with the matter to the appropriate standard. If the review finds the investigation was not conducted to the standards we expect, recommendations can be made including that a fresh investigation takes place.

The outcome of the review will be final and a record will be made on the AEP Formal Complaints file of how the matter was resolved.

The review will consider whether any further changes are required to service delivery and working practices as a consequence of the issues identified from the complaint.

A report will be given to the National Executive Committee on the earliest possible occasion including any recommendations for actions which need the approval of the NEC.

### **How does the AEP monitor complaints?**

Regular reports regarding complaints will be provided to the General Secretary and the National Executive Committee.