



Introduction

We are committed to providing high-quality services to LGBT+ people who have experienced sexual violence, domestic abuse, hate crime and conversion practices. Our intention is to help the community recover from these experiences and prevent further harm.

In addition to our direct service delivery, we support other organisations through consultancy, training and research on LGBT+ experiences of GBV. We carry out fundraising and community awareness raising to support more LGBT+ victim/survivors of abuse and violence.

We welcome complaints, comments, suggestions and feedback from our service users, other stakeholders and members of the public on any aspects of our work and see them as an opportunity to learn and make our services better for the future. We aim for a learning culture where all feedback is welcomed.

We will make it as simple as possible for you to raise concerns and set out here a variety of formal and informal ways that you can tell us if we might have got something wrong.

If you do want to make a complaint, we want to make it as easy as possible for you and reassure you that people who do complain about our services are protected from discrimination. A complaint about our service will not change the service you are eligible for.

Our intention is to respond to all complaints and feedback in line with our values of accountable, kind, brave and expert.

If you feel that we have not dealt with your complaint appropriately or with enough care, then there are other professional bodies you can raise a concern with.



General principles

We will ensure that we follow these same principles regardless of who is making a complaint or the subject of the complaint.

We will:

- Be transparent - we will tell you what we are doing with your concern and any action we have taken as a result
- Take you seriously and take the steps we need to understand your feedback or complaint
- Treat you with respect, politeness and protect your confidentiality and privacy
- Not discriminate against you or withhold a service based on any complaints you may make about us.

We will take complaints about our services, and organisation more generally from, people who have used our services or are using our services, individuals or organisations connected to our service.

We might take complaints about:

- The way an individual worker or freelancer has provided services
- Our operating policies and procedures
- A publication or a comment we have made in print or on socials
- Any of our fundraising or promotional material

We will do our best to ensure investigations into all complaints are resolved as quickly and transparently as possible.

Please note we are unable to respond to the following concerns under this policy:

- Complaints about allegations of serious or sustained misconduct by those in management and control of our charity. Concerns of this nature should be referred to the Charity Commission in England and Wales
- Complaints about employment or contractual matters, either from a member of the public, an employee or third-party agency



- Complaints that have already been brought to the attention of, and are being investigated by, the police
- Complaints where legal action is being taken

If we cannot resolve your complaint under this policy, we will advise you of the action we are taking and why.

All complaints are handled in line with our confidentiality and safeguarding policies, which are available upon request.

Complaints Process

Informal complaints

Any member of the public or person using our services can talk to us about how they have experienced our service or our organisation. This feedback can come via a call, an email or a message on social media. This could be picked up by any member of the team.

The member of the team should respond to the feedback professionally and with kindness: making sure that they are listening to the other person's experience and taking it seriously.

Victim/survivors should be offered the chance to speak with a manager to discuss their concerns more fully.

All staff should let the person making the complaint or giving feedback know that you will share it with a manager and ask if the person gives consent to have a follow up conversation – detailing the actions that we've taken because of their feedback.

If writing a complaint is not possible for any reason, a staff member can take a complaint verbally.

Records

All staff members must record details of the feedback received, including the date, time, method of communication, the issues raised, and the outcome the individual is seeking. This information must be shared with their line manager on within 24 hours.



The line manager is responsible for ensuring the feedback is logged on the Complaints spreadsheet held on the managers' SharePoint site. Wherever possible, this should be completed on the same day the feedback is received, or no later than the next working day.

If the line manager is unavailable, the information should be escalated to the next appropriate manager to ensure that records are maintained and updated within the required timescales.

Outcomes of feedback

Managers should discuss feedback received with the relevant team member within four weeks of receipt, either during their next scheduled one-to-one or, where appropriate, by passing the feedback to the relevant line manager to discuss.

Where feedback relates to a team, service, or organisational process, it should be discussed at the next scheduled team meeting, and or as soon as is practicably possible.

Any actions agreed to address the feedback should be recorded on the Complaints spreadsheet within two weeks of the action being agreed.

Where the individual has given consent to be contacted, they should be informed of any action taken because of their feedback within eight weeks of the feedback being received, unless there are exceptional circumstances preventing this.

If the individual remains dissatisfied following this response, they may choose to escalate the matter through the organisation's formal complaints procedure.

Formal complaints

Formal complaints are complaints that are received in writing and clearly marked as a formal complaint, there is no obligation to have completed an informal process first.

If writing a complaint is not possible for any reason, a staff member can take a complaint verbally.

Formal complaints can be made to us by letter or email:

By email: info@galop.org.uk

By letter: **PO Box 81790, London EC3P 3GA**



If a member of the public needs support to make a complaint to us, we will provide support or signpost to the Citizen's Advice Service for support with a complaint.

All formal complaints will be forwarded to the appropriate member of the Management Team. They will ensure the complaint is recorded on the Complaints register and will identify the most appropriate manager or senior manager to lead the investigation.

A designated member of the Management Team will act as the main point of contact for the complainant throughout the process. They are responsible for maintaining clear communication, ensuring the investigation is conducted fairly and thoroughly, and providing updates until the complaint is resolved.

All formal complaints will be subject to an investigation. The complainant will be informed of the investigation process, including the expected timescales for completion and when they can expect to receive an outcome.

Throughout the investigation, we will seek to keep the complainant informed of progress. However, where client safety, confidentiality, legal obligations, or data protection considerations prevent us from sharing specific information, we may be unable to provide detailed updates. In these circumstances, we will confirm that the complaint has been investigated and advise whether any actions have been, or will be, taken because of the findings.

Timescales

A formal complaint will be acknowledged by the allocated member of the Management Team within three working days of receipt.

The allocated manager will arrange a fact-finding discussion with the complainant to ensure they fully understand the nature of the complaint and the outcome being sought. Wherever possible, this discussion should take place within ten working days of the complaint being received.

Following the fact-finding discussion, the allocated manager will send a written summary of the complaint within five working days. This will confirm:

- The issues being investigated.
- The investigation process and who may be involved.
- The anticipated timescale for the investigation.
- The date by which the complainant can expect to receive an outcome.



We will aim to complete investigations and provide a written outcome within 20 working days of the fact-finding discussion. Where this is not possible due to the complexity of the complaint or other exceptional circumstances, the complainant will be informed of the reasons for the delay.

If an investigation cannot be completed within the expected timeframe, the allocated manager will provide the complainant with a progress update at least every 10 working days until the investigation is concluded and an outcome is issued.

Outcome

The final response letter should clearly set out:

- How the complaint was investigated.
- The findings of the investigation.
- Whether the complaint was upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld.
- Any actions that have been taken, or will be taken, because of the investigation.
- Any lessons learned and how this learning will be implemented to improve our services, policies, or practices.

The response should be written in clear and accessible language and should address all aspects of the complaint raised.

The final response letter should also explain the next steps available to the complainant if they remain dissatisfied. We can provide the outcome via telephone if this is preferred for access needs.

We will include details of how to request a Stage Two Review and the timeframe within which this request should be made: one calendar month.

Information about escalating concerns to any relevant external body should also be provided where appropriate.

Stage two formal complaints

A Stage Two Complaint Review will be overseen by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) who has had no previous involvement in the complaint.

Stage Two complaints will normally focus on concerns about the handling of the Stage One investigation, such as whether relevant information was overlooked, whether the investigation process was followed appropriately, or whether issues arose during the investigation itself. A Stage Two Review will not usually re-investigate the original



complaint unless there is evidence that significant information was missed or not properly considered.

Timescales

A request for a Stage Two Review must be made within one calendar month of the date of the Stage One outcome letter.

Upon receipt of a Stage Two complaint, the designated member of the Senior Leadership Team will acknowledge the complaint within five working days. The acknowledgement will explain how the review will be conducted and the anticipated timescales.

In some cases, the review can be completed through an assessment of the existing records and evidence. Where further information is required, the reviewer may arrange a fact-finding call or meeting with the complainant. Where this is necessary, we will aim to hold the discussion within 10 working days of acknowledging the Stage Two complaint.

The reviewer will consider all relevant documentation from the Stage One investigation, identify any gaps or areas requiring clarification, and obtain any additional information needed to reach an informed decision.

We will aim to complete the Stage Two Review and provide a written outcome within 20 working days of acknowledging the Stage Two complaint.

Where it is not possible to meet this timescale due to the complexity of the review or other exceptional circumstances, the complainant will be informed as soon as possible. We will explain the reason for the delay, provide a revised timeframe, and issue progress updates at least every ten working days until the review is concluded.

Outcome

The Stage Two outcome letter will clearly set out:

- How the review was conducted.
- The issues considered as part of the review.
- The findings and rationale for the decision.
- Whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld.
- Any actions that have been taken, or will be taken, because of the findings.
- Any lessons learned and how these will be implemented to improve services, policies, or practices.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, the letter will include information on how to request a Final Complaint Review. Requests for a Final Complaint



Review must be made within 1 calendar month of the date of the Stage Two outcome letter.

Final Complaint Review

A Final Complaint Review will be considered by a Complaints Panel consisting of three people, at least one of whom must be a member of Galop's Board of Trustees.

Other members of the panel may be managers, staff members, or independent representatives who have had no prior involvement in the complaint and who have sufficient experience and expertise to undertake the review.

Where appropriate, Galop may invite an independent external representative to chair the panel.

The panel's role is to review:

- The original complaint and Stage One investigation.
- The Stage Two Review and its findings.
- Whether the complaints process was followed fairly and appropriately.
- Any concerns that significant information was overlooked or that procedural errors occurred during either stage of the process.

The Complaints Panel will normally conduct its review based on documentary evidence only.

The outcome of the Final Complaint Review represents the conclusion of Galop's internal complaints procedure and there is no further right of appeal within the organisation.

Timescales

A request for a Final Complaint Review must be made within 1 calendar month of the date of the Stage Two outcome letter.

We will acknowledge the request within five working days.

Within ten working days of acknowledging the request, we will write to the complainant to:

- Confirm that a Complaints Panel is being convened.
- Provide the names and roles of the proposed panel members.
- Identify any external panel members, where applicable.
- Check whether the complainant has any concerns regarding potential conflicts of interest.



- Confirm the anticipated date of the panel meeting.
- Confirm the expected date by which an outcome will be provided.

We will aim to convene the Complaints Panel within 20 working days of acknowledging the request.

The panel will aim to issue its written outcome within 10 working days of the panel meeting.

Where it is not possible to meet these timescales due to availability, complexity, or other exceptional circumstances, we will inform the complainant as soon as possible, provide a revised timeframe, and issue progress updates at least every ten working days until the review is concluded.

Outcome

The final outcome letter will set out:

- How the Final Complaint Review was conducted.
- The information and evidence considered by the panel.
- The panel's findings and rationale.
- Whether any aspect of the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld.
- Any recommendations or actions arising from the review.
- Any organisational learning identified and how this will be implemented.

The decision of the Complaints Panel is final and concludes Galop's internal complaints process. Where appropriate, the outcome letter will include information about any relevant external organisations that may be able to consider the matter further.

This gives you a fully aligned process with clear timescales at every stage:

- Acknowledgement: **3 days (Stage 1) / 5 days (Stage 2 & Final)**
- Fact-finding: **10 working days**
- Outcome: **20 working days (Stage 1 & Stage 2)**
- Panel convened: **20 working days**
- Final panel decision: **10 working days after the meeting**
- Progress updates: **Every 10 working days if delayed**
- Escalation requests: **1 calendar month between stages**