

THAMES OPERA COMPANY

FORMAL COMPLAINTS

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

UPDATED NOVEMBER 2021




Policy Statement

Thames Opera Company is committed to providing a quality service for its stakeholders working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of everyone we work with. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our employees, customers and stakeholders, and in particular by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.






This policy applies to the organisation's volunteers, clients and contractors and is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction. An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved, but if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then Thames Opera Company's formal complaints policy should be followed.

Thames Opera Company recognises that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly.






Our aim is to:

-  resolve informal concerns quickly
-  keep matters low-key
-  enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint refers





Thames Opera Company aims 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 respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc.
-  we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures

Thames Opera Company's responsibility is to:

-  respond politely (not defensively) and do not make the situation worse
-  acknowledge the formal complaint in writing
-  respond within a stated period of time
-  deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint
-  take action where appropriate

The complainant's responsibility is to:

-  bring their complaint, in writing, to Thames Opera Company's attention normally within three weeks of the issue arising
-  explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date
-  allow Thames Opera Company a reasonable time to deal with the matter
-  recognise and accept that some circumstances may be beyond Thames Opera Company's control

Formal complaints procedure:

Thames Opera Company's aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently, timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected.

Stage 1: In the first instance, if you are unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write to the member of staff who dealt with you, or their manager, so that he or she has a chance to put things right. If your complaint concerns a Trustee, rather than a member of Thames Opera Company's staff, you should write formally to the individual concerned. In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking. You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within ten working days of receipt. You should get a response and an explanation within ten working days. If you are unsure which member of Thames Opera Company's staff to write to, your complaint should be sent to a member of the Senior Management team.

Stage 2: If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint, you can then write to the Chair of Thames Opera Company's Board of Trustees (Unless the complaint relates to the Chair when you should address your complaint to the Vice Chair), stating the reason why you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You must do this within ten working days of receiving a response and an explanation from a member of the Senior Management team. The Chair of the Board of Trustees (or their nominee) will respond normally within ten working days to inform you of the action which will be taken to investigate your complaint, and when you can expect to hear the outcome of the investigation.

Confidentiality:

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and Eastside maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

Monitoring and reporting:

Thames Opera Company's Board of Trustees will receive a report of any formal complaints made and their resolution.

Designated people:

All complaints should be made in writing to the member of staff who dealt with you, or to the following people:

Chairman of the Board of Trustees: Matthew Smith

Complaints should be addressed to the appropriate person at the following address: Thames Opera Company, The Old Bakery, The Green, West Tilbury, Tilbury, RM18 8TU.

This policy has been endorsed by the Board of Trustees who give their full support to its implementation.

I and the other members of the Board of Trustees are committed to this policy and to providing the highest standards of quality service for all our stakeholders. We expect every member of Thames Opera Company to share this commitment and to work together to achieve it.

TBC

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Thames Opera Company

19th November 2021

This policy is monitored periodically to judge its effectiveness and is updated in accordance with changes in the law. This policy was last updated on: 19th November 2021