

THE ORDER *of* ST. GEORGE

Grand Priory of the United Kingdom
BM The Order of St. George, London WC1N 3XX

Policy and Procedures for Handling Complaints

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This policy supersedes any other policies, protocols, procedures or actions written or otherwise that the Order has used, applied or adopted in relation to complaints prior to the approval date.

Author – The Deputy Grand Prior – Membership, Policies, Protocols and Procedures.

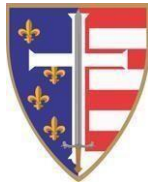
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The Grand Prior is charged with the responsibility of running the Order and furthering the objectives of the associated Charitable Trust. The Grand Prior, reserves the right to act on behalf of the Order in a considered and reasonable manner on all matters pertaining to the Order, providing the policies, protocols and procedures of the Order are upheld and not compromised.



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Policy and Procedures for Handling Complaints. This Policy relates to the Order.

Where there are complaints about the associated Charitable Trust, these should be made to the Charity Commission. However, initial concerns can be raised with the Order who will advise the complainant, without fear or favour, how to raise their concerns with the Charity Commission, if that is their wish to do so.

1. Purpose and scope of policy

1.1 Our intention, at all times, is to deal with people fairly and properly. If you feel that we have not met that standard, please let us know. Where there is reason to believe our conduct or the conduct of any group within the Order or one of our members has fallen short, we want to be able to resolve any issues and learn from what has happened so that we can continuously improve.

1.2 This policy explains how the Order deals with complaints about its conduct from members, all external parties including members of the public and any organisation or body that we are associated with or who are associated with us.

2. What is a complaint?

The Order will treat any expression of dissatisfaction about our conduct, any group within the Order or one of its members as a complaint. However, we ask you to contact us in writing as set out in the next section, so that we can consider the matter properly.

2.1 This policy covers complaints about:

- a) how you or others have been treated by the Order or a group within the Order or one of its members;

- b) the Order's conduct or a group within the Order or one of its members in carrying out its charitable work on behalf of the associated Charitable Trust;
- c) the Order's conduct and compliance with its own policies and procedures; and
- d) the behaviour of any member of the Order irrespective of rank or responsibility.

2.2 It may be the case that we receive correspondence that, in our view, does not fall under our definition of a complaint or does not raise any issue that calls for in-depth investigation. This may apply, for instance, to:

- a) objections to certain steps, recommendations or decisions we have taken in compliance with our charitable work as recommended and or approved by the Charities Commission;
- b) disapproval of the Order's refusal to take action in a matter where we have no legal power to act;
- c) anonymous complaints; or
- d) malicious, repetitive or vexatious claims - such as harassment of any member of the Order, irrespective of rank or responsibility, any group within the Order, the Trustees or any individual trustee or repeated submissions of a complaint to which a response under stage two of our complaints procedure has been provided.

2.3 We will not reply to rude or abusive emails, calls or letters. We reserve the right to report such offensive matters to the appropriate authorities.

2.4 In all other cases we will give brief reasons for our views but, having done so once, will not normally engage in further correspondence on the merits of the position we have taken.

2.5 This policy does not cover matters that are subject to separate procedures, which may include, but not necessarily, the following:

- a) Dissatisfaction or disagreement with opinions or determinations handed down by the Grand Prior or Trustees in meeting their obligations to the Order and/or the associated Charitable Trust.
- b) Concerns raised by members which are being dealt with under our Whistleblowing Policy.

However, this policy and the associated procedures may apply in such matters. No complaint will be ignored, irrespective of the circumstances or members involved or the channels used by the complainant to raise their complaint.

3. How to complain

3.1 By email to The Deputy Grand Prior – membership@orderofstgeorge.co.uk

3.2 By post – Mark the envelope confidential. The Deputy Grand Prior. Membership, Protocols and Procedures. BM The Order of St. George, London WC1N 3XX

3.3 It will help us to deal quickly and fully with your complaint if you can state that you are making a complaint, set out your concern in writing as clearly as possible, and provide your contact details.

4. What you can expect from us when handling a complaint

4.1 Our policy is to take legitimate complaints seriously and deal with them according to the procedures set out in this policy and as recommended by the Charities Commission.

4.2 Our service standards

a) We aim to deal with complaints promptly and sensitively, and be courteous and helpful at all times. We would hope, too, that you will be courteous and fair in your dealings with our officers and members all times. All complaints received will be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPRS) UK and EU.

b) We will keep full and accurate records of all complaints we receive so that we can monitor the types of problems reported to us, the best way to resolve them and how long we are taking to deal with complaints. This also helps us to take a closer look at how we can improve in the future.

c) If you make a complaint, we will investigate it thoroughly and impartially, without discrimination or prejudice. We aim to resolve matters as promptly as we can, but if a complaint gives rise to serious issues, we may need to take extra time in order to investigate it fully and properly so that, wherever we can, we resolve the issue first time and learn from it and make improvements.

d) We will ensure that all decisions we make are proportionate, appropriate and fair given the circumstances of each individual complaint.

5. Making a Complaint

Stage one (1)

5.1 If you have supplied your contact details, we will send an acknowledgment of your complaint within five working days. Your complaint will then be passed to an appropriate person who was not involved in the events which led to the complaint and who is in a position and has the relevant experience to consider the complaint. We will aim to respond as soon as possible, and in any event within 20 working days. We may need to contact you to ask for more information or clarity before making a final response.

5.2 When we provide you with a final response, we will clearly set out the steps we took in investigating the complaint along with our views and reasons for this. Where we

identify mistakes in our approach we will acknowledge those mistakes, set out details of remedial steps or changes we think are appropriate in the circumstances, and explain what we will do to prevent the problem from reoccurring. We will also

indicate your right to request a review of your complaint if you are not satisfied with our response.

5.3 In complaints involving either:

- a) The Magisterium Officium
- b) Another member of the Grand Magistry - *Currently the Grand Prior Emeritus, Grand Chancellor, Grand Prior of the Grand Priory of the Americas (The Grand Magistry is responsible for the international work of the Order, not the UK Grand Priory)*
- c) A Grand Prior
- d) A Trustee of the associated Charitable Trust,

If the complaint is about any of the above, a UK Deputy Grand Prior who is not a member of the Grand Magistry or a Trustee, will consider if there is a sufficiently serious prima facie case and, if so, shall send it to the Grand Secretary General of the Order for consideration and advice; unless the Grand Secretary General is also a Trustee or is part of the complaint. If such is the case then the Deputy Grand Prior will seek the advice and opinion of a Patron of the Order.

If the complaint is about the Deputy Grand Prior responsible for Membership, Policies, Protocols and Procedures, the complainant should contact the Grand Secretary General – secretarygeneral@orderofstgeorge.co.uk

Stage two (2)

5.4 We expect most complaints to be resolved at stage one. However, if you consider the response you have received is not fair or appropriate, you may contact us to request a review of your complaint by the Grand Secretary General. You should do this within 20 working days of receiving a stage one response unless there is special reason for doing so later.

5.5 We will acknowledge your request to review the complaint within five working days of receipt. Again, we may need to contact you to ask for more information or clarity before making a final decision. We will aim to respond within 20 working days of receipt.

6. Extending time limits

We aim to complete all complaints within the timescales above; however, if a complaint is very complex it may occasionally be necessary to extend the time limit. If this is the case, we will keep the complainant informed of progress with the investigation, the reasons for the delay, and the new deadline.

9. If you remain dissatisfied

7.1 If, having followed the 2 stages of our complaints procedure, you still remain dissatisfied, you can ask to have your complaint reviewed externally.

7.2 You should contact The Grand Secretary General and ask for your complaint to be referred to the Charities Commission or you can do this yourself through their website accessed through www.gov.uk

Contact details for the Grand Secretary General - secretarygeneral@orderofstgeorge.co.uk

By post – mark your letter confidential –Grand Secretary General. BM The Order of St. George, London WC1N 3XX

10. Other information

8.1 On a need to know basis and if relevant, the Magisterium Officium, the Grand Prior, the Grand Council of the Order and the Chair of the Board of Trustees, will be informed of any complaints received about the Order, the associated Charitable Trust, any group within the Order or its members and Officers, at each meeting of the Grand Council by the Grand Secretary General or, in their absence, the Deputy Grand Prior responsible for Membership, Policies, Protocols and Procedures. Details will not be given just that a complaint is being dealt with in-line with the policy for doing so. They will also be kept up-to-date as necessary.

8.2 Details of the complaint, the complainant and those involved will not be disclosed at any meetings of the Order or to any group or individual outside the Order* (*unless required by law to disclose to the appropriate authorities) or to any individual not directly involved in investigating the complaint. To do so will become a serious disciplinary matter.

8.3 Where a complaint is being handled by an appropriate authority, they will guide the Order and any appropriate officers of the Order, how to act and proceed.

8.4 Where there are sensitive issues, the Grand Secretary General will advise of any need for a 'Part B' to meetings and advise accordingly. This will be done to preserve the legitimacy of the complaint and to protect the personal and private information of those involved – which will not be disclosed.

8.5 The Order welcomes any comments or suggestions about our complaints procedure, to make sure it operates as efficiently and effectively as possible. Please send any comments to us by email or post to: secretarygeneral@ordeofstgeorge.co.uk.

The Grand Secretary General. BM The Order of St. George, London, WC1N 3XX. Updated

22nd January 2026