



# Complaints Policy & Procedure

Stockport City of Sanctuary

## 1. Introduction

Stockport City of Sanctuary is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, inclusive, and respectful environment for refugees, people seeking sanctuary, volunteers, trustees, partners, and members of the local community.

We value feedback and recognise that complaints can help us improve our work. All complaints will be taken seriously and handled fairly, transparently, sensitively, and in a timely manner.

This policy sets out how complaints can be made and how they will be managed.

This policy will be reviewed **annually** and published on our website for accessibility: <https://stockport.cityofsanctuary.org>

## 2. Scope

This Complaints Policy applies to all activities and functions of Stockport City of Sanctuary, including:

- Events, meetings, and activities organised by the group
- Interactions involving volunteers, trustees, and partners
- The quality, accessibility, or conduct of services and activities
- Behaviour of anyone acting on behalf of Stockport City of Sanctuary

This policy does **not** replace safeguarding procedures. Any safeguarding concern will be managed under the Safeguarding Policy.

## 3. How to Make a Complaint

### 3.1 Informal Complaints

Where appropriate, we encourage concerns to be raised informally in the first instance.

- Individuals may speak directly to **Sandy Broadhurst (Chairperson)** or the relevant volunteer involved
- Many concerns can be resolved quickly through respectful discussion

Raising a concern informally will **not** affect anyone's right to make a formal complaint.

### 3.2 Formal Complaints

If a concern cannot be resolved informally, or if it is serious in nature, a formal complaint should be submitted.

Formal complaints should be made **in writing** to the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead using one of the following methods:

- **Email:** info@stockport.cityofsanctuary.org
- **Post:** 9 Bamford Street, Stockport, SK1 3NZ
- **Telephone:** 07594 596905

Support can be offered to individuals who may find it difficult to submit a written complaint.

### 3.3 What to Include

Where possible, complaints should include:

- A clear description of the complaint
- Names of individuals involved (if known)
- Dates, times, and locations
- Any steps already taken to resolve the issue
- Any relevant evidence (if available)
- The preferred outcome (if applicable)

## 4. Complaints Procedure

### 4.1 Acknowledgement

- All formal complaints will be acknowledged within **5 working days**

### 4.2 Investigation

- Complaints will be investigated by **Sandy Broadhurst (Chairperson)** or another appropriate person who is not directly involved in the issue
- Evidence will be gathered and relevant parties may be spoken to
- Investigations will normally be completed within **20 working days**
- If delays occur, the complainant will be informed and given a revised timescale

### 4.3 Outcome

Following the investigation, the complainant will be informed in writing of:

- The findings
- Any actions taken or proposed

Possible outcomes may include:

- An explanation or apology
- Changes to practice or procedures
- Mediation or resolution steps
- Referral to external bodies where appropriate

### 4.4 Review / Appeal

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request a review.

- The review will be conducted by a person not involved in the original investigation
- Reviews will be completed within **10 working days** of the request

## 5. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be accepted. However, investigation may be limited where insufficient information is provided.

Stockport City of Sanctuary will take action where possible based on the information available.

## 6. Unreasonable or Vexatious Complaints

We aim to respond constructively to all complaints. However, complaints may be considered unreasonable if they are:

- Repetitive without new evidence
- Malicious or abusive
- Unclear or without a legitimate basis

In such cases, Stockport City of Sanctuary reserves the right to limit or decline further engagement, while ensuring fair consideration has been given.

## 7. Complaints About Stockport City of Sanctuary

Complaints must first be raised directly with Stockport City of Sanctuary using this policy.

If, after the internal process has been exhausted, the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may raise the complaint with **City of Sanctuary UK, only where there is evidence that:**

- The group has acted contrary to City of Sanctuary values; **and/or**
- The matter is serious enough to bring the City of Sanctuary name into disrepute

City of Sanctuary UK will determine whether the complaint meets the threshold for investigation.

## 8. Complaints About Awarded Organisations

### 8.1 Initial Step

Complaints about an awarded organisation must first be raised with the organisation concerned.

Individuals may contact Stockport City of Sanctuary to confirm whether the award was granted locally or by City of Sanctuary UK.

## 8.2 Awards Granted by City of Sanctuary UK

Where an award was granted by City of Sanctuary UK:

- Stockport City of Sanctuary will notify City of Sanctuary UK
- The complaint will be handled under City of Sanctuary UK's complaints procedure

## 8.3 Awards Granted by Stockport City of Sanctuary

Where an award was granted by Stockport City of Sanctuary:

- Complaints will only be investigated where they relate to people seeking sanctuary and award criteria
- Initial handling will be **informal**, led by **Sandy Broadhurst (Chairperson)**

During consideration, the following questions will be assessed:

1. Has the organisation acted contrary to City of Sanctuary values?
2. Has the organisation brought the City of Sanctuary name into disrepute?

If these are answered affirmatively, Stockport City of Sanctuary may decide to revoke the award and will notify City of Sanctuary UK.

If not, the following will be considered:

3. Has the organisation continued to meet the award criteria?

Where criteria are broadly met, targets for improvement may be agreed within a reasonable timeframe. Failure to meet agreed improvements may result in referral to City of Sanctuary UK and affect future reaccreditation.

## 9. Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled confidentially and shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Information may be shared with statutory authorities where required, particularly in cases involving safeguarding, criminal behaviour, or legal obligations.

## 10. Monitoring and Review

- Complaints will be monitored to identify learning and improvement
- This policy will be reviewed **annually** or sooner if required

## 11. Contact Information

### **Complaints Officer / Safeguarding Lead:**

Sandy Broadhurst, Chairperson

 07594 596905

### **Emergency Contacts:**

- Social Services (9am–5pm): **0161 217 6028**
- Out of Hours Emergency: **0161 718 2118**
- Police Child Protection Team: **101** (or **999** in an emergency)