

Complaints Policy & Procedure

Introduction

Lancaster & Morecambe City of Sanctuary is committed to providing high-quality services and creating a positive and inclusive environment for refugees, people seeking sanctuary, volunteers, and the local community.

We value feedback and take all complaints seriously. This policy outlines how complaints will be handled, ensuring that they are addressed in a fair, transparent, and timely manner.

We commit to reviewing this policy every three years and will publish on our website lancasterandmorecambecityofsanctuary.org for ease of access.

Scope

This Complaints Policy applies to all Lancaster & Morecambe City of Sanctuary (L&MCoS) activities, including but not limited to:

- Activities and events organised by L&MCoS
- Interactions between volunteers, and individuals receiving support.
- The quality and accessibility of the services provided to refugees, people seeking sanctuary, and other vulnerable individuals.
- The behavior of L&MCoS volunteers, and partners.

How to Make a Complaint?

1. Informal Complaints:

- We encourage individuals to address concerns informally, where possible. If someone is dissatisfied with an aspect of our service, we recommend they speak directly with Jean O'Neill (Chair of Trustees) or volunteer involved.
- Many issues can be resolved through a respectful conversation, and we encourage a solution-oriented approach.

2. Formal Complaints:

- If a concern cannot be resolved informally, individuals should submit a formal complaint in writing to Jean O'Neill or Bashar Bakhou
Complaints can be submitted via:
 - Email: admin@lancaster.cityofsanctuary.org

- In writing: 9 Halton Road, Lancaster, LA1 2EA
- Phone: 07766 816260

3. What to Include:

- The nature of the complaint (what happened).
- Details of the individual(s) involved.
- Any steps already taken to resolve the issue (if applicable).
- Any supporting evidence (e.g., emails, photos, records of communication).
- Preferred outcome or resolution (if applicable).

Complaints Procedure

1. Acknowledgment:

- Once a complaint is received, it will be acknowledged within 5 working days.

2. Investigation:

- The complaint will be investigated by Jean O'Neill or Bashar Bakhou, who will gather facts, review evidence, and interview relevant parties.
- We will aim to complete the investigation within 20 working days of receiving the complaint. If additional time is needed, we will inform the complainant of the delay and provide a new timeline.

3. Resolution:

- After completing the investigation, we will inform the complainant of the outcome and any actions taken. This may include:
 - An apology or explanation.
 - A change in service or practice.
 - Referral to external bodies if necessary (e.g., local authorities, regulatory bodies).

4. Outcome Review:

- If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they can request a review of the decision. This review will be conducted by different member of the group who was not involved in the original investigation.
- The review process will be completed within 10 working days of the request.

Anonymous Complaints

- L&MCoS will accept anonymous complaints, though it may be more difficult to investigate these effectively without specific details.
- Whenever possible, we will respond to anonymous complaints and take appropriate action.

Unreasonable Complaints

We are committed to addressing all complaints fairly and thoroughly. However, we recognize that some complaints may be unreasonable due to their nature or frequency. Unreasonable complaints may include those that are excessively repetitive, malicious, or unrealistic, or those where no clear or actionable issue is raised. In such cases, we reserve the right to limit our response or refuse to engage further.

We aim to resolve all complaints in a constructive manner, but we also strive to maintain a balanced approach, ensuring resources are focused on addressing legitimate concerns.

Complaints about Lancaster & Morecambe City of Sanctuary

In the first instance you must contact L&MCoS directly to raise your complaint.

If after L&MCoS's complaints procedure has been exhausted and the complainant is not satisfied they can raise the complaint with City of Sanctuary UK. However, **the complaint will only be investigated by City of Sanctuary UK if the complainant has sufficient evidence** that:-

- L&MCoS has acted contrary to the values of City of Sanctuary UK;
- What has been done, or not done, is of such a serious nature that it has brought the City of Sanctuary name and reputation into disrepute.

Confidentiality

- Complaints will be treated in confidence, and only those who need to know will be informed.
- However, in certain circumstances, information may need to be shared with external authorities (e.g., if the complaint relates to safeguarding concerns, criminal behavior, or illegal activities).

Monitoring and Review

- The Complaints Policy will be reviewed every three years, to ensure it is effective and continues to meet the needs of the organization and those we serve.
- Data on complaints will be monitored to identify any trends or areas where improvements can be made.

Contact Information

- **Complaints Officer:** Jean O'Neill/ Bashar Bakhou; details above
- **Safeguarding Officer:** Jean O'Neill/Eleanor Denvir (please refer to our safeguarding policy for more details)
- **Emergency Contacts:**
 - Lancaster & Morecambe City of Sanctuary **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** is **Eleanor Denvir**. Contact Eleanor on tel no. **07484 686975** or via email e.denvir@globalink.org.uk
 - Lancaster & Morecambe City of Sanctuary **Chair of Trustees** is **Jean O'Neill**. Contact Jean on tel no **07766 816260** or via email urbaneworrier@btinternet.com. Second contact is Bashar Bakhou. Contact Bashar on ibasharb@gmail.com
 - Lancashire Adult Social Care – 0300 123 6721. Or [report a concern online](#)
 - Lancashire Child Protection Team – 0300 123 6720 (out of hours: 0300 123 6722)

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