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# Complaint Policy

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Galway Traveller Movement  
1 The Plaza  
Headford Road  
Co. Galway

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## Policy Statement

- 1.1. Galway Traveller Movement is committed to taking seriously any complaint that concerned individuals have about the organisation. Galway Traveller Movement, GTM, believes that if an individual wishes to make a complaint or register a concern, they should find it easy to do so.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments are taken seriously and addressed in a professional manner.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy covers all actions to be taken in respect to a complaint by a concerned individual. Concerned individuals can include: GTM participants, members of the local community and concerned stakeholders (funders, external agencies, etc.).
- 3.2. Complaints can be made against any aspect of GTM.

## 4. Principles

- 4.1. It is GTM's policy to welcome complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide better services.
- 4.2. The policy will be in line with GTM's ethos to encourage Traveller participation.
- 4.3. It will ensure the protection of the Traveller community against discrimination and racism within GTM.
- 4.4. Community development methodologies will be applied as in accordance to the workings of GTM.

## 5. Operational Principles

- 5.1. All complaints will be responded to and then resolved promptly, and within the timescales outlined.
- 5.2. This organisation supports the concept that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be sorted out at a local level between just the complainant and the organisation.
- 5.3. Complainants should be consulted about what they would like to happen about their complaint.
- 5.4. All persons involved should be supported and given appropriate assistance throughout the process.
- 5.5. The complaints process should be well publicised. People engaging with GTM should be made aware that there is an easy way to complain, and how to do it.
- 5.6. All complaints must be properly recorded in a consistent manner.
- 5.7. Complaints should be kept at a central location and monitored for quality purposes

## 6. Complaints Procedures

- 6.1. Who can complain?
  - 6.1.1. Anyone who engages with GTM.
  - 6.1.2. Any member of the local community.
  - 6.1.3. An advocate may complain on behalf of a person engaging with GTM, provided they have the persons written consent.
  - 6.1.4. A parent / guardian may complain on behalf of a child.
  - 6.1.5. Any external stakeholder (funders, external agencies, etc.).
- 6.2. A concerned individual can complain about any aspect of the organisation that has impacted on them or the organisation they represent in a way that they perceive to be negative.
- 6.3. All complaints by members of the community or other stakeholders should be referred to the joint coordinators of GTM.
- 6.4. What can they complain about?
  - 6.4.1. A participant of GTM can complain about:
    - 6.4.1.1. Any part of the service that they have received
    - 6.4.1.2. A decision made about them that affects them
    - 6.4.1.3. Being denied a service
    - 6.4.1.4. Discrimination and Racism
    - 6.4.1.5. A member of staff

#### 6.5. Complaints involving staff

- 6.5.1. If the complaint is about a member of staff, the complainant should immediately be referred to the co-ordinator who will then liaise with the operational committee. The person engaging with GTM will be supported to write the complaint. The person will be told that the staff member will be informed that a complaint has been lodged against them.
- 6.5.2. If the complaint is about the co-ordinator, the participant will be supported to write the complaint, which will be referred to the GTM Board of Management. The person engaging with GTM will be told that the co-ordinator will be informed that a complaint has been lodged against them.

#### 6.6. Verbal complaints

- 6.6.1. All verbal complaints, no matter how seemingly unimportant, should be taken seriously. There is nothing to be gained by staff adopting a defensive or aggressive attitude.
- 6.6.2. All contact with the complainant should be polite, courteous and empathetic. At all times staff should remain calm and respectful.
- 6.6.3. A staff person who receives an oral complaint should seek to solve the problem immediately if possible. If staff cannot solve the problem immediately they should offer to get the co-ordinator to deal with the problem, if this complaint is of a particular complex level, the complaint will then, be referred to GTM's operational committee.
- 6.6.4. If the suggested plan of action is not acceptable to the complainant then the member of staff or co-ordinator should ask the complainant to complete a Complaints Record Form (Appendix I) and inform them fully about the complaints procedure.
- 6.6.5. All complaints should be recorded noting: date; time; name of person/project making the complaint; nature of the complaint; and name co-ordinator handling the complaint. Contact details for the complainant should also be recorded.
- 6.6.6. If a complaint is made regarding a staff person, the complaint will be dealt with as described in 6.5.

#### 6.7. Written complaints

- 6.7.1. All complaints that need the co-ordinator and or the operational committee, to resolve them should be lodged in writing.
- 6.7.2. A completed copy of the Complaints Record Form should be given to GTM's co-ordinator. This should include information on the following:
  - 6.7.2.1. The nature of the complaint.
  - 6.7.2.2. Why the original response to the complaint was unsatisfactory, if there was one.
  - 6.7.2.3. What the complainant's desired outcome would be.
- 6.7.3. The co-ordinator or operational committee will proceed to investigate the complaint. If necessary, further details may be requested from the complainant. If the complaint is not made by a person engaging with GTM but on the behalf of a GTM participant, then the consent of the participant, preferably in writing, must be obtained from the complainant.
- 6.7.4. If a complaint has been received by letter or email, the co-ordinator should contact the complainant in writing within five working days to acknowledge receipt of the letter. The co-ordinator may be required to ask additional questions to ensure the information outlined in the Complaints Recording Form is available. The letter should be attached to a copy of the form.
- 6.7.5. Where a complaint involves two or more individuals, all parties will have the opportunity to give their side of events to the co-ordinator and the operational committee (who will choose whether those involved should meet together or should be meet separately).
- 6.7.6. If the complaint involves a member of staff they will be requested to attend to discuss the issues. They will be given reasonable notification which enables them time to organise to bring a colleague with them if they wish to.
- 6.7.7. The co-ordinator and operational committee will complete the investigation within ten days (unless otherwise agreed) and the complainant will be informed of any outcomes in writing and verbally.

- 6.7.8. If the complaint involves potentially serious matters, advice should be sought from a legal advisor. If legal action is taken at this stage, any investigation by the organisation under the complaints procedure should cease immediately.
- 6.7.9. If the complaint involves the co-ordinator, then the process should be passed to the GTM Board of Directors.

## 7. Outcomes and Actions

- 7.1. Outcomes and actions initiated as a result of the complaint should be recorded on the Complaints Recording Form.
- 7.2. If the complainant is found to be rightly aggrieved, an apology should be offered by the organisation in writing signed by co-ordinator, and all steps should be taken to ensure the cause is appropriately addressed.
- 7.3. If the complainant's proposed outcome is not judged satisfactory by the organisation, the complainant will be provided with a written rationale for the decision.
- 7.4. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they have a right to appeal, though this should be done within ten working days from receipt of official correspondence.
- 7.5. The co-ordinator must then contact the chairperson of the Board of Directors to instigate the establishment of an appeal committee and process.
- 7.6. The appeal should involve two members of the GTM Board of Directors who have not previously been involved in the process.
- 7.7. The decision of this committee is final.

## 8. Anonymous Complaints

- 9.1 Anonymous complaints or complaints made under false names raise both practical problems and issues concerning fairness. The reason for this is that an investigation can not be undertaken. Of particular importance is the fact that a staff member cannot properly respond to the issues raised. The co-ordinator will also not be in position to undertake any remedial actions where there is not a full agreement on the issue as described in the complaint.
- 9.2 In the event that an anonymous complaint is received GTM will note the issues raised and, where necessary try and resolve them appropriately. An anonymous complaint may be referred for investigation:
  - 9.2.1 If there was good reason why the complaint was being made on an anonymous basis, for example, if there was a concern by the complainant that if their identity was revealed it could lead to negative consequence on their health or well-being. This may depend on the seriousness of the allegation being made, and should be at the discretion of the manager. If the allegation involves the manager, it should be referred to the chair of the management committee.
  - 9.2.2 If the allegation can be properly investigated either by talking to a third party witness, or with evidence provided with the complaint, and where there is no need for further contact with the anonymous complainant.
  - 9.2.3 Any complaint involving a minor will be investigated and handled in a confidential manner according to the Child Protection Policy.
- 9.3 In the case that a complaint can not be fully investigated, the complaint will not be referred to in the staff file or will not in any other way impact upon working process or roles etc, except where this has been agreed by all involved including the person named in the complaint.
- 9.4 If the complaint relates to the general service delivery this will be referred to the co-ordinator and remedial action will be implemented if appropriate.
- 9.5 A record of all complaints will be kept in the complaints file.
- 9.6 If anonymous complaints are received, as far as possible, the organisation will promote the complaints procedure and ensure appropriate supports are in place to facilitate complaints being made.

# Complaints Record form

Date of complaint: \_\_\_\_\_  
Complaint made by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Complaint received by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Complaint made by: Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Letter (attached) \_\_\_\_\_  
In person \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

- All complaints are treated confidentially.
- No project user will suffer loss of service because they have made a complaint.

## Complainant details

Name of complainant(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Address of complainant/s: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone number of complainant/s: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If a complaint is being made on behalf of someone else:

1. Who is the complaint on behalf of: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who is making the complaint: \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is their relationship \_\_\_\_\_
4. Does the representative have the complainant's written consent to represent their interests? Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

Details of the complaint (If insufficient space, attach extra pages)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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The complainant's desired outcome would be:

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Signed

Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your comments. Complaints are valuable in helping to maintain and improve the service of Galway Traveller Movement

How is the complaint being dealt with? (To be completed by Margaret O'Riada/Martin Ward)

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Actions and outcomes (to be reported by Margaret O’Riada/Martin Ward)

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## Complaints Process – Information for people engaging with GTM

### Who can complain?

- 1) Anyone who is engaging with GTM.
- 2) An advocate may complain on the persons behalf provided they have the persons written consent.
- 3) A parent / guardian may complain on behalf of a child.

### What can you complain about?

- 1) Any part of the service that you have received
- 2) A decision made about you that affects you
- 3) Being denied a service
- 4) Discrimination and Racism.
- 5) A member of staff

### Important things to note:

- 1) You have the right to complain when you are dissatisfied with the organisation.
- 2) If staff cannot address your issue then they will help you write down your complaint so it can go to the co-ordinators.
- 3) If you make a complaint then you will not be treated differently following the complaint. The service sees complaints as a way to improve what we do.

### Complaints involving staff:

If you wish to make a complaint about a staff member

- Tell one of the team and you will be referred to the co-ordinators who will help you follow the process.
- Note that the staff member will be informed that a complaint has been made against them.
- If you want to complain about the co-ordinator then the complaint can go to Board of Management, again let a member of staff know.

**Complaint Process**

- All complaints will be taken seriously.
- If you tell a staff member about a complaint, the staff member will try to resolve the issue with you. If this does not happen and you are still unhappy then the staff member will help you complete a Complaints Record Form or write a complaint letter, which will be given to the coordinators.
- Once you have written down the complaint the co-ordinators will investigate the problem and get back to you in 10 working days with a response. However, if the complaint is of a particular complex nature the complaint may be passed onto GTM's operational committee.
- If you are dissatisfied with the response, inform the co-ordinators and a meeting can be set up with someone more senior in the organisation (within four weeks).
- You can bring a family member or other advocate to this meeting. Following this meeting you will be informed of an outcome after three days.