

Complaints Procedure - Code of Practice

The OLD WELL THEATRE TRUST (hereinafter referred to as "OWTT") Complaints Procedure exists:

- to provide a practical, formal framework through which grievances may be quickly, efficiently and fairly addressed.
- to promote equality of opportunity for all;
- to safeguard the human rights of all.

This is the procedure to be followed in the event of your wishing to make a complaint against an OWTT member, Trustee or committee member. There are two distinct stages to the procedure. In the first instance, the OWTT will attempt to resolve the complaint informally. If no informal resolution is possible, the complainant can invoke the formal procedures, including the right of appeal to the board of Trustees.

Complaint Procedure

It is not possible to list all the possible circumstances which might give rise to a complaint, but the following guidelines are intended to help decide whether there are grounds for making a complaint against an OWTT member, Trustee or committee member. There may be cause for complaint if someone is subjected to any of the following:

- Bullying - physical/verbal/emotional and/or cyber
- Unreasonable behaviour
- Sexual harassment - physical and/or verbal
- Damage to property
- Uncooperative working practices
- Incitement to wrong doing
- Infringement of Equal Opportunities
- Unfairness in assessment

1. Complaint against an OWTT member: Informal First Stage

Anyone feeling that he/she has been treated unfairly by an OWTT member, should explain the complaint to a theatre Trustee or Committee member or the Director of a performance. The person receiving the complaint will attempt to resolve the complaint informally. If, after this, the complainer feels that the complaint has not been properly addressed, he/she may invoke the formal second stage procedure described in 3, below.

2. Complaint against an OWTT Trustee or committee member: Informal First Stage

Anyone feeling he/she has been treated unfairly by a OWTT Committee member should explain the complaint to the OWTT Trustees. If the complaint is against an OWTT Trustee the complainant should explain the complaint to the Chairman of the Trustees, or if the complaint is against the Chairman, to another Trustee. The person to whom the complaint is made will attempt to resolve the complaint informally. If, after this, the complainant feels that the complaint has not been properly addressed, he/she should follow the formal second stage procedure described in 3, below.

3. Complaint against an OWTT member, Trustee or committee member : Formal Second Stage

- 3.1 The complainant should write a letter to the OWTT Trustees setting out in detail the grounds for complaint and details of the person the complaint is against. Include with the letter all evidence in support of the complaint i.e. a list of all times, places, occurrence's and details of incidents, along with witness statements.
- 3.2 The Chairman of the Trustees will convene a meeting of Trustees to consider all the relevant written evidence.
- 3.3 The OWTT Trustees will afford the complainant the opportunity to attend in person to present the complaint to the Trustees. The complainant may be accompanied, by one other person either from within the theatre membership or from outside (but not a legal representative). The accompanying person will take no part in the meeting. The person (or people) against whom the complaint is directed may also attend. The OWTT Trustees may also request any relevant witnesses to the complaint to attend.
- 3.4 After consideration of the complaint the OWTT Trustees will either uphold or dismiss the complaint and recommend appropriate action, where appropriate. If the complaint is substantiated the Trustees will act in accordance with OWTT policies.

Whether there is deemed to be enough evidence to advance the case or not, a member of the OWTT Trustees will inform the complainer in writing of the decision to act or not. Please note that you will not necessarily be informed what action is to be taken, only if action will be taken or not.

4. Appeal against the Decision of the Complaints Panel

- 4.1 The complainant should write a letter to the *Chairman of the OWTT* setting out in detail the grounds, both for your original complaint and for your appeal against the decision.
- 4.2 The Chair of the OWTT will convene a Trustees' meeting to reconsider the complaint and the grounds for appeal.
- 4.3 The complainant may attend in person to present the complaint to the Trustees, and be accompanied by one other person either from within the OWTT or from outside (but not a legal representative). The accompanying person will take no part in the meeting. The person (or people) against whom the complaint has been made may also attend. Any relevant witnesses to the complaint may also be asked to attend.
- 4.4 After hearing the circumstances of your appeal the Trustees will either uphold or dismiss the complaint and recommend action if appropriate.
- 4.5. This decision will be final.