

	Complaints policy
	January 2026

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1. **Policy statement**

- 1.1 Stonehaven Folk Festival (SFF) is a charity run entirely by volunteers, including a board of trustees. SFF values constructive comment that will help to improve the festival. Whilst trustees are always willing to discuss concerns on an informal basis, the board will consider formal complaints that are made using the procedure outlined in this policy.

2. **Principles and assumptions**

- 2.1 SFF prides itself on providing a friendly, warm and encouraging environment, where audiences and performers have a positive experience in terms of:
 - booking tickets
 - the music they hear
 - the festival venues
 - the people they meet, and
 - the overall hospitality they experience during the festival.
- 2.2 Where the experience falls short of this expectation, individuals have the opportunity to raise any concerns or complaints.

3. **Policy aims**

- 3.1 Individuals who have a particular complaint about any aspect of the festival are supported to bring it to the board's notice. The board will always treat such complaints seriously and sensitively.

4. **Registering a complaint**

Stage one:

- 4.1 A formal complaint may be made to any trustee or volunteer during each year's festival, or at any time in the year. If not made directly to a trustee, a volunteer must inform a trustee as soon as possible.

- 4.2 The trustee to whom the complaint is made is responsible for trying to resolve the complaint or concern informally and to the individual's satisfaction. Where necessary, the trustee concerned is also responsible for reporting any areas that may need to be further discussed to improve the festival experience, to a subsequent board meeting.
- 4.3 Complaints at stage one received over the festival weekend should where possible be resolved during the festival, and in any event within 28 days.
- 4.4 Matters relating to the safety of vulnerable adults and children should be dealt with under the children, young people and vulnerable adults protection policy.

Stage two:

- 4.5 If the trustee to whom the complaint is reported is unable to resolve the matter to the complainant's satisfaction, or if the matter relates to an individual's behaviour, the matter should proceed to stage two.
- 4.6 The trustee concerned should report the matter to the SFF chair as soon as possible either in person or by phone. They should also record the matter in an email to the chair, copying it to the company secretary who in turn is responsible for logging all stage two complaints and their outcome.
- 4.7 On receipt of the complaint the SFF chair will consider and investigate the matter and their decision will be final. Where necessary, the chair may discuss the matter at a board meeting before reaching a decision.
- 4.8 The chair will be responsible for reporting any areas that may need to be further discussed to improve the festival experience, to a subsequent board meeting. They will also update the company secretary with a record of the outcome.
- 4.9 All stage two complaints will be responded to within 28 days of the formal recording of the complaint.

5. Data protection / retention

- 5.1 All stage two complaints, including details of the individual making the complaint or involved in the investigation, will be formally recorded and records kept for six years.

6. Publication and review

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed three years after its first approval and every three years thereafter.