



Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel

Disputes & Complaints Policy

This Policy is only operative where complaints do not fall within the remit of the Handbook of Rules & the Employee Handbook

1. Why is a Disputes & Complaints Policy necessary?

Although the Organisation of Ex-Service Personnel staff will make every effort to provide the best quality of service to members, disputes & complaints may arise from time to time. The Organisation of Ex-Service Personnel wishes to be seen as member-friendly and therefore needs to treat all disputes & complaints fairly.

In addition, in 2015 the law brought the Organisation of Ex-Service Personnel under the scope of the Charity Regulator, consistent with government policy to enhance customer/member care in the Irish Charity sector.

This Policy is intended to address both

- disputes between the Organisation of Ex-Service Personnel & its members (including former members who were members not more than six months before their complaint is first made) in their capacity of parties to a mutual society as well as
- complaints from members in their capacity as “customers” of the Organisation of Ex-Service Personnel. In this context, a complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction in writing, in connection with a service, or failure to provide a service, provided to the member by this Organisation of Ex-Service Personnel.

2. General principles of a Disputes & Complaints policy

Disputes arise from time to time in the operation of any arrangement involving large numbers of persons as well as money. Likewise member dissatisfaction can occasionally arise in the provision of any services. Where this dissatisfaction manifests itself in complaints it is necessary to deal with them fairly & promptly. Speedy resolution of the complaint can limit member dissatisfaction as well as reputational damage across the community.



This does not mean that the Organisation of Ex-Service Personnel or the officer involved is automatically presumed to be in the wrong. That may well be the case from time to time, but equally the possibility of receiving frivolous or otherwise unfounded complaints cannot be excluded.

However it does mean that every dispute or complaint will be

- Recorded in the Disputes & Complaints Register,
- Investigated (& where appropriate by an officer other than the one complained about),
- Responded to in writing within a reasonable timeframe &
- Afforded a right of appeal where the decision is not satisfactory to the complainant.

It is accepted that trivial or irrelevant complaints (e.g. “I was very cold at the AGM. Why don’t you turn the heating on at those meetings?”) do not need to be recorded or addressed in accordance with the procedures set out below. This Policy & the procedures set out below are intended to capture written complaints, about

- a service,
- refusal to provide a service to a particular member or
- the courtesy & integrity of our staff.

The existence of this Disputes & Complaints Policy will be notified to Branches and members by a notice in the public area of the Organisation of Ex-Service Personnel’s office and on the website.

3. Officers & Committees responsible for implementing this Policy

The Chairman & the Disputes & Complaints Committee / Board are responsible for implementing this policy.

Their respective duties are as follows:

- The Chairman should record all Disputes & Complaints in the Register, investigate them and where possible resolve them &



- Where a Dispute or Complaint cannot be resolved by the Chairman (or indeed is about the Chairman) the Disputes & Complaints Committee should receive it, investigate it and where possible resolve it.

The constitution of the Disputes & Complaints Committee is set out in Appendix A.

4. Procedures for responding to a Complaint

Where a member makes any expression of dissatisfaction in writing about a service of the Organisation of Ex-Service Personnel:

- a) They should be given a copy of this Policy,
- b) Upon receiving the Complaint the Chairman should write to the member explaining
 - That the matter will be considered by the Disputes & Complaints Committee;
 - The date by which this Committee is expected to consider the Complaint; &
 - that they have a right to be heard by that Committee.
- c) The Disputes & Complaints Committee's decision should be notified to the member in writing. The member has a right to appeal the decision of the Committee to the Appeals Officer, who will be appointed by the Board as the need arises. The Appeals Officer may or may not be a member of the ONE and will be independent in their duties as Appeals Officer. All appeals will be submitted in writing to the Appeals Officer within 14 days of the notification of the decision of the Disputes & Complaints Committee. The Appeal will contain all information and any supporting documentation. The Appeal Officer may or may not meet the appellant in person.
- d) The member should also be informed that if they remain unsatisfied they have a right to refer the matter to the Charities Regulator, which is a public body which independently investigates complaints (at no charge to the member) which cannot be resolved between Charity service providers and their customers/members. The member should be provided with contact details for the Charities Regulator, which are:



The Charities Regulator, Waterloo Exchange, Waterloo Road, Dublin 4,

Phone: Concerns phone line 01 633 1550. concerns@charitiesregulator.ie

5. Training of all staff involved in complaints handling

All persons involved in complaints handling must be properly trained to fulfill this role. This includes member-facing staff, the Chairman, the Disputes & Complaints Committee, Appeals Officer & the Board.

6. Information to be provided to the Board

The information provided to the Board each month should include a report setting out the status of all Complaints being considered either internally or by the Charities Regulator



Appendix A

Constitution of the Disputes & Complaints Committee

(refer to paragraph 4)

- (1) The Board of Directors shall appoint a Disputes & Complaints Committee of as many members as it feels appropriate.
- (2) This Committee shall investigate and where possible resolve Disputes & Complaints which have been referred to it in accordance with this Policy.
- (3) The Committee shall appoint a Chairman and a Secretary who shall not be the same person. The Secretary shall keep a record of every meeting.
- (4) Decisions will be made on the basis of a simple majority. Where a vote is tied the complaint must be referred to the Board for consideration.
- (5) Where it is felt that an apology or compensation is appropriate, it must be recommended to the Board before being committed to.
- (6) The Board will appoint an Appeals Officer who shall have discretion to uphold, amend or vary and decision of the Disputes & Complaints Committee however the decision shall not be any more onerous than any decision of the said Committee.