

# Complaints Policy

At the Cleft Lip and Palate Association, we want you to have the best possible experience every time you contact us or use one of our services.

As a small charity with a big scope, CLAPA knows the best way to improve our work is through open and honest conversations with our community. We welcome complaints and comments as a chance to do just this, and hope you'll get in touch if you have a bad experience so we can do what we can to stop it from happening again.

When we make mistakes, we will acknowledge this, we will sincerely apologise, and we will tell you how we intend to make sure this doesn't happen again in the future.

Thank you for helping us to provide a better service to everyone in the UK affected by cleft lip and palate.

## 1. How can I get in touch?

- 1.1. Email us at [info@clapa.com](mailto:info@clapa.com). Your email will then be passed on to the relevant staff member.
- 1.2. Call us on 020 7833 4883 to reach our office in London. Please note that as we have a small staff team, we may not be able to deal with your complaint immediately, but in those cases we will take your details and give you a full response as soon as possible.
- 1.3. Our phone lines are open Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm. Outside of these hours, you can leave a message and one of our staff will return your call as soon as possible.
- 1.4. You can write to us at:  
  
CLAPA  
First Floor, Green Man Tower  
332B Goswell Road  
LONDON  
EC1V 7LQ
- 1.5. If your complaint is of a particularly **sensitive, personal** or **serious** nature, you can contact our Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees directly. See 4.2. – 4.3 below for contact details.
- 1.6. In all cases, please include your **name** and **contact details** so we can get back in touch with you as soon as possible. We will usually use the same method of contact as you did, unless you request otherwise.

## 2. When can I expect a response?

- 2.1. We will **acknowledge** all complaints **within seven working days**, and will **respond within 28 days**. However, we will always aim to respond as fast as possible, and in most cases this will be within the same working week, if not the next day.
- 2.2. Depending on the nature of your complaint or the area of our work it concerns, there may be different procedures for taking it forward, or we may need more information before we can effectively solve the problem. If we anticipate it will take longer than 28 days to resolve your issue, we will still acknowledge your complaint within seven working days of receipt and keep you updated on our progress.
  - 2.2.1. If you've had a **bad experience with one of our services**, we will usually pass on your complaint to whoever looks after this service so they can respond directly. We will either try to resolve this immediately, or record your complaint in a log which will be used when reviewing this service in the future.
  - 2.2.2. If you **disagree with a position CLAPA has taken** on a topic or issue, we will listen to your concerns and do our best to respond in a sensitive and considerate manner. In cases where we have received a large number of similar comments about an issue, we may direct you to a published statement which we think will answer your questions (but if it does not, please feel free to contact us again).
  - 2.2.3. If you have a complaint **about a CLAPA Volunteer**, it will be dealt with internally using our volunteer disciplinary procedures. You will be kept informed of any outcome.
  - 2.2.4. If you **are a CLAPA Volunteer**, please refer to the Volunteering Problem Solving Procedure, available in the Volunteer Resource Centre.
  - 2.2.5. If you have a **general issue or comment** about any area of our work, we will acknowledge this as soon as possible and, when a clear solution is not possible straight away, we will record your comment in the appropriate log for future review.
- 2.3. **All complaints** will be recorded in our **complaints log**, which will be reviewed at regular intervals and whenever we are making changes to a particular service, policy or procedure. Whenever possible, we will explain our actions and the reasoning behind them in our reply.

## 3. What will CLAPA do?

- 3.1. We will strive to be transparent and open to discussion as we work to address your concerns and correct our mistakes. If you already have an idea of how you would like us to solve your issue or respond to your complaint (e.g. a change in our policy, a particular action, etc.), please let us know.

3.2. We will treat you with courtesy and respect; we will listen to your concerns and work to fully understand the issue from all sides. We will respond as quickly as possible, given our small team, and will keep you informed about our progress as we work together to reach an outcome which is satisfactory for everyone involved.

**3.3. On some rare occasions, we may choose not to respond to a complaint. These include:**

- 3.3.1. When a complaint is made anonymously or we are unable to use any contact details provided. We will still record and reference these when reviewing our services.
- 3.3.2. When a complaint is about something which CLAPA is not connected to, or which we have no direct or indirect responsibility for. We may choose to respond to clarify this, but are not obliged to.
- 3.3.3. When we have already responded to a complaint in full and have clearly stated there is nothing further we can do. We will always inform you of our decision to do this, and will let you know how to pursue it further if applicable.
- 3.3.4. When a complaint is clearly abusive, offensive or prejudiced, and/or if it is a baseless personal attack on a staff member.
- 3.3.5. When a complaint is incoherent or illegible and we are unable to contact you for clarification.
- 3.3.6. When a complaint appears to be part of a mass mailing or not directly referencing something CLAPA has done or failed to do.

3.4. In most cases, we will respond to let you know our decision, and will usually only refuse a response if we feel it would not be constructive or helpful to any parties involved.

#### **4. What can I do if I'm unhappy with the response?**

4.1. We'll always try to resolve your complaint in an honest, open and satisfying way. However if you're unhappy with our response, you can escalate this complaint by writing directly to our **Chief Executive**, either by letter or email.

4.2. Please give us the details of your complaint, why you were not satisfied by the response we gave, and what you would like us to do to make things right.

[claire.cunniffe@clapa.com](mailto:claire.cunniffe@clapa.com)

Claire Cunniffe  
CLAPA  
332B Goswell Road  
LONDON  
EC1V 7LQ

4.3. You can also contact our **Chair of Trustees**, Rona Slator, by writing to the below address. Upon receipt, your letter will be forwarded directly to the Chair, who will respond within 28 days.

Rona Slator  
Complaints  
CLAPA  
332B Goswell Road  
LONDON  
EC1V 7LQ

#### 4.4. Fundraising

- 4.4.1. CLAPA is committed to the highest standards when it comes to our fundraising. If your complaint is about our fundraising practices then please direct your complaint in writing to our **Head of Fundraising**. They can be contacted by emailing [fundraising@clapa.com](mailto:fundraising@clapa.com) with the subject line FAO: Head of Fundraising or at CLAPA, Green Man Tower, 332B Goswell Road, London, EC1V 7LQ.
- 4.4.2. Our Head of Fundraising will acknowledge your complaint within 7 working days (unless they are unavailable), and will respond within 28 days. If you are not satisfied or no resolution can be found, you can choose to escalate this issue to our **Chief Executive**, David Stokes, or our **Chair of Trustees**, Rona Slator. See 4.2. – 4.3. above for how to do this.
- 4.4.3. You can also contact the **Fundraising Regulator** ([www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk](http://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk)) via their online complaints form. If you need advice, or are unable to complain in writing for any reason, you can contact the Fundraising Regulator by phone on 0300 999 3407.

#### 4.5. General

- 4.5.1. If your complaint is about another area of our work and you have not been satisfied by the response from either our Chief Executive or our Chair of Trustees, you can contact the **Charity Commission** directly.
- [www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk)
  - 0845 3000 218
  - The Charity Commission  
PO Box 1227  
Liverpool  
L69 3UG