Karuna Bhavan, Bankhouse Road, Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire, ML11 0ES
Email: admin@iskconscotland.org Charity No. SC001127

COMPLAINTS POLICY

Purpose:
The purpose of this policy is to set out a procedure for receiving complaints that ISKCON Scotland members may have against each other; or against the management. This process may also be used by ISKCON Scotland's suppliers.

The complaints policy exists to:

- Provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use by anyone wishing to make a complaint;
- Publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint;
- Ensure that everyone at ISKCON Scotland knows what to do if a complaint is received;
- Make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way;
- Ensure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired; and
- Gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of ISKCON Scotland, and its members.

Origin of Complaints

Complaints may come from any person or organisation that has a legitimate interest, for example, members, donors, and members of the wider public who regularly visit ISKCON Scotland.

Where a complaint appears to be a private matter between parties to a dispute, (except where one of the parties to the dispute serves at ISKCON Scotland, or is a leader in ISKCON, for example travelling sanyasis or senior devotees associated with ISKCON; or the complaint about the incident in question has not taken place on ISKCON Scotland property grounds; the complaint will not be handled by ISKCON Scotland. The complainant(s) may be directed to seek external assistance.

Regarding complaints received, **the temple management will form a Complaints Committee,** which will include screened, selected, trained and dedicated members to deal with the complaints. The Complaints Committe (CC) will exercise its discretion with regard to a number of considerations as to whether to deal with the complaint or not. **Until the Complaints Committee is formed, the complaints should be passed to the temple council and will be dealt with by the temple council** in a fair, sensible and timely manner as outlined below.

A complaint can be received by email or in writing only. By email: **complaints@iskconscotland.org**; or by post addressed to the Complaints Committee, Karuna Bhavan, ISKCON Scotland, Bankhouse road, Scotland ML11 0ES.

Complaints pertaining to Safeguarding issues

ISKCON Scotland management is working on updating the Safeguarding policy. For concerns or complaints pertaining to Safeguarding issues, the complaints procedure will be referred in the *Safeguarding Policy*. However, until the KB safeguarding policy is updated, please direct complaints relating to safeguarding issues as per the below complaints procedure document.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Temple Management Team.

Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on:……

Last reviewed:……

Management Sign off of Policy

Signed……..

Temple President
Date:

ANNEX 1
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.
The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint;
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number;
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to ISKCON Scotland (for example: resident, donor, member, etc.);
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure;
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take; • Ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words; and
- A complaint is logged only when it is received in writing.

Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints may be emailed to complaints@iskconscotland.org; or by post addressed to the Complaints Committee, ISKCON Scotland, Bankhouse road, Scotland ML11 0ES.

Resolving Complaints

Stage One

If the complaint has been received, it must be directed to, within one week of receiving the complaint, to the Complaints Committee to attempt to resolve it swiftly.

On receiving the complaint, the Complaints Committee will record it in the complaints log. They will investigate the complaint and work to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the Complaints Committee within a week of receiving the complaint. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the response to the complainant should describe:

- the action taken to investigate the complaint;
- the conclusions from the investigation; and
- any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at **ISKCON Scotland Trustees level (referred to as Senior Management Team SMT in Annex 2 Complaints Procedure Flow Diagram)**. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the trustees.
The request for the trustees review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it.
The acknowledgement should state that the trustees are dealing with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The trustess receiving the Stage Two complaints may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably qualified person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The Complaints Committee should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally, complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the trustees decide it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

Appeals

There are provisions for appeals from the decisions of the Complaints Committee to the Trustees to the Ombudsman.

Time limits

The period while a complaint is being considered may require investigation and take some time. It is the duty of all involved to give precedence to the investigation, determination and resolution of complaints.

Respondents may be asked not to visit the Temple premises or the Temple conducted preaching programs while investigations are in progress.

External Stage

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. More serious complaints will be handled through formal procedures by people outside the Temple who have appropriate skills, training and experience. These will be complaints, for example, of serious or persistent misconduct; of racial, child or sexual abuse or abuse of a disabled person; of criminal offences; or convictions or cautions.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Complaints Committee or the Trustees may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about a senior manager.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action

ANNEX 2
COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FLOW DIAGRAM