Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries - Making a complaint

Introduction

If you want to make a complaint regarding the Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the UK, there is a complaints procedure for you to use. This document explains the procedure.

This procedure is separate from Arts Council England's standard published complaints procedures. The Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries is owned by Arts Council England but is delivered in partnership with the Welsh Government, Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS), and the Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC). This means that your complaint will be handled by the body who delivers the scheme in your country.

Making a complaint will not affect in any way the level of service you receive from any of these bodies. For example, making a complaint will not affect the chances of your museum receiving the award of Accreditation in the future.

If you experience or anticipate any barriers to making a complaint, please contact the relevant delivery partner for information on the type of support they can provide. Contact details are given in the 'Getting in touch' section at the end of this document.

If you make a complaint, you will be treated with respect, and we expect you to treat our staff in the same way.

How do I make a complaint?

The Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries has a staged process. We recommend firstly contacting the appropriate partner in the country where your museum is based to see if your concerns can be addressed before making an official complaint.

Stage One

If you are not happy with the service you have received, please send your complaint to the relevant body within three months of the decision or action to which the complaint refers. Contact details for all Accreditation partners are given in the 'Getting in touch' section at the end of this document.

Your complaint will be dealt with by the relevant partner who will try to put things right. We hope that we can settle complaints as quickly as possible and in line with the complaints procedure of the individual partner.

You will receive a written response to your complaint at stage one.

Stage Two

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, you can take this further by writing to or emailing the Complaints Manager of Arts Council England as the owners of this scheme. If your complaint is regarding Arts Council England then you can take this further by writing to or emailing the Head of Customer Services. Contact details are given in the 'Getting in touch' section at the end of this document.

Please tell us:

- what happened
- when it happened
- who dealt with you
- what you would like us to do to put things right

You must do this within four weeks of receiving the response to stage one. We will respond within 20 working days.

If you cannot make your complaint in writing, please contact us by phone on 0845 300 6200.

Agreed 10 March 2016

What can I complain about?

You can complain if you think that:

- maladministration has taken place (for example, if we have delayed, made mistakes in or failed to follow the procedures in our application process); or
- we have failed to give you access to information or have given you incorrect advice or information; or
- we have not treated you politely; or
- we have unlawfully discriminated against you or not treated you fairly.

What you cannot complain about

You may be disappointed if we decide that your organisation is not eligible for Accreditation or if the Accreditation Panel decide not to award Accreditation, but you cannot use the complaints procedure to appeal against a decision if our decision-making process has been followed correctly.

Other ways to make a complaint

England

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (known as the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman) investigates complaints by members of the public who have suffered injustice because of maladministration by public organisations. The Ombudsman also looks at complaints about being refused access to official information.

By law, the Ombudsman is independent of the Government and the civil service, and has wide powers to investigate.

The Ombudsman does not normally investigate complaints if they have not been through our complaints procedures first.

The Ombudsman's services are free.

You can get an explanatory leaflet about the Ombudsman – see 'Getting in touch' at the end of this document.

Wales

The Public Service Ombudsman for Wales

The Public Service Ombudsman for Wales has legal powers to look into complaints about public services and is independent of all government bodies.

The service this team provides is impartial and free of charge.

Their vision is to put things right for the users of public services and to drive improvement in those services and in standards in public life using the learning from the complaints they consider.

You can get an explanatory leaflet about the Ombudsman – see ‘Getting in touch’ at the end of this document.

Scotland

The Scottish Public Service Ombudsman

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) is the final stage for complaints about councils, the National Health Service, housing associations, colleges and universities, prisons, most water and sewerage providers, the Scottish Government and its agencies and departments and most Scottish authorities.

The SPSO is independent and impartial and their service is free of charge.

They look into complaints where a member of the public claims to have suffered injustice or hardship as a result of maladministration or service failure. They are the 'last resort', and look at complaints which have been through the formal complaints procedure of the organisation concerned.

You can get further information about the Ombudsman and his office from their website – see ‘Getting in touch’ at the end of this document.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Ombudsman

You can complain to the Ombudsman if you are unhappy with the service provided by a government department/agency or public body. The Ombudsman can consider complaints from people who claim to have suffered injustice because of maladministration by government or public bodies in Northern Ireland. The term 'maladministration' is not defined in legislation but it is generally taken to mean poor administration or the wrong application of rules.

As a general rule, the Ombudsman normally will not investigate complaints unless you have first used the organisation's complaints procedure.

All complaints made to the Ombudsman are treated in the strictest confidence. This service is free of charge.

The Ombudsman is completely independent of the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Northern Ireland Executive, and of the government departments and public bodies that he can investigate.

You can get further information about the Ombudsman and his office from their website – see 'Getting in touch' at the end of this document.

Further information

Freedom of information

Our publication scheme gives details of what information we routinely publish and where you can find it. You can find information about our publication scheme on our website www.artscouncil.org.uk or by phoning 0845 300 6200.

If you want information that we do not include in our publication scheme, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives you the right to ask us for it. It also sets out exemptions from that right.

All requests for information should be in writing and sent to:
Senior Officer, Freedom of Information and Data Protection
Arts Council England
49 Lever Street
Manchester
M1 1FN
foi@artscouncil.org.uk

Further information on the Freedom of Information Act can be obtained from the Information Commissioner (see 'Getting in touch' at the end of this document).

Your personal information
If you use our complaints procedure, you are agreeing that we can use any personal information you send us for purposes connected with your complaint. We may also give your personal information to other people and organisations if we have to do so by law or if you have given us permission.

Equal opportunities
We are committed to equal opportunities and take complaints about discrimination seriously.

We may use complaints about discrimination to review our policies and procedures. This is to make sure we treat everyone equally.

We may record information about the ethnic background, sex and disability of everyone who makes a complaint so that we promote and maintain our equal opportunities commitment. We will keep all information confidential.

Comments and suggestions
We welcome comments and suggestions as these can help us improve our services. Please send your comments or suggestions to our Customer Services team – see 'Getting in touch' at the end of this document.

Getting in touch

England

You can contact Customer Services, or write to the Complaints Manager at stage one of the complaints procedure at:
Arts Council England
The Hive 49 Lever Street
Manchester
M1 1FN
Website: www.artscouncil.org.uk
Phone: 0845 300 6200
Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

You can write to the Head of Customer Services at stage two of the complaints procedure at:
Arts Council England
The Hive 49 Lever Street
Manchester
M1 1FN
Website: www.artscouncil.org.uk
Phone: 0845 300 6200
Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

You can get an explanatory leaflet about the Ombudsman from:
The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP
Complaints Helpline Phone: 0845 015 4033
Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

To get information about the Freedom of Information Act you can contact:
The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Phone: 01625 545 700

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Fax: 01625 524 510
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk

Wales

You can write to the Welsh Government at stage one of the complaints procedure at :
Central Complaints Unit
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ
Website: www.gov.wales
Phone: 029 2080 1378
Email: complaints@wales.gsi.gov.uk

You can write to the Complaints Manager at stage two of the complaints procedure at:
Arts Council England
The Hive 49 Lever Street
Manchester
M1 1FN
Website: www.artscouncil.org.uk
Phone: 0845 300 6200
Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

You can get an explanatory leaflet about the Ombudsman from:
The Public Service Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae
Pencoed
CF35 5LJ
Website: http://www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk/
Phone: 0300 790 0203
Fax: (01656) 641199

Scotland

You can write to Museums Galleries Scotland at stage one of the complaints procedure at:
Waverley Gate,
2-4 Waterloo Place,
Edinburgh
EH1 3EG
Website: http://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/
Phone: 0131 550 4100
Email: admin@museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk

You can write to the Complaints Manager at stage two of the complaints procedure at:

Arts Council England
The Hive 49 Lever Street
Manchester
M1 1FN
Website: www.artscouncil.org.uk
Phone: 0845 300 6200
Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

You can get further information on the Ombudsman at:

Scottish Public Service Ombudsman
4 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7NS
Website: www.spso.org.uk
Phone: 0800 377 7330

Northern Ireland

You can write to Northern Ireland Museums Council at stage one of the complaints procedure at:
153 Bangor Road
Holywood
County Down
Northern Ireland
BT18 0EU
Website: www.nimc.co.uk
Phone: 028 9055 0215

You can write to the Complaints Manager at stage two of the complaints procedure at:

Arts Council England
The Hive 49 Lever Street
Manchester
M1 1FN
Website: www.artscouncil.org.uk
Phone: 0845 300 6200
Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

You can get further information on the Ombudsman at:
Northern Ireland Ombudsman
33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN
Website: www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk
Phone: 0800 34 34 24
Email: ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk

To get this publication in Braille, large print, or in another accessible format please contact us on 0845 300 6200.

Agreed 10 March 2016