

The Health Creation Alliance

Managing Concerns and Complaints **(also incorporating discipline policy)**

January 2024

1. Introduction

Our Code of Conduct [THCA-Code-of-Conduct-Oct23.pdf](#) outlines how we model the best of health creation by treating everyone with respect and making everything we do a welcoming and safe place to be. It includes the six features of health creating relationships and practices that are embedded in the way we work.

THCA is aware that as a social movement it should set the highest standards of governance. We will do everything we can to be transparent and accountable in our actions. You are welcome to engage with us, share in decision making and raise concerns through the membership process. We are committed to learning from all concerns or complaints and will include how we have learnt from complaints in our annual report.

2. What is this policy for?

Problems, misunderstandings and frustrations may arise within an organisation and THCA is no exception. It is our intention to be responsive to our people (volunteers, employees, associates, members, and participants) and their concerns. The purpose of this policy is to provide a quick, effective, and consistent method for any of our people to present their concerns to management and to have those concerned internally resolved.

3. Definitions

- A volunteer is a person who has an agreement to work with the THCA on a specific piece of work or role which is not remunerated. E.g. Non-Executive Director
- An Employee or Associate receives payment for a specific piece of work or role. This may be through direct engagement or be fixed-term in nature.
- A member is defined as a person who has signed up to receive our newsletter
- A participant is a person who attends one of our events e.g. training programme, conference or meeting.
- “Our people” is the collective term used to describe the roles above.
- A supervisor is the person from whom you receive day to day direction regarding your role, regardless of whether you are employed or not.

4. Procedure

Step 1: Discussion with supervisor/ person in charge to facilitate an immediate resolution.

Initially our people should bring their concerns or complaints to their immediate supervisor or, in the case of our members or participants, the THCA representative who is facilitating the event who for the purpose of this procedure acts as the supervisor. This is an informal stage to explore whether the complaint can be managed locally between those involved. This could include, for example, an 'on-the-spot' apology, if appropriate, and/or an agreement on immediate action (within maximum of ten days) to resolve the issue.

If the complaint involves the supervisor or THCA representative then there is still the opportunity for informal discussion although this should be scheduled through an appointment to discuss the complaint. This is to ensure the purpose of the informal discussion is clear from the outset. This should ideally take place within five working days of the incident happening. The immediate supervisor should respond in writing within five working days of the meeting held with the person who has raised the issue.

Step 2: Informal escalation

If the discussion with the immediate supervisor does not resolve the problem to the mutual satisfaction of the person raising the concern and the supervisor, or if the supervisor does not respond to the complaint, the aggrieved person may submit a verbal complaint to a THCA Director. The individual should be explicit that this is to be handled under this policy and within 5 working days the THCA Director must have made contact with those concerned in order to facilitate a resolution. The THCA Director should respond in writing within five working days of the meeting held with the person who has raised the issue.

Step 2: Written complaint and decision

If an informal discussion with a THCA Director does not resolve the problem to the mutual satisfaction of the person raising the concern and the supervisor, or if the supervisor does not respond to the complaint, the aggrieved person may submit a written complaint to another THCA Director or the CEO.

The submission of the written complaint is due within five working days of the response from the supervisor. The complaint should include:

- The problem and the date when the incident occurred.
- Suggestions on ways to resolve the problem.
- A copy of the immediate written response or a summary of the supervisor's verbal response and the date when the person met with the immediate supervisor. If the supervisor provided no response, the complaint should state this.

Upon receipt of the formal complaint, the THCA Director must schedule a meeting with the person within five working days to discuss the complaint. Within approximately five working days after the discussion, the director/department head should issue a decision both in writing and orally to the person filing the complaint.

Step 3: Appeal of decision

If the person remains dissatisfied with the decision of the THCA Director, the person may, within ten working days, appeal this decision in writing to the THCA Chair. Therefore, so far as possible, the THCA Chair should not be involved in the earlier steps.

The Chair may call a meeting with the parties directly involved to facilitate a resolution.

This is the final stage of the internal process.

5. Additional Guidance

We model our values, and the enactment of this policy should be within the six features of health creating relationships and practices, in particular listening and responding, truth-telling and reciprocity. If no appeal is made from one level to the next level of this procedure within the time limits set forth above, the problem should be considered settled based on the last decision, and the problem should not be subject to further consideration.

Because problems are best resolved on an individual basis, this policy may be initiated only by an individual person and not by a collective. All complaints must be made in good faith.

THCA reserves the right to impose appropriate disciplinary action for any conduct it considers to be disruptive or inappropriate. The circumstances of each situation may differ, and the level of disciplinary action may also vary, depending on factors such as the nature of the offence, whether it is repeated, the person's work record and the impact of the conduct on the organization. The sanction could include the removal of THAC membership or termination of contract for paid employees or associates.

No-one will be subject to retaliation for filing a complaint under this policy.

Date of last full review: January 2024

We will undertake a light-touch review annually and a full review at least every 3 years.