LEADERS UNLOCKED

Last updated: October 2026

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy statement

Leaders Unlocked is committed to maintaining the highest standards in all aspects of our work. To maintain these high standards, we have put in place a complaints policy and procedure which will contribute to an open, accountable culture that builds trust and respect at our organisation.

This policy sets out the principles we apply to receiving, listening to, responding to and learning from complaints. Together, our policy and procedure provide a consistent way for Leaders Unlocked to receive, and learn, from complaints.

We aim to ensure that:

- our complaints procedure is fair to everyone, and making a complaint is as easy as possible.
- we welcome feedback and suggestions to improve our ways of working.
- we deal with complaints politely and in a timely manner, believing that this leads to better results for complainants.
- making a complaint will not cause Leaders Unlocked to treat the complainant negatively, or in any way differently.
- we respond appropriately – this means, for example, providing an explanation, or an apology where we have got something wrong, or information on any action taken/resulting changes to our ways of working.
- we learn from complaints, treating them as a useful tool for indicating how and where we can improve the way we work. For this reason, we review complaints annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.
- we deal with complaints sensitively, only informing those who need to know, and in accordance with the relevant data protection requirements.

Although it is not a legal requirement for Leaders Unlocked to have a complaints procedure, because we regularly engage with children and young people; we hold this policy to ensure appropriate consideration is given to complaints received from these groups and/or their parents/carers. This policy has been created with reference to the principles contained in the relevant child protection legislation.

Our complaints procedure aims to provide a clear and accessible route for the young people who engage with us and their parents/carers to raise any complaint. It also seeks to ensure that children and young people who raise a complaint have their concerns resolved swiftly and, wherever possible, by the people who work with them.

That said, this policy and procedure also applies to complaints received by any client or external stakeholder of Leaders Unlocked.

Definitions and Scope

Our general definition of a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Leaders Unlocked, that comes from any external stakeholder who has a legitimate interest in Leaders Unlocked.

External stakeholders include all organisations and individuals, including children, young people, parents/carers outside Leaders Unlocked, but do not include employees of Leaders Unlocked.

Confidentiality

Leaders Unlocked handles all complaint information sensitively. We only inform those who need to know. When we use information received through a complaint to learn and improve the way we work, we communicate learnings with reference to practical issues rather than named individuals.

We keep a record of all complaints, for learning and monitoring purposes on a secure database (the Complaints Database). All complaint information, including information stored in the Complaints Database is handled according to the relevant data protection requirements.

Responsibilities

Where a member of staff receives a formal complaint, either about themselves specifically, or any aspect of Leaders Unlocked, they are responsible for notifying their line manager or a Senior Manager at the earliest opportunity. For the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), this means notifying the Chair of the Board, who is currently Jayne Morgan.

All formal complaints, whether received directly by a member or staff, or through the Leaders Unlocked website, will be dealt with by a manager or Senior Manager in the first instance. This manager is responsible for:

- Notifying a senior manager of the complaint, if they are not a senior manager themselves.
- Stages 1-3 of the complaints process, for any complaint relating to their direct reports.

The senior managers are also responsible for:

- Ensuring that managers who are their direct reports are supported in handling stages 1-3 of the complaints process.
- Stages 1-3 of the complaints process, for any complaint relating to their direct reports.
- Ensuring that the Complaints Database is secure, accurate and kept up to date.

The CEO assumes overall responsibility for the appropriate handling of all complaints at Leaders Unlocked. The CEO is also responsible for ensuring that:

- The senior managers are supported to respond as appropriate to complaints that relate to their direct reports
- All complaints, including those relating to senior managers, are handled appropriately, in accordance with the complaints procedure (see below).
- All Leaders Unlocked staff know and understand their responsibilities under this policy and procedure.
- The Leaders Unlocked Complaints policy and procedure are reviewed annually and revised where necessary.

Complaints Procedure

Making a complaint:
If you wish to make a complaint, you can do this by email or letter. Please use the contact details here http://leaders-unlocked.org/contact/

It may be that we can resolve your issue informally, and where appropriate, the member of staff handling your complaint may attempt to do so in the first instance. However, if you wish to raise a formal complaint from the outset, please say so when you get in touch with us about the issue.

Please include the following information when raising a formal complaint:

- Your name and address/email address
- The nature of your complaint
- The date on which the incident occurred (if relevant)
- How you would like to see it resolved (if appropriate).

You might find our Complaints Form useful for making a formal complaint. It is at the end of this document (Appendix A).

We can give you the best response when you make a formal complaint in writing, via email or post, and therefore we encourage you to do so. However, you are also welcome to make a formal complaint verbally, for example over the phone or in person. If you send us a formal complaint by post, please remember to include a way for us to reply to you.

If you wish to make a complaint about the CEO, you can email the Board of Directors directly at Board@leaders-unlocked.org

Time limit for making complaints:

There is no time limit for making a complaint, but it is best to contact us as soon as possible, and we request that you do so within eight weeks of the issue arising.

If you make a complaint about something that happened a while ago (for example, over six months ago), it may not be possible to confirm the relevant details or give you a satisfactory response.

The complaints process:

Stage 1 – Acknowledgement

On receipt of a formal complaint (whether made in writing or verbally), we will send an acknowledgment email (or letter, as appropriate) to the complainant within three working days. We will also log the complaint on the Complaints Database.

Stage 2 – Investigation

When we acknowledge your formal complaint, or shortly after that, we may ask you for some further, clarifying information, to make sure we understand your complaint.
The manager handling your complaint will investigate it fully. If they feel they need to meet you as part of their investigation, they will seek to schedule that meeting within seven working days of receiving the complaint.
The manager handling your complaint may be a line manager or senior manager within the organisation. Complaints of a very serious nature, or those about senior managers, will be referred to the CEO.
If your complaint is about the CEO, then the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Board (Or the Vice-chair if the Chair is unavailable).

Stage 3 – Response

The manager handling your complaint will seek to provide you with a written response within ten working days. This response will:

- confirm the outcome of their investigation
- include an apology, where your complaint is upheld
- confirm any recommendations/remedies made (e.g. reviewing policies, staff development and training, improvements to our ways of working)

If your complaint is about a complex or serious issue, the manager handling your complaint may therefore require longer than ten working days to investigate the issues and provide you with a response.
In this case, they will send you an update email (or letter, as appropriate) within ten working days to explain this and confirm when you will receive their response.

Stage 4 – Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at Stage 3, you can ask for it to be reviewed. You will need to make this appeal within fourteen working days of the date of the written response. Your appeal should include a clear explanation of why you feel that your complaint has not been properly resolved, and what it is you want Leaders Unlocked to do.

Depending on who handled your complaint in the first instance, your appeal may be handled by a senior manager, the CEO directly or a member of the Board of Directors.

You will receive an acknowledgement of your appeal within three working days.

The person handling your appeal will then review the stage 2 investigation and stage 3 response and recommend that Leaders Unlocked either:

- uphold the outcome in the stage 3 response
- amend the outcome and/or recommendations/remedies in the stage 3 response.

You should be informed of the result of your appeal within ten working days of the date that you appealed.
The decision made at this stage will be final.

Anonymous complaints
You are free to make your complaint anonymously. For example, you could use an anonymous email address to contact us.
If you write to us anonymously, this won't change how seriously we will take your complaint, however it may limit the amount of investigation we can do and affect the outcome of your complaint.
Alternatively, you can also request that your name and other identifying details relating to the complaint are not recorded in the Complaints Database [or elsewhere].

Complaints made on behalf of a child or young person:
Adults, carers and other representatives may sometimes be best placed to make complaints on behalf of young people or children. If you are making a complaint on behalf of a child or young person, where possible, when you make the complaint, please confirm that the child or young person is happy for this to happen and that the complaint submitted reflects their views.
Leaders Unlocked has discretion to decide whether or not you are suitable to make a complaint on behalf of a child or young person. In responding to such complaints, where possible, Leaders Unlocked will check with the child or young person that they are happy with the person making a complaint on their behalf. If the CEO considers that you are not the best person to complain on a young person or child's behalf, they will write to you to let you know.

Safeguarding children and young people
If your complaint raises concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, we will follow our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy alongside this complaints procedure. Our safeguarding obligations take priority over our complaints policy and procedure.

Appendix A
Leaders Unlocked Complaint Form
Personal Details

First Name*:	
Surname/family name*:	
Address:	
Email:	
Telephone:	
Would you prefer to be anonymous in our complaints database.	**Yes/No.**

Your Complaint

A. Please provide a summary of your complaint below (300 words max – you will have an opportunity to provide further details later)

B. Please indicate what you would like us to do as a result of your complaint (200 words max)

C. Supporting documentation
Would you like to include any documents to help explain your complaint? If so, please let us know what they are in the box below and attach them

to your email or if you have printed out this form, include them in the same envelope (100 words max).

Signature:
Date: