



Royal Navy Museums **COMPLAINTS POLICY**



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POLICY PURPOSE

The complaints policy is intended to ensure that all complaints regardless of how received (i.e. verbally or digital etc.) are handled fairly, consistently and where possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction. This policy must be followed for all complaints relevant to Royal Navy Museums, including Portsmouth Historic Dockyard Operations.

KEY POINTS

The Royal Navy Museums (RNM) is a non-departmental public body and its key sponsor is the MOD. The RNM is a registered charity (number: 1126283) and is an incorporated company (number 06699696).

The Royal Navy Museums is not defined as a Public Authority under Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act and are not required to respond to information requests.

Our responsibility in relation to complaints is to:

- Acknowledge all formal complaints in writing
- Respond within the stated period of time
- Investigate the complaint to its fullest
- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complainant
- Act where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- Bring the complaint in writing to Royal Navy Museums, details of address can be found below. This must be done within 6 weeks of the issue arising. All complaints should follow this process. The process outlines the steps to be taken to resolve the complaint.
- You must include the following information:
 - Full name
 - Address
 - Email address
 - Proof of visit (image of tickets, receipt) – if applicable.
- Explain the problem as clearly as possible with any action taken to date.
- Allow us a reasonable amount of time to deal with the matter. More detail can be found below.
- Inform us of what remedy is sought - refund, replacement ticket, apology or corrective actions.

INTRODUCTION

At Royal Navy Museums our vision is: *Linking Navy & Nation with inspiring stories and experiences.*

We are committed to providing a quality visit and service to our visitors, including both pre and post visit, inspiring enjoyment and engagement with the continuing history and modern role of the Royal Navy and the Royal Navy's impact on shaping both our nation and the modern world.

One of the ways in which we continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the feedback we receive both internally and externally. This includes responding positively and proactively to any complaints by investigating and acting on statements made.

RNM is a member of the Museums Association and is committed to following the Code of Ethics for Museums, particularly by upholding the highest standards of institutional integrity and personal conduct.

SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

What is a complaint?

At Royal Navy Museums we define a complaint as "A voluntary expression of dissatisfaction with an organisation's policies, procedures, staff or quality of service, whether justified or not. It may be made in person, by phone, by email, through the website, social media or in writing".

The following (this is not an exhaustive list) will be treated as a complaint as they touch upon the Royal Navy Museums purpose and values:

- fundraising methods that breach the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice complied with the Code of Fundraising Practice which outlines the legal requirements and best practice expected of all charitable fundraising organisations across the UK.
<https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/code>
- poor standards of service including accusations of professional incompetence/misconduct.
- financial losses/waste;
- criminality within or involving the Royal Navy Museums;
- Royal Navy Museums being deliberately used for significant private advantage;
- non-compliance with the Royal Navy Museums own policies/procedures including but not limited to Data Protection and Privacy Statement;
- non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

Please note, under certain circumstances, we may not be able to respond to a complaint where:

- you have not identified yourself or provided your contact details;
- your complaint is not about Royal Navy Museums;
- your expression of the complaint is insufficiently clear;
- your complaint has been sent to us and other organisations as part of a bulk mailing or email.

However, Royal Navy Museums will still take the complaint seriously and deal with it appropriately, including contacting you where we are able to, to discuss the matter further.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Donor Charter

<https://www.royalnavymuseums.org.uk/memberships> and our Privacy Statement that outlines the way in which Royal Navy Museums processes the data it collects.
<https://www.royalnavymuseums.org.uk/privacy-policy>

Any data collected on an individual will be accessed only by those involved with the complaint and will not be shared. The data held will be confirmed with the individual and the legal purposes for holding the data whilst the complaint is being managed. The data will be held within our systems in accordance with our Data Retention policy. No complaints are shared with third parties. Information will be processed in accordance with UK GDPR, DPA 2018 and the RNM Privacy Policy.

The following are **not managed under this Complaints Policy**, and should be referred to the relevant policy and procedure:

- Privacy Statement
- Subject Access Requests
- Freedom of Information requests
- Employment grievances
- Staff disciplinary matters
- Whistleblowing disclosures
- Safeguarding concerns
- Procurement challenges
- Health and safety matters
- Insurance claims or request for compensation
- Commercial disputes

Who are complaints reported to?

Depending on the outcome of the initial complaint, the case is managed based on its stage level (refer to Complaints procedure at the end of this document). The Associate Executive Director will be made aware of complaints that are difficult to resolve and they will highlight to the Executive Board. Any complaints that are formally reported to the relevant regulator are notified to the Audit and Governance Committee for awareness.

Each complaint will be dealt with individually, fairly, independently and confidentially following the relevant regulators guidance.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

All formal complaints must be sent in writing to either of the details below and include all details required for us to assist with your complaint, these are listed above under "Purpose."

Email	Postal Address
Enquiries@royalnavymuseums.org.uk	Customer Engagement Team HM Naval Base (PP66) Portsmouth Hampshire PO1 3NH

ACCESSIBILITY AND EQUALITY

Royal Navy Museums is committed to ensuring that everyone can access and use this complaints process fairly, respectfully and without disadvantage. Complaints will be handled in line with our responsibilities under equality legislation and with due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

We will make reasonable adjustments where needed to support people who may otherwise face barriers when making or progressing a complaint. This may include accepting information in a different format, communicating through a preferred method, allowing additional time where appropriate, using plain language, or working with a nominated representative or support person.

If a complainant needs this policy or correspondence in an alternative format, or requires any other adjustment to take part in the process, they should contact Royal Navy Museums using the details in this policy. We will consider requests promptly and will explain what support we can provide.

We will not treat a person less favourably because they have made a complaint, requested an adjustment, or raised an equality or accessibility concern. Information shared with us will be handled sensitively and only used for the purpose of managing the complaint and any support needed to do so.

RESPECTING THE RNM STAFF

The Customer Engagement team will do everything they can to resolve a complaint. Whilst the team are managing the complaint, we expect our staff to be treated respectfully. Persistent complainants will be reminded of the process and advised that if they are not satisfied with the outcome then to liaise with the relevant regulator. If required, the legal team will issue a cease and resist letter.

Abusive behaviour is not tolerated at the RNM, this includes verbal, physical and staff harassment. Harassment is in both verbal and physical forms. If staff are faced with abusive behaviour, this will be immediately escalated to their line manager and removed from the complaint. Where required, the police will be informed and the Charity Commission notified of a serious incident.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

STAGE ONE

We will initially try to resolve your complaint informally via phone, however if we are unable to resolve over the phone we will ask you to send your complaint to us in writing, ideally via email to enquiries@royalnavymuseums.org.uk. If your complaint is sent via social media, we will also ask you to send your complaint to the above email.

In your communication you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result and the remedy you are seeking.

Once your complaint is received, we will acknowledge its receipt within 5 working days if via email and 10 working days if via letter. At this stage we will give you an indicative timescale for when we will look to respond in full. The Customer Engagement team will lead at this stage.

STAGE TWO

If you are unsatisfied with the response you were given to your complaint then you can ask for your complaint to be escalated, this will be escalated internally. This will be led by the Complaints Engagement Team who will reassess. Once escalated you will receive a communication, outlining where your complaint has been escalated to and how long you can expect to receive a response.

Your complaint will be investigated in full by the escalated person who will contact you via email or letter to explain the complaint and the resolution they have come to. This will be completed within 4 weeks (20 working days). The internal reviewer will consider if the original complaint was properly investigated, if evidence had been properly considered and whether the outcome was reasonable and proportionate.

STAGE THREE

If you are still not satisfied with the subsequent reply from the investigation and the escalation you have the option to have your complaint further escalated. This will usually be escalated to an officer outside of the Communications Engagement Team.

Once escalated you will receive a communication, outlining where your complaint has been escalated to and how long you can expect to receive a response. All responses will be issued in writing within 6 weeks of escalation.

The decision of this escalated contact will be final. The review will consider whether the complaint procedure had been correctly followed, the decision and if further action is required.

STAGE FOUR - EXTERNAL REVIEW

If you are still not satisfied with the subsequent reply from the final escalation you will be given the details of our regulators to whom you can contact:

Fundraising Regulator:

The Fundraising Regulator can investigate concerns that the Code of Fundraising Practice may have been breached by a fundraising organisation. www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/more-from-us/resources/complaints-process

Charity Commission:

If you are dissatisfied with Royal Navy Museums complaints process, you can contact the Charity Commission, www.charitycommission.gov.uk/About_us/Contacting_us/default.aspx

ICO:

Where a complaint relates to how Royal Navy Museums has handled personal data or information rights, the complainant may contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for advice or to make a complaint if they remain dissatisfied with our response, [Information Commissioner's Office](https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/). The ICO can provide guidance, review and investigate data protection or information rights concerns, and, where appropriate, take regulatory action. The ICO cannot usually consider a complaint until the complainant has first raised the matter with Royal Navy Museums and allowed us a reasonable opportunity to respond.

There may be occasions that exceptional circumstances may require the timeline to be extended. This could be due to the complainants needs, further investigation required on the evidence provided or that the relevant regulator has become involved. At each stage of the process, the complainant will be kept informed of progress and outcomes clearly explained. Any extension to the review will be approved by a member of the Executive Team.

Recording Complaints

All enquiry responses, including complaints, are responded to via Microsoft Outlook, where it is stored within a folder. Once a response is issued, it is moved to the "Completed Complaints" folder.

The Customer Engagement Executives are responsible for logging complaints on the central Complaints Record Log. If a complaint is escalated to stage 2 the investigating officer will update the log accordingly.

Once a completed complaint has been added to the complaints log, the email is moved to the "Reported in Complaints Log" folder.

Complaints Log:

This is a secure excel document accessible only by the Customer Engagement Team, General Managers, and the Senior Leadership Team. It is updated weekly. The log records:

- Complaint ID
- Date Received
- Site
- Department
- Root Cause
- Complaint Detail
- Complaint Level (1,2, or 3)

- Customer Engagement Team Internal Action Taken
- Response to Customer
- Outcome

Optional fields/dependant on the complaint action are: Specific Attraction and Other Factors.

If there are multiple emails from one customer, this is all logged under one Complaint ID for a full overview.

Revision Table	
Issue date:	16.07.2026
Date of last completed review:	04.05.2026
Date of next scheduled review:	04.06.2029
Author:	S.Bennett
Reviewed by:	S. Fleming
Approved by:	E. Allen
This policy will be reviewed formally after being in existence for a period of three years or sooner in the event of new legislation or guidance emerging in this connection. Any significant amendments will be approved by Royal Navy Museums Operations Board. Any minor amendments may be approved by the Executive Director of Resources. Trustees and staff will be notified of any amendments to it by the Governance team including the effective date. This may be by means of internal messaging systems, email, update on Decision Time and meetings or via the Chair.	