



Grievance Policy

Navy Cadet Force

NB The title Navy Cadet Force has been shortened throughout this document to (NCF) purely to reduce costs of printing, by saving ink and paper, and thus be more environmentally friendly. This document is for internal use only.

Policy Statement

The NCF believes that if a member of staff or cadet wishes to make a complaint or register a concern they should find it easy to do so. It is each unit's policy to welcome complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt and improve. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments by staff or cadets and possibly their relatives are taken seriously.

The policy is not designed to apportion blame, to consider the possibility of negligence or to provide compensation. It is NOT part of the NCF disciplinary policy.

The NCF believes that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints will lead to an aggravation of problems, staff/cadet dissatisfaction and possible litigation. Each unit or Marine Detachment supports the concept that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be sorted out at unit level between just the complainant and each unit. If this fails, due to either the unit, Marine Detachment, or the complainant being dissatisfied with the result the complaint will be referred to the next level in the Chain of Command, and ultimately to the XO to investigate.

Aim

The aim of each unit is to ensure that the Grievance Procedure is properly and effectively implemented, and that staff/cadets feel confident that their complaints and worries are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly.

Goals

The goals of each Unit or Marine Detachment are to ensure that:

- staff and cadets are aware of how to complain, and that each unit or Marine Detachment provides easy to use opportunities for them to register their complaints
- every written complaint is acknowledged within two working days
- investigations into written complaints are held within 28 days
- all complaints are responded to in writing or by email to complainant.
- complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly and sensitively with due regard to the upset and worry that they can cause to both staff and cadets.

The NCF believes that, wherever possible, complaints are best dealt with on a local level between the complainant and the unit or Marine Detachment. If either of the parties is not satisfied by a local process the case should be referred to the next level in the Chain of Command.

Complaints Procedure

Oral Complaints

- All oral complaints, no matter how seemingly unimportant, should be taken seriously. There is nothing to be gained by staff adopting a defensive or aggressive attitude.
- staff who receive an oral complaint should seek to solve the problem immediately if possible.
- If staff cannot solve the problem immediately they should offer to get the appropriate and next senior relevant person involved, following the relevant Chain of Command.
- All contact with the complainant should be polite, courteous and sympathetic.
- At all times staff should remain calm and respectful.
- Staff should not accept blame, make excuses or blame other staff/cadets.

- If the complaint is being made on behalf of a member of staff by an advocate it must first be verified that the person has permission to speak for the member of staff/cadet, especially if confidential information is involved. It is very easy to assume that the advocate has the right or power to act for the member of staff/cadet when they may not. If in doubt it should be assumed that the member of staff/cadet explicit permission is needed prior to discussing the complaint with the advocate.
- After talking the problem through, the member of staff dealing with the complaint should suggest a course of action to resolve the complaint. If this course of action is acceptable then the member of staff should clarify the agreement with the complainant and agree a way in which the results of the complaint will be communicated to the complainant (ie through another meeting or by letter).
- If the suggested plan of action is not acceptable to the complainant then the member of staff should ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing to the unit and give them a copy of the complaints procedure and form for completion.
- In both cases details of the complaints should be recorded on a complaints form and handed up the Chain of Command.

Written Complaints

- When a complaint is received in writing it should be passed on to the appropriate Staff Officer who should record it and send an acknowledgment letter/email within two working days confirming who the complaints officer for the matter will be. The complaints officer will be the named person who deals with the complaint through the process.
- If necessary, further details should be obtained from the complainant. If the complaint is not made by the member of staff but on the member of staff's behalf, then consent of the member of staff, preferably in writing, must be obtained from the complainant.
- A leaflet detailing the procedure should be forwarded to the complainant.
- Immediately on receipt of the complaint the unit or Marine Detachment should launch an investigation and within 28 days should be in a position to provide a full explanation to the complainant, either in writing or by arranging a meeting with the individuals concerned.
- If the issues are too complex to complete the investigation within 28 days, the complainant should be informed of any delays.
- If a meeting is arranged the complainant should be advised that they may, if they wish, bring a friend or relative or a representative such as a lay advocate.
- At the meeting a detailed explanation of the results of the investigation should be given and also an apology if it is deemed appropriate (apologising for what has happened need not be an admission of liability).
- Such a meeting gives the NCF the opportunity to show the complainant that the matter has been taken seriously and has been thoroughly investigated.
- After the meeting, or if the complainant does not want a meeting, a written account of the investigation should be sent to the complainant.
- The outcomes of the investigation and the meeting should be recorded on appropriate documentation and any shortcomings in the unit/Marine Detachment/NCF procedures should be identified and acted upon.
- Each unit and the relevant Chain of Command should discuss complaints and their outcome should be reported to the XO and the units complaints procedure should be reviewed during an annual inspection (and not less than every two years).

The Responsibility of this Policy falls to the Colonel of the Navy Cadet Force.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Fitzgerald', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Signed:

Date: January 2023

Print: Colonel Terry Fitzgerald

This Policy has been approved for distribution by the Chairman of the Navy Cadet Force.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luke Giles', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Signed:

Date: January 2023

Print: Luke Giles