

Title	COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE ORGANISATION POLICY				
Responsibility	<i>Operations with Executive Oversight</i>				
Ref No.	VPP031	Version No.	1	Date Issued	September 2023

1. PURPOSE

1. To allow the community or a group to make a complaint against **The Valley Project (TVP)**, enabling a fair and frank process. This policy enables those wishing to make a complaint to understand how we will deal with that complaint.

2. PROCEDURE

This policy defines and documents **TVP** principles regarding complaints made against the organisation.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and executive members of **TVP**.

What is a complaint?

A complaint about TVP is an expression of dissatisfaction with the way in which we have gone about our work. This includes complaints regarding:

- The way a person or business has been treated by TVP
- The process followed when deciding on what actions, if any will be taken on the matter
- Any other matter about which TVP has carried out its duties and functions when dealing with a person, business which goes against the constitution of TVP.

Please note that this does not include a complaint about a decision we have reached on a current issue we are dealing with (unless the complaint is regarding our conduct and/or process we undertook in reaching the decision)

Where a complaint concerns the decisions you think we should make on a current issue or other matter, or the process you think we ought to follow, we may decide to note that as a submission to the executive, rather than treat it as a complaint about TVP.

What happens when I make a complaint?

If you make a complaint via our google forms (all other complaints will be null and void if not made via the google form), it will be read, logged, acknowledged and assigned to the privacy officer of TVP to respond to.

The privacy officer will make contact with you, and in some cases seek further information from you. They may also consult with the staff who are handling or have handled the relevant issue in regards to the complaint or matter.

We will answer your complaint as promptly as we can. We aim to respond to your complaint within 20 working days of receiving it. In some cases, a full response will not be possible within this timeframe, and we will indicate our likely timing for a full response.

We will apply the complaints principle (below) in responding to all complaints.

Complaints Principles

There are five complaints principles that we apply to responding to complaints about TVP, and each is briefly discussed below:

Accessibility

- We will make it easy for you to complain.
- We will acknowledge your complaint, and address it as promptly as possible.

Fairness

- We aim to deal with your complaint fairly and properly.
- Complaints are dealt with in an even-handed, objective way, and our complaint-handling process is fair and reasonable.
- We will take all complaints seriously and deal with them in a manner consistent with the Ombudsman's Effective complaint handling guide.

Responsiveness

- We will communicate expected timeframes for dealing with your complaint.
- We want to resolve any problems that you identify and will consider what changes, if any, we need to make to the way we go about our work.

Efficiency

- We will consider your complaint as efficiently as possible, engaging with the appropriate staff within the organisation.
- Sometimes we will not be able to deal with your complaint with urgency, because of competing work priorities.
- Unreasonable complainant conduct cannot be allowed to become an undue burden.

Confidentiality

- Personal information relating to complaints will be treated as confidential information. We will consult with you if any person seeks access to identifying personal information about your complaint.

Possible decisions on complaints

Because the nature of complaint can vary greatly, a wide range of possible decisions can be made. The most common possible responses are summarised here:

Complaint is upheld and corrective action is taken

We want to resolve any problems that you identify and will consider what changes, if any, we need to make to the way we go about our work.

If we agree with you that we have not met our own high standards of performance, we will advise you of that and we will make changes aimed at ensuring that we do not repeat this.

Complaint is rejected - no further action

If your complaint is, in our view, unfounded, we will give you brief reasons for why we have formed that view.

Having done so, we will not normally engage in further correspondence on the same issues. Please see the content below if you are dissatisfied with the TVP response.

If you are dissatisfied with the TVP response.

If you are dissatisfied with the response you receive to any complaint, you can ask us to reconsider. Please contact the Privacy Officer via privacy@northeastvalley.org

You also have the right to raise your concerns with the New Zealand Ombudsman:

Office of the Ombudsman
Freephone: 0800 802 602

www.ombudsman.parliament.nz
info@ombudsman.parliament.nz

The Ombudsman may look into your complaint and make a recommendation to us regarding the concern you have raised.

Unreasonable complaint conduct

TVP is under no obligation to respond to complaints whose conduct is unreasonable.

We will follow the Ombudsman's Managing unreasonable complaint conduct manual when considering whether a complainant's conduct is unreasonable.

The Ombudsman's manual provides the following definition of unreasonable complainant conduct.

"Unreasonable complainant conduct ('UCC') can be defined as any behaviour by a current or former complainant which, because of its nature or frequency, raises substantial health, safety, resource or equity issues for the parties to a complaint. The parties to a complaint that might be detrimentally impacted by UCC include, the organisation responsible for handling a complaint, the case officer(s) tasked with dealing with a complaint, the subject of complaint, a complainant himself or herself (potentially including members of their families and friends) and other complainants and service users."

If we take the view that a complainant's conduct is unreasonable, we will advise the complainant of our view and in some cases that we will not be corresponding with the complainant any further.

3. DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. The desired outcome is to enable complaints to have an avenue that is confidential and follows the guidance of the Privacy Act as well. This ensures that our organisation continues to be a respected pillar of our community.

5. REVISION HISTORY

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Version	Description of Change	Author/s	Effective Date	Next Review Date
1	Initial Release	James Sutherland	September 2023	September 2024

Name: James Sutherland Role: Chair

Signed:  Date: 11.09.2023