

Complaints Policy

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1. Introduction

The Royal Armouries is committed to providing a level of service which meets the satisfaction of all visitors to the Museum and users of our services. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our visitors, users, customers and stakeholders, including responding positively to complaints and by putting mistakes right.

The Royal Armouries is a member of the Museum's Association and seeks to abide by the Code of Ethics for Museums, in particular with regard to upholding the highest levels of institutional integrity and personal conduct at all times.

2. Principals

The Royal Armouries values transparency and will remove as many barriers as possible to making complaints, because we want our visitors to have the best experience possible and value complaints as much as feedback to make that experience better.

As part of the complaints procedure, the Royal Armouries will ensure that;

- Making a complaint is a simple process;
- All complaints are treated as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for a timely and proportionate response;
- Complaints are dealt with promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- Responses to complaints are handled correctly, for example, seeking a resolution and giving an explanation where we have got things wrong, or information on action taken;
- We learn from complaints and use them to improve our service;
- Complaints and outcomes are properly recorded and monitored.

The Royal Armouries recognises that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly, and our aim is to resolve complaints informally where possible, by:

- Listening courteously to the complaint and arriving at as full an understanding of the problem as possible;
- Checking our understanding with the complainant where necessary;
- Courteously explaining the situation;
- Taking action to put things right if appropriate;
- Escalating the complaint if the complainant is not satisfied.

However, if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, the formal complaints policy should be followed.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the Royal Armouries defines a formal complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction that relates to the Royal Armouries' work which cannot be resolved informally to the satisfaction of the complainant, and therefore requires a formal response'. For the purposes of this policy, this refers to the work of the Royal Armouries only, and not those by a third party. The Armouries does not consider negative feedback to constitute a complaint.

Within this definition, 'the Royal Armouries' work' is understood to encompass all aspects of its business, including facilities and services, communications and the conduct of its staff and volunteers across all its sites.

While there are different staff, facilities and services across the Royal Armouries' sites, this policy applies equally across both the museum at Leeds and Fort Nelson. Please note that although we have collection items on display at the Tower of London, the site is operated by Historic Royal Palaces, and that complaints regarding the Tower of London should be referred to [Historic Royal Palaces](#).

Complaints which do not require a formal response (e.g. minor complaints or those that can be quickly and satisfactorily resolved through normal operations) are dealt with in line with the Royal Armouries' [Customer Care Policy](#) by the Visitor Services team.

Complaints which relate to a safeguarding concern should be made in conjunction with the Royal Armouries' [Safeguarding Policy](#).

This policy is intended for use by museum visitors only. Employees should refer to the Grievance Policy, Bullying & Harassment Policy or Whistle Blowing and Procedures as appropriate.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the [Museums Association's Code of Ethics for Museums](#) and the [International Council of Museums' Code of Ethics](#).

4. Responsibilities

The Royal Armouries' formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

The Royal Armouries' responsibility is to:

- Ensure that staff are aware of this policy as well as its relevance and importance;
- Maintain a log of formal complaints and outcomes, reported annually to the Board of Trustees;
- Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- Respond within a stated period of time;
- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- Take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- Bring their complaint in writing to the Royal Armouries' attention within a month of the issue arising, either via email, in the post or by completing a comment form;
- Explain the problem as clearly as possible, including any action taken to date by the Royal Armouries;
- Allow the Royal Armouries a reasonable time to deal with the matter;
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond the Royal Armouries' control.

All of the Royal Armouries' staff are responsible for acknowledging any complaints received and managing them according to the procedure set out in this policy.

The Director General and Master of the Armouries is responsible for overseeing all complaints and ensuring that appropriate actions are taken to improve the Royal Armouries' service. For more serious complaints, this may include escalation to the Board and/or inviting third parties to support scrutiny and resolution of the complaint, which will be at the discretion of the Director General and Master of the Armouries and will be communicated to the complainant at the time.

A log of complaints will be kept, which will be reviewed by the Executive at least once per quarter.

5. Privacy and Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and the Royal Armouries maintain confidentiality, although the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality. Complainants will be made aware of any situations which may make confidentiality impossible.

The personal data of complainants will be managed according to the Royal Armouries' [Privacy Notice](#), and all data kept for no longer than two years from resolution of the concern.

6. Complaints Procedure

The Royal Armouries acknowledges that complaints and negative feedback may be received through a variety of channels. At any point during the process, complainants may request that a complaint be considered a formal complaint, which will require a response in line with the complaints procedure. Channels of complaint and negative feedback may arise in different channels:

- Verbally from visitors, users, customers, and stakeholders to one of the Royal Armouries' sites;

- Verbally over the telephone;
- Written on a feedback form during a visit to one of the Royal Armouries sites or at an event;
- Written in email or letter to the enquiries@armouries.org.uk account or to that of a staff member, in which case it will be forwarded to the enquiries@armouries.org.uk account for formal recording;
- Written post, reply or comment on social media which makes an explicit request for a reply;
- Contact form submitted through the Royal Armouries' website.

Complaints may be sent by post to:

Complaints

The Royal Armouries

Armouries Drive

Leeds

LS10 1LT

Complaints may be sent by email to:

enquiries@armouries.org.uk

The complaint will be logged and acknowledged within 5 working days. A formal response will be issued within 20 working days (if this is not possible within the time stated, the complainant will be notified and the reasons given).

If the complaint is about a particular site, it will be passed on to the relevant site as they're best placed to investigate, but the Visitor Services team will remain responsible for logging and tracking the progress of any complaint.

If the complaint relates to our fundraising activities, you can also contact the [Fundraising Regulator](#). If the complainant is not satisfied with the response to their concern, an internal review can be requested by contacting the

Director General and Master of the Armouries, Nat Edwards, at the above address.