

Permaculture Association Complaints Procedure 2013

We aim to offer a fair and good service to members of the Permaculture Association, the network of the Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design, the LAND network, the public, and partners we work with. If you have a complaint please let us know so we can address it for you and learn from it. We will deal with your complaint in a polite and prompt manner using the procedure described.

Complaints against:

- The Permaculture Association
- Member of staff of the Permaculture Association

The procedure

We want to try to sort your complaint out as soon as possible. Please talk to a member of staff in the first instance. They may be able to sort things out straight away.

If we cannot sort your problem out immediately, we will make a record of your complaint and follow the procedure set out below.

Please note that all members of staff work part-time.

Stage 1

We will acknowledge your complaint within five working days of it being received and let you know who will be dealing with it. You should receive a full response within fifteen working days.

If we cannot provide a response within this time, we will write to you explaining the reasons for the delay and tell you when you can expect a reply.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at Stage 1, please contact us within a month of receiving the reply to your complaint. We will let you know, within five working days, that we have received your complaint and we will ask Andy Goldring, CEO, to look at it. If your complaint is against the CEO two members of the board will consider it.

You should receive a response within fifteen working days. If we cannot provide a response within this time, we will write to you explaining the reasons for the delay and tell you when you can expect a reply.

Stage 3

If you are still not satisfied, you can ask the Chair of our Trustees to review your complaint. You should contact the Chair within a month of receiving our Stage 2 response. We will let you know within five working days that the Chair has received your complaint and we will send you a full response within 21 working days.

Independent review

Stage 3 is the final stage of our complaints procedure. If you are still not satisfied we will seek external, impartial advice from a mutually agreed source.

Complaints against:

- Freelance tutor for the Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design
- LAND Centre or LAND Learning Centre
- PDC Course teacher of a PDC course recognised by the Permaculture Association

Please contact the individual or centre directly and make the complaint known to someone who is authorised to deal with it. They will then initiate their own procedures to look into the complaint.

The Permaculture Association will work to support complaints to be resolved, however we are not a regulatory body, and ultimate responsibility lies with the tutor or teacher involved, or the owners or other responsible persons of the centre.

Tutors for the Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design have agreed to provide specific services within specific timeframes. You may check these in the model tutor contract provided at www.permaculture.org.uk/diploma. If you believe that these agreements are not being fulfilled and are not satisfied with the response you receive from the tutor, please contact the Permaculture Association with a complaint.

If the complaint is likely to affect the reputation of the Permaculture Association or to detract from our ability to deliver our work, we may consider what action might be appropriate.

Recording complaints and respecting confidentiality

In keeping with the permaculture ethic of People Care we will try to look after the best interests of anyone involved in the process of a formal complaint.

We think the best way to do this is to work within boundaries and consider safeguarding:

- All correspondence relating to a formal complaint must be in writing.
- Each stage of a formal complaint will be recorded and records kept.
- Complaints will be considered as they are received, without changes.
- The Permaculture Association may seek additional information from third parties or members of staff to understand the context of the complaint.
- To avoid any single member of staff being solely responsible for dealing with a complaint, details will be shared with the Chief Executive Officer and / or the chair of the Board of Trustees.
- The Permaculture Association will respect the confidentiality of:
 - the person making the complaint.
 - a person or people named in the complaint.

