

## Complaints against Members

### 1. Background

It is recognised that even well managed, customer focused businesses will attract complaints from time to time. This note sets out the procedure we will follow once a complaint has been initiated.

In the first instance, you should contact the Member concerned. All Guild Members are required to have an effective complaints handling procedure and will provide details on request. Only if you have not been able to resolve the complaint, or believe the Member is in breach of the Guild's standards, should you escalate the complaint to the Guild.

It must be clearly understood that the Guild's obligation is only to see that the Member concerned responds to the complaint in a professional and timely way, in accordance with the Guild's [Charter](#) and [Code of Minimum Standards](#). **The Guild does not act as an arbitration service nor can it intervene in commercial disputes.**

### 2. Making the complaint

The complaint should be addressed to the [Administrator](#), either by way of an e-mail, letter or fax (contact details are given at the bottom of this page). We always ask the complainant to advise the details in writing, so that there is a clear statement of the alleged facts, to avoid any subsequent confusion or disputes.

On the day of receipt or the next working day (where-ever possible) the Administrator will:

- acknowledge receipt and advise that the complaint is being investigated;
- advise the Member concerned and copy all correspondence to them.

### 3. Resolving the complaint

The Member concerned will then:

- investigate the complaint without delay and certainly within the time limits set out in the *Code of Minimum Standards*;
- keep the Guild Administrator informed of any potential or actual delays in responding;
- respond directly to the complainant, with an advised copy to the Guild Administrator;
- promptly inform the Guild Administrator of any reply or follow up correspondence.

### 4. Follow up actions

The Guild will:

- Diarise to chase the Member for a reply or progress report as necessary;
- Advise the complainant if there is likely to be any delay in a response being issued;
- Check that any acknowledgement or substantive reply is made within the timescales set out in the *Code of Minimum Standards*;
- Write to the complainant once the Member has responded, saying that a response has been sent and that the Guild will close its file unless advised otherwise.

The Guild will NOT:

- Become involved in the merits or otherwise of the case;
- Comment to the complainant on the actions taken by the Member (eg on the level of any compensation);
- Suggest to the Member how they should resolve the complaint (eg whether or not to offer compensation)

since these are all commercial issues for the Member.

## **5. Unresolved complaints**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the final response from the Member, the Administrator will once again explain that the Guild cannot arbitrate or intervene in disputes. If appropriate, he will however advise the complainant of any arbitration service that may be available.

## **6. Breach of Guild rules**

If:

- the Member fails to respond within the timescales set out in the *Code of Minimum Standards*; or
- the Member's actions appear to be contrary to the principles of the Guild's Charter, *Code of Minimum Standards* or are likely to bring the Guild's name into disrepute

then the Guild Administrator will report the facts to the Guild's Management Committee. The Member will be invited to submit a written response or to appear at a meeting of the Management Committee to explain their actions. The matter will be considered by the Management Committee at its next regular meeting, but a special meeting or telephone conference will be convened if the matter is urgent or particularly serious.

The Management Committee will consider the facts and take whatever action it deems appropriate by exercise of its powers under the Guild's Rules and By-Laws, reporting the decision to the next General Meeting of all Members. Those actions could include a formal censure, obtaining an undertaking to modify the Member's behaviour, suspension of Membership or, in extreme cases, termination of Membership. The Member will have the right to appeal against the Management Committee's decision, as set out in the Rules and By-Laws.

## **7. Conflicts of interest**

If the complaint is about a Member of the Management Committee, that Member will take no part in any discussions within the Management Committee; if as a result the Management Committee would not be quorate, the matter will need to be considered at a General Meeting.

**To contact the Guild to make a complaint, contact the Administrator/Company Secretary:**

Richard Delahoy  
 Guild of British Coach Operators Ltd  
 P O Box 5657  
 Southend on Sea  
 SS1 3WT  
 United Kingdom

[admin@coach-tours.co.uk](mailto:admin@coach-tours.co.uk)

Fax: 0870 139 9469