

GRIEVANCE POLICY

The Company

StAnza International Poetry Festival (StAnza) is an organisation committed to advocating for the contemporary relevance and importance of poetry through the presentation of an annual festival in Scotland, as well as performances, events and programmes throughout the year.

Policy Statement

StAnza aims to promote an environment in which all those working with the organisation feel safe, valued and respected. To facilitate this, we have in place clearly articulated policies that stipulate expectations of both the organisation and its colleagues, as well as straightforward and humane mechanisms for raising concerns.

This policy sets out the mechanism by which any internal stakeholder with the organisation may raise a formal grievance and seek remedy for concerns relating to working relationships and/or environment. It ensures that matters raised will be dealt with fairly, consistently and promptly to offer assurance for all those engaging with StAnza that their professional wellbeing is paramount to the organisation.

Underlying Principles

This policy is guided by the principles that:

- Grievances and concerns must be taken seriously by StAnza at all times;
- Anyone raising a grievance or concern must be treated fairly, consistently and in line with the organisation's other policies, including Dignity & Respect at Work, and Code of Conduct;
- Swift, amicable settlement of grievances is a priority, with provision in place for escalation where required.

Scope and Aims of the Policy

This policy applies to all internal stakeholders with StAnza, including employees, contractors, trustees and volunteers (henceforth referred to as 'colleagues'), regardless of contract type, length of service or position in the organisation.

It is intended to provide a mechanism by which grievances may be settled fairly, in a process that is straightforward and clearly defined.

Some aspects of working relationships and/or environment are already regulated by other policies, conditions of service or statute. In those cases, the grievance procedure provides colleagues with a mechanism by which to raise concerns about the way these provisions are applied, rather than about the actual provisions themselves.

Every effort will be made to resolve the issue at the earliest possible stage, and at each stage efforts will be made in order to avoid proceeding to the next stage and to settle the issue amicably.

Please note: where a grievance or concern amounts to a public interest disclosure, it is subject to additional provisions under our Whistleblowing Policy, a copy of which can be found on our website:

<https://stanzapoetry.org/policies/>.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other key policies related to working with StAnza, notably our Code of Conduct; Dignity & Respect at Work Policy; Safer Spaces Policy; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy; and Disciplinary Policy. All policy documents are available either on our website – <https://stanzapoetry.org/policies/> – or by emailing Suzie Kirk Dumitru, Operations Manager – suzie.kd@stanzapoetry.org.

Grievance Procedure

Informal Resolution

In the first instance, a colleague wishing to raise a grievance should do so with their Line Manager, as noted in their agreement, or with their main StAnza point of contact, with the objective of resolving the matter in the context of a normal Line Manager / colleague dialogue. A grievance should be raised by the colleague without delay, and **within one calendar month** of the event or action (or final event/action) which gives rise to the complaint.

This informal discussion does not constitute part of the formal grievance process, but a note of the meeting and any actions agreed should be taken. A copy of these notes should be retained by the Line Manager/point of contact and a copy given to the colleague. If the colleague is not satisfied with the response given, or if the Line Manager/point of contact feels unable to address the matters raised, then the matter should be referred to the formal grievance procedure.

Formal Grievance Procedure

- A formal grievance should be raised by the colleague **within 10 days** of the Line Manager's/point of contact's response to the informal meeting.
- At all formal meetings where a colleague's grievance is considered, the colleague has the right to be accompanied/represented by a Trade Union Official or other colleague contracted in the service of StAnza.

Stage 1: Initial notification of formal grievance

- The colleague should submit their grievance in writing, via email, to the Operations Manager – suzie.kd@stanzapoetry.org.
 - If the grievance relates to the Operations Manager and/or the Artistic Director, it should be submitted to the Chair of the board – chair@stanzapoetry.org
- The colleague should detail the specific circumstances which constitute the grievance, including dates, times and details of any relevant witnesses.
- The person receiving the grievance will then commence a formal investigation or, if considered necessary and appropriate, refer the matter to an external investigator.
- **Within 10 days** of the receipt of the grievance, the investigator will send written acknowledgement of receipt of the grievance and an invitation to a grievance meeting, to be scheduled at a mutually convenient time and without unreasonable delay.

Stage 2: Grievance meeting

- The grievance meeting will be attended by:
 - the investigator;
 - the colleague raising the complaint;
 - a trade union representative or colleague acting as companion for the colleague raising the complaint, where requested;
 - a note-taker, who must be unrelated to the case;

- any individual required to attend to meet the reasonable access needs of the colleague raising the complaint (e.g. support worker, interpreter);
- any other member of staff or trustee whose presence is deemed necessary and appropriate by the investigator;
- any witnesses whose commentary is required in support of the colleague's case, provided that their attendance is notified to the investigator no fewer than **3 working days in advance of the meeting**.
- The investigator must ensure that the physical arrangements for the meeting are suitable, including offering consideration to the reasonable access needs of any individual attending, and ensuring that the location is private and that the content cannot therefore be overheard by any external party.
- The meeting will proceed as follows:
 - The investigator will introduce the meeting, read out the grounds of the grievance as provided by the colleague and ask the colleague for confirmation that they have been correctly detailed;
 - The investigator will invite the colleague to provide any additional information or clarification in order to progress the grievance;
 - The colleague will be invited to put forward their case for how they would like the grievance to be resolved. They may include commentary from any witness and/or documentation that has been provided to the investigator in advance of the meeting;
 - The investigator may question the colleague and/or any of the colleague's witnesses;
 - Dependent upon their assessment of the content of the meeting, the investigator will either choose to adjourn the meeting to allow for subsequent investigation, or will conclude the process in advance of submitting their written response regarding the case to the colleague and other relevant parties.
- During the meeting, a companion attending in support of the colleague raising the grievance may present information on their behalf, but may not answer any questions asked directly of the colleague.
- Following an adjournment of the meeting, any individual who is the subject of a grievance raised against them will be given the right to respond before any final response is given by the investigator.

Stage 3: Response to the grievance

- Following the grievance meeting, if the investigator concludes that no further investigation is required, they will submit their formal written response to the colleague raising the grievance without delay, but **within 10 working days of the meeting**. If, for any reason, it is not possible to submit the response within this timeframe, they will submit, in writing, an explanation to the colleague raising the complaint for the delay.
- If the meeting is adjourned pending further investigation, the investigator will submit, in writing, to the colleague raising the grievance, an estimation of the time scale for a response to be submitted, and/or any additional steps in the process that might be warranted.

Stage 4: Appeal

- The colleague raising the grievance shall have the right to appeal if they are dissatisfied with the resolution provided.
- The notice of appeal, outlining its reasons, should be submitted in writing to the Chair of the board – chair@stanzapoetry.org – **within 10 working days** of receipt of the response from the investigator, along with any documentation in support of the appeal.
 - If the Chair of the board is the original investigator of the grievance; the subject of the grievance; or has been integrally involved in the investigation of the grievance prior to the appeal, the colleague

raising the appeal may request the contact details for the Vice-Chair or appropriate board representative to whom the appeal may be submitted.

- The Chair – or other recipient of the appeal – will then respond **within 5 working days** of the receipt of the appeal to convene an appeal hearing, which they will lead.
- The format of the appeal meeting will follow the format of the grievance meeting and access/support arrangements for the colleague raising the grievance must be implemented appropriately.
- **Not less than 5 working days** in advance of the appeals meeting, all participants must be sent:
 - All information relating to the original grievance hearings, including a written record of the meetings;
 - Copies of all letters etc sent out following the grievance meeting;
 - The colleague's Notice of Appeal, including reasons for the appeal;
 - Any new information, not available at the original grievance meeting.
- The response to the appeal will be submitted by the Chair (or other recipient of the appeal), in writing, to the colleague raising the grievance **within 10 working days** of the appeal meeting.
- The response to the appeal meeting will be final.

Responsibilities

StAnza's Board of trustees is responsible for ensuring that the organisation meets its legal and ethical obligations in respect of this policy, and will review it annually.

Context and Resources

StAnza implements its Grievance Policy in accordance with current legislation and best practice guidelines. Resources on the subject that colleagues may find useful include:

- ACAS: www.acas.org.uk
- Citizens Advice: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/grievance-meetings/dealing-with-grievances-at-work/>
- Gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/raise-grievance-at-work>

Monitoring and Review

The ways in which we seek to achieve our aims and the means by which we hold ourselves accountable to our commitments are constantly evolving. As such, this document and our related policies are under regular review by the Board of Trustees, Artistic Director and Operations Manager, and we welcome feedback and constructive criticism from our staff, stakeholders, collaborators, volunteers and audiences.

If you have comments on this or any other StAnza policy document, please email Suzie Kirk Dumitru, Operations Manager on suzie.kd@stanzapoetry.org

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