



Schedule 2

Artsmark - Making a complaint

Introduction

If you want to make a complaint regarding Artsmark, we have a procedure for you to use. This document explains the procedure.

This procedure is separate from our standard published complaints procedures. Artsmark is owned by Arts Council England but is delivered in partnership with Arts Council funded Bridge organisations. Bridge organisations connect the cultural sector and the education sector so that children & young people can have access to great arts and cultural opportunities.

Making a complaint will not affect in any way the level of service you receive from us or any of these organisations. For example, making a complaint will not affect the chances of your school receiving an Artsmark award in the future.

If you experience or anticipate any barriers to make a complaint, please contact us for information on the type of support we can provide. Contact details are given in the 'Getting in touch' section at the end of this document.

If you make a complaint, you will be treated with respect, and we expect you to treat our staff in the same way.

You may not be sure what information you should include or how best to set out your complaint. You should set out the facts as clearly as possible, in a logical order. Remember to include important details and dates where possible. We can give you information about how we will process your complaint. Our contact details are given in the 'Getting in touch' section at the end of this document.

We will do our best to keep all complaints confidential. However, we may need to disclose specific information so we can investigate the issues you have raised. Under the Freedom of Information Act, We may also have to release certain information if we are asked for it. You can get information on the Freedom of

Information Act from the Information Commissioner's Office. You will find contact details in the 'Getting in touch' section at the end of this document.

How do I make a complaint?

Artsmark has a two stage complaints process. We recommend firstly contacting Arts Council England to see if your concerns can be addressed before making an official complaint.

What can I complain about?

You can complain if you think that:

- maladministration has taken place (for example, if we or a Bridge organisation have delayed, made mistakes in or failed to follow the procedures in our published process); or
- we have failed to give you access to information or have given you incorrect advice or information; or
- we have not treated you politely; or
- we have unlawfully discriminated against you or not treated you fairly.

What you cannot complain about

You may be disappointed with the Artsmark level you are awarded, but you cannot use the complaints procedure to appeal against a decision if our decision-making process has been followed correctly.

Stage One

If you are not happy with the service you have received, please send your complaint to Arts Council England's Head of Customer Services within three months of the decision or action to which the complaint refers. Contact details are given in the 'Getting in touch' section at the end of this document.

Your complaint will be dealt with by the relevant Arts Council England employees who will try to put things right. We hope that we can settle complaints as quickly as possible.

You will receive a written response to your complaint at stage one.

Stage Two

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, you can take this further by writing to or emailing our Chief Executive. Contact details are given in the 'Getting in touch' section at the end of this document.

Please tell us:

- what happened
- when it happened
- who dealt with you
- what you would like us to do to put things right.

You must do this within four weeks of receiving the response to stage one.

If you cannot make your complaint in writing, please contact us by phone on 0845 300 6200.

Other ways to make a complaint

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (known as the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman) investigates complaints by members of the public who have suffered injustice because of maladministration by public organisations. The Ombudsman also looks at complaints about being refused access to official information.

By law, the Ombudsman is independent of the Government and the civil service, and has wide powers to investigate.

The Ombudsman does not normally investigate complaints if they have not been through our complaints procedures first.

The Ombudsman's services are free.

You can get an explanatory leaflet about the Ombudsman – see 'Getting in touch' at the end of this document.

Further information

Freedom of information

Our publication scheme gives details of what information we routinely publish and where you can find it. You can find information about our publication scheme on our website www.artscouncil.org.uk or by phoning 0845 300 6200.

If you want information that we do not include in our publication scheme, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives you the right to ask us for it. It also sets out exemptions from that right.

All requests for information should be in writing and sent to:
Senior Officer, Freedom of Information and Data Protection
Arts Council England
49 Lever Street
Manchester
M1 1FN
foi@artscouncil.org.uk

Further information on the Freedom of Information Act can be obtained from the Information Commissioner (see 'Getting in touch' at the end of this document).

Your personal information

If you use our complaints procedure, you are agreeing that we can use any personal information you send us for purposes connected with your complaint. We may also give your personal information to other people and organisations if we have to do so by law or if you have given us permission.

Equal opportunities

We are committed to equal opportunities and take complaints about discrimination seriously.

We may use complaints about discrimination to review our policies and procedures. This is to make sure we treat everyone equally.

We may record information about the ethnic background, sex and disability of everyone who makes a complaint so that we promote and maintain our equal opportunities commitment. We will keep all information confidential.

Comments and suggestions

We welcome comments and suggestions as these can help us improve our services. Please send your comments or suggestions to our Customer Services team – see ‘Getting in touch’ below.

Getting in touch

You can write to the Head of Customer Services at stage one of the complaints procedure at:

Arts Council England

The Hive 49 Lever Street

Manchester

M1 1FN

Website: www.artscouncil.org.uk

Phone: 0845 300 6200

Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

You can write to our Chief Executive at stage two of the complaints procedure at:

Arts Council England

21 Bloomsbury St

London

WC1B 3HF.

Website: www.artscouncil.org.uk

Phone: 0845 300 6200

Email: Chief.Executive@artscouncil.org.uk

You can get an explanatory leaflet about the Ombudsman from:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Millbank Tower

Millbank

London

SW1P 4QP

Complaints Helpline Phone: 0845 015 4033

Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

To get information about the Freedom of Information Act you can contact:

The Information Commissioner

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Phone: 01625 545 700

Fax: 01625 524 510

Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk

To get this publication in Braille, large print, or in another accessible format please contact us on 0845 300 6200.