**Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain Archive**

**At the Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York**

**Archive** **Declined Access, Appeal Policy**

**1 Purpose of the Policy**

1. This policy is relevant to the handling of appeals relating to the refusal of the General Secretary of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain) Limited (GSB) to grant access to materials held in the AA Archives which are stored and maintained at the Borthwick Institute (York) on behalf of the GSB.
2. There are three levels of access to the AA Archives - Open Access, Restricted Access, Confidential Access – and the level which applies depends upon the materials for which access is sought. For details concerning permission to access the archive, see the [AA Access Policy Document.](https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/download/1/Library/Documents/Archives/AA-Archives-Access-Policy-6-07-2023.docx)
3. This policy is relevant to any person who has been denied access at any level to the GSB archives held at the Borthwick Institute (York) on behalf of AA GB.
4. The GSB aims to treat all appeals with courtesy and fairness and to deal with them promptly. Information about the appeal will only be shared when necessary for the investigation and resolution of the appeal.

**2 Handling of appeal**

1. An appeal in this policy is a formal request for the decision to deny access to be reviewed.
2. The appeal must be raised by the person or organisation who made the initial request for access and lodged through the formal process set out in this policy within three months of the refusal of access.
3. In the first instance a request for an appeal should be directed to the General Service Office (GSO) of AA GB, either by post (10 Toft Green, York YO1 6JT) or by email (to [aainformation@aamail.org](mailto:aainformation@aamail.org)).
4. Once this request has been received, the appellant should be asked to submit a written account by letter or email addressed to the chair of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. The written account should include (1) the person's name, address, and telephone number, (2) any relationship of the person to the GSB, and (3) brief facts about the appeal.

**3 Appeal - Formal Stage.**

1. The appeal should be acknowledged in writing within seven working days. The acknowledgment should confirm who is dealing with the appeal and when the appellant can expect a reply. A copy of this appeal policy should be attached.
2. A board trustee who was not involved in the original refusal of access should be appointed by the chair of the board to handle the appeal.
3. The board trustee will review the paperwork and may speak to anyone who may have been involved with both the application for access and the declining of the access.
4. If necessary, the trustee may consult with other board members or seek legal advice.
5. Ideally the appellant should receive a definitive reply within 28 days of acknowledgment. A progress report containing an indication of when a full reply can be expected should be sent if, for example, the investigation cannot be fully completed in the time limit.
6. Irrespective of the outcome the reply to the appellant should outline the investigation process and the decision reached.
7. The appeal process shall remain fair and respect all those involved.

The outcome of the appeal by the decision maker is final.

**4 Occasions when the trustee may choose not to respond to an appeals request.**

1. When someone unreasonably pursues an appeal that trustee has previously responded to.
2. When an appellant is making vexatious or constant complaints.
3. When a complaint is being abusive, offensive or is harassing a member of staff of the GSO or the GSB.

**5 Data protection**

The GSB will process any personal data collected in accordance with the data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the individual makes the appeal is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only with the purpose of dealing with the appeal.

**6 Policy review**

This policy should be reviewed annually by the archive sub-committee and when there are changes to the data protection law.

6-05-2023