



meetings industry association

MEETINGS
INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION

AIM COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

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SERIOUS MIS-CONDUCT

The types of issues that may be raised are wide and various and a definitive list cannot be drawn up. In most cases, the specifics of the issues together with the responsiveness of the member/AIM direct venue will determine the course of the investigation and the ultimate outcome. However, there are some areas of conduct which are considered to be so serious that the Complaints Handling Group will invoke instant removal of AIM accreditation. Examples of such conduct are listed below though this list cannot be considered to be exhaustive.

- **Any action or inaction, whether deliberate or caused through omission or negligence, which causes there to be serious compromise to the safe usage of the member/AIM direct venue's premises by visitors or staff. E.g.**
 - fire exit doors locked or chained closed;
 - fire exit routes blocked through poor storage/housekeeping;
 - poor, irregular, irresponsible management/maintenance of the fire alarm system or fire prevention and fire fighting equipment.
- **Any business activity, operated as a policy by the member/AIM direct venue, which results in clients being defrauded in monetary terms or in being cheated in kind. E.g. –**
 - poor accounting practices;
 - deliberate over-charging;
 - misrepresentation of goods and services;
 - deliberate substitutions with inferior products, without the client's knowledge or agreement and without a reduction in charge.
- **Any infringement of Food Hygiene regulations and practices that result in any part of the food operation being closed or prevented from operating, by the Local Authority Environmental Health department.**
- **The employment of illegal immigrants or persons who do not have the appropriate legal authority to work in the United Kingdom.**
- **The absence of effective Health and Safety policies and procedures such that the health and safety of visitors and staff is seriously at risk. E.g. –**
 - risk assessments have not been carried out, or have not been monitored within a 12 month period;
 - there is no effective process for the elimination or reduction of serious, evident hazards;
 - there is evidence of serious electrical or gas appliance faults which have not been adequately dealt with.
- **There is inadequate or no Employers Liability Insurance in place.**
- **There is evidence of discriminative practices against visitors and/or staff which are contrary to legal requirements.**
- **There is evidence that in its application for mia membership and/or AIM accreditation, falsehoods and/or misrepresentations have been made. E.g. –**
 - the member/AIM direct venue does not have in place the various business documents, policies and processes that enable it to comply with the AIM CODE
- **There have been a significant number of complaints raised against a member/AIM direct venue which the member/AIM direct venue has not been willing or able to respond to or propose/take action which address and resolve the issues.**

COMPLAINTS PROCESS

TRIGGER	ACTION	BY WHOM	TIMESCALE	COMMENT	
1. New applicant does not meet all minimum standards required at Entry Level. 2. Venue does not meet all minimum standards required at Entry Level. NB. This policy does not cover the failure by a member/AIM direct venue to satisfy the standards for Silver or Gold levels. That is covered within the appropriate accreditation process and has its own appeals procedure.	1. Contact applicant and advise areas where action is required. Offer assistance/training. Advise applicant to re-submit when completed.	AIM Admin	Up to applicant.	Referral may be made to BPF for training advice.	
	1. Contact member/AIM accredited venue and notify required action. Offer assistance/training. Advise timescale for completion/achievement of standard. Continue to 2.2 2. Reassess at end of timescale. If standards still not achieved, form view on whether the member/AIM direct venue can/will meet required standard. Continue to 2.3 or 2.4 3. If longer timescale required for member/AIM direct venue to meet standard, advise again and reassess in due course. Revert to 2.2 4. If member/AIM direct venue considered unlikely/unable to meet standard, refer to AIM Development Group (ADG). Continue to 2.5		AIM Admin	Contact within 10 days of application receipt.	(i) Until a member/AIM direct venue is accredited at entry level, no benefits should be initiated for them. (ii) A member/AIM direct venue may be referred to the ADG once only as a part of the accreditation process. A second referral will automatically lead to expulsion other than in extraordinary circumstances. (iii) Once expelled, application may be made again as a new applicant.
				Improvement timescale 40 days.	
				Reassess within 10 days.	
				Subject to specifics but improvement timescale should be within 20 days.	
	5. Review action thus far and determine agreement/otherwise with decisions taken. Revert to 2.1 or continue to 2.6	ADG	Meet and reach decision within 20 days.		
	6. Recommend to Council that member/AIM direct venue be expelled from AIM/AIM. Continue to 2.7		Recommendation by report to Council immediately.		
7. Review recommendation and determine agreement/otherwise. Revert to 2.3 or continue to		Council	Next Council meeting.		

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TRIGGER	ACTION	BY WHOM	TIMESCALE	COMMENT
	2.8			
	8. Chief Executive, (for Council) notifies member/AIM direct venue of decision in writing and the action that would be required to enable re-application.	Chief Executive	Immediately following meeting.	
3. Complaint received about member/AIM direct venue's compliance/meeting of AIM standards at any level.	1. Contact member/AIM direct venue in writing to advise detail of complaint. Request report of circumstances, issues and remedial action taken within timescale. Advise member/AIM direct venue of possible inspection by Assessor. Continue to 4.2 (Level A) or 4.7 (Levels B-F)	AIM Admin	Contact within 2 days of receipt of complaint.	Acknowledge receipt of complaint to Complainant and subsequently, keep Complainant informed of progress of investigation
			Report from member/AIM direct venue required within 10 days.	
	2. Upon receipt of report, review details and determine whether further action is required. Continue to 4.3 or 4.4 or 4.7	AIM Admin & ADG Chair	Reviewed within 5 days.	This may involve discussion with the Complainant/ the member/AIM direct venue/ the Chair of ADG
			Confirmation of closure of investigation within 2 days to all parties.	
			Response within 5 days.	
	3. If action taken meets requirements and the matter can be considered to be closed, advise member/AIM direct venue accordingly reiterating requirements for continued AIM recognition. Notify Complainant of conclusion of investigation and outcome. Record incident for future reference. End		Subject to specifics, but timescale for actions within 40 days.	
Response within 5 days.				
4. Respond to report by notifying specific improvement actions required to address the issues and set timescale for completion. Request progress report from member/AIM direct venue by end of timescale. Continue to 4.5		Subject to specifics, but should be within 20 days.		
5. Upon receipt of progress report, review action taken. Continue to 4.6 or 4.7		Review within 5 days.		
6. If longer timescale required for member/AIM direct venue to meet standard, advise again and reassess in due course. Revert to 4.4		Subject to specifics, but should be within 20 days.		

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TRIGGER	ACTION	BY WHOM	TIMESCALE	COMMENT	
	7. Subject to nature of complaint and/or response from member/AIM direct venue (see Table 2) arrange for inspection by AIM Assessor. Continue to 4.8		Arrangements made within 2 days.	Copy of all correspondence to AIM Assessor.	
	8. Visit to member/AIM direct venue by AIM Assessor to inspect the issues raised in the complaint. Written report by Assessor to AIM which must provide specific action points required to address the issues and thus meet minimum standards. Continue to 4.9	AIM Assessor	Inspection and report within 20 days.		
	9. Write to member/AIM direct venue confirming required action and setting timescale. Member/AIM direct venue required to report upon completion of actions. Continue to 4.10		AIM Admin & ADG Chair	Write with requirements within 5 days.	Subject to specifics, a report confirming completion of actions with appropriate portfolio of evidence may suffice. Alternatively a re-visit may be required.
				Subject to specifics, but improvements timescale should be within 40 days.	
				Reassess within 5 days.	
				Refer within 5 days.	
	10. Reassess at end of timescale. If standards met, revert to 4.3. If standards still not achieved, form view on whether the member/AIM direct venue can/will meet required standard. Revert to 4.9 or continue to 4.11				
	11. If member/AIM direct venue considered unlikely/unable to meet standard, refer to ADG. Continue to 4.12				
	12. Review action thus far and determine agreement/otherwise with decisions taken. Revert to 4.9 or continue to 4.13		ADG	Meet and reach decision within 20 days.	
				Recommendation by report to Council immediately.	
	13. Recommend to Council that member/AIM direct venue is expelled from AIM/AIM. Continue to 4.14				
	14. Review recommendation and determine agreement/otherwise. Revert to 4.9 or continue to 4.15		Council	Next Council meeting.	

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TRIGGER	ACTION	BY WHOM	TIMESCALE	COMMENT	
4. Further complaint received within 12-month period (Entry Level), 24-month period (Silver Level) or 36-month period (Gold Level).	15. Chief Executive, (for Council) notifies member/AIM direct venue of decision in writing and the action that would be required to enable re-application.	Chief Executive	Immediately after meeting.		
	1. Contact member/AIM direct venue in writing to advise detail of complaint. Request report of circumstances, issues and remedial action taken within timescale. Advise member/AIM direct venue of forthcoming inspection by Assessor. Continue to 5.2	AIM Admin	Contact within 2 days of receipt of complaint.	Report from member/AIM direct venue required within 10 days.	Acknowledge receipt of complaint to Complainant and subsequently, keep Complainant informed of progress of investigation.
			Arrangements made within 2 days.		
	2. Arrange for inspection by Assessor. Continue to 5.3				
	3. Review of report by Assessor followed by visit to member/AIM direct venue to inspect the issues raised in the complaint. Written report by Assessor to AIM which must provide specific action points required to address the issues and thus meet minimum standards. Continue to 5	Assessor	Inspection and report within 20 days.		
4. Write to member/AIM direct venue confirming required action and setting timescale. Member/AIM direct venue required to report upon completion of actions. Continue to 5.5	AIM Admin & ADG Chair	Write with requirements within 5 days.	Subject to specifics, a report confirming completion of actions with appropriate portfolio of evidence may suffice. Alternatively a re-visit may be required.		
			Subject to specifics, but improvements timescale should be within 40 days.		

	5. Upon receipt of report, review details and determine whether further action is required. Continue to 5.6 or 5.7		Reviewed within 5 days.	
	6. If action taken meets requirements and the matter can be considered to be closed, advise member/AIM direct venue accordingly stating requirements for continued AIM recognition. Record incident for future reference. End		Confirmation of closure of investigation within 2 days to all parties.	Notify Complainant of conclusion of investigation and outcome.
	7. If standards still not achieved, form view on whether the member/AIM direct venue can/will meet required standard. Revert to 5.4. or continue to 5.8	AIM Admin & ADG Chair	Reassess within 5 days.	
	8. If member/AIM direct venue considered unlikely/unable to meet standard, refer to ADG. Continue to 5.9		Refer within 5 days.	
	9. Review action thus far and determine agreement/otherwise with decisions taken. Revert to 5.4. or continue to 5.10	ADG	Meet and reach decision within 20 days.	
5. Complaint of Serious Misconduct.	10. Recommend to Council that member/AIM direct venue is expelled from AIM. Continue to 5.11		Recommendation by report to Council immediately.	
	11. Review recommendation and determine agreement/otherwise. Revert to 5.4 or continue to 5.12	Council	Next Council meeting.	
	12. Chief Executive, (for Council) notifies member/AIM direct venue of decision in writing and the action that would be required to enable re-application.	Chief Executive	Immediately after meeting.	
	1. Arrange an immediate un-announced visit to the member/AIM direct venue by a two member/AIM direct venues of the ADG	AIM Admin & ADG		

***NB – All days stated are working days.*

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Definitions:

Extraordinary Circumstances – will be defined through discussion and agreement by ADG and recorded for future reference. An example would be – the operating organisation has been taken over by new management during the accreditation process.

Table 2

NATURE OF COMPLAINT/PROBLEM	INVESTIGATION DIRECTION
<p>A) One or more “minor” issues occurred – e.g. messages not delivered, refreshments late, issues with bedrooms for <5% of delegates.</p>	<p>What were the issues? What went wrong in processes and procedures? What was in place to prevent these from happening? What can be done to prevent a recurrence? What resources are required to achieve this and when can they be made available?</p>
<p>B) A second complaint of level (A) is received within 6 months of the first.</p>	<p>Symptom/manifestation of the problem(s)</p>
<p>C) One or more issues are questioned with regard to compliance with the AIM CODE.</p>	<p>What were the issues? What specific problems occurred or were evident</p>
<p>D) One or more issues are questioned with regard to compliance with the 10 Point Code of legislative conduct.</p>	<p>Causes and effects</p>
<p>E) One or more issues are raised which question the Venue facilities grading awarded and/or the number/proportion of meeting rooms graded.</p>	<p>What went wrong in processes and procedures? What was in place to prevent these? What <i>policy</i> omissions, gaps or oversights are evident? What training has been carried out?</p>
<p>F) One or more issues are raised, specific to any one or more of the criteria within BPF Achieving Service Excellence, which question the achievement of minimum scores for Silver and/or Gold.</p>	<p>What resource (personnel/materials/budget) shortages are there which cause/contribute to the failures?</p>
<p>G) Combinations of any two or more categories (B) to (F).</p>	<p>Solutions</p> <p>What action is required to address the causes? What resources are required to achieve this and when can they be made available?</p> <p>Volition</p> <p>Does the member/AIM direct venue recognize the issues and understand the causes & effects? Is there acceptance of the solutions viability Is there a will to invest the time and resources to carry out the solutions?</p>
<p>H) Complaint of Serious Misconduct</p>	<p>Collection of evidence is the most important element to a successful investigation.</p>

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