

SHEFFIELD GREEN PARTY DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

November 2020

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Green Party of England and Wales (GPEW) Standing Orders for Party Discipline passed at Spring Conference 2015, together with other Party documentation, established a constitutionally binding complaints and disciplinary framework for GPEW.
- 1.2 According to these national requirements, Sheffield Green Party (SGP) must be able to deal with complaints and disputes that have initially not been resolved between the people involved.
- 1.3. This policy and procedure document should be read in conjunction with SGP [Code of Conduct](#) and [Constitution](#)

2. MAKING A COMPLAINT

- 2.1 Any person or group of persons wishing to make a complaint about the conduct of SGP member(s), group of members or SGP as a whole, should put their complaint in writing to SGP Executive Committee at exec@sheffieldgreenparty.org.uk
If it involves any individual Officer(s) of the Executive Committee those Officers will have no further involvement in the determination of the complaint.
Officers must declare any potential conflict of interests.
- 2.2 The Executive Committee will liaise with those making the complaint (the Complainant(s)) and those against whom it has been made (the Respondent(s)) with a view to clarifying issues and/or resolving the complaint. Constructive communication between the parties will be encouraged and mediation will be offered if appropriate in the circumstances. Such conflict resolution provision may be via GPEW Dispute Resolution Committee (DRP) and/or a SGP mediator.
- 2.3. If the matter is not resolved to the reasonable satisfaction of the parties at this stage it will be referred to the Dispute Resolution Panel– see section 3 below.

3. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PANEL

- 3.1 SGP Executive Committee shall appoint a sub-committee; the Dispute Resolution Panel, to determine matters that have not been resolved under section 2 above. Noting that any disciplinary action should be seen as a last resort and not as a substitute for good working practices, nor for the use of consensual dispute resolution.
- 3.2 The Panel will consist of three SGP members appointed by the Executive Committee from a list of approved volunteers (see Appendix 1)

The Complainant(s) and Respondent(s) cannot be on the Panel.
The Panel will not include members with a conflict of interests.

4. PROCEDURE

- 4.1 The Panel will investigate the complaint and prepare the results of that investigation.
- 4.2 At the outset, Complainant(s) and Respondent(s) shall clarify whether they consider all or part of their case to be in any way confidential. The Panel will make every reasonable effort to respect confidentiality, while explaining to participants that some details may need to be shared in confidence with other GPEW members and that the outcome of the case may be reported to SGP members. Reporting of cases should be anonymised, unless the Panel considers there is good reason to give details which would otherwise remain confidential. Personal details will not be shared without explicit consent.
- 4.3 The Complainant(s) and Respondent(s) shall be asked whether they require any adjustments to be made to the complaints process for reasons of disability and if so, what these adjustments should be. The Panel and other parties involved will be informed of any such adjustments.
- 4.4 The Panel may determine that conflict resolution such as mediation via GPEW DRC should be offered and any report or recommendations from them will also be considered by the Panel.
- 4.5 If, following consensual conflict resolution, the matter is resolved, the Panel need take no further action.
- 4.6 If the matter remains unresolved, before making a decision the Panel may offer those involved the right to an oral hearing (or to answer questions in writing).
- 4.7 Following an oral hearing (if requested) or written submissions (if requested) the Panel will determine the facts about the matter, establish the most likely picture of what did (or did not) happen from an analysis of those facts, identify any problems, including the source of those problems and identify whether there has been any unacceptable conduct. The Panel's decision will take into account all Party documentation such as SGP Code of Conduct and Constitution, GPEW Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Constitution in addition to any relevant procedural documents, strategy documents and job descriptions.
- 4.8 Once a final decision has been reached this will be communicated to all parties in writing.
- 4.9 Either party may appeal to GPYH (Yorkshire and the Humber Green Party) Regional Committee. An Appeal Panel will be formed, this will consist of three members of the Regional Committee not previously involved in the process. A complaint which remains

unresolved at Regional level will be referred to the GPEW Disciplinary Committee in accordance with GPEW Constitution.

- 4.10 All actions will need to be logged by the Panel; date of receipt of complaint, issues identified by Panel, initial assessment by Panel, outcome of mediation, assessment of outstanding issues by Panel, offer of oral hearing, outcome of oral hearing and recommendations, confirmation of decision, appeal to Regional Committee, outcome of appeal, referral to Disciplinary Committee and outcome. These records will be stored in a confidential area of SGP Googledocs.

5. PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS REFERRALS & SANCTIONS

The Panel can make recommendations and/ or referrals and/ or impose sanctions as appropriate.

Referrals can be made to GPYH at any stage if the matter cannot be dealt with at local Party level.

Any sanctions imposed must be reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances. Sanctions may include (but not be limited to)

- 5.1 Request for voluntary signed commitment as to future conduct
- 5.2 Written warning
- 5.3 Moderation or exclusion from SGP email lists or online activities for a defined period
- 5.4 Exclusion from SGP activities, including those of its working groups, sub-regional groups or subcommittees etc, for a defined period
- 5.5 Motion to de-select or remove elected or non elected Officer or postholder or candidate (in accordance with 6.4 SGP Constitution)
- 5.6 Referral to Green Party Regional Council (GPRC) for consideration of suspension or termination of membership

APPENDIX 1 - Approved volunteers for Sheffield Green Party Dispute Resolution Panel

In accordance with s.3.2 SGP Dispute Resolution Procedure the following members may serve on a Panel:

Jon Ashe
Steve Barnard
Jillian Creasy
Liam Hardy
Rachel Hope
Stewart Kemp
Douglas Johnson
Jason Leman
Graham Marsden
Chris Sissons
Graham Wroe