

TOURETTES ACTION COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Tourettes Action

Registered Charity No: 1003317



Complaints Policy & Procedure

Version 1.0

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Contents

1.	Policy Statement.....	4
2.	Definitions	4
3.	Expressions of Dissatisfaction	4
4.	Making a Formal Complaint	5
5.	Resolving Complaints	5
6.	Variation of the Complaint Procedure.....	7
7.	Service Improvement	8

1. Policy Statement

Tourettes Action aims to provide high quality services. We believe we achieve this most of the time, but we recognise that sometimes this is not the case.

At Tourettes Action we view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve, as well as a chance to put things right for the person that has made the complaint. We aim to provide a fair complaints process which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint, and to also ensure that:

- People know how to contact us to make a complaint.
- Everyone at Tourettes Action knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- All complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- Wherever possible complaints are resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- Gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

All complaint information will be handled sensitively and following any relevant data protection requirements.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by one or more service users about the standard of service provided by Tourettes Action. This includes services provided by people or organisations acting on behalf of the charity. A complaint can be made verbally (including by phone) or in writing (including email).
- 2.2 This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use Tourettes Action Grievance policies.

3. Expressions of Dissatisfaction

- 3.1 We encourage anyone who is not happy with Tourettes Action to let us know. Some expressions of dissatisfaction can be dealt with immediately without the need to raise a formal complaint; this may provide better and more prompt results for the complainant.
- 3.2 We encourage the complainant to discuss their dissatisfaction in the first instance. If the complainant is unhappy with a staff member or volunteer sometimes it is best to let them know directly, however this may not always be appropriate or comfortable, so managers or the leadership team will make themselves available for informal discussions where they are requested.

- 3.3 Wherever possible we will try to resolve the issue promptly and to the complainant's satisfaction without the need for a formal complaint unless the dissatisfied party so desires.

4. Making a Formal Complaint

- 4.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with our initial response or wishes to raise the matter more formally, written complaints may be sent to Tourettes Action by e-mail or post:

By email to: helpdesk@tourettes-action.org.uk

In writing to: Tourettes Action, The Meads Business Centre, 19 Kingsmead, Farnborough, Hants, GU14 7SR.

- To ensure a complaint is identified more clearly please ensure that:
 - The subject line of the email or letter states "***For the attention of the complaints team***"

- 4.2 Verbal complaints may be made in person to any of our staff or trustees. The person who receives an in-person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint.
- Take the complainant's name, address, and telephone number.
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Tourettes Action (for example service user, volunteer).
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure.
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take.
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

On receiving the complaint, the staff member or trustee must record it in the complaints log and notify the CEO that a complaint has been received.

5. Resolving Complaints

Stage 1

- 5.1 Stage 1 complaints will go to a senior member of TA staff to investigate and respond to. This individual will acknowledge receipt of the complaint (verbally or in writing) within 5 working days. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and should state that they should expect a reply within 14 days.

Staff must provide the senior member of staff with any information required to respond to the complaint within 14 working days. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

If it is not possible to respond within 14 working days (for example, an investigation has not been fully completed) the senior member of staff should notify the complainant and indicate that an additional response will be provided in a further 14 working days.

In all cases, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response, or if the complaint is of a sensitive nature, the complaint will be escalated to a Stage 2 complaint.

Stage 2

- 5.2 Complaints that have not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1 or are of a more sensitive nature will be assigned to the CEO to investigate and respond to. For complaints that have already been investigated under Stage 1, the CEO's role is to review the handling of the complaint, the response and decision by the Stage 1 review and review any new information to determine whether the outcome of the Stage 1 review is appropriate.

In all cases, the CEO will acknowledge receipt of the complaint (verbally or in writing) within 5 working days. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and state that they should expect a reply in 14 days.

Staff must provide the CEO with any information required to respond to the complaint within 14 working days. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

If it is not possible to respond within 14 working days (for example, an investigation has not been fully completed) the CEO should notify the complainant and indicate that an additional response will be provided in a further 14 working days.

In all cases, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response, or the complaint is about the CEO, the complaint will be escalated to a Stage 3 complaint.

Stage 3

- 5.3 In addition to complaints that are escalated from Stage 2, complaints that relate to the CEO are classed as a Stage 3 complaint and are automatically passed to the Board of Trustees for review (initially to the Chair of the Board of Trustees).

The Chair, or another trustee, should acknowledge the complaint within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and state that they should expect a reply within 14 days.

The Chair may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate another trustee to do so. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the review may involve reviewing the paperwork and decision-making of the case or may involve a fresh investigation including speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage 1 or Stage 2. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within 14 working days. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, the Chair should notify the person responsible for the complaint and take up to an additional 14 working days to respond.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Chair decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

The Charity Commission

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: [Complaints About Charities](#)

6. Variation of the Complaint Procedure

- 6.1 The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. For example, this may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest (for example a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage 3 review), or to ensure the person or persons handling the complaint have appropriate expertise (for example if the complaint relates to a clinical or medical matter).

7. Service Improvement

- 7.1** Tourettes Action routinely considers the complaints we receive in order to identify issues and make service improvements. Complaints are reviewed at least annually by the CEO and the Board to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action. We will use this information to spread good practice throughout our organisation.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for reporting complaints received to the Board.