



Complaints Procedure

Introduction

This Complaints Procedure is for the use of service users, clients, visitors, donors and volunteers of Genesis and the projects that operate within it.

The term Project Manager refers to Line Managers for project and non-project roles and covers both paid and volunteer positions.

A. Purpose

A.1 Introduction

Genesis Trust is committed to providing excellent service to everyone who is affected by its operations. Complaints are seen as an opportunity for Genesis Trust to improve the quality of its services, and to improve relations with its stakeholders and service users.

A.2 Complaints Procedure

The objective of this complaints procedure is to ensure that:

- Any complaints that are received are investigated at the appropriate level in the organisation,
- All complaints are actioned in the most expeditious way,
- Persons making complaints know how their complaint will be dealt with,
- Wherever possible, lessons are learned.
- An objective, understanding and sensitive approach is used
- The rights of both, service users, customers, visitors, donors, volunteers and staff are safeguarded.

A copy will be sent to anyone making a formal complaint, as well as being available on request to anyone who wishes to view it.

A.3 Investigating Complaints

- Investigations will be appropriately thorough and fair.
- Investigations will seek to establish whether or not the complaint is fully justified, partially justified, or not justified, with reasons.
- Investigators should identify whether the complainant's suggested redress is suitable and within Genesis Trust's capacity to redress.
- The Project Manager will identify appropriate remedies for improvement.
- The Chief Executive Officer may (CEO) instigate further investigation.

B. Using the Complaints Procedure

B.1 When should the Procedure be used?

Complaints can be made for a number of reasons such as substandard quality of service, the conduct of a member of staff, or the way requests for information have been dealt with.

B.2 Confidentiality

At all stages of the Complaints Procedure, confidentiality must be maintained by ensuring that only those who need to know about the complaint have access to details about the complaint. Staff not involved in the complaint should not normally be advised that a complaint has been made and is being investigated, unless there is a possible impact on the relationship between the complainant and staff.

Service users, customers, visitors, donors and volunteers making a complaint against a member of staff will be asked not to discuss it with others, as this may jeopardize the objectivity of the investigation.

B.3 Advice and support for Clients

Formulating a complaint may not be easy for a complainant. For this reason complainants should be offered support and help at all stages of the complaints process. This could be support from staff or an independent party. This can help overcome many obstacles that complainants encounter in articulating dissatisfaction. Staff should therefore suggest that the complainant seeks help from a friend, relative, advice centre or another agency that they use. Should a claimant not wish to have an advocate, staff should be aware that help may be needed by the complainant in writing down a complaint.

C. Staff responsibilities and levels of Authority

C.1 Staff

The Project Manager will endeavour to deal with issues before they become complaints and aim to resolve issues early. Once complaints are formalised, Project Managers are responsible for following the procedure laid down here to deal with a formal complaint. Where a complaint is made against the Project Manager, then the complaint will be investigated by the CEO.

C.2 CEO

The CEO is responsible for dealing with complaints which cannot be resolved by the Project Manager. If the complaint is made against the CEO, then the process outlined in D.2 should be followed.

D. Complaints against Staff

D.1 Securing the rights of staff

It is important that the rights and privacy of a member of staff who is the subject of a complaint are secure. The complaint should be given to their line manager, who is responsible for informing them that a complaint has been lodged against them. This should be done verbally and then followed up in writing.

The member of staff will be kept informed of timescales of the Complaints Process and the stage in the procedure that has been reached. They should be informed of the final outcome of the complaint, including whether any further action will follow. This should be communicated verbally and in writing.

There may be occasions where a Project Manager feels it would not be appropriate to alert the member of staff that a complaint has been made against them. In this situation advice from the CEO should be sought before taking any action.

D.2 Complaints against the CEO

The same procedure as above should be followed with the exception that a member of the Board of Trustees should carry out the investigation.

E. Procedures

E.1 Verbal complaints

In many instances it will be possible to resolve an issue quickly and fairly by talking to a member of staff, in which case the formal Complaints Procedure won't be needed.

E.2 Written Complaints

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response to a verbal complaint and/or wishes to pursue the matter further, the complaint should be put in writing, signed by the complainant and handed to the Project Manager. This should be done no later than 14 days after the date of the incident the complainant is referring to. The details should be documented, preferably using the Genesis Complaints form (see Appendix 2).

The CEO should be informed that a written complaint has been made. A letter should be sent to the complainant acknowledging the complaint within 5 working days and explaining Genesis Trust's complaint procedure and timescales. Where the complaint is about the Project Manager, the complainant can give their written complaint to the CEO.

A thorough investigation should be conducted by the appropriate Manager. This may involve the need to interview members of staff and clients where appropriate in relation to the complaint. As a result of the investigation recommendations for future changes should be made.

In most cases we will attempt to complete the investigation within 14 days and we will contact the complainant verbally and/or in writing with the outcome of the investigation within 21 days.

E.3 Appeals against an outcome

Where the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint they may appeal to the CEO if they have not dealt with the complaint in the first instance. If the latter is the case the appeal should be addressed to: The Chair of the Board of Trustees, The Old School House, South Parade, Bath, BA2 4AF. The complainant must explain why in their opinion the earlier decision was unacceptable. The complainant will be contacted within 14 days of receipt of their appeal to arrange a date for an appeals hearing. This will be held at a location, time and date that enables the complainant to attend if they wish. The Project Manager or the Chief Executive Officer will attend the appeal hearing in order to explain why they took the decision they did.

The decision of the Board of Trustees is final.

E.4 Escalating a complaint

Further progressing of a complaint beyond the Board of Trustees will depend on the nature of the matter. The Charity Commission has a list of the types of issues it would be willing to investigate. Other alternative routes include the police or the Health and Safety Executive.

If an accusation is made that this procedure has not been followed, the matter can be raised for discussion at a Trustees meeting by contacting the Chair of Trustees. The Trustees' meeting will not consider the substantive matter because this may invalidate their appeal review process, but they may refer the whole matter back to the first review stage and ask for a report to make sure that the full procedure is followed.

Review

This policy and process has been reviewed and issued on these dates and by:

Date Issued	Whom	Next Review Date
September 2018	Nick Mayo	September 2019

GENESIS TRUST BATH – COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Stage	Complaint goes to	Acknowledge within:	Responsibility for investigation:	Aim to respond within:
Verbal complaint	Member of staff or Project Manager	Dealt with informally but written record of complaint and outcome kept in Complaints Log Staff member informed verbally and later in writing both of the complaint and the outcome. Complaints Log reviewed every 3 months	Project Manager	15 days
Written complaint	The Project Manager This should be made using the GT Complaints Form (See Appendix 2) Project Manager will advise CEO if necessary	Acknowledge in 5 days. Carry out investigation within 14 days.	Project Manager	21 days Letter must state that the complainant has 14 days to appeal against the outcome
Serious complaints (e.g. fraud or sexual harassment)	The Chief Executive Officer or Project Manager	Acknowledge in 5 days. Carry out investigation within 14 days.	The Project Manager (with the Chief Executive Officer if appropriate)	21 days Letter must state that the complainant has 14 days to appeal against the outcome
Appeal	Chief Executive Officer or Genesis Trust Board of Trustees will hear appeals	Acknowledge within 14 days Carry out appeal hearing within 28 days on a date agreed with the complainant	Chief Executive Officer or Trustees Appeals Panel	Within 5 days of the decision

GENESIS TRUST BATH – COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

**Genesis Trust
Complaints Form**

Your name

Your address

Your email

Your daytime telephone number

Your evening telephone number

Please state the Genesis service/project your complaint is about:

What is your complaint?

What could we do to put things right or stop the problem happening in the future?