



SERVICE USER COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

TRC is committed to providing high quality support for all service users. One of the ways in which we aim to continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our service users. We aim to respond positively to all complaints, thereby ensuring that any negative aspects of our service are unrepeated.

Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

- making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response;
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- we respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc;
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly;
- keep matters low-key;
- where necessary and appropriate, enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. However, if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed as outlined below. The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Definition

TRC defines a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction (with TRC, with a member of staff or volunteer, or with a TRC Trustee) that relates to TRC and that requires a formal response'.

TRC responsibility will be to:

- acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- respond within a stated period of time;
- deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- bring their complaint, in writing, to TRC's attention normally within 8 weeks of the issue arising;
- raise concerns promptly and directly with the Volunteer Manager or the Chair of Trustees who will be responsible for any further action;
- explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- allow TRC a reasonable time to deal with the matter;

- recognise that some circumstances may be beyond TRC's control.

Confidentiality

In line with the TRC Confidentiality Policy all information will remain strictly confidential. However, in exceptional cases, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain complete confidentiality (with each complaint will be judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant before confidentiality is breached.

Monitoring and Reporting

Trustees of TRC will receive annually an anonymous report of complaints made and their resolution.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Stage 1

If you are unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write to the Manager or the Chair of Trustees. If your complaint concerns a Trustee of TRC, rather than a member of staff or another volunteer, you should write formally to the individual concerned. In your letter you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking.

You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within one week of receipt. You should get a response and an explanation within three weeks.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the initial response to the complaint then you can write to TRC's Chairperson and ask for your complaint and the response to be reviewed. You can expect the Chairperson to acknowledge your request within two weeks of receipt as it may need to be forwarded on and a response within 28 days.

TRC's aim is to resolve all matters as quickly as possible. However, inevitably some issues will be more complex and therefore may require longer to be fully investigated. Consequently, timescales given for handling and responding to complaints are indicative. If a matter requires more detailed investigation, you will receive an interim response describing what is being done to deal with the matter, and when a full reply can be expected and from whom.

Final Stage

If you are not satisfied with the subsequent reply from TRC's Chairperson, then you have the option of writing to the Charity Commission at Charity Commission Direct, PO Box 1227, Liverpool, L69 3UG, stating the reason why you are dissatisfied with the outcome. All information on making complaints to the Charity Commission can be found on the Charity Commission's website www.charity-commission.gov.uk in information form CC47.

The Charity Commission will respond usually within 15 working days, either by way of acknowledgment of your complaint, or to inform you of the action which will be taken to investigate your complaint, and when you can expect to hear the outcome of the investigation.