



The Smallpeice Trust

Complaints Policy and Procedure

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SECTION ONE: POLICY

Policy Statement

The Smallpeice Trust is committed to providing an excellent service to all its stakeholders, working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect.

We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, and will make sure that wherever practicable, complaints are resolved to the satisfaction of all parties involved, and that efforts are made to repair any damage to relationships. We welcome complaints from children and young people themselves, as direct beneficiaries of our programmes.

We will take seriously any concern or complaint and will look into it promptly, for resolution as quickly as possible. We are committed to handling complaints as part of our process of monitoring the quality, effectiveness and non-discriminatory nature of the Trust's activities. We will deal with complaints in line with our Confidentiality policy and keep a register of all complaints, which will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.

Purpose of this policy:

- Ensure everyone knows how to make a complaint and how a complaint will be handled
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within clear time frames
- Provide individuals and organisations with a fair and effective way to complain about our work
- Ensure that complaints are monitored to improve our work

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual or organisation, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the work undertaken by or on behalf of The Smallpeice Trust.

Key areas of possible complaint include (but are not limited to):

- Concern from someone we work with about the quality of programme delivery
- Concern about the behaviour of staff, volunteers or partners contracted to deliver on behalf of The Smallpeice Trust. This could include action taken or conversely, action not taken
- Concern about HR processes and decisions
- Concern about late payment of invoices

A complaint must be about an action for which The Smallpeice Trust is responsible.



Principles

The Smallpeice Trust will:

- Listen carefully to complaints and treat complaints as confidential, where possible
- Investigate the complaint fully, objectively and within the stated time frame
- Notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal
- Inform the complainant of any action that will be implemented to ensure that there is no re-occurrence
- Record, store and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.
- Report on an annual basis, the number of complaints received, the outcomes and any actions taken. This will be anonymised

Concern, Complaint or Comment

It is important to establish the difference between a concern, a complaint and a comment.

We welcome all feedback about the charity, as this helps us understand what we are doing well and where we need to improve. We understand that comments are often made to assist us with this, and are not seen by the person making the feedback as an actual concern or a complaint.

Where there is more of a concern, we will always take these seriously at the earliest stage, as this will reduce the likelihood of their developing into formal complaints.

If there are any concerns about our work please tell us as soon as possible, so we can quickly understand those concerns and try to put things right.

If an individual or organisation is not happy with the response to their concern and/or they want to make a formal complaint they should follow the procedures outlined below in section 2.

Related Policies

This policy is supported by the additional following policies (depending on the nature of the complaint):

- Data and Governance Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy



Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years and additionally if a significant change is made to the laws, regulations, systems, people or processes related to this policy.



SECTION TWO: PROCEDURES

There are three stages to the complaints procedure:

1. Stage One – The Complaint
2. Stage Two – Investigation
3. Stage Three – Appeal

Stage One - The Complaint

Complaints can be made verbally, by phone, email, or letter.

Please contact the the person/team who provided the service, or alternatively contact us as follows:

Chief Transformation Officer, The Smallpeice Trust, Holly House, 74 Upper Holly Walk, Leamington Spa, CV32 4JL. Email: info@smallpeicetrust.org.uk Phone: 01926 333200

Please include:

- Name and contact details
- Nature and date of complaint
- Desired resolution

Complaints are logged and acknowledged within 3 working days.

Stage Two - Investigation

All complaints at this stage should be dealt with by a manager within the area of work being complained about (unless delegated to a more appropriate member of staff by them). If they need to discuss the complaint with the complainant, they will do so within seven working days of receiving the complaint.

Complaints will be fully investigated, and a written response provided to the complainant within ten working days by the manager.

The complainant will receive written confirmation of the outcome of any investigation and any recommendations/remedies made, such as reviewing of policies, staff development and training or appropriate improvement to our services.

Where the complaint is upheld, an apology will be offered.

Stage Three - Appeal

If the complaint cannot be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at stage two, or if the manager feels that the complaint is of a very serious nature, or concerns a Head of Department, then it will be referred to



the Chief Executive.

If the complaint is about the Chief Executive, then the matter will be discussed with two Trustees.

The Chief Executive and/or Trustees will acknowledge receipt within three working days, they will review the Stage Two investigation and recommend one of the following actions within ten working days (from the date the complainant stated they wanted to take the complaint to stage 3):

- Uphold the action taken at Stage Two
- Make changes to the Stage Two recommendation/actions

The complainant should be informed in writing of the outcome of stage three, the decision reached about this complaint will then be final but other options available to the complainant (as listed below) should be detailed in the letter.

If after The Smallpeice Trust has been through the three stages and the complainant is still not satisfied with the result, they should be advised that there is no further right of appeal within the Trust. Very serious complaints can also be referred to the Charity Commission.

Anonymous Complaints

Complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered, but action may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

Complaints by Children and Young People

We welcome complaints directly from children and young people who are involved in our programmes.

We will establish at an early stage whether the parents or carers are aware of the complaint, with the child themselves encouraged to inform them. However, parents may not be informed if it's felt that the child is capable of dealing with the complaint themselves and there appears to be no wider impact of not informing them. Support should be offered by staff to help them make their complaint, if necessary.

As most complaints from children will likely arise on an event, and be given verbally, a staff member will take a record of the complaint to pass on to the on-site event lead. It must be made clear if they are using the actual words the child used, or if they are paraphrasing. Wherever possible complaints should be addressed there and then. If it requires further investigation, or if more serious, this should be flagged to the Programme Manager to respond to/advise on response.

Responses will be made directly back to the child, and their parents included in communication if they have been made aware, as referenced above.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

To process a complaint, The Smallpeice Trust will hold personal data about the complainant, which the individual provides, as well as any other information captured as part of the complaint investigation. We will hold this data securely and only use it to address the complaint. The identity of the person making the



complaint will only be known to those who need to consider the complaint and will not be revealed to other people or made public. However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example, where relevant legislation applies, or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties.

Complaints Reviews

On an annual basis, as part of our safe and effective practice work, we will review internally the number of complaints received, the outcomes, any actions taken and lessons learnt. This will be anonymised and a report created pulling out any themes which may highlight further areas of improvement/monitoring needed. This will be reviewed by the relevant Programme Managers, Executive Team and Board of Trustees.



Appendix 1 – Complaints Form

Used to log complaints and returned to the Business Manager once completed.

Name:		Department:		Date:	
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COMPLAINT DETAILS									
Date the complaint was received:		Received by:							
Name of person making the complaint:		Date of complaint:		Complaint number:					
Subject of the complaint (<i>brief description, e.g., parent complaining about application process</i>)									
Complaint details (<i>Summarise the complaint giving as much detail as possible, including nature of complaint, dates / times, persons involved</i>):									
Actions taken to resolve the complaint (<i>Summarise who investigated and dealt the complaint, actions taken and whether a satisfactory outcome was reached</i>):									
Has the complaint been satisfactorily resolved?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown <input type="checkbox"/>						
If no to the answer above, what further actions need to be taken and by when?									
Lessons learned?									
Please record any lessons learned following the complaint resolution.									