

Sight Research UK

Policy and Procedures for Resolving Complaints

Background

Sight Research UK views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

The Charity Commission report '*Cause for Complaint*' states: 'an effective complaints management system is a proven way of maintaining and building relationships with the people on whom the charity depends.'

The Objectives of our Complaints Policy

- Provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- Publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- Ensure everyone at Sight Research UK knows what to do if a complaint is received
- Ensure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- Ensure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- Gather information to help us improve what we do

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about an action taken, or a lack of action taken by Sight Research UK.

Where complaints come from

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in Sight Research UK. This may include supporters, researchers or research institutions, suppliers, or members of the public.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

This policy does not cover complaints from employees, who should use the appropriate Sight Research UK discipline and grievance procedures.

The scope of our complaints process

Although we are happy to receive your feedback we may choose not to respond to complaints that are:

- About something to which we have no connection
- Pursued unreasonably. If we have already responded we will provide information on the next stage of the escalation process but may choose not to reply again.
- Obviously abusive, prejudiced or offensive in their manner
- Incoherent or illegible
- Clearly sent to us and numerous other organisations as part of a bulk mailing or email
- Made anonymously. However, we will investigate the complaint and use the information to improve in any way that we can.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the board of trustees of Sight Research UK.

Review

This policy is reviewed every two years and updated whenever necessary	
Version	3.0
Last reviewed	28/01/2021
Date for next review	January 2023

Procedure for Resolving Complaints

Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints may be sent to Sight Research UK at:

Redwood House
Brotherswood Court
Almondsbury Business Park
Bristol
BS32 4QW

or by email to: hello@sightresearchuk.org

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 0117 325 7757 or in person to any of Sight Research UK's staff, volunteers, or trustees at the above address or at any of our events or activities.

Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded in writing. The person who receives a phone or 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 Sight Research UK (for example: supporter or researcher)
- 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.

STAGE ONE

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Charity Administrator within two days.

On receiving the complaint, the Charity Administrator records the complaint on the charity's CRM database, Donorfy. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within two days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within two weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified 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.

STAGE TWO

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chairman.

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within one week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chairman may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

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 Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

STAGE THREE

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage Two, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by Sight Research UK's professional body, the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) AMRC will be provided with all the information gathered about the complaint and will be invited to offer a final resolution of the complaint within one month of being notified.

Alternatively, the complainant can request that the complaint is reviewed by the independent regulator of charitable fundraising in England, Wales and Northern Ireland by sending a letter to Fundraising Regulator, 2nd Floor, CAN Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road, London, N1 6AH or by filling in a form on the website at:

<https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/complaints/make-complaint>

EXTERNAL STAGE

The complainant may complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Charity Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. 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 Two review.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

Date last reviewed:	January 2021
Date of next review:	January 2022