

Complaints Policy

Introduction

The FSI will provide for the processing and resolution of any complaints received about its products and services, subject to its legal and ethical duty to protect the confidentiality of information as set out in the Data Protection Act and the Human Rights Act. The common law duty of confidence will also be observed.

The way we handle complaints, resolve problems and use feedback is a priority for the FSI to ensure the satisfaction of its beneficiaries, donors and supporters.

Scope

The FSI recognises that at times things can and do go wrong and believes that it is in everyone's best interest to resolve concerns and complaints at the earliest possible stage. This policy and associated procedures are designed to make it easier to obtain a response to concerns about the FSI's products and service, and for FSI staff to respond in an open and constructive manner. The procedure and policy statement forms part of the FSI's overall Risk Management strategy and will be reviewed at least biennially.

This policy and procedure applies to all employees who provide products and services on behalf of the FSI.

Who May Complain?

Complaints may be made by a relevant person who uses the products and services of the FSI or a person acting on their behalf. The Complaints Procedure is not to be used for staff grievances which will continue to be handled separately.

Policy Aims

The FSI's Complaints Procedure will:

- a) Seek to resolve problems by informal means at an appropriate level wherever possible;
- b) Be easily accessible and publicised, our website gives an e-mail address to contact;
- c) Be simple to understand and use;
- d) Respect confidentiality;
- e) Seek to provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where appropriate
- f) Provide information to the Senior Management Team so that services can be improved.
- g) Identify a formal complaints process for the management of complaints
- h) Ensure that written records are kept of all formal complaints
- i) Ensure that all correspondence, statements and records of complaints are kept confidential and held securely.

This complaint policy and procedure is necessary for the efficient operation and provision of products and services in delivering value for money and ensuring user satisfaction. They have been developed in

order to encourage people to tell us what we are doing wrong or can do better, in order that we can endeavour to learn and put it right and has been based on four key principles

- a) Openness and accessibility
- b) Responsiveness
- c) Fairness and independence
- d) Learning and improvement

Key responsibilities

The Trustee Board of the FSI has a responsibility to ensure that there is an effective complaints policy in place and to be assured that it is monitored and is effective. The Chief Executive has overall responsibility and administration of the Complaints policy however, all members of staff have a responsibility to comply with the requirements of this policy and respond to any complaint in a positive way.

Definition of Complaint

The complaints procedure is designed to fulfil the following objectives:

- a) To enable members of the public and others to express complaints, comments, or suggestions, to the FSI when they feel dissatisfied with a product or service provided and to have them addressed in a respectful and courteous manner.
- b) Appendix 1 diagrammatically illustrates the general complaints procedure. Importantly the procedure stresses the principle that all complaints need to be recorded. The procedure also makes provision for distinguishing between an oral and a written complaint in terms of resolution.
- c) All complaints should be reported to the CEO of the FSI
- d) Normally complaints should be made within a 3 month period from which the subject of complaint occurred however delayed complaints may be considered.

Oral Complaints

- a) Whenever a member of staff receives an oral complaint, they should attempt to resolve the complaint directly in a respectful and courteous manner, if appropriate, they should seek immediate advice and support from their line manager
- b) Where an oral complaint is 'difficult' the matter should be referred to the more senior manager who will then seek the advice of the CEO if appropriate.
 - a. Examples of 'difficult' complaints may include the following:
 - i. Where the complainant will not accept an oral resolution.
 - ii. Where the manner and extent of the complainant's dissatisfaction (e.g. angry threat to go to the media) requires the direct involvement of the CEO
 - iii. The complainant is abusive and threatens violent behaviour.
 - iv. Where the gravity of the complaint indicates a major breach of FSI procedures; this should be escalated to CEO as a matter of Urgency

- v. Where the nature of the complaint implicates a member of the FSI staff in potentially illegal activity (e.g. fraud). Such a complaint will require the immediate attention of the CEO
- c) Oral complaints should receive an honest and objective response and should, if requested by the complainant, be followed by a letter that will confirm the oral response issued within 10 working days of the complaint.
- d) The person dealing with the complaint should capture the details of the complaint in writing and action taken. This should be shared with the CEO and added to the Master Quality spreadsheet.

Written Complaints

Written complaints should normally be made within 3 months of the incident, however, delayed complaints may be considered at the discretion of the FSI. All complaints should have a full response within 20 working days.

- a) Written complaints must be acknowledged, in writing, within two working days of date of receipt of complaint by FSI. Written complaints received should be sent to the FSI immediately
 - a. The CEO will be notified of the complaint on the day of receipt and they will advise who will respond.
 - b. The investigation will identify the relevant facts surrounding the complaint and identify if there has been a failure of systems, processes or standards.
 - c. A report of the outcome(s) of the investigation must be sent to the CEO within 10 working days or receipt of the complaint.
 - d. The Chief Executive, or in his/her absence, a designated senior manager, will sign the final response, which will be forwarded to the complainant within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint. If the investigation cannot be completed within 20 working days, an interim letter no later than day 15 or at the earliest opportunity must be sent to the complainant outlining the reason(s) for the delay and offer a timescale for response.
 - e. Affected staff shall be advised as to the outcome of the complaint and action to be taken thereafter.
 - f. All responses to complaint correspondence will be in hard copy form although they may be supplemented by electronic responses.

Complaints Review

If a complainant is not satisfied with the response to their complaint, she/he may request that the complaint be considered by the Board of Trustees.

- a) It is a precondition of the move to the Trustee stage that the complaint has been dealt with under the complaints policy and has not been resolved.
- b) The request for review must be in writing, addressed to the CEO within 10 days of the complaint response sent to the complainant and must set out briefly the reasons why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response.
- c) The Trustees will normally be held (via Video or Telephone Conference with a minimum of 3 Trustees) within 10 days of receipt of the review request to consider the papers. The

complainant may be invited to attend and whenever possible, that meeting will be held within 20 working days.

- d) The review meeting is not a judicial process and will be as informal as circumstances allow.
- e) The Trustees may make findings and recommendations and a copy of those findings and recommendations will be sent by electronic mail or otherwise given to the complainant and where relevant, the affected member of staff.
- f) The Trustees will formulate its response as quickly as reasonably possible, aiming to do so within 10 working days of the hearing.
- g) A written record will be kept of all complaints.
- h) Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where there are legal grounds to disclose.

Awareness

The FSI will ensure that staff are aware of the Complaints Procedure through their induction period.

Policy Monitoring and Reporting

- a) All complaints records and outcomes will be formally collated and analysed, utilising where possible electronic media for storage.
- b) The Board/SMT will be provided with a quarterly report
- c) The report will detail the following:
 - a. The incidence of complaints in the previous quarter
 - b. An overview of the nature/type of complaints
 - c. An overview of the resolution of the complaints
 - d. An assessment of trends emerging in relation to complaints.
 - e. An assessment of actions needed to redress general areas of service
 - f. In addition, an annual report on complaints will be compiled for the annual Trustee Strategy Away Day.

Contact Details for complaints:

Contact Number: +44 20 8142 5147

Email: admin@thefsi.org

Commitment to review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects emerging good practice and legislative requirements.

Last Reviewed: March 2021