



Complaints Handling Policy

Date of Approval:	12 th May 2020
Date of Review:	To be reviewed not later than 4 years from the last review.

- 1) All complaints should be put in writing to the Clerk or, alternatively, to the Chairman. The complaint shall include the following:
 - Name of the complainant
 - Address of the complainant
 - Telephone number and/or email address of the complainant
 - Details of the complaint
- 2)
 - a) On receipt of a written complaint the Clerk or Chairman, as the case may be, shall promptly advise the complainant in writing that their complaint has been received and will be dealt with promptly, but allowing sufficient time for the Trust to obtain advice from third parties as necessary.
 - b) Except where the complaint is about the Clerk, which should always be put to the Chairman, the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman will try to settle the complaint directly with the complainant.
 - c) Where the Chairman receives a written complaint about the Clerk, the Trust will treat this as a staffing matter and will investigate the matter and if necessary invoke its disciplinary procedure.
- 3) The Clerk or Chairman, as the case may be, shall advise all Trustees by email of any complaint received and what action has been taken.
- 4) The Clerk or Chairman, as the case may be, shall formally report to the next meeting of the Trust any written complaint disposed of by direct action with the complainant.
- 5) Where a written complaint cannot be settled as set out above, a Complaints Committee will be formed comprising three Trustees, agreed by all Trustees, save that if the complaint is about a Trustee, that Trustee will be excluded from the process forming the Committee and from being part of the Committee.
- 6) Once formed, the Complaints Committee will agree a date for a meeting to review the complaint. The Clerk shall notify the complainant of the date on which the complaint will be considered, and the complainant shall be offered an opportunity to explain the complaint orally.
- 7) At least seven working days prior to the meeting, the complainant shall provide the Trust

with copies of any documentation or other evidence relied on. The Trust shall provide the complainant with copies of any documentation upon which it wishes to rely at the meeting and shall do so promptly, allowing the claimant the opportunity to read the material in good time for the meeting.

- 8) At the complaint meeting:
 - a) the complainant (or his/her representative) should outline the grounds for complaint and, thereafter, questions may be asked by the Committee.
 - b) The Chair of the Committee will then have an opportunity to explain the Trust's position and questions may be asked by the complainant.
 - c) The complainant and the Chair of the Committee shall then summarise their position.
 - d) The complainant should be asked to leave the room while the Committee decides whether or not the grounds for the complaint have been made.
 - e) The complainant should be given the opportunity to wait for the decision but if the decision is unlikely to be finalised on that day they should be advised when the decision is likely to be made and when it is likely to be communicated to them.
- 9) As soon as practicable after the decision has been made it and the nature of any action to be taken shall be communicated in writing to the complainant.
- 10) If the complainant is not happy with the Committee's response, the complainant has the right to appeal to the full Trust (minus those on the Committee), whose decision shall be final.