



Policy & Procedure Document: Complaints Policy

Last Review: April 2023
Document Owner: Director of Resources
Approved by: Chief Executive

Introduction

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by a third party in regard to the conduct of representatives of the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi), or the quality of service provided by NDTi.

In all cases, concerns expressed and complaints received by NDTi will be dealt with professionally, promptly and with the aim of resolving the matter to the complete satisfaction of the other party and to ensure that the good reputation and standing of NDTi is maintained if not enhanced.

Complaints may be verbal or written and may be made direct to NDTi staff member, associates or volunteers in the course of their duties, or via other persons such as a partner agency or advocate. A verbal complaint may be made in person or by telephone. A written complaint may be by letter, e-mail or text.

All complaints will be listened to carefully with the aim of resolving them immediately. However, if this is not achieved the formal complaints procedure will be followed.

Confidentiality

It is important that strict confidentiality is maintained with regard to client details, the nature of complaints and individuals involved, following the policy and procedures set out for Data Protection and Confidentiality. This is particularly important where the nature of a complaint may result in disciplinary action against members of NDTi staff or representatives.

Procedure

Complaints will be resolved using a three stage process. NDTi will endeavour to resolve all complaints at an early stage but they will be escalated if necessary. All complaints should follow this process. The Chief Executive should only become involved in the event of failure to reach a resolution in Stage One and Two. If the Chief Executive is involved in the complaint it should be referred to the Chair of the NDTi Board who will initiate an investigation.

Stage One

The member of staff or representative that the client usually deals with will try and resolve the complaint – unless the complaint is about that person in which case an alternative person, ideally known to the complainant, will be identified to take the lead.

Every effort will be made to resolve the complaint informally to the complainant's satisfaction at an early stage, without the need to escalate to Stage Two. This will be recorded on the Complaints Log (Appendix 1).

Stage Two

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response received or the way in which the complaint has been dealt with at Stage One the complaint should be formalised and escalated to the relevant Head of Programme or Manager who will carry out the appropriate investigation to reach a resolution. In the event that this is the person about whom the complaint is being made, the process will move immediately to Stage Three.

Stage Three

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the response received or the way the complaint has been dealt with at Stage Two, it should be referred to the Chief Executive who will look at the complaint independently and carry out a full investigation to reach an agreed resolution. In the event of an agreement not being reached after a thorough investigation and all efforts to agree a resolution have failed the decision of the Chief Executive is final.

The outcome of all complaints will be confirmed to the complainant in writing. If the complainant is not satisfied after completion of this procedure, they have the right to appeal to the NDTi Board. The Chair of the Board will appoint a three person panel to hear the appeal.

Recording of Complaints

Immediately a complaint becomes a formal complaint a Complaint Record will be completed. This allows for all details of the complaint, investigation and resolution to be recorded. All correspondence and information relating to the investigation should be kept with the Complaint Record Form.

Contact with a Complainant

The client should be kept informed of the progress of the investigation at all times. They should have the name and contact number of the person dealing with their complaint.

Timescales

Complaints should be dealt with as quickly as possible and within the following timescale. These timescales apply to each step of the procedure if a complaint is escalated.

Step One

Initial contact in the form of an acknowledgement letter within five working days after the complaint was received, if it cannot be dealt with immediately.

Step Two

Carry out the investigation and send a final written response as quickly as possible and generally within ten working days of receipt of the complaint. Every effort should be made to keep the complainant informed of the progress of the investigation if a final response is not possible within ten working days.

Records of complaints will be retained for seven years.

Monitoring and Reporting of Complaints

The Director of Resources should be informed immediately the Formal Complaints Procedure is invoked and a complaint reference number will be issued.

The completed Complaints Record and all relevant paperwork will be forwarded to and retained by the Director of Resources.

Details of the complaints received will be reported regularly to the NDTi Board.

Review of Working Systems

When a resolution has been reached NDTi's systems and procedures should be examined to learn from the complaint and ensure there can be no repetition of the problem.

Review of Procedure

This procedure will be reviewed every year to ensure it remains appropriate and effective.

Contact Details

In the first instance (Stage One), please make any complaints directly to the NDTi member of staff or representative normally dealt with.

If the complaint is not fully resolved at Stage One, please contact NDTi, giving details of the nature of the complaint and the staff / representatives involved, by:

- telephone on 01225 255268
- email on office@ndti.org.uk
- in writing at NDTi, 4 Queen Street, Bath, BA1 1HEE

Further Information

This policy links to and should be read in conjunction with the following NDTi documents, policies and procedural guidance:

- Disciplinary Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy