



Patron: HRH The Duchess of Cornwall  
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## Complaints Policy - Procedure

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This policy reflects legislation and official guidance at the time it was last reviewed. Any changes in legislation will take precedence over anything printed in this policy. Where other policies are referred to, they can be viewed in the Policy Library

## **Complaints Policy - Procedure**

### **1. Introduction**

The RSN welcomes comments and suggestions about how it can improve its work and operations. This Policy sets out the arrangements which the RSN has for the investigation and resolution of complaints, and for learning from these.

This Complaints Procedure should be read in conjunction with other relevant RSN policy documents.

### **2. Complaints Process**

#### **2.1 How to Make a Complaint.**

We want to make it straight forward for you to contact us and to provide feedback or let us know when something doesn't appear to have gone as you would have hoped or expected. You must raise your complaint within 3 weeks (21 days) of the last occurrence of the subject of this complaint. These are the ways you can get in touch with us:

- 1) Face to face: if your complaint can be dealt with a member of staff or volunteer and you wish to complain, then please speak to them directly. It may be possible to resolve the issue immediately. However, if that is not possible;
- 2) You can email us at [hr@royal-needlework.org.uk](mailto:hr@royal-needlework.org.uk)
- 3) You can write to us at: 12a Hampton Ct Rd, Molesey, East Molesey KT8 9AU

In order for us to investigate and resolve complaints as efficiently and effectively as we can it is helpful to have as much detail about an issue as possible, Complaints Schedule Item 2 is a template complaint proforma form, which can be found in the Complaints Schedule on our website and details the kind of information that can be helpful for us.

#### **2.2 Stage One (Informal Stage)**

In most cases a Stage One complaint is best resolved by the Department Manager responsible for the issue being complained about. They should investigate it and take any relevant appropriate action.

If the complaint has been received by the subject-matter expert of the complaint, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Informal complaints should be acknowledged (generally within five working days) by whoever is dealing with it and complainants will then be notified of the findings/outcome either verbally or in writing as soon as practicably possible (generally within 28 working days).

### **2.3 Stage Two (Formal Stage)**

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One they can request that the complaint is reviewed as a Stage Two (Formal) complaint. Alternatively, a complainant can express a preference for their complaint to be investigated formally if they do not believe the informal procedure (Stage One) is appropriate to the seriousness or complexity of the issue.

Complainants should outline the details of their complaint in writing or electronically and be sent to [hr@royal-needlework.org.uk](mailto:hr@royal-needlework.org.uk) or by post to the address at 2.1.3.

If the complainant is unable to make a complaint in writing and complain verbally, we request they clearly state it is a formal complaint so the person receiving the complaint can, whenever possible, receive the details using the template complaint proforma form, attached at Complaints Schedule Section 2.

All Stage Two complaints will generally be acknowledged in writing (by post or email) within five working days from the date it is received and setting out the next steps.

Complainants will receive a full response to their complaint within a target of 28 working days from the date of the acknowledgement letter in writing.

### **2.4 Stage Three (Appeal Stage)**

If the complainant is not happy with the outcome of their complaint at Stage Two, they will have the right to appeal within five working days of receipt of the outcome notification at Stage Two.

Stage Three enables complainants to outline the reasons for dissatisfaction in writing or electronically to the Chief Executive (or the Chair of Council if it is about the Chief Executive) at [hr@royal-needlework.org.uk](mailto:hr@royal-needlework.org.uk)

The acknowledgement will generally be made in five working days and will state who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chief Executive (or the Chair of Council, if the complaint is about the Chief Executive or the Chief Executive is materially involved in the issues surrounding the complaint), the RSN Council may conduct the appeal themselves or appoint a suitably senior person to do so (this may be a third-party resource).

An Appeals Panel, normally of three members, including a council member, will be convened to consider the appeal. The Chief Executive or Chair of Council will be responsible for ensuring the panel is appropriately representative.

Panel membership will generally be restricted to people who have had no previous involvement in the complaint.

Members of the Appeals Panel will:

- Read through the necessary papers
- Speak with relevant individuals involved with the complaint
- Make a final decision

The Chair of the Appeals Panel will write within 28 working days of receiving the appeal, to confirm:

- The conclusions from the investigation and the decision about the complaint
- The reason for the decision
- Whether or not the procedure has been followed properly and fairly
- The redress, if appropriate, which will be offered e.g. an apology, additional help or signposting to other sources of advice or support
- Details of the changes we will make to prevent a recurrence of the issues which led to this complaint
- Any action that may be taken in light of the review

In all cases, the decision taken at this stage is final.

## **Record Keeping**

The manager dealing with the complaint should log the details of the complaint and (when closed) the findings/outcome with [HR@royal-needlework.org.uk](mailto:HR@royal-needlework.org.uk) so we can monitor the volume of complaints received, the resolution to understand how we are doing and whether there are any themes in the issues being raised.