



Patron: HRH The Duchess of Cornwall
President: HRH The Duchess of Gloucester



Complaints Policy

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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

Links with other school policies

This policy links with the following other THE RSN policies:

- Grievance
- GDPR
- Anti Bribery
- Privacy

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.

2. Scope

The Policy set out in this document applies to the RSN stakeholders who have a genuine complaint.

Where staff members have an issue with another staff member this should be dealt with through the Grievance policy.

Please note there are separate complaints policies for Degree Students following their presiding University procedures and these should be used where applicable.

3. Principles

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction and can be made verbally or in writing. The RSN takes such matters seriously and undertakes to resolve issues as soon as practically possible and addressing each complaint in a sensitive, fair, transparent, equitable, professional, and unbiased manner through the complaints handling process.

Academic decisions on marking cannot be changed as this is based on academic expertise and knowledge. The RSN do not accept a challenge to academic judgement as a reason for appeal.

The RSN follows the principles of Good Compliant Handling including:

- Getting it Right - Acting in accordance with the law and relevant guidance, and with regard for the rights of those concerned.
- Being customer focused - Having clear and simple procedures.

- Being open and accountable - Publishing clear, accurate and complete information about how to complain, and how and to take complaints further.
- Acting fairly and proportionately - Treating the complainant impartially, and without unlawful discrimination or prejudice.
- Putting things right - Acknowledging mistakes and apologising where appropriate and providing prompt, appropriate and proportionate remedies.
- Seeking continuous improvement - Using all feedback and the lessons learnt from complaints to improve service design and delivery.

We will always operate from the premise that any person is entitled to express his or her views on our services and that those views should be taken seriously where this is warranted. We will not, however, tolerate any abusive or discriminatory language or behaviour towards any of our staff, and may decline to investigate a complaint further in such circumstances.

All complaints will be monitored centrally and if necessary, they will be escalated to the highest level in line with our policy depending on the complexity or seriousness of the issue.

In all cases 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 (subject to the Privacy Policy) any action taken as a result of the complaint.

4. Complaints Process

4.2 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
3. You can write to us at: 12a Hampton Ct Rd, Molesey, East Molesey KT8 9AU

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. The Complaints Form contained at the end of this document outlines the information that can be helpful for us.

4.3 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).

4.4 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 or by post to the address at 4.2.

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 as many details about the complaint as possible.

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.

4.5 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

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.

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.

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

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 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.

5. Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know in accordance with data protection requirements.

6. External Assistance

As the RSN is a registered charity, the complainant can complain to the Charity Commission Regulator at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Charity Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at:

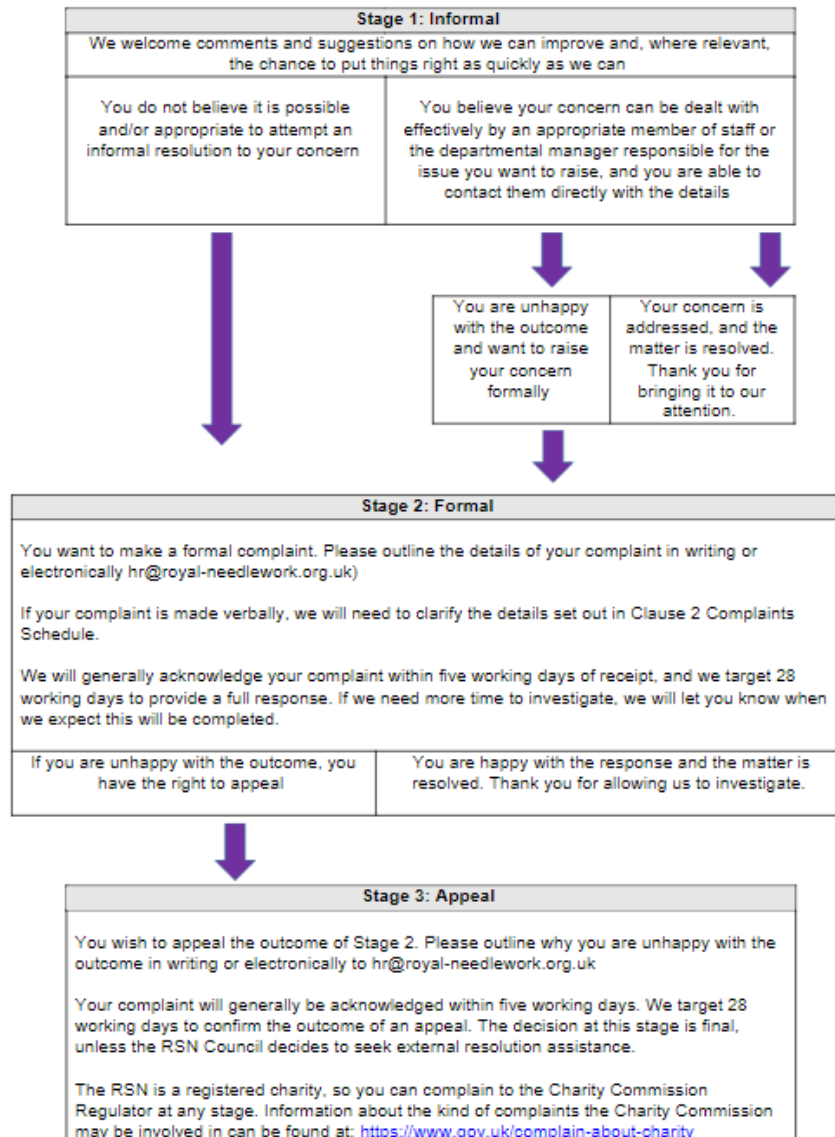
<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

Appendix – Complaint Template Reporting Pro-forma

This template should be used to ensure as much detail as possible is

Name of Complainant:
Address of Complainant:
Complainants email:
Complainants telephone number
Date complaint made
Department/s complaint concerns
Description of complaint, itemising in individual complaints (where relevant)
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint. (Who did you speak to and what was the response)?
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Process Map



Response Time

How we handle a complaint in summary

Stage	Type	Acknowledge	Target Timeframe
One	Informal	5 days	Within 28 working days of acknowledgement
Two	Formal	5 days	Within 28 working days of acknowledgement
Three	Appeal	5 days	Within 28 working days of acknowledgement