



FOUNDATION YEARS TRUST COMPLAINTS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Foundation Years Trust (FYT) views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person (or organisation) that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at FYT knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of FYT.

WHERE COMPLAINTS COME FROM

Complaints may come from any individual, volunteer or organisation who has a legitimate interest in FYT, including the general public if something is perceived to be improper. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff or volunteers, who should refer to FYT's internal HR policy for the grievance procedure.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

RESPONSIBILITY

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with FYT's Board of trustees.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed regularly, annually as a minimum, and updated as required.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints may be sent to The Foundation Years Trust at Beaconsfield Community House, Beaconsfield Close, Birkenhead CH42 3YN, or by email to info@foundationyearstrust.org.uk. Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 0151 647 4830 or in person to any of FYT's staff at the same address as above or at any of our events.



Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have, such as social media. Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to FYT e.g. donor, volunteer, service user or member of setting staff or other organisations.
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words

Resolving Complaints

Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to FYT's Trust Director within five business days.

On receiving the complaint, the Director records it in the complaints Log book. If it has not already been resolved, they will delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within five working days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this Complaints procedure should be attached. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, the complainant will be kept informed of progress made, with an indication of when a full response will be received.

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 any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level.

At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Trustee with designated authority for this policy. The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within five working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The designated Trustee may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the



person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One. The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within a month. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, the complainant will be kept informed of progress made, with an indication of the timelines for a full response.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the designated Trustee decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

External Stage

As FYT is a registered charity based in England, the complainant can complain to the Charity Commission of England and Wales at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Charities Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-charities/complaints-about-charities> and <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

COMPLAINTS AROUND FUNDRAISING

If a complaint concerns poor fundraising practice, either the way donations have been requested or how fundraisers have behaved, stage one and two of the Complaints' procedure should be followed in the first instance. If this does not result in full resolution, then the complainant should then refer to the Fundraising Regulator <http://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/complaints>

VARIATION OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about a Chair or trustee should not also have the Chair and/or trustee involved as a person leading a Stage Two review.

MONITORING AND LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

Named Trustee: Michael Towner

Second named Trustee: Dermot Coleman