

Postcode Society Trust Complaints Policy

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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY?

The Trust views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right. Complaints made to the Trust will be dealt with in an efficient and robust way which is detailed within this policy.

The Policy aims to do the following:

- provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use;
- ensure everyone knows what to do if a complaint is received;
- ensure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way;
- ensures that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired; and
- gather information which helps to improve performance for the future.

DEFINING A COMPLAINT

In general terms, a complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction or concern (whether we think it is justified or not) about any aspect of the Trust's work.

A complaint may relate to the Trust as a whole or to individual or groups of members of staff, or volunteers.

Please note, decisions made by the Trust on funding awards are final and you cannot use the complaints procedure to appeal against a funding decision. However, concerns may be raised, or complaints made, about the Trust's grant-making process.

CONFIDENTIALITY

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

REGULATORY INVOLVEMENT

OSCR

OSCR are the Scottish Charity Regulator. They can be contacted to report serious issues where there is a significant risk of harm to the charity itself or to the people it was set up to help. For details on how to do this see <https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/raise-a-concern/>.

Police Scotland

Police Scotland should be notified when:

- Serious harm or danger of harm to the people that the charity helps;

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- Criminal or illegal activity within or involving a charity (this includes charities that are set up for an illegal or improper use); and,
- Serious financial loss to a charity - this could include theft or embezzlement.

Gambling Commission

This Policy applies to the Trust's specific complaints only. Complaints relating to the Trust's society lottery are directed to the Trust's External Lottery Manager which operates its own process.

RECEIVING COMPLAINTS

The Trust encourages anyone who has a concern or complaint about any aspect of our service to correspond in writing at:

Postcode Society Trust, 28 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, EH2 4ET,

or by email: info@postcodesocietytrust.org.uk

Complaints received by telephone or in person will be encouraged where possible to send in their complaint in writing.

All complaints that reach stage 2 are recorded together with the complainant's; name, contact details and their relationship to the Trust. The complainant is informed that there is a procedure and what will happen next.

OUR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Our procedure consists of the following stages:

Stage 1 – First point of Contact Resolution

In the first instance, the recipient of the complaint will aim to resolve the complaint at the first point of contact without escalation. Our aim is to ensure every complaint is acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.

Stage 2 – Full Investigation & Outcome

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 1, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level.

Complaint is escalated from the recipient to the Chair of the relevant Trust and formally recorded. An Investigation takes place and the Chair may consult the Management Team, including the Head of Charities or the Deputy Head of Charities, as needed. If the investigation of the complaint is likely to take longer than 5 working days, the complainant will be notified advising of the proposed timescales and next steps, with the aim of resolving the complaint within a maximum of 20 working days.

The Chair or Head of Charities will respond to the complainant advising of the outcome of the complaint and any action taken as a result of the investigation. The decision taken at this stage is final.

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LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

Complaints should be regarded as a source of learning and improvement. Our complaints record will be reviewed annually in the month of January each year by Community Programmes Manager to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

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