

Complaints Resolution Policy

This policy applies to all directorates with the exception of Schools and Children's Services
For Schools and Children's Services refer to Complaints Resolution Policy Schools QS-0010

Complaints Resolution Policy

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The National Autistic Society is committed to providing high quality, transparent and accessible services to everyone we support across adult services and other support networks. To do this we need you to tell us when we do things well and when we get things wrong.

- We want to help resolve all complaints as quickly as possible.
- We will handle any expression of dissatisfaction with our services which calls for a response as a complaint.
- We will listen to your complaints, treat them seriously, and learn from them so that we can continuously improve our service

You can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect and fairness at all times. We expect that you will also treat our staff dealing with your complaint with the same courtesy, respect and fairness.

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Scope

This policy applies to all NAS employees, families of people supported in our services and people the NAS provides support to.

Of note - this policy does not apply to situations where staff have a grievance against another member of staff (please see the Grievance and Whistle-blowing policies for concerns of this nature).

This policy also covers situations where feedback is received from those not employed by the NAS, for example:

- Someone supported in an NAS Service or Student Support or receiving any service from the NAS
- On behalf of those who are unable to complete the process independently (as defined by the Mental Capacity Act 2015 or the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 or the Mental Capacity Act 2016 Northern Ireland)
- A person who has been asked to do so by the person affected
- An NAS Member or member of an organisation related to the NAS; a funding organisation / fund raiser.
- A member of the public
- NAS volunteers
- People supported by NAS volunteers

Please note for NAS Schools and Children's Services refer to Complaints Resolution Policy NAS Schools and Children's Services QS-0010.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not.

Our policy covers complaints about:

- the standard of service you should expect from us
- the behaviour of our staff in delivering that service
- any action, or lack of action, by our staff or others engaged on NAS business

Safeguarding

If there is a concern about safeguarding an adult, or there is a belief that someone may be at risk of serious harm, the NAS will immediately refer the case to the appropriate statutory agency for adult protection. If there is a safeguarding concern, we will investigate this under our Safeguarding Policy and not through this complaints policy. Where a complaint is about the manner in which a safeguarding matter has been handled then that complaint

will be addressed through this policy. Please refer to the NAS website for more information on our Safeguarding Adults Policy SO-0189.

Our standards for handling complaints

- We can receive complaints by telephone, letter or email. We can also receive complaints in alternative ways if we need to, because of reasonable adjustments required. We treat all complaints seriously.
- You may wish to have a third party act on your behalf. A third party is any person or organisation acting on behalf of or making enquiries for the complainant.
- You can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect and fairness at all times.
- Any information that you give will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, in line with our charity's Data Protection policy (IGP-02).
- You have the right to anonymity but if you wish to remain anonymous, we may not be able to update you on the outcome of your complaint or offer you the opportunity to feedback.
- We will deal with your complaint promptly:
 - We will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within 5 working days where we have return details and you can expect to have a full reply within 28 working days.
 - In a few cases we will not be able to send a full reply within 28 working days of receipt, for example if your complaint is very complex. If this happens, we will tell you the reason why and let you know when we will be able to reply in full, keeping you fully informed of progress.
- We will not treat you less favourably than anyone else because of your:
 - sex or legal marital or same-sex partnership status: this includes family status, responsibility for dependents, and gender (including gender reassignment, whether proposed, commenced or completed), sexual orientation
 - colour or race: this includes ethnic or national origin or nationality
 - disability
 - religious or political beliefs, or trade union affiliation
 - any other unjustifiable factors, for example language difficulties, age, pregnancy and maternity
- Investigations will be cross referenced with other parties, where relevant, when external organisations are implicated in the concern raised.

How to complain to us

If you wish to make a complaint, you can do so by:

- email
- letter
- telephone
- asking a member of staff to help you in writing out your complaint

Our contact details are in the 'Contacting Us' section below. If you require different adjustments, let us know and we will try and put those arrangements in place where we can.

Contacting us

There are a variety of ways that people can make complaints:

- Telephone to your local service / team
- In writing to your local service/ team
- Email: Your.Views@nas.org.uk
- Website: www.autism.org.uk
- Writing to:
The Nominated Individual and Safeguarding Lead
The National Autistic Society
Weston House
42 Curtain Road
London EC2A 3NH

Comments and Compliments

Quality of service is an important measure of our effectiveness. Learning from complaints, comments and compliments is a powerful way of helping continuous improvement at our charity and enable us to better deliver to our values and standards.

As well as learning from your complaints we would like to hear about:

- ideas you have on how we might do things better
- when we do things well.

Your comments and compliments will be passed on to the relevant team and we will use them to help improve the way we do things.

You can make your comments and compliments by contacting any members of our staff, or you can e-mail: Your.Views@nas.org.uk

References

CQC
Care Inspectorate – Scotland
Care Inspectorate - Wales
RQIA
HSC Trust
Health and Personal Social Services Day Care Regulations 2007
NISCC
DHSSPS
Access NI
Data Protection Policy IGP-02
Whistleblowing Policy HR-0002
Grievance Management Policy HR-001
Complaints Resolution Procedure – QS-0009-001-0422
Tell us how we are doing leaflet