

## Complaints Procedure

### Introduction

Disability Assist ('the charity') welcomes feedback as a means of addressing any issues and as an opportunity to improve its quality of service. We encourage early discussion and informal resolution of any problems and respect the right of anyone to make a formal complaint using this procedure. The aim of a complaint investigation, whether it is done informally or as part of the formal complaints procedure, is to provide as full an understanding of the situation as possible in order that appropriate action can be taken that will resolve the matter in a way that is satisfactory to all concerned.

Disability Assist maintains a register of all complaints, outcomes and any action plans and these are reviewed as part of the charity's ongoing quality monitoring. Compliments and complaints are a standing agenda item for Board meetings.

### Principles

- a) Any complaint received will be treated as serious and will be dealt with sensitively in compliance with the complaints procedure.
- b) Copies of the complaints procedure will be freely available.
- c) Any member of staff or volunteer who receives a complaint about an incident, themselves or about another employee or volunteer of Disability Assist will immediately inform their Line Manager and/or the Chair.
- d) During the investigation of any formal complaint, details of all discussions between the complainant and Disability Assist and any action taken will be recorded in a designated file.
- e) All reasonable efforts will be made to find a solution that is acceptable to all concerned.

### Informal complaints

Anyone with a complaint or concern about the charity's work should raise it with the staff member dealing with the issue. We hope that any concerns will be able to be addressed quickly and easily. If the issue is not resolved, or a formal record of the problem is required, the following procedure should be used.

## Formal complaints procedure

### Stage 1

The complainant (or advocate/supporter working on their behalf) should submit their complaint in writing to the Chief Executive Officer, Mrs Sophie Fournel with details of his/her complaint. This should be sent to:

Disability Assist  
c/o R&B Star,  
Units 9 & 10, Nimbus Enterprise Park,  
Liphook Way, Allington,  
Maidstone,  
Kent ME16 0LQ

Or,

[sophie@disabilityassist.org.uk](mailto:sophie@disabilityassist.org.uk)

The Charity will make a written response to the complaint within seven working days. This will either propose a resolution, or if more time is required to investigate the matter, propose a timetable for resolving the complaint.

### Stage 2

If the person making the complaint is unhappy with the proposed resolution, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by a complaints panel, which will meet within 20 working days of the request for the panel review. The complaints panel will consist of three Trustees (including the Chair). The panel will interview the person involved and others who may have knowledge relevant to the complaint in order to decide appropriate action. If a volunteer or employee is involved, the interview will be conducted by their Line Manager, who will recommend action to the panel.

A written reply with details of the investigation and any proposed actions will be sent, usually within four weeks of the formal complaint being received, but no longer than eight weeks. If appropriate, a meeting will be offered to discuss the outcome of the investigation.

### Stage 3

In the case of a serious complaint, which arises out of negligence or ignorance and is generally an isolated incident, the panel must ensure that procedures are being implemented properly. The Line Manager of the person concerned must also be interviewed to ensure that they are aware of the seriousness of the issue and also that they have a responsibility to ensure that a similar

complaint does not arise again. The letter to the complainant should be fuller and reflect the fact that their complaint has been dealt with in detail and that the staff concerned have been retrained and made aware of the gravity of the situation.

#### Stage 4

In the event that the matter is still unresolved then issue will be taken to the full Board of Trustees who will review the complaint. The complainant will be able to put their view forward, both written and oral, assisted by a supporter if appropriate. The Board will fully review the complaint and make their final recommendations. They may decide to refer the matter to the Independent Ombudsman.

#### For Office Use Only:

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