

DSUK COMPLAINTS POLICY

Introduction

DSUK views complaints as opportunities to learn, improve, and make things right for those affected.

Our policy is:

- Provide a fair and accessible complaints procedure.
- Publicise the complaints procedure clearly.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand how to handle complaints.
- Investigate complaints fairly and promptly.
- Aim to resolve complaints and repair relationships.
- Use complaint data to improve our services.

Difference between a concern and a complaint:

- Concern: An expression of worry or doubt over an important issue.
- Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction about actions taken or not taken.

When responding to complaints, DSUK will aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial.
- Conduct full and fair investigations.
- Engage independent investigators when necessary.
- Provide prompt and effective responses.
- Respect confidentiality and comply with data protection laws.
- Treat all complainants with respect.
- Keep complainants informed throughout the process.

Accessibility

This policy is available on the DSUK website and upon request. Reasonable adjustments will be made for individuals with disabilities or language barriers.

Where Complaints Come From

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

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 the Trustees of DSUK.

Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints may be sent by email at info@downsyndromeuk.co.uk marked for the attention of the Operations Manager - Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 0330 111 2121 or in person to any of DSUK's staff or trustees 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 DSUK, e.g., donor, volunteer, sponsor
- 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 the DSUK Trustees within five business days.

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On receiving the complaint, the Trustees record it in the complaints Logbook. If it has not already been resolved, they 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 complaint's 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, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

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 because 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 again by the Trustees.

The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Trustees 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, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. 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 because of the complaint. The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Trustees decide it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

External Stage

As DSUK is a registered charity, the complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Charity Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: <https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/raising-concerns/>

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Trustees may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest.

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Complaint Campaigns

In the event of a complaint campaign where many complaints are received all based on the same subject, these complaints will be forwarded to the Trustees for investigation and response. The same response letter will be sent to all complainants and/or a single response published on the Charity's website. If the complainants are dissatisfied with the Trustee's response, they may wish to complain to the Charity Commission as detailed above.

Serial or persistent complainants

If the complainant tries to re-open a complaint with the Charity after this complaint procedure has been fully exhausted, then the Charity can decide that it is appropriate to stop responding to the complainant.

Circumstances in which the Charity will not respond could include:

- The Charity has taken every reasonable step to address the complainant's needs, *and*
- The complainant has been given a clear statement of the Charity's position and their options (if any), *and*
- The complainant is contacting the Charity repeatedly but making substantially the same points each time

However, this list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Circumstances in which the Charity will be most likely to choose not to respond:

- It has reason to believe the individual is contacting the Charity with the intention of causing disruption or inconvenience, and/or
- The individual's letters/emails/telephone calls are often or always abusive or aggressive, and/or
- The individual makes insulting personal comments about, or threats towards, staff.

Monitoring and review

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The Trustees will review this complaints policy annually. The Charity will log all formal complaints received and will record how they were resolved. Trustees will examine the complaints log on a regular basis and will consider the need for any changes to the complaints policy or other procedures.

Policy Ratified on	September 2021
Policy Reviewed Date	October 2025
Policy Review Due	October 2026
Trustee sign off	Casimir Knight

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Complaint Form

Personal Details

Your Name	
Your Relationship to the Charity	
Your Address	
Daytime Contact Number	
Evening Contact Number	

Details of the Complaint

Please provide details of your complaint:

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What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint?

(Please detail who you spoke to and what the response was)

Resolution

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Evidence

If you are attaching any supporting paperwork, please give details:

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Signature	
Date	

For Official Use Only:

Date complaint form received	
Date Acknowledgement sent	
By whom	
Complaint referred to	