

Public Feedback and Complaints Policy and Process

POLICY

St John Ambulance is the Nation's premiere First Aid charity and we appreciate your feedback on our services. We use this feedback to continuously improve what we do.

COMPLIMENTS

If you wish to compliment the charity's services or its volunteers or staff we would encourage you to contact our Feedback and Complaints Team at feedbackandcomplaints@sja.org.uk (their postal details and telephone number are provided at the end of this document).

COMPLAINTS

If you have a legitimate complaint about us, we want to put things right, and we are committed to resolving legitimate complaints fairly and promptly, and to learning how we can improve our services.

Our Policy covers complaints raised at any level within the charity. However, it will not apply to certain types of complaint.

TYPES OF COMPLAINT COVERED

- The standard of service we provide
- The behaviour of our people delivering that service
- The charity's policy, communications, resources, or decisions about that service

TYPES OF COMPLAINT NOT COVERED

- Whistleblowing complaints (such as criminal matters - which should be reported to the Police, or serious Regulatory breaches – which should be referred to the relevant Regulator)
- Disputes between the charity/its volunteers/its staff (which must follow our internal Grievance Procedures)
- Complaints which we have already dealt with via this Policy
- Anonymous complaints – we cannot reply to such complaints but will consider if action is needed
- Complaints by Third Parties – unless they are acting as an advocate for you AND with your consent
- Complaints which are inappropriate (we will not accept vexatious, malicious, abusive, frivolous or other inappropriate complaints)

Where at all possible, complaints will be dealt with informally in the first instance. Most complaints can be resolved in this way, avoiding the need for more formal investigation, which could lead to extended timeframes and complexity.

In some cases it will be necessary for us to refer you to a third party e.g. where we provided services as a sub-contractor to the NHS.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

By using our Complaints Procedure you acknowledge that we have a legitimate interest in using your personal data for the purpose of dealing with your complaint (further information can be found in our Data Protection Policy).

We will endeavour to treat information related to the Complaint as confidential. However, in some cases the law will oblige us to refer matters to the Police, or to a Regulator etc.

In addition, a person has the right to be told about a complaint against them and the evidence involved. We will try to ensure that your identity as the source of a complaint is not revealed without your consent, however it may be that the nature of the allegations or evidence indicates their source.

OUTCOME AND APPEAL

We very much hope that once a decision has been made about your complaint, you will be satisfied with the outcome. If you are not satisfied then you will have the opportunity to Appeal that decision. However, once such an Appeal has taken place, this will exhaust the charity's Internal Complaints Procedures, and no further Appeal will be accepted. In certain cases you may be able to refer the matter Externally (e.g. to a Regulator, or to an Ombudsman), and we will provide further information in this respect.

LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

The Charity records all complaints and outcomes, so that we can identify any emerging issues and trends. The monitoring of complaints allows us to learn lessons so that any appropriate improvements to our services can be implemented.

PROCESS OF MAKING A COMPLAINT

INFORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Most complaints can be resolved informally. It is often the quickest and most efficient route to resolving a complaint. In order to pursue an informal resolution, the complaint should be referred to the person who manages the service, or manages the person complained about. If you do not know who this is then you should contact our Feedback and Complaints Team at feedbackandcomplaints@sja.org.uk (their postal details and telephone number are provided at the end of this document).

FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCESS

If you have been unable to resolve a complaint informally then you should make a formal complaint to our Feedback and Complaints Team at feedbackandcomplaints@sja.org.uk (their postal details and telephone number are provided at the end of this document).

The written complaint can either be sent by post or by email (if you are unable to do this yourself, you should seek assistance from someone who can do this for you, but you should ensure that they explain how they have obtained your consent).

An acknowledgment of your complaint will be sent to you within five working days, and will indicate whether the complaint is one that the charity will accept, and if so, it will advise who the complaint has been referred to for Review (this may be someone outside the charity, i.e. in the NHS). If we are proceeding with the matter, our Reviewer will contact you within a further 5 working days, after which you will receive updates at no less than four-weekly intervals.

WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN YOUR COMPLAINT

The following information should be provided so that the matter can be resolved as quickly as possible:

- Confirm that this is a Formal Complaint, and that the Informal stage did not resolve matters
- Include any documents for correspondence which supports your complaint
- Be clear and concise and try to present the information in date order, and provide key dates, times, names, places etc. If you do not provide sufficient information or evidence to substantiate your complaint, the charity may not be able to take it forward.
- Set out the result which you would like from your complaint i.e. whether you are seeking an apology or an explanation, or some other response (the charity cannot guarantee that it will be able to do as you ask)

HOW WE WILL DEAL WITH YOUR COMPLAINT

When a formal complaint has been received we will decide how it should be reviewed. General complaints will be directed to the appropriate Manager involved with the service or the person that you have complained about (either Locally or Nationally). Some types of complaint will be directed to a specialist department e.g.:

- Clinical complaints will be directed to our Clinical Team (who may need to refer the matter on, e.g. to the NHS)
- Fundraising complaints will be directed to our Fundraising Team
- Customer complaints (about our commercial services) will be directed to our Customer Services Team
- Safeguarding complaints will be directed to our Safeguarding Team
- Complaints relating to legal action will be directed to our Legal Team

If your complaint has been referred externally (e.g. to the NHS) the third party will respond to you. Otherwise our nominated Reviewer will contact you to identify themselves and to summarise the steps they will be taking, with estimated timeframes (unless the matter is unusually complicated, your complaint should be decided within a maximum of [eight] weeks).

Once the Reviewer has completed their investigation, they will write to you to inform you of their decision, and whether the charity will be taking any specific action (the Reviewer will also indicate how, if necessary, you can Appeal their decision).

APPEALING A DECISION

If you are not satisfied with the decision regarding your complaint, you can make an Appeal.

In order to make an Appeal you must write to the person indicated in the Complaint Decision. Your Appeal must:

- Be submitted within fourteen days of your receipt of the Complaint Decision
- Set out in writing why you think the Complaint Decision is unsatisfactory
- Provide any further evidence you wish to be considered
- Indicate any revised solution you would like us to provide (the charity cannot guarantee that it will be able to do as you ask)

The person considering your Appeal will contact you within 5 working days of the receipt of your Appeal and will indicate the estimated timeframe for dealing with it (unless the matter is unusually complicated you should be notified of the outcome of your Appeal within a further four weeks).

EXHAUSTION OF THE INTERNAL COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Once an Informal assessment, a Formal Complaint, and an Appeal has taken place, the charity's Internal Complaints Procedure will have been exhausted, and no further Appeal will be accepted.

In some cases, it may be possible for you to refer the matter Externally e.g. to a Regulator, or to an Ombudsman. Further information is available at www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity.

Feedback and Complaints should be emailed to: feedbackandcomplaints@sja.org.uk

Postal Address: Feedback and Complaints Team, Quality and Standards Department,
St John Ambulance, St John's Lane, London, E1M 4BU

Telephone: 020 7234 4039

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27 St John's Lane
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08700 10 49 50
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Call your local office on
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