

Complaints Policy of Suffolk Poetry Society

Registered charity 1162298

1.Suffolk Poetry Society views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation who has made the complaint.

2.Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure the officers and trustees of Suffolk Poetry Society know what to do if a complaint is received.
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

3.Definition of a complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Suffolk Poetry Society.

4.Where complaints come from

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

5.Confidentiality

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

6. Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the trustees of Suffolk Poetry Society.

7. Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

The trustees reserve the right to amend the procedures in the light of particular circumstances, if this is deemed likely to lead to more effective handling of a complaint.

Adopted on 26 March 2016, reviewed 9 December 2020, 1 December 2021, 7 December 2022, 30 October 2023 approved 11.12.23

Complaints procedure of Suffolk Poetry Society

1. Published Contact details for Complaints

Written complaints may be sent to Suffolk Poetry Society c/o The Secretary, 5 Bolton Lane, Ipswich IP4 2BX or by email to secretary@suffolkpoetrysociety.org.uk

Verbal complaints may be made by phone or in person to any of the trustees of Suffolk Poetry Society or to volunteers at any SPS events or activities. Contact details of trustees can be obtained from the Secretary (tel: 01473 210 264)

2. Receiving complaints

2.1 Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

2.2 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 Suffolk Poetry Society (for example, member)
- 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.

3. Resolving complaints

3.1 Stage One

3.1.1 In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issues being complained about depending on the situation. 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 if this is a relatively minor matter and does not involve a serious accusation against that person in which case the complaint should be immediately referred to the Secretary.

3.1.2 Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Secretary within seven working days.

3.1.3 On receiving the complaint, the Secretary records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate a nominated Trustee to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

3.1.4 If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

3.1.5 Complaints should be acknowledged by the Secretary within seven 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 complaints procedure should be attached.

3.1.6 Ideally complaints should receive a definitive reply within thirty working days. 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.

3.1.7 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 as a result of the complaint.

3.2 Stage 2

3.2.1 If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed by the Chair of the committee of trustees. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair.

3.2.2 The request for a review by the Chair should be acknowledged within seven working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

3.2.3 The Chair, unless subject to the complaint, 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. If it is not appropriate for the Chair to handle the matter then this shall be handled by the Secretary.

3.2.4 If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

3.2.5 The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

3.2.6 Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within thirty working days. 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.

3.2.7 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 as a result of the complaint.

3.2.8 The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Chair decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

3.3 External stage

3.3.1 The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx

4. Monitoring and learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

Note: The trustees reserve the right to amend the procedures in the light of particular circumstances, if this is deemed likely to lead to more effective handling of a complaint.

26 March 2016

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