



# DSUK COMPLAINTS POLICY

2021

## Introduction

DSUK 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) that has made the complaint.

## 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 everyone at DSUK knows 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 aim for relationships to be repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

## Difference between a concern and a complaint:

- A concern is defined as “an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought”
- A complaint is defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action”

## When responding to complaints, DSUK will aim to:

- Be impartial and non-adversarial
- Facilitate a full and fair investigation
- Where necessary or required, commission an investigation by an independent person or panel
- Address all the points raised and provide an effective and prompt response
- Respect complainants’ desire for confidentiality. The Charity will treat conversations and correspondence with discretion. Parties to a complaint should realise that some information may have to be shared to carry out an appropriate and thorough investigation
- Treat complainants with respect
- Keep complainants informed of the progress of the concern or complaints process.

## Accessibility

The complaints procedure is published and accessible via the DSUK website. A copy of this policy will also be made available to anyone on request.



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### Where Complaints Come From

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](mailto: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.



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### Monitoring and review

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	10 October 2023
Policy Review Due	10 October 2024
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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<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

**For Official Use Only:**

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