

**Complaints policy**

Zephyr’s 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 organisations) that has made the complaint.

This document sets out our policy and procedure regarding complaints. It identifies steps to be taken if a complaint is raised, and provides a clear route of action. It also details the methods for which such feedback can be received, and how our organisation communicates.

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 Zephyr’s 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

**Definition of a complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Zephyr’s - encompassing our core services, project work and online support groups.

Complaints may come from any individual, volunteer or organisation who has a legitimate interest in Zephyr’s, including the general public if something is perceived to be improper. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email, via social media or in writing. This policy does not cover complaints from staff or volunteers, who should refer to Zephyr’s internal complaints policy.

Any of the following situations may give rise to complaints:

* Interactions between members of our Zephyr’s team, staff, trustees or volunteers
* Interactions between our Zephyr’s team and those we support

These may take place in person, over the phone, online or in public or private comments and messages.

We will endeavour to respond appropriately, with sensitivity, to listen carefully to the feelings of the person who raises the complaint or concern and all involved, and follow the procedures as outlined below.

**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 board of trustees of Zephyr’s.

**Review**

This policy is reviewed annually and updated as required.

To raise a concern, make a complaint or provide feedback relating to this policy, please contact Zephyr’s at Unit 42, Sneinton Market, Freckingham Street, Nottingham NG1 1DQ or by email at [contact@zephyrsnottingham.org.uk](mailto:contact@zephyrsnottingham.org.uk). In a situation where it may be appropriate to do so you can also contact the Chair Of Zephyr’s Board of Trustees, Vikki Jones via [chair@zephyrsnottingham.org.uk](mailto:chair@zephyrsnottingham.org.uk).

Written June 2023.

**Complaints Procedure**

**Contact details for complaints**

Written complaints may be sent to Zephyr’s at Unit 42, Sneinton Market, Freckingham Street, Nottingham NG1 1DQ, by email at [contact@zephyrsnottingham.org.uk](mailto:contact@zephyrsnottingham.org.uk). In a situation where it may be appropriate to do so complaints can also be made to [chair@zephyrsnottingham.org.uk](mailto:chair@zephyrsnottingham.org.uk)

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 07915 995532 or in person to any of Zephyr’s staff or trustees at the same address as above or 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 phone 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, phone number and email address
* Note down the relationship of the complainant to Zephyr’s e.g. doner, volunteer, user
* 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**

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 Zephyr’s Director within three working days.

**Step 1**

On receiving the complaint, the Director will record the complaint. If it has not already been resolved, they will investigate and 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 complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within 30 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.

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.

**Step 2**

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Step 1, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level.

At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Board of Trustees who will conduct their own investigation. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Step 1. The person who dealt with the original complaint 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 30 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.

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

**Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about a Chair or trustee should not also have the Chair and/or trustee involved as a person leading a Step 2 review.

**Monitoring**

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