



COMPLAINTS

Date of Authorisation: 6 April 2021

GIST Cancer UK

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www.gistcancer.org.uk

Registered Charity Number: 1129219

Complaints

Policy

It is the policy of GIST Cancer UK (GCUK) to pursue a strategy of continual improvement in the service it provides and to welcome suggestions as to how this may be achieved, or constructive criticism about services or their delivery.

GIST Cancer UK views a complaint 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.

Where a volunteer, patient/carer or other person, agency or organisation indicates any expression of dissatisfaction with the service received, or any issue relating to equality, diversity and inclusion it is the policy of this charity to investigate the complaint and where possible resolve all issues.

Objectives

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise on our website the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure all the trustees of GIST Cancer UK 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 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 GIST Cancer UK and its services including complaints regarding equality, diversity, and inclusion.

GIST Cancer UK opposes all forms of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Where complaints may come from

Complaints may come from:

- Patients
- Carers
- Volunteers
- Trustees
- Grant givers
- Fundraisers
- Donors
- Researchers

- Medical professionals
- Medical Advisory Board
- Service providers
- Others associated organisations or agencies

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 board of trustees.

Nominated trustee - The nominated trustee is a trustee who has been nominated to receive and monitor complaints by a trustee board meeting and recorded in the minutes of this meeting. The nominated trustee should be agreed on an annual basis. In the event of a nominated trustee not being appointed the responsibility should lie with the Chair of the Trustees to delegate the responsibility when a complaint is received. The Chair of the Trustees should not be involved in resolving a complaint at this state

Procedure

Publicised contact details for complaints

Written complaints may be sent to GIST Cancer UK at Oak Tree House, Melksham Road, Lacock, Wiltshire SN15 2LW or by e-mail at admin@gistsupportuk.com.

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 0300 400 0000 or in person to any of GIST Cancer UK's volunteers or trustees at any of our events or activities.

Receiving complaints

The Charity is aware that dissatisfaction with the service may be presented in different ways such as in writing, over the phone or by e-mail. Trustees are to be alert to possible complaints however presented.

Any complaint coming to the charity from or via a volunteer will be passed immediately to an appropriate trustee.

All complaints received, including those received by e-mail, telephone, correspondence or in person need to be recorded. The person who receives the 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 GIST Cancer UK eg patient, medical professional *etc*

- 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

For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see [Appendix 1](#)

Resolving complaints

This procedure describes the informal and formal stage to be followed when a complainant indicates any dissatisfaction with the service provided.

Informal 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 nominated trustee.

On receiving the complaint, the nominated trustee records it in a complaints log. 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.

If a complaint cannot be resolved informally by the person receiving the complaint it should be acknowledged by the person receiving the complaint within a week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of the complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. 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.

Formal 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 at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of the Trustees.

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The person who receives Stage Two complaints may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitable person to do so. If appropriate they can involve appropriate experts eg Members of the Medical Advisory Board. This investigation may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

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

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

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. 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 Trustee 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 the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Formal Stage Two review.

Monitoring and learning from complaints

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

Appendix 1

Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation
eg "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal