



COMPLAINTS POLICY

Purpose of Policy

FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology) views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person who 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 FACT 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 FACT.

Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in FACT.

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

This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use FACT's Discipline and Grievance policies.

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.

Written complaints may be sent to:

FACT, 88 Wood Street, Liverpool, L1 4DQ or by email to feedback@fact.co.uk.

What information we will need from you

We will need:

- a clear, detailed description of what your complaint is about
- copies of any letters or emails related to the complaint
- your email address or postal address (so we can reply)

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 0151 707 4444 or in person to any of FACT's directors or staff at the same address.

Receiving Complaints

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

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
- 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 Visitor Services Manager within one week of receipt.

On receiving details of the complaint, the Visitor Services Manager will record it. If it has not already been resolved, he/she will delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, that person will be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints will be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within one week. The acknowledgement will say who is dealing with the complaint and when .

We aim to provide a full response to complaints within 20 working days. If we can't reply to you within this time, we will let you know and tell you when you can expect a reply.

A copy of this complaints procedure will be attached.

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 by the Senior Management Team. At this stage the complaint will be passed to a member of FACT's Senior Management Team, including the CEO if appropriate, to consider.

The request for review by the Senior Management Team will be acknowledged within one week and will say who will deal with the complaint and when the complainant can expect a reply.

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

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant will 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 Senior Management Team decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Trustees may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about a Director should not also have the Director as the person leading a Stage Two review.

Discontinuing Complaints

FACT will treat all complaints seriously and will deal with them without recrimination. Where a complaint is shown to be frivolous, vexatious or motivated by malice FACT reserves the right to terminate consideration of a complaint.

FACT may also terminate consideration of a complaint and/or restrict access to staff or procedures for complainants who seek, by pursuing an unreasonable course of conduct:

- To be, or are, disruptive; and/or
- Whose requests are disproportionate and/or unnecessary and/or cause disproportionate and/or repeated efforts by members of staff.

In the event a complaint is terminated the complainant will be notified of this decision in writing.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

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

Specific measures and/or changes to policies and procedures may be implemented following an individual complaint if this is deemed necessary.

Guidance for Staff 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
- 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 e.g “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

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