

# The Florence Nightingale Foundation

# Complaints Policy

1. **Introduction**

The Florence Nightingale Foundation is committed to providing a quality service and values feedback from people who come into contact with the organisation. The Foundation’s procedure on Handling of Complaints is designed to ensure that issues brought to its attention are listened to, noted, investigated and responded to within a reason timescale. The aim of the Florence Nightingale Foundation’s Complaints Policy is to ensure that all complaints are taken seriously and addressed so that goodwill is fully restored and that the reputation of the Foundation is upheld.

The Florence Nightingale Foundation (FNF) views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future and is an invaluable opportunity to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint. The Foundation actively encourages all issues and concerns to be raised at the earliest opportunity with a view to early resolution and without the need for formal complaints to be raised.

1. **Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are to:

* Provide a clear process through which stakeholders and those who come into contact with the FNF can raise issues and concerns with a view to early resolution
* Provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
* Publicise the existence of the complaints procedure so that people know how to contact the FNF to make a complaint
* Make sure everyone at the Florence Nightingale Foundation knows what to do if a complaint is received
* Make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
* Make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved
* Gather information which helps the FNF to improve what the Foundation does

1. **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about any aspect of the Florence Nightingale Foundation.

1. **Where Complaints Come From**

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in the Florence Nightingale Foundation. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff and Trustees, who should use The Florence Nightingale Foundation’s Grievance Policy. Staff should raise any issues raise any issues directly with their Line Manager and Trustees with the Chair in the first instance.

Complaints/allegations may be made by:

* A member of the public;
* A registrant with the Nursing and Midwifery Council;
* A professional organisation or trade union; or
* An organisation within the public or independent sectors.

1. **Confidentiality**

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

1. **Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Trustees and is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer.

1. **Complaints Procedure of the Florence Nightingale Foundation**

**7.1 Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:**

The process for complaints is published on the Foundation’s website. Written complaints may be sent to the Florence Nightingale Foundation at: Deans Mews, 11-13 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0AN or by email to [admin@florence-nightingale-foundation.org.uk](mailto:admin@florence-nightingale-foundation.org.uk).

This policy is to be available on the FNF website.

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 020 7730 3030 or in person to any of the Florence Nightingale Foundation’s staff or Trustees or at any events or activities.

**7.2 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 telephone 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 the Florence Nightingale Foundation
* Tell the complainant that the Foundation has 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.

**7.3 Resolving Complaints**

***Stage One***

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person to which the complaint has been made against and should aim to resolve it swiftly if appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the Chief Executive within 48 hours.

On receiving the complaint, the Chief Executive records it in the 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.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within 48 hours. 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 4 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.

The reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, an apology (where applicable) and any action taken as a result 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 at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair.

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within 48 hours of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chair 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 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 4 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.

The reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, an apology (where applicable) 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.

***External Stage***

* **Charity Commission**

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 at: [www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx)

* **Equality and Human Rights Commission**

The Foundation is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations and this is reflected in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy. When someone complains that they have been directly affected by the failure of the Foundation to comply with this statement, the Foundation will acknowledge receipt of this within two working days. The Foundation will then carry out an investigation of the complaint and respond substantively to the complainant within one month of the date of receiving the letter of complaint, or within two months in certain circumstances and if the complexity of the matter requires a longer investigation.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response or feels their complaint has not been resolved within a reasonable timescale, the complainant will be provided with information on how complaints of this nature are dealt with and the procedure for sending their complaint to the Equality and Human Rights Commission at: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/contact-us/equality-advisory-and-support-service>.

The Foundation will fully co-operate with any subsequent investigation by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, providing access to any relevant documentation which the Commission may require. Similarly, the Foundation will co-operate fully with any investigation by the Equality and Human Rights Commission governed by the Equality Act 2010.

1. **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 stage two review.

1. **Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

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

1. **Review**

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Last reviewed by Governance & Assurance Committee, December 2020

For review by December 2022