

**Complaints Policy of The Dulwich Society**  
**Charity Registration Number: 234192**

The Dulwich Society 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 involved in managing The Dulwich Society 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 maintained or 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 The Dulwich Society.

**Where Complaints Come From**

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in The Dulwich Society and should be put in writing as set out 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 trustees and the executive management committee.

**Review**

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on: 15<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Reviewed: January 2020

## **Complaints Procedure of The Dulwich Society**

### **Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:**

Complaints should be put in writing and sent to The Dulwich Society by e-mail to [chairman@dulwichsociety.com](mailto:chairman@dulwichsociety.com) or [secretary@dulwichsociety.com](mailto:secretary@dulwichsociety.com).

### **Receiving Complaints**

The Society will then acknowledge the complaint, inform the complainant that we have a complaints procedure and tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take.

### **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 Society's Secretary within one week to record it in the Society's complaints register.

If the complaint has not already been resolved, the Chairman or Secretary 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 a week. 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 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.

#### **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 Executive Committee/Trustee level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chairman.

The request for Executive Committee/Trustee level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case 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 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 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 Executive Committee/Trustees decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

### **External Stage**

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)

### **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 the Chairman should not also have the Chairman as the person leading a 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.

This policy will be published on the Society's web site [www.dulwichsociety.com](http://www.dulwichsociety.com)

The complaints register is available via the [secretary@dulwichsociety.com](mailto:secretary@dulwichsociety.com)