

## **Complaints Policy**

The British Toxicology Society (BTS) 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. If a complaint is to be made about a minor matter, wherever possible, it should be made informally, as soon as possible, to facilitate rapid resolution.

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 all directors of the BTS, and employees of the BTS administrative office, 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 the BTS. Informal comments about minor matters; such as seating arrangements in a lecture theatre, or the size or temperature of a meeting room at the Annual Congress, should be considered as “feedback” rather than invoking a complaints process.

### **Where Complaints Come From**

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

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 BTS Executive Committee.

## **Review**

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

## **Complaints Procedure of the BTS**

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

Written complaints may be sent to the BTS at

c/o Executive Business Support, City Wharf, Davidson Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire  
WS14 9DZ

Email: [bts@execbs.com](mailto:bts@execbs.com)

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to +44(0)1543 442158 or in person to any of the BTS Executive Committee, or at any of our events or activities.

### **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
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to XXXX, for example member or corporate member
- 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 BTS General Secretary within one week.

On receiving the complaint, BTS General Secretary 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. This will usually be the Chair of the appropriate sub-committee.

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 the BTS Executive Committee level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the BTS General Secretary. If the complaint concerns the General Secretary then it will be passed to the BTS President.

The request for Executive Committee 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 BTS General Secretary/President 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 Council 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 BTS Executive Committee may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the President should not also have the President as the person leading a Stage Two review.

## **Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

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

Reviewed February 2022

Date of Next Review February 2024

Contact for document: [secretariat@thebts.org](mailto:secretariat@thebts.org)