At NSUN we aim to deliver high standards in everything we do. We take all concerns and complaints seriously and welcome all feedback as this provides us with opportunities to improve and maintain the standards we strive to achieve. NSUN recognises a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standards of service, or an action or omission by a member of staff or volunteer.

We use this wide definition as it catches the broad spectrum of comments and complaints and brings them under one umbrella. It also reflects the fact that many people don’t know how to categorise their problem and are often uncomfortable calling it a ‘complaint’. Many people talk about ‘queries’ or ‘concerns’ which are likely to be minor complaints which can be quickly resolved or they might be misunderstandings that require further information. But they are still complaints under our definition.

If an expression of dissatisfaction or discontent cannot be resolved immediately then NSUN is will take follow-up action and provide a response as outlined in this policy.

We recognise that we sometimes get things wrong. Your feedback will help us to resolve mistakes faster and learn how we can do things better to improve what we do and how we do it.

Everyone has the right to make a complaint regarding their experiences of NSUN services and communications with any of our staff and will not be discriminated against because of it. All formal complaints made to NSUN are recorded and reported to senior management, who will regularly advise the Board of Trustees of changes or improvements NSUN may be taking as a result of complaints received.

Complaints procedures can:

- Empower members by instilling confidence in them and giving them more influence over NSUN and the way it operates
- Enable NSUN to show that it is focusing on members’ needs
• Help to promote NSUN well to the public by showing it is responsible and accountable
• Enable NSUN to demonstrate that it has an open, fair and honest approach
• Save time and effort by enabling problems or concerns to be tackled early
• Minimise the adverse effects of things that go wrong and reduce the chances of problems escalating
• Reduce the potential of future complaints
• Provide valuable information on NSUN services
• Help to measure the quality of NSUN services and give trustees and staff an opportunity to monitor and improve them
• Help find ways of being more responsive to unmet needs
• Enhance NSUN’s reputation by helping communication, showing a considerate approach
• Help to foster a good reputation and confirm NSUN’s commitment to excellence

The Complaints Procedure applies to the following:

• Members of NSUN
• Volunteers of NSUN
• Stakeholders and partners
• NSUN funders
• Members of the public/any person who has any contact with NSUN

Who can make a complaint:

• Any person who has any contact with NSUN’s services may use the complaints procedure.
• The complaint may be made directly or by a third person representing the interests of the person.
• Complaints could come from NSUN members, from members of their family, from advocates or representatives, from professional workers in other agencies, or from a member of the public.

The key principles of this procedure are:

• To treat people with dignity and respect
• To listen and seek to empower people by resolving complaints at the earliest point in the process
• To ensure the right to complain without victimisation, objectivity, fairness and openness, resolution of conflict and moving forward

The key purposes of this procedure are:

• To improve the quality of the service
• To identify weaknesses and shortfalls
• To take remedial action where appropriate
Examples of complaints:

- Failure to provide a service at the right time or to the expected standard
- Neglect or delay in answering a query or responding to a request for a service
- Failure to follow NSUN’s agreed policy, rules or procedures
- Failure to take proper account of relevant matters in coming to a decision
- Discourteous conduct by a member of staff; harassment, bias or discrimination

How to make a complaint

If you find cause to complain with any aspect of our organisation please tell us by whatever means is most convenient e.g. telephone, letter, email, face to face or via the contacts page on our website http://www.nsun.org.uk/contact-us/.

Contact the Managing Director
NSUN
27-29 Vauxhall Grove
Vauxhall, London
SW8 1SY

020 7820 8982
info@nsun.org.uk

If you need help in making your complaint this can be provided by NSUN – or you may choose someone to assist you.

What information we 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)

Further help with making your complaint

You can make your complaint using your preferred method and format of communication. NSUN will also arrange appropriate support, translation or interpretation services to ensure equal access to this procedure for all. You may seek support from a relative, friend or advocate. NSUN staff should be aware and able to assist you to locate a local advocacy service should you need this assistance in order to make your complaint.

Complaints will be dealt with in a confidential manner

Your complaint will be confidential and information about the complaint will usually only be shared with those who need to know in order to help resolve it. Occasionally, if the complaint is very serious, such as if it involved harm to yourself or to others, other people might have to be involved. This would be discussed with you at the time. We will handle all information in line with the Data Protection Act.
What happens next

Stage 1: We aim to respond to all complaints. In the first instance a complaint can be made to any NSUN employee. That employee will either write down the details of the complaint if the complaint is being made verbally and forward it to the Managing Director, any written complaints will be forwarded in the same manner.

We will send you a letter acknowledging receipt of your complaint within five working days of receiving it, enclosing a copy of this procedure. We will tell you who will be dealing with the matter and when you can expect a full response. Whether the complaint is justified or not, you should receive a definitive reply that describes the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint after twenty working days. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a reply will be given. If the problem remains unresolved then the formal complaints procedure is implemented.

Stage 2: At this stage the complaint will be directed to the Managing Director and the NSUN Board representative. If the complaint is concerning the Managing Director then it will be directed to the NSUN Chair. You will receive acknowledgement within five working days. We will tell you who will be dealing with the case and when you can expect a full response. A meeting will be convened between you (and your representative if necessary) and an appointed employee who has not been involved with the complaint. This will take place within 14 working days of the matter being referred to stage two.

Following discussions with all relevant parties, the appointed employee looking into the complaint will prepare a written statement of their findings and any recommendations. Following investigation a written response and a copy of the statement will be given to you within twenty working days. Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the response to you 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 Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

Stage 3: If you are still dissatisfied with the handling of the complaint then it will be reviewed by a Panel of two Trustees and the Managing Director (if appropriate). Acknowledgement of the Panel review request will be sent within five working days. The Complaints Panel will investigate the complaint and issue a decision in writing within twenty-eight working days.

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.

Monitoring and Learning from Complaints
Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.
Putting things right

If your complaint is found by us to be justified we will: issue you with a full written apology; take action, where appropriate, to put right what went wrong; try to prevent any similar problems happening in the future.

External Stage: What to do if you’re not satisfied

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your formal complaint you can find out how to complain about a charity, a decision we've made or a service we've provided.

See more at:

How to complain
http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/how-to-complain/

Guidance for the general public

Complaints about charities (CC47)
http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx
You're unhappy and want to make a complaint. Can this be resolved informally by the member of staff receiving the complaint or the Managing Director? If not, acknowledgement of complaint sent within FIVE WORKING DAYS. Written response following informal investigation sent within TWENTY WORKING DAYS.

Formal complaints procedure starts. Complaint directed to the Managing Director and/or NSUN Chair, written acknowledgement sent within FIVE WORKING DAYS. Meeting arranged within FOURTEEN WORKING DAYS.

Complaint investigated and a written response provided within TWENTY WORKING DAYS.

Acknowledgement of Panel review sent within FIVE WORKING DAYS.

Complaints Panel investigates and issues a decision in writing within TWENTY-EIGHT WORKING DAYS.

Contact the Charity Commission.