

Architects Benevolent Society

Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy statement

Architects Benevolent Society (ABS) aims to provide high quality, equitable and needs-led support to our beneficiaries. We welcome every opportunity to monitor and improve our service, which includes taking account of the views of those we are here to support. The aim of this policy is to outline how people can provide feedback and to ensure that any complaints received are dealt with in a fair way and to the satisfaction of the complainant wherever possible.

Complimenting our service

Compliments are welcome and important and when they are received, either verbally or in writing, and they will be recorded. Compliments enable ABS to:

- understand that our service is being provided to beneficiaries' satisfaction and expectation
- provide positive feedback to our staff
- influence our organisational and service development

Making a complaint about our service

ABS recognises that there will be times when our trustees, staff and volunteers make mistakes, or get things wrong. In order to learn from such mistakes, we need to know about them and encourage people to comment or complain. Such comments or complaints will always be taken seriously, recorded and responded to as detailed in the procedure for resolving complaints below. The monitoring of complaints allows us to learn lessons so that any appropriate improvements to our service can be implemented.

Types of complaint covered

- The standard of service we provide
- The behaviour of our people delivering that service
- The charity's policy, communications, resources, or decisions about that service

Types of complaint not covered

- Disputes between the charity/its volunteers/its staff (which must follow our internal Grievance Procedures)
- Complaints which we have already dealt with via this Policy

- Anonymous complaints – we cannot reply to such complaints but will consider if action is needed
- Complaints by third parties, unless they are acting as an advocate for you with your consent
- Complaints which are vexatious, malicious or abusive

Where at all possible, complaints will be dealt with informally in the first instance. Most complaints can be resolved in this way, avoiding the need for more formal investigation, which could lead to extended timeframes and complexity.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

By using our Complaints Procedure, you acknowledge that we have a legitimate interest in using your personal data for the purpose of dealing with your complaint (further information can be found in our Privacy Policy).

We will endeavour to treat information related to the complaint as confidential. However, in some cases the law will oblige us to refer matters to the Police, or to a Regulator etc.

Procedure for resolving complaints

Who Can Use This Procedure?

This procedure is for anyone who comes into contact with trustees, staff and volunteers from ABS. You may have the assistance of a friend or someone else to help you with any or all of the stages of this Complaints Procedure if needed. If you wish to follow this procedure and complain about an aspect of our service, this will not affect any services you receive, or wish to receive, from ABS.

Informal Complaints Procedure

We hope that the majority of complaints can be resolved informally by speaking directly to the person or persons involved. It is often the quickest and most efficient route to resolving a complaint. In order to pursue an informal resolution, the complaint should be referred to our Operations Manager at katie.vivian@absnet.org.uk or on 020 7580 2823.

Formal Complaints Procedure

If a complaint cannot be resolved informally then you should make a formal written complaint to our Operations Manager by email to katie.vivian@absnet.org.uk or by post to

Katie Vivian
Architects Benevolent Society
6 Brewery Square
Copper Row
London SE1 2LF

If your complaint relates to the Chief Executive, please write to the ABS Chair, Architects Benevolent Society, 6 Brewery Square, Copper Row, London SE1 2LF.

Please mark all written complaints as 'Private & Confidential'.

Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within five working days.

Once the complaint has been acknowledged, it will be investigated by discussion with all involved and a written response provided to you within 20 working days.

If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, please let us know and it will be referred to the designated member of the Board for review, and you will receive a written response within 10 working days.

