

BBS UK Complaints Policy & Procedure

BBS UK/BBS UK Clinics Ltd Complaints Officer: Laura Dowswell - laura.dowswell@bbsuk.org.uk

Bardet-Biedl Syndrome UK (BBS UK) and BBS UK Clinics Ltd aim to provide the best possible advice, support and services to people affected by Bardet-Biedl Syndrome (BBS) and exists to serve people affected by BBS and to be accountable to its trustees, directors, funders, Charity Commission and partners.

From time to time an individual or organisation may feel it has not had the best possible service that BBS UK/BBS UK Clinics Ltd aim to provide. In such instances it is important that if a complaint is made, the circumstances are investigated and necessary corrective action undertaken within reasonable time limits.

It is in everyone's best interests to communicate well with one another and to ensure that any concerns and complaints are dealt with as quickly and appropriately as possible. In addition, concerns and complaints brought to our attention can be an opportunity to inform, review and help improve procedures.

Key principles of the policy are:

- Accessibility – useable format, free from jargon, assuming no specialist knowledge
- Good communication – clarification of the process involved in dealing with complaints
- Clear and adhered to recommended timescales (where appropriate)
- Clarity over roles and responsibilities of those involved in the process
- Appropriate confidentiality which must be maintained by all involved in the process (including any employees, administrative staff and trustees or directors)
- Investigations should be: proportionate to the seriousness of the complaint and the outcome sought; not use more resources than the outcome the complainant seeks.

Monitoring and recording complaints

At all stages of the complaints procedure the following information should be recorded:

- Name of the complainant
- Date and time at which complaint was made
- Details of the nature of the complaint
- Desired outcome of the complainant
- How the complaint is being investigated (including written records of any interviews held)
- Results and conclusions of investigations
- Any action taken
- The complainant's response
- Record of any subsequent action if required

Trustees and directors should appropriately monitor the general nature of complaints over each year to inform practice and potential improvements to procedures and policies within the charity/company.

Upholding or not upholding complaints

At each stage of the complaints procedure the conclusion will be either:

- That the complaint is upheld (in part or full) and where appropriate some form of action is taken OR
- That the complaint is not upheld and reason(s) for this, where appropriate, are clearly given

In the first instance of receiving a complaint it may be appropriate to resolve the issue by offering to the complainant one or more of the following:

- An emphatic response
- An explanation of events
- A recognition that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to endeavour that it will not happen again. However, this must not include any information or detailed action taken involving a member of staff
- An undertaking to review policies in light of the findings of the complaint

The complainant may choose to take no further action or take their complaint to the next stage.

Complaints made against members of staff or volunteers

If the complainant raises concerns or issues regarding a member of staff it might be appropriate during the conciliation stage of the complaint process for a senior member of staff or the complaints officer to discuss this with the employee, informally in the first instance to establish the facts surrounding the nature of the complaint. This may require a more detailed approach during the formal stages of the complaint process such as a written report from the employee or evidence of communication between the employee and complainant.

Any information shared with an employee about the complaint should be carefully considered to ensure the integrity of the nature of the complaint and complainant is maintained and remains confidential.

The Stages of the Complaints Process

Stage 1 (also known as the Conciliation Stage)

1.1 The complainant raises and discusses their concerns/issues with the staff member. Most concerns can be resolved satisfactorily at this stage. However, the staff member may feel it more appropriate to refer the complainant to a more senior or experienced member of staff who will try to resolve the concern informally.

Stage 2

2.1 If the complainant remains unhappy, they should then contact the Service Manager by putting their concerns in writing. The Service Manager (or their nominated representative) will then investigate the concerns and respond within agreed timescales. An acknowledgement will be made of the concern/complaint within five working days. The Service Manager will respond to the issues raised within 15 working days of receiving the complaint. If it is not possible to meet these timescales, then the Service Manager will contact the complainant to discuss reviewing these.

2.2 If the concern or complaint is against the Service Manager, in the first instance the complainant will need to write in confidence to the nominated Complaints Officer. The Complaint Officer will seek to resolve the issue informally before, if necessary, moving to Stage 3.

Stage 3 (also known as the Formal Stage)

3.1 Any complaint should be communicated in writing to the nominated Complaints Officer.

3.2 The Complaints Officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint, in writing (identifying the complaint), within five working days.

3.3 The Complaints Officer shall investigate all circumstances leading to the complaint.

3.4 The Complaints Officer shall inform the complainant of the result of the investigation, and any corrective action taken. This will be completed within twenty-one days unless circumstances prolong the investigation, in which case an interim report will be made to the complainant and a new time-scale set.

Stage 4

4.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the results of the enquiry and/or corrective action taken, they have a right to put their case (in person if they wish) to the Chair of BBS UK/BBS UK Clinics Ltd.

4.2 The Chair shall undertake any further enquiries and report the decision to the complainant within thirty days.

Stage 5

5.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Chair, they have a right to put their case to an Appeal Sub Committee made up of at least three members of the BBS UK Board of Trustees or BBS UK Clinics Ltd Board of Directors.

5.2 The Appeal Sub Committee should undertake an investigation of the complaint and produce

recommendations for the Governing Board.

5.3 The Governing Board will take a final decision on the complaint.

Any complaint dealt with via the formal stages of the procedure and positive feedback to BBS UK/BBS UK Clinics Ltd will be fully recorded and a report will be made of occurrences and presented annually at the February Board of Trustee meeting.

This Complaints Policy and the Complaints Officer will be clearly advertised on the BBS UK website.

Signed Off/Reviewed By:	Date:	Comments:
Board: RF, DH, LD, JA	03/06/2019	Amended Policy
Next Review:	May 2020	