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## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE DOCUMENT CONTROL

**SOP Number**                      **G002 – Customer Complaints Policy & Procedure**  
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### VERSION HISTORY

Previous version	Significant changes from previous version	Author	Date

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## Customer Complaints Policy and Procedure

### 1. Complaints Policy Statement

Tall Ships Youth Trust ("TSYT"):-

- is committed to providing a good quality service to its service users and supporters.
- will take seriously any concern or complaint and will look into it promptly, for resolution as quickly as possible
- recognises that all customers, users and organisations have the right to raise complaints and will have access to clear information as to how to voice complaints and concerns
- will deal with complaints in line with the TSYT confidentiality policy and in line with all relevant Data Protection guidelines
- will keep a register of all complaints, which will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Trustees of TSYT
- complaints procedure will be part of the process of monitoring the quality, effectiveness and non-discriminatory nature of its services offered to customers /clients
- All employees, volunteers and board of trustees members are required to read, understand and comply with this policy and its procedures.

### 2. Introduction

2.1. TSYT strives for high standards in what it provides and welcomes feedback from individuals, users, stakeholders, funders and anyone who works with them, on all aspects of its services. Such feedback is invaluable in assisting to evaluate and improve its work

2.2. The objectives of TSYT complaints policy and procedures are to:-

- Ensure everyone knows how to make a complaint and how a complaint will be handled
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively with clear timeframes
- Provide individuals with a fair and effective way to make a
- Complaint

- Ensure that complaints are monitored to improve the service

2.3. TSYT will ensure that it:-

- listens carefully to complaints and treats complaints as confidential, where possible
- records, stores and manages all complaints accurately and in accordance with Data Protection legislation
- investigates any complaint fully, objectively and within the stated time frame
- notifies the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal
- informs the complainant of any action that will be implemented in order to ensure that there is no re-occurrence
- reports on an annual basis, the number of complaints received, the outcomes and any actions taken

### **3. Definition of a complaint**

3.1. A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by an individual, whether justified or not.

3.2. An individual may make a complaint if they feel the charity has -

- failed to provide service to an acceptable standard or made an error in the way a service was performed
- failed to act in a proper way

### **4. Concern or complaint**

4.1. It is important to establish the difference between a concern or a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the likelihood of them developing into formal complaints

4.2. Any concerns should be reported to an appropriate representative of the charity as soon as possible, so that the individual's concerns can be understood and endeavoured to be put right

4.3. if you are not happy with the response /action in relation to your concern and you wish to make a formal complaint please follow the procedure as stated below

## 5. Complaints Procedure

5.1. TSYT aims to settle the majority of complaints quickly and satisfactorily. The complaint may be resolved quickly by way of an apology or by an acceptable explanation to the individual.

5.2. There are three stages to the complaints procedure:-

- Stage One – the complaint
- Stage Two- investigation
- Stage Three- appeal

## 6. Stage One – Complaint

6.1. The complaint can be written or if the individual prefers they can advise a representative of TSYT or someone else, who can write it down for them. The complainant will need to sign the written complaint. (**COMPLAINT FORM AS ANNEX A**)

6.2. Individuals wishing to make a complaint should contact: Customer Services Tall Ships Youth Trust, 2A The Hard, Portsmouth, Hants, PO1 3PT or email [Info@tallships.org](mailto:Info@tallships.org)

6.3. The complaint should include the complainant's name and address, the nature and date of the complaint and how they would like to see it resolved .The complaints form can be requested and can be sent to the complainant or collected by the complainant or can be handed to the complainant.

6.4. On receipt, each complaint will be allocated a reference number and logged on the complaints register. Complaints must receive an acknowledgment within 3 working days of receipt of a signed complaint.

## 7. Stage Two – Investigation

7.1. All complaints at this stage should be dealt with by a manager. If they need to meet with the complainant, they will do so within 7 working days of receiving the written complaint.

7.2. Complaints will be fully investigated, and a written response provided to the complainant within 10 working days by the individual who carries out the investigation.

7.3. The complainant will receive written confirmation of the outcome of any investigation, any recommendations made or remedies to be effected such as reviewing of policies, staff development and training or appropriate improvement to services

7.4. Where the complaint is upheld an apology should be offered.

- 7.5. Occasionally investigations may take longer, particularly if the complaint is complex. Should this be the case a holding letter will be sent after 10 working days and a final date given for a conclusion to be reached.
- 7.6. If an individual remains dissatisfied with the outcome from Stage Two they can appeal within 15 working days of the date of the outcome and progress to Stage Three.
- 7.7. The complaints register will then be updated, and any pending complaints flagged in order that they are followed up.

## **8. Stage Three – Appeal**

- 8.1. If the complaint cannot be resolved to the complainants satisfaction at Stage Two , or if the manager feels that the complaint is of a very serious nature , or concerns a leader ( i.e. head of a crew) then it will be referred to the Chief Executive
  - 8.2. If the complaint is about the Chief Executive then the matter will be discussed by two trustees.
  - 8.3. The Chief Executive and/or trustees will acknowledge receipt within 3 working days , they will review the Stage Two investigation and recommend one of the following actions within 10 working days ( being from the date the complainant stated that they wished to take the complaint to Stage Three ):-
    - Uphold the action taken at Stage Two
    - Make changes to the Stage Two recommendations.
  - 8.4. The complainant should be informed in writing of the outcome of Stage Three. The decision reached about the complaint will be final but other options available to the complainant (as listed below) should be detailed in the letter.
  - 8.5. If after TSYT has been through the three stages and the complainant is still not satisfied with the result , they should be advised that there is no further right of appeal with TSYT but they could approach the following for advice:-
    - A solicitor
    - Citizens Advice Bureau
    - Royal Yachting Association
    - The Association of Sail Training Organisations (ASTO)
- This should be done within one month of receiving the outcome from the appeal.

## 9. Anonymous complaints

- 9.1. Complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered, but any action may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation

## 10. Data Protection

- 10.1. To process a complaint TSYT will hold personal data about the complainant, which the individual provides, and which other people give in response to the complaint. TSYT will hold this data securely and will only use it to address the complaint. The identity of the person making the complaint will only be known to those who need to consider the complaint and will not be revealed to other people or made public. However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example, where relevant legislation is applied or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties.
- 10.2. TSYT will normally destroy complaints files in a secure manner 6 years after the complaint has been closed

## 11. Monitoring

- 11.1. Complaints are an important tool which alongside any other information acquired will allow TSYT to learn about the services it provides. They provide a useful source of information about how individuals perceive the services and how individuals are being served. To ensure TSYT can learn from complaints the following data will be collected:-
- Name and address
  - Name of person dealing with the complaint
  - Date of the complaint and response
  - Nature of the complaint
  - Action(s) taken /recommendations made in response to the complaint
  - Lessons learnt.
- 11.2. Complaints information will be considered on a regular basis by the management team and reported annually to the TSYT board of trustees.
- 11.3. Wherever possible the data collected will be used to improve and develop service offered by the charity.