



Ileostomy & Internal Pouch
Association

Registered Charity

Complaints Policy

Date agreed by Board of Trustees	Signature of Chair of Trustees	Date of next review:
15 February 2020		



Table of Contents

1.	Introduction.....	2
2.	Aim.....	2
3.	Associated policies.....	2
4.	Scope	2
5.	Who can make a complaint?	3
6.	The difference between a concern and a complaint	3
7.	How to raise a concern or make a complaint.....	3
8.	Formal complaints procedure	4
9.	Anonymous complaints	6
10.	Time scales	6
11.	Complaints received during holiday periods	6
12.	Withdrawal of a Complaint	6
13.	Resolving complaints.....	6
	APPENDIX 1 - Complaint Form	7



1. Introduction

The Ileostomy & Internal Pouch Association (IA) is committed to providing a quality service for its members and working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all our stakeholders. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our members and stakeholders, and in particular by responding positively to complaints and concerns, and by putting mistakes right.

2. Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the complaints process is clear, flexible and responsive to the needs of individual complainants.

3. Associated policies

This policy should be read alongside the following policies, all of which are available on IA's website and in hard copy format from National Office:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

4. Scope

This policy covers all complaints about any provision of services by IA, other than complaints that are dealt with under other statutory procedures, including those listed below.

Exceptions	Relevant Procedure
Safeguarding	Complaints about safeguarding matters are handled under our Safeguarding Policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.
Whistleblowing	Complaints from staff (including temporary staff and contractors) and volunteers relating to workplace wrongdoing which it is in the public interest to raise will be dealt with under our Whistleblowing Policy.
Staff grievances	Complaints from staff (including temporary staff and contractors) relating to personal matters will be dealt with under our internal grievance procedures, as detailed in the Staff Handbook.
Staff conduct	Complaints about staff will be dealt with under our internal disciplinary procedures, as detailed in the Staff Handbook. Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint but will be notified that the matter is being addressed.



If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against IA in relation to their complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to their complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

5. Who can make a complaint?

This complaints policy is not limited to members. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to IA about the behaviours of and/or services provided by staff, trustees, volunteers and representatives of our local branches and affiliate groups.

6. The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as ‘an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought’.

A complaint may be defined as ‘an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action’.

It is in everyone’s interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. IA takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, IA will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this policy.

7. How to raise a concern or make a complaint

For ease of use, a template complaint form is attached to this procedure under Appendix 1. If you require help in completing the form, you can ask IA’s Compliance & Governance Officer or a third party organisation (such as the Citizens Advice Bureau) to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.



8. Formal complaints procedure

If your concern is not resolved at the informal stage you may choose to make a complaint in writing to the National Office. Complainants should not approach individual trustees to raise concerns or complaints. Trustees have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure.

Complaints may be made by a third party acting on behalf on a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

Stage 1

Formal complaints must be made to the CEO (unless they are about the CEO or trustees), via the National Office. This may be done in person, in writing (preferably using the appended Complaint Form), or by telephone. Please mark written complaints as Private and Confidential.

The CEO will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 working days.

The CEO will decide how to proceed with the investigation and may choose to delegate responsibility for communication and investigation to an appropriate member of staff.

During the investigation, the investigator will:

- share the nature and details of the complaint with the person/s complained of, to allow them a fair chance to respond
- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish
- keep a written record of any meetings, interviews and correspondence in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the CEO will liaise with the investigator to provide a response within 20 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint. If this is not possible, the Compliance & Governance Officer will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions IA will take to resolve the complaint.

The complainant will be advised of how to escalate their complaint should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1.

Complaints that involve or are about the CEO should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees, via the National Office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.

Complaints about the Chair of Trustees, any individual trustee or the whole Board of Trustees should be addressed to the Compliance & Governance Officer via the National Office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential.



If the complaint is about the CEO or a member of the Board of Trustees (including the Chair or Vice-Chair), a suitably skilled trustee will be appointed to complete all of the actions at Stage 1.

Stage 2

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and wishes to take the matter further, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2 where their complaint will be referred to the Board of Trustees. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure. The Board of Trustees will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint to be included. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Compliance & Governance Officer, via National Office, within 5 working days of receipt of the Stage 1 response. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply. The Compliance & Governance Officer will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within 5 working days.

Consideration of a Stage 2 complaint will involve a quorum of the Board of Trustees with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Should the Board of Trustees consider that further information is required from the complainant, the complainant may be requested to provide a written submission or to attend a Stage 2 meeting with representatives from the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees will aim to consider the Stage 2 complaint and provide a written response within 20 working days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the Compliance & Governance Officer will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

The Board of Trustees will consider the complaint and all of the evidence presented. They may elect to:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.
- If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the Board of Trustees will:
 - decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
 - where appropriate, recommend changes to IA's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Chair of Trustees will provide the complainant and respective local branch/affiliate group/staff member (as appropriate) with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 10 working days of the Board of Trustees' decision. The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the respective local branch/affiliate group/staff member (as appropriate) will take to resolve the complaint.



9. Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the CEO will determine whether any such complaint warrants an investigation.

10. Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

11. Complaints received during holiday periods

We will consider complaints made outside of working periods (for example during a seasonal holiday) to have been received on the first working day after the holiday period.

12. Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

13. Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, we will endeavour to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review IA's policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.



APPENDIX 1 - Complaint Form

Please complete and return to IA National Office marked for the attention of either the CEO, Chair of Trustees or Compliance & Governance Officer (as appropriate), who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Your telephone number:
Your email address:
Complainant's name (if different):
Complainant's telephone number:
Complainant's email address:
Your relationship to the complainant (if applicable):
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken about it to anybody at your local branch/affiliate group or National Office:



What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details:

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By whom:

Complaint referred to:

Date: