

Policy	Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy
Date of last Board review	September 2024
Next review date	September 2027
Approved and authorised by	Chief Executive

The Talent Foundry Trust values in action

The Talent Foundry's (TTF) values are ambition, inquisitiveness and inclusion and equity, but we realise that sometimes we get things wrong and that not everyone will agree with what we do.

We welcome and value feedback as this enables us to improve what we do and how. Any compliments, comments and complaints help us continue to strive for excellence and help ensure that all our activities, programmes and opportunities are the very best that they can be.

Complimenting us

Compliments are valuable and important in our ongoing quality assurance of all our activities. When compliments are received, we will record these and pass them to the relevant member of our team where possible. Receiving compliments enables us to:

- understand from our supporters and stakeholders what we do well and the positive difference this makes to the young people we work with
- provide positive feedback to our team and corporate partners
- influence the continued development of our work.

Commenting on our people or our work

It is always helpful to hear what people think about us, what we do and how we do it.

Suggestions for 'what works well' or 'even better if' are welcome because they:

- help to influence the organisational decisions we may make
- help us maintain the high standards of our activities
- raise issues of real importance and can lead to change for the better.

Wherever we can, we will record and report, internally and externally if required, on comments we receive.

Whilst we endeavour to acknowledge all compliments and comments wherever possible, this may not always be practicable, but any feedback is always appreciated.

Complaining about our people or our work

We recognise that there will be times when our trustees, staff and volunteers or third parties working on our behalf make mistakes or get things wrong. Where this happens and where we receive a complaint, we will always take this seriously, record and report on it internally and externally if required, and deal with it in a timely manner.

We will always take steps to maintain the confidentiality of your personal information. We will only disclose it to people who need to look into your complaint, and, rarely, to others where we are legally permitted to do so.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at TTF knows what to do if a complaint is received

- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of TTF.

Complaints may come from:

- Clients and partners
- Beneficiaries (teachers, students)
- Volunteers
- Donors
- Other parties who come into contact with TTF or its programmes, e.g. those in the proximity of an event TTF is running.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

This policy does not cover complaints from employees (this is covered in policies in the employment handbook).

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the board of trustees and the senior management team of TTF.

Complaints Procedure

Contact details for Compliments, Comments & Complaints:

Written complaints may be sent to The Talent Foundry to info@talentfoundry.org.uk

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to the Chief Executive on 020 7148 0934 or in person to any of TTF's staff, contractors, associates, volunteers or trustees at our events or activities.

Receiving complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded.

The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to TTF (for example: teacher at a school, member of staff at the corporate partner)
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see **Appendix 1**

Resolving Complaints

Stage One

- In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.
- Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the CEO within one week. Should the complaint involve that person directly, it should be sent to the Chair of Trustees.
- On receiving the complaint, the nominated TTF representative records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.
- If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.
- Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within a week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.
- Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
- Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two

- If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of Trustees.
- The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within a week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.
- The Chair may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.
- If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.
- The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.
- Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.
- Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should 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.

External Stage

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage, or for fundraising complaints, the Fundraising Regulator.

Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: www.charitycommission.gov.uk

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.

Appendix 1 - Practical guidance for handling verbal complaints

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation e.g. "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of TTF, then apologise
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal