

**The Federation of Writers – Scotland  
Policies & Procedures  
2024**

**Subject:**

**Feedback, complaints and organisational learning**

**Purpose:**

To provide opportunity and a framework for

- a. feedback to be provided to the organisation between formal consultation periods,
- b. complaints to be made in a safe environment with, and in, confidence,
- c. the organisation to receive, handle and act to resolve issues raised, and
- d. the organisation to learn continually through these processes.

**Context:**

As a volunteer-based organisation, we know that other views exist about the work we do, that sometimes issues or experiences may give rise to a dis-satisfaction expressed through a complaint and that the way we respond to these instances should be characterised by fairness, impartiality, respect and a determination to learn from our experiences.

**Contents:**

Part 1: Giving Feedback

Part 2: Making a Complaint

Part 3: How the organisation learns from Feedback and Complaints

**Part 1: Giving Feedback:**

*General comments* can be provided through membership of Facebook and Social Media accounts subject to following the etiquette and behaviour requirements. All entries are monitored and reviewed and ‘feedback’ or suggestions are noted and reported into the organisation.

The Federation also supports a Voluntary Advisory Panel comprising a cross-section of members. The panel provides an opportunity for the Board to actively invite feedback to help inform planning and reviews.

*Specific feedback* to which you would like a response can be addressed directly to [contact@federationofwriters.scot](mailto:contact@federationofwriters.scot)

We understand *feedback* as something different to simply asking a question or seeking information or a clarification.

## **Part 2: Making a Complaint:**

If you have an issue or issues which you feel can only be addressed through a complaint procedure, please be assured that you will be treated with respect and your concerns will be addressed with sensitivity, fairness and transparency.

Procedures give everybody clarity about how matters should proceed and are intended to give confidence and reassurance to a complainant and to those charged with the responsibility of responding to them on behalf of the organisation.

We have a three-stage procedure which provides a framework within which we will use our best endeavours to resolve issues raised.

Here is the procedure to follow.

### **Stage 1 Seeking *informal* resolution**

There is an expectation that all complaints start here unless, in the shared judgment of the complainant and the organisation, it relates to a particularly serious matter in which case it would commence at Stage 2 or be subject to immediate referral to an external agency if required by law.

At this stage:

- a. Please email a summary of your concerns with a request for contact from the organisation for an informal discussion in the first instance to [contact@federationofwriters.scot](mailto:contact@federationofwriters.scot) To maintain confidentiality, please remember to avoid naming individuals including personal information other than your name and contact details.
- b. A person nominated by the organisation will contact you and arrange for an informal discussion to take place via telephone, Zoom or in person which ever you prefer. Please advise this person of any accessibility requirements at this stage.
- c. Following your discussion with the nominated person they will investigate the matters you have raised and may come back to you for clarifications or further formation to enable them to work towards a resolution.
- d. The nominated person will provide you with their response to your complaint in a further meeting or in writing, if you request it, or both.
- e. We aim to
  - (i) acknowledge your initial request within 3 working days
  - (ii) contact you arrange a suitable meeting within 10 working days
  - (iii) provide a response within 10 working days following your meeting.
- f. Any of these timings may be extended by mutual agreement to take account of circumstances.
- g. We will keep a record of your complaint, our actions and the outcome for monitoring and assurance purposes. These records will be kept in accordance with Data Protection and GDPR requirements. There is a separate policy relating to Data Protection.

- h. If, at the conclusion of this stage, you are not content with the outcome, you may request, by email to [contact@federationofwriters.scot](mailto:contact@federationofwriters.scot) that the matter proceeds to Stage 2 of our procedure.

## **Stage 2 Seeking formal resolution**

This stage allows for a review of a complaint made at Stage 1 and relies on the facts and evidence provided at that stage. New or additional elements of an initial complaint are not permitted.

At this stage:

- a. You will be invited by a nominated person to meet with them to clarify your dissatisfaction with the resolution proposed at Stage 1. This nominated person will not be the same person who dealt with your complaint at Stage 1.
- b. The Stage 2 nominated person will also talk with whoever dealt with your complaint at stage 1 and will be able to view any records or other evidence available as well as the proposed resolution made at that stage.
- c. The Stage 2 nominated person will
  - i. Assess whether all pertinent information was taken into account at Stage 1 and
  - ii. Assess whether the proposed resolution represented a reasonable response to the complaint.
  - iii. Where they adjudge it appropriate, the Stage 2 nominated person may vary the proposed resolution from Stage 1 and, if they do so, will provide an explanation for their decision citing all or any of fairness, reasonableness, accuracy or process.
  - iv. The outcome of the decision will be conveyed in writing to the complainant.
  - v. We aim to
    - a) acknowledge your initial request within 3 working days
    - b) contact you arrange a suitable meeting within 10 working days
    - c) provide a response within 10 working days following your meeting.
- d. Any of these timings may be extended by mutual agreement to take account of circumstances.
- e. We will keep a record of your complaint, our actions and the outcome for monitoring and assurance purposes. These records will be kept in accordance with Data Protection and GDPR requirements. There is a separate policy relating to Data Protection.
- f. If, at the conclusion of this stage, you are not content either with the process or the outcome, you may request, by email to [contact@federationofwriters.scot](mailto:contact@federationofwriters.scot) that the matter proceeds to the Appeal stage of our procedure.

### **Stage 3 Seeking Appeal**

This stage provides an opportunity for a *review of the process by which the final Stage 2 proposed resolution of a complaint was reached*. This is to ensure to be that it has been consistent with our procedures, accurate and fair in its assessment of the facts and reasonable in the terms of the proposed resolution.

This stage is *not a re-investigation of the complaint* but provides an opportunity for all sides to be satisfied as to the integrity of the procedures undertaken at Stage 1 and Stage 2.

All communications for a Stage 3 Appeal will be in writing and you are requested to advise the organisation of any support you may require to accomplish this.

#### **At this stage:**

- a. You will be invited by the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or their nominated representative, to write to them to clarify the basis of your dissatisfaction with the resolution proposed at Stage 2.
- b. The Chair of the Board of Trustees, or their nominated representative, may request additional information or clarifications from you and from others involved in the procedures at Stage 1 and Stage 2 and will be able to view any records relating to the complaint.
- c. Where they adjudge it appropriate, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or their nominated representative, may vary the proposed resolution and, if they do so, will provide an explanation for their decision citing all or any of fairness, reasonableness, accuracy or process.
- d. The outcome of the Appeal will be conveyed in writing to the complainant stating the grounds for the decision and will constitute The Federation's final position on the matter.
- e. We aim to
  - i. acknowledge your initial request within 3 working days
  - ii. contact you arrange a suitable meeting within 10 working days
  - iii. provide a response within 10 working days following your meeting.
- f. Any of these timings may be extended by mutual agreement to take account of circumstances.
- g. We will keep a record of your complaint, our actions and the outcome for monitoring and assurance purposes. These records will be kept in accordance with Data Protection and GDPR requirements. There is a separate policy relating to Data Protection.

All responsibilities exercised under these procedures are done so with delegated authority from the Federation board.

### **Part 3 Organisational Learning**

Reviewing feedback and the experience of responding to complaints provide opportunities for the organisation to learn and improve.

Individual learning points are noted and an annual report is provided to the board so that actions can be agreed.

Date agreed: 22/08/2024
Date for review: 01/08/2027