



IARS COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Policy sets out how complaints from **members of the public, volunteers and service users** should be handled by the organisation. Complaints from members of staff and consultants fall outside of this guidance and should be dealt with in accordance with the IARS Handbook.

As a voluntary non-profit organisation, we take pride in the work that we do and want to ensure that we continue to learn from our service users, volunteers and the public. We are accountable for our actions and hence we strive to deal with feedback and complaints in a transparent, fair and prompt fashion.

If a member of the public has a complaint they are entitled to be treated with respect and to have their complaint looked into quickly and efficiently as close to the source of the problem as possible. We believe that if a complaint is handled well, it is more likely that it will be resolved at an early stage rather than escalating into a long exchange of correspondence. Furthermore, it can be a positive means of restoring confidence in our organisation, which has been founded upon the key restorative justice value of power sharing.

1. What is a complaint?

A complaint is defined as:

“Any expression of dissatisfaction about any aspect of our services by a member of the public who has been directly involved in the service complained of”.

Any expression of dissatisfaction that do not fall within the above definition should be treated as negative feedback.

The IARS International Institute will consider complaints received within three months of the matter complained of.

Complaints maybe made in person, by telephone or in writing. Complainants who are unable to contact us in writing/and or receive a reply in writing, should be given consideration to dealing with their complaint by telephone or in a meeting.



2. Stages of Complaints procedure

Stage 1: Informal resolution

Individuals who are dissatisfied with any aspect of IARS service or its employees, volunteers or representatives should be able to try and resolve the matter informally with the staff member they have been in touch with. If they feel that their complaint cannot be resolved informally they should proceed to stage 2.

Stage 2: Formal complaint

Complaints should be directed to the IARS Director in confidence. Members of the public are encouraged to treat any information about staff confidential and try to communicate in a polite and respectful manner. The receipt of their complaint should be acknowledged within 48 hours of receipt and be investigated from an independent perspective. All the papers and evidence submitted should be considered by the Director afresh.

A decision will need to reach the complainant within 7 working days. Based on the restorative justice values of reconciliation and fairness, the IARS International Institute should try and offer solutions and an amicable way of dealing with the complaint should the facts be substantiated and the complaint upheld. If the complaint is not upheld, reasons will need to be given to the complainant.

The complainant will need to inform the IARS Director within 48 hours whether they accept the outcome of the investigation. If the complainant is unhappy then they need to be informed by the Director about how they can escalate their complaint.

Stage 3: Escalation of complaint

Complaints that cannot be resolved satisfactorily at stage two should be referred to the Board. The Board will not consider complaints that have not undergone Stage 1 and 2 unless they relate to the Director.

On receipt of a complaint at the third stage, the Chair of the Board will request all submitted material relating to the complaint. New material will not be considered by the Board. The Board will try and respond to the complaint within two weeks of receipt of the material.



3. Abusive/aggressive complainants

It is essential to maintain a professional manner when dealing with complainants. People who are stressed, angry or upset may react in an aggressive way. The IARS Institute is clear with its employees and representatives that they do not themselves become aggressive or angry whatever the provocation as this will inevitably exacerbate the situation. Should this happen, the Director will deal with the matter separately as part of the disciplinary procedure outlined in the Employee Handbook.

Where a complainant demonstrates a predominantly abusive or aggressive manner during a telephone, written or face to face communication, the Director may terminate the communication until the complainant's behaviour changes.

If an individual is threatening or abusive, or if it is felt that there is a risk to the safety of staff, the Director should report the incident to the Board, and if appropriate to the police.

4. Terminating correspondence

It is acceptable to be firm with a complainant who is persistent or whose complaint is unfounded. Situations may arise where it is felt that no useful purpose would be served by continuing with the correspondence.

5. Complaints against members of staff

If a complaint includes a specific complaint about an employee/associate/volunteer or other representative of the IARS International Institute this will need to be made to the Director. If a complaint relates to one of the Non-executive Directors (Board) while performing their role, then the complaint should be made to the Chair via the Director. If the complaint relates to either the Director or the Chair, then the complaint should be made to the body of the Board.

The IARS representative concerned should be told that a complaint has been made against them and provided with the detail of the grounds of the complaint. Having been provided with sufficient information on the grounds of the complaint and sufficient time to consider it, the IARS representative should be given the opportunity to give their account during the investigation of the complaint and where appropriate to provide information to assist with the response.



Where the investigation into a complaint reveals evidence of misconduct, mismanagement or underperformance this should be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy as outlined in the Employee Handbook. If a complainant alleges criminal conduct by an IARS representative, the complainant should be told that we cannot investigate such allegations and that they should contact the police.

Complaints should be sent (either via email or post marked as confidential) to: Dr. Claire Bonham | Director | director@iars.org.uk

Amended: March 2020

IARS INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
14 Dock Offices, Surrey Quays Road,
Canada Water, SE16 2XU, UK
Office Mobile: **0044 (0)7833224442**
Email: contact@iars.org.uk

