

Complaints Policy

Purpose of this document

- This document details The Laurel Trust's commitments relating to complaints from people and organisations coming into contact with The Laurel Trust through its work.
- It is intended to be used by beneficiaries and stakeholders in the event that they have a complaint against The Laurel Trust in relation to its charitable activities.

Our policy

The Laurel Trust is committed to providing the highest levels of service to all beneficiaries and stakeholders.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to raise a concern or to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to raise a concern or to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at The Laurel Trust knows what to do if a concern is raised or complaint is received
- To make sure all concerns and complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that concerns and complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

What is a complaint?

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

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

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.

Scope of the policy

The policy applies to all complaints made against the Charity which have been raised as a matter of concern but which have not been capable of informal resolution and which the complainant or the Charity considers should be dealt with on a formal basis.

The Charity expects that before seeking to use this formal policy the complainant or the Laurel Trust will have made reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution of the position.

Formal Complaints Procedure

STAGE 1

1. The complainant must put the complaint in writing by letter or by email unless the complainant has a disability which prevents this, in which case the complainant may contact the Charity for assistance. The complaint should be addressed to The Chair of the Trustees
2. The Charity will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 48 hours, using your preferred method of communication and pass the complaint to the Consultant Director for investigation. If the complaint relates to the Consultant Director it will be passed to a Trustee. If the complaint relates to the Chair of Trustees it will be passed to the Company Secretary.
3. The matter will be discussed with the complainant. This may be during a meeting or on the telephone. Whenever reasonably possible such discussion will take place within 15 working days of the complaint being received. When this is not possible, the Charity will provide an explanation and set out expected timescales by which a response can be expected.
4. The findings at stage 1 and steps that should be taken to resolve the matter will be put in writing by the Laurel Trust. Whenever reasonably possible this will be done within 15 working days of the discussion with the complainant.

STAGE 2

1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the first stage, she/he may request that the complaint be reviewed. Such a request should be made in writing addressed to the Chair of the Trustees within 10 working days of the response being sent to the complainant and must set out briefly the reasons why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response.
2. The chair will appoint a panel of three Trustees
3. The panel of Trustees will conduct a review of the matter to date and inform the Chair of their decision
4. The Chair will report their findings to the complainant, where possible within 15 working days of receipt of the written request to use Stage 2.
5. A record will be kept of all complaints, and of whether they are resolved at the first stage or proceed to stage 2. The complaints log and confirmation of resolution will be reviewed periodically by the Board of Trustees.
6. Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept confidential except where the Charity is required by law to disclose them.
7. There may be occasions where, despite all stages of this procedure being followed, the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome. If the complainant tries to reopen the same issue, the Company Secretary is able under this policy to inform him/her in writing that the procedure has been exhausted and that the matter is now closed.
8. If the complaint is serious, for example, if there is the potential for significant harm to the Chari-

ty, its work, its beneficiaries and other people coming into contact with the charity in the course of its work, a complaint can be made directly to the Charity Commission: <https://forms.charity-commission.gov.uk/raising-concerns/>

Policy Status

This policy covers complaints from external individuals, schools and organisations. It should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy

The Charity may alter or adapt this Policy, and any components of it, at any time.

Review

This policy is reviewed annually and updated as required.

Adopted on:

Last reviewed: