

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Purpose and Scope

Back Up aims to provide the highest level of service to our service users, donors and volunteers. We appreciate that occasionally things may go wrong, and that there may be circumstances which are beyond our control. Feedback and issues/complaints are important to us as they tell us what you think of our services and fundraising activities and help us to improve and develop. Complaints made in good faith are protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 will never result in reprisals, retaliation or loss of opportunities to be involved with Back Up. This complaints policy will be easily available on our website.

Context

The complaints policy, as with everything we do, takes place within the context of our values:

We embrace challenge

Challenge is central to our learning and growth; it helps us gain knowledge and skills. By finding ways to overcome challenge and move forward we gain a sense of achievement, supporting us to realise our full potential.

We have fun

We believe that having fun allows us to connect with others whilst opening up opportunities to develop, achieve and get the most out of life, showing that there is a positive future after spinal cord injury.

We build inclusive communities

We achieve more for people affected by spinal cord injury when we work together. We are collaborative and inclusive in our approach. We embrace diversity, working with, and supporting individuals, groups, and the wider spinal cord injury community.

We are ambitious for each other

We are driven by the needs of people with a spinal cord injury and their families. We are passionate, striving to be the best. We set high standards, and we work hard to reach them. We are proactive, push boundaries, try new approaches and we learn quickly. We recognise that failure doesn't have to equal loss, rather an opportunity for growth. We listen to what people affected by spinal cord injury want and we seek innovative responses based on their feedback.

What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, action or lack of action by Back Up, our staff or those acting on our behalf.

Back Up is committed to ensuring that:

- All complaints are investigated comprehensively and sympathetically through our complaints procedure by the appropriate staff member, volunteer or manager
- Individuals receive a full and honest response in the shortest possible time
- Complaints are recorded, monitored and used to develop and enhance our work, and identify any training needs. Complaints data will be reviewed annually to identify systemic issues and inform service improvements.

Procedure

If an individual has a problem or complaint regarding the delivery of one of our services or fundraising activities or anything else relating to Back Up's operations, they should:

STAGE ONE – Informal problem resolution

Speak to the staff member or volunteer(s) responsible for the delivery of the service or fundraising activity i.e. during a course; this would be the volunteer Group Leaders or at an event, the event manager. The staff member or volunteer(s) will work in conjunction with you to try and sort out any issues that are causing you concern, within their capability. We strongly encourage you to raise any concerns/issues so that they can be discussed and resolved at the time they occur. The responsible staff member or volunteer(s) should make the office aware of the problem and how it was resolved in agreement with the individual. The complaint will be recorded on our central database.

STAGE TWO - Complaint

If a satisfactory solution cannot be reached or you feel unable to raise the concern with the appropriate staff member or volunteer(s), you should contact the Director of Services/ Director of Fundraising / Director of Finance and Operations or (if those individuals had already been involved at stage one) the Chief Executive. They can be contacted via the Back Up office on 020 8875 1805 or via email. Please include your name and contact details, and full details of the complaint.

We will ensure that all complaints are handled in accordance with the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice (2025).

Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days. Following an investigation, a full response will be sent to you within 4 weeks.

STAGE THREE - Appeal

If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can ask for the outcome to be reviewed. To do this you should write to the Chief Executive(if not previously involved), or the Chair of Board of Trustees, via the Back Up office setting out the complaint and the relating issues. The Chief Executive / Chair will set up an Appeals Panel and investigate further.

The panel will review all information relating to the original complaint and write to you within 4 weeks with their outcome. The panel's decision will be final.

Response

Our response can take a range of forms such as a sincere apology, or a change in policy / practice.

Once a complaint is closed it cannot be reopened unless a new incident occurs.

Persistent or Unreasonable Complaints

If a complaint is deemed as unreasonable, vexatious or frivolous the complaint may be refused. In such circumstances we will inform the complainant of what alternative methods will be used to manage communications with the complainant.

Decisions to restrict communication will be proportionate and documented.

Related Policies and Procedures

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Confidentiality and Data Protection Guidelines
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure

These policies are available on request from: admin@backuptrust.org.uk

