



# Complaints and Compliments Policy

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| <b>Operational Owner</b> | General Manager: Jane Sullivan  |
| <b>Trustee Owner</b>     | Joe McGarry   |
| <b>Effective date:</b>   | 7/1/21  |
| <b>Review date:</b>      | 7/1/23  |
| <b>Related documents</b> | Staff Code of Conduct<br>Disclosure of Malpractice in the Workplace Policy<br>Anti-bullying and harassment policy |

## Approval History

| Version | Reviewed by              | Amendment History       | Approved by  | Date    |
|---------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--|---------|
| 1.0     | Jane Sullivan-Management | First Draft             | Management Committee                                 | 7/1/21  |
| 2.0     | Emma Hughes              | Addition of Compliments | Jane Sullivan/Joe McGarry on behalf of Mgmt/Trustees | 06/4/21 |

## Purpose

We strive to offer a fair, high quality service to all our beneficiaries, partners and other interested stakeholders. We welcome and value your feedback so we can improve the services we provide to you. We take all forms of feedback seriously and use compliments and complaints to monitor our performance and adapt our services to meet your needs. We know, however, that things sometimes do not go according to plan. In the unlikely event that you wish to make a complaint against Susan's Farm we will do what we can to address your concerns in a polite and prompt manner. The following procedure is in place to guide us.

## Definitions

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the standards of service, actions or lack of action, by Susan's Farm or its staff and associated personnel<sup>1</sup>. It is a criticism that expects a reply and would like things to be changed. Complaints could include the following (which is not an exhaustive list):

- Concern from someone we work with about the quality of programme delivery
- Concern from a member of the public or supporter about a particular fundraising approach or campaign action
- Concern about the behaviour of staff or associated personnel

<sup>1</sup> Contractors, suppliers, volunteers etc.

A complaint has to be about some action for which Susan's Farm is responsible or is within our sphere of influence.

A complaint is **not**:

- A general inquiry about Susan's Farm's work
- A request for information
- A contractual dispute
- A request to amend records e.g. to correct an address, cancel a donation
- A request to unsubscribe from a Susan's Farm service e.g. a campaign newsletter or email

The complaints procedures do not apply to complaints that are subject to current investigation by any regulatory body or other legal or official authorities in the UK or other countries in which we operate. Such issues will be dealt with by the relevant regulatory body.

### **Complimenting Our Service**

Compliments are valuable, welcome and important and when they are received, either verbally or in writing, they will be recorded.

Compliments enable Susan's Farm to:

- understand that a satisfactory product/service is being provided
- provide positive feedback to our staff/volunteers
- influence our organisational and service development

### **The complaints procedure**

We want to try to sort your complaints out as soon as possible. It is hoped that most complaints or concerns about Susan's Farm's work or behaviour can and will be dealt with informally by staff or volunteers at a local level. However, it is recognised that not all issues can be resolved in this way and that a formal complaints mechanism is required for those occasions when an individual or organisation wishes to make their complaint a matter of record and to receive a formal response.

If you have a problem please talk to a member of staff in the first instance. If for whatever reason you feel uncomfortable talking to the staff member directly then please ask to speak to a senior staff member who works in the service that you access. Either of these people may be able to sort things out straight away. If they cannot sort your problem out immediately, they will make a record of your complaint and follow the procedure set out below. Note that you may be invited at any stage to attend a meeting to resolve the issue with all those involved. The meeting is to allow all parties involved to address the issue and move on positively.

#### **Stage 1**

We will acknowledge your complaint in writing within five working days of receiving it and let you know who will be dealing with it. This will usually be a senior staff member. You should receive a full response within 15 working days. If we cannot provide a response within this time, we will write to you explaining the reasons for the delay and tell you when you can expect a reply.

## **Stage 2**

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive at Stage 1, you should contact us within one month of receiving the reply to your complaint. We will let you know, within five working days, that we have received your complaint and we will ask Trustees of the charity to look at it. You should receive a response within 15 working days. If we cannot provide a response within this time, we will write to you explaining the reasons for the delay and tell you when you can expect a reply.

## **Stage 3**

If you are still not satisfied, you can ask the Chair of our Board of Trustees to review your complaint. You should contact the Chair within a month of receiving our Stage 2 response. We will let you know within five working days that the Chair has received your complaint and we will send you a full response within 21 working days.

## **Independent review**

Stage 3 is the final stage of our complaints procedure. If you are still not satisfied, we will seek external, impartial advice from a mutually agreed source (e.g. ACAS).

## **Contact us**

You can let us have your feedback in any of the following ways:

By phone: 01228 548336

By e-mail: [info@susansfarm.co.uk](mailto:info@susansfarm.co.uk).

By letter: write to us at: Susan's Farm CIO, 145 Houghton Road, Carlisle, CA3 0LD

Please note: During all stages we advise the complimenter/complainant to put their concerns in writing. In this way we have an accurate and detailed account of what the compliment/complaint is actually about. It also helps us with the investigation of complaints. We endeavour to work with all our beneficiaries in a positive way to provide a happy, safe and trusting environment for all. We advise all individuals to bring any concerns to us as soon as they arise as they are easier to resolve in the earlier stages rather than the later.