

DanceSyndrome Complaints Policy

DanceSyndrome views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person or organisation that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

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

Definition of a Complaint

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

Where Complaints Come From

Complaints may come from any person or organisation who has a legitimate interest in DanceSyndrome.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should use DanceSyndrome's Discipline and Grievance policies.

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 and the management committee.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and amended when necessary. It may also be reviewed should any new, relevant legislation require this.

Date of implementation: February 2013

Date of next review: November 2020

Office address:

DanceSyndrome
C/O Pathway Associates
Suite 2, Waterside,
St James Court West,
Accrington, Lancashire,
BB5 1NA

Telephone: 07597 942494
Email: info@dancesyndrome.co.uk
Website: dancesyndrome.co.uk
twitter: @Dancesyndrome
facebook: dancerleddisabilityinspired

Registered Charity No: 1152664
Registered in England and Wales
Social Enterprise
and company limited by guarantee
Company No: 8402154

DanceSyndrome Complaints Procedure

Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:

Written complaints may be sent to DanceSyndrome at C/O Pathways Associates, Suite 2, Waterside, St James Court West, Accrington, BB5 1NA or by e-mail at info@dancesyndrome.co.uk.

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to Dawn Vickers (Managing Director) on 07875 128015 or in person to any of DanceSyndrome's staff, volunteers or trustees at any of our events or activities.

Receiving Complaints

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Complaints received by telephone or in person need to be recorded. The person who receives a complaint by phone or in person should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address, telephone number and email address
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to DanceSyndrome (for example: client, member)
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure and give them a copy or tell them where they can access a copy
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by Email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

For further guidelines about handling verbal complaints, see Appendices 1 and 2.

Resolving Complaints

Stage One

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate. Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to Dawn Vickers (Managing Director) within ten working days.

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On receiving the complaint, Dawn Vickers will record it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, she will delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they will be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within one week. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached. Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

Stage Two

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to The Chairperson (Sue Blackwell - blackwell.sue@gmail.com) or Vice Chair in her absence (Chris Robson - chris@chrisrobsonassociates.co.uk).

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within ten working days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chairperson may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so, this should not be anyone who has been involved at Stage One. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

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Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

External Stage

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage. Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-charities>

Variation of the Complaints Procedure

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.


Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends that may indicate a need to take further action.

The policy and procedure are reviewed annually and amended when necessary. It may also be reviewed should any new, relevant legislation require this.

Date of implementation: February 2013

Date of next review: November 2020

Signed: 

Sue Blackwell, Acting Chair – DanceSyndrome – 01.11.2019

An easy read version of this policy is available at <http://www.dancesyndrome.co.uk/policies>

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Appendix 1 - Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation e.g "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review

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Appendix 2 – Handling Verbal Complaints

Stay Calm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
Listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words • Make notes if needed • Don't debate the facts
Show Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain details about the complaint before any personal information • Ask for clarification wherever necessary
Reflect Back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show understanding of the complaint by reflecting back what has been said
Acknowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge the persons feelings even if you feel that they are being unreasonable e.g. "I understand this situation is frustrating for you" • Don't make any admission of fault
Apologise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you feel that an apology is deserved, then apologise
Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the person what they would like to be done to resolve the issue • Don't promise things that you cannot deliver
Clarification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that the complainant understands what you have told them
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review

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