

## **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

### **Statement.**

The purpose of the Social Workers Benevolent Trust (SWBT) is to respond to requests for assistance by making appropriate grants, and by managing its financial resources to the best advantage for present and future beneficiaries. All activities are carried out by a Board of unpaid Trustees, who obtain specialist advice when necessary.

**The Trustees' legal responsibility as a body to make or not make grants cannot be transferred to any other body or individual. While it is open to the Trustees to change their decision in the light of complaints and investigations made, they remain responsible for the allocation of funds.**

### **Definition of a complaint.**

A complaint can be said to exist when any person having dealings with SWBT is dissatisfied with any response, action or decision taken in connection with their contact with SWBT, and wishes to take the matter further.

At every stage the complainant will be treated with courtesy and respect. They will be kept informed of what is happening and will be given reasons for any decision made.

### **Stage One.**

Any person affected by a response, action or decision of SWBT will be invited to submit their complaint in writing to the Chair, who will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days.

If the aggrieved person declines to make a written complaint, the Chair will take any necessary immediate action which may result in a report to the next trustees' meeting which would take whatever action it deems appropriate.

At every grant allocation meeting, the Chair will ensure that one trustee is not party to the allocation decisions. They become the Designated Trustee for that meeting.

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On receipt of a written complaint, the Chair will ask the Designated Trustee for the meeting when the application was considered, to examine the matters raised in the written complaint, consult with colleagues as s/he sees fit and issue a fuller response to the complainant ideally within 20 working days of receipt of the original complaint. This response will either be (a) to confirm the original decision or to (b) submit the matter for reconsideration to the next trustees' meeting.

## **Stage Two.**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, after the outcome of (a) or (b) above, the matter will be investigated by the Chair, who will interview whomsoever they see fit and produce a report and recommendations. The Chair will inform the complainant of their decision in writing, ideally within 25 working days of their appointment. The Chair's decision is final and will be reported to the next Board meeting.

## **The role of the Charity Commission:**

The Charity Commission is the statutory regulatory body set up to ensure that charities maintain public trust and confidence. It will generally only intervene when there is some grave, general risk of significant harm or abuse to the charity, its assets, beneficiaries or reputation, where the use of its powers of intervention is necessary to protect them and where this represents a proportionate response to the issues in the case, for example when there is evidence that trustees are acting in significant breach of the provisions of the charity's governing document or of charity or trust law.