

Complaints and Whistleblowing Policy

ACTS FAST aims to provide its clients and team members with the best service possible ensuring everyone's needs are met in a proficient, timely and safe way.

The charity recognises however that from time to time there may be occasions when clients or team members feel that the quality or level of service provided falls short of what they could reasonably expect.

It is the charities intention that through positive and professional relationships any day-to-day difficulties or complaints are dealt with in the first instance with the person they may concern at an informal level. This is usually the best way to deal with most issue informally and as quickly as possible, for everyone's best interests.

If, however after informally raising a complaint or concern you feel that it hasn't been appropriately addressed or does not result in an amicable, agreed outcome, then these formal complaints process may be followed:

1. Please raise the complaint in the first instance informally with the person to which the issue relates (where appropriate to do so). This is usually the most appropriate way to resolve complaints or issues quickly, for all parties concerned.
2. If however you feel unable to do this, or it would be inappropriate to do so, please refer your complaint to the line manager or department lead. This will hopefully resolve the complaint or issue as supervisor oversight ensures issues are addressed and resolved on a more practical basis. They will listen to your complaint and act accordingly, which may include escalation to the senior manager for further investigation or action – dependant on the nature of the complaint.
3. Should you feel after doing this that your issue or complaint has not been appropriately or acceptably addressed, please refer to the issue to the CEO or relevant operational manager who will listen to your complaint and investigate any concerns. They will aim to conclude the investigation within 30 days, however on occasion this may take longer. They will keep you informed and will notify you of their findings in writing (usually email). This will aim to resolve the matter and inform you of a course of action for the parties concerned.

You can contact the CEO (James Druce) here: james.druce@actsfast.org.uk

Please note all matters of complaint will only be handled at this stage once the preceding steps have been followed and addressed.

The CEO or senior manager will investigate your concerns and their decision is final. This does not affect any of your statutory rights. For matters of a more senior or complex nature, the matter may be referred to the board of trustees for governance oversight.

For all matters of a very serious nature, or risk to self or harm to others, appropriate action should always be taken with the respective enforcement agencies to ensure UK law is followed at all times. Call 999 in an emergency.

Whistleblowing

It is important that people within ACTS FAST have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they are unhappy with anything. Whistle blowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrong- doing within their organisation. This includes concerns about another employee or volunteer. There is also a requirement by ACTS FAST to protect whistle-blowers and so they can come forward in confidence.

Should anyone suspect an illegal or immoral activity, they are encouraged in the first instance to contact their line manger where appropriate. Should the concern related to their line manager or be very serious in nature they are encouraged to speak to the CEO, or if more appropriate the Chair of Trustees.

This is without prejudice and whistle-blowers have special rights of protection under UK law. ACTS FAST will take any concerns raised seriously and following an investigation will usually inform you of the outcome. Where serious or illegal activity is suspected of taking place, team members are to refer their concerns or information to the relevant agency such as the police (999 for emergencies or 101 for non-emergencies).

Policy updated: May 2022